SAC ESSAY: Invictus and Ransom explore the difficulties of leadership. Discuss.

There is a moment in Ransom where Priam recounts the pressures of keeping his 'royal image' as a leader and how he must 'keep' what is 'most human' beneath his veneer. Here, Malouf signifies the burdensome and restricting nature of leadership – how a leader's humanity in the monarchical world must be supressed. Yet, Invictus provides a slightly deviating philosophy – showing that being human and being a leader can be compatible in the world of 1990's South-Africa. This balance is far more a difficulty in Ransom when contrasted with Eastwood's film. But, where Invictus' leaders struggle to convince their followers to accept their 'new' visions, in Ransom such a problem is more of an inconvenience. Nonetheless, however, what unifies both texts are that leader's must move on from their past, no matter how difficult it may be, so that they may lead to the best of their ability. Such an ability is pivotal for any leader, and it is one that accentuates the hardships leaders have to face, no matter where they are from.

The hardship and adversity that humans must face from their past is difficult to overcome, however for leaders, to be able to lead, they must learn to move on. Such is the case for Jason. When he realises that Mandela has "signed" the order for Etienne and his team – his white counterparts- to work with him, Eastwood's closeup shot of Jason's agitation and frustrations encapsulates his difficulty to percerive them as fellow colleagues for Mandela's security team. Here, further accentuated when he dogmatically stresses that 'not long ago they tried to kill us' in opposition to Mandela's proposal, Eastwood offers an obstacle Jason must overcome – the previous oppression and subjugation he has faced from white South Africans. For Jason, moving on from this prejudice is difficult. But, Mandela knows that for Jason to lead his team effectively he must overcome this – so, we see the President plead for Jason to 'try,' not only acknowledging the difficulty of such an obstacle, but also emphasizing its importance for Mandela to rebuild his 'rainbow nation,' – a symbol of the racial barriers breaking down in South Africa. Mandela knows that people 'see' his 'security team', when they judge him, so Jason as head of security must be able to put the oppression behind him so that Mandela's image is not compromised. Eastwood here, emphasizes the importance of moving on from the past in order for leaders to lead, even when it serves most difficult.

Malouf also echoes such a message through Achilles, who is 'enfolded' in this "clogging grey web" of grief that entraps him and tarnishes his own image as a leader. The warrior finds it extremely difficult to put the death of his brother Patroclus behind him. For Achilles, this grief is so restricting – like such a metaphor of the "web" suggests – that after eleven days it still 'torments him.' And this does indeed effect his ability to lead. Malouf's previous epithet of Achilles' "swiftness of foot" accentuates his past strong image as a godlike warrior is immediately undermined by the fact his "spirit" "deserted" him moments after the death – connotative of abandonment and loss of his identity. Achilles warrior and leader ethos therefore deteriorates. In fact, in contrast to Jason, Achilles' dealing with the past affects his image as a leader where his servants stress that they 'no longer know what authority they are under.' – they are questioning his ability to lead. So here, even though Jason reluctantly accepts Mandela's proposal and begins to put his past behind him, Achilles however fails to. So, on different levels, both authors present the difficulty of leadership: one where they must face past adversity in order to move on and lead.

However, where in Invictus leaders must actively deal with the pressure of persuading their followers to comply with their proposals, Ransom on the other hand, suggests such an obstacle is less prominent, no matter how absurd their proposals may be. Even though Priam knows that his 'vision' of 'something new' is not 'tied to convention'- implicative of the opposition he will face, Priam remains 'bold' in his decision to confront Achilles 'as a father' anyway – as if pre-emptively disregarding all arguments of which he must "prevail." The dominating and self-assurance of Priam

suggests that he knows that he can do what he wants – there is no reason for him to justify his reasons as the king, no matter how bizarre his decisions may seem. Malouf here suggests that the pressure to convince his followers isn't as much of a difficulty for Priam. Although he must 'prevail' against his wife and the council, Priam can at the end of the day overrule – his council can merely "let him do his way." It is much rather an inconvenience for him – as he 'rages' at his servants for not 'listening' to what he had requested. This is far from Mandela's situation, however. When Eastwood pans through the ANC committee after, Mandela requests to 'restore the Springbok emblems', a low murmur of disapproval dominating the audio coupled with the disgusted expressions of the committee encapsulates the opposition Mandela faces. Mandela knows he must convince his people in order to "rebuild" the nation. Unlike Priam, Mandela knows he needs "every single brick" – representative of the importance of convincing every single person – to break down social barriers in South Africa. Eastwood here, in contrast to Mandela, represents the difficulty Mandela faces with regards to leadership: the pressure of persuasion in the face of opposition. The cry of "who is with me" and the silent response of the committee signifies the long hard journey it will take for Mandela to convince his fellow "comrades" to forgive the whites – a stark contrast to Priam, whose family can only remain "silent" in disbelief and "let" him undertake his own journey towards Achilles. So, whether it is even Pienaar convincing his team to sing the anthem, or Jason convincing his team to work with Etienne, Eastwood underlines the hardships leaders endure in the fate of opposition.

Where the texts continue to deviate is how leadership can restrict more of one's humanity and "true-self" in Ransom than in Invictus. In the monarchical world of Ransom, the traditional leader is one that is the "living map" of one's country – a "ceremonial figurehead" that is powerful and thus, shows no emotion. For Priam, such a role is indeed burdensome. To overcome his personal grief, he knows he must be "stripped of all distractions" of power – the elusive connotation of "distractions" is suggestive of Priam's annoyance – he knows that he has to "do what is most human" to move on and lead, rather than being the "figurehead." Priam's role therefore has refrained him from finding out who he really is, and such a problem is accentuated as he questions his council that isn't it "time" that he is able to "explore" the pleasures of humanity. Malouf here, accentuates Priam's struggle to find his identity as a human even though he knows that the God's made him "a king" as well as "a man" – as if such concepts are not compatible. Thus, his role as a leader has suppressed the "man" "inside", a difficult burden to endure. Yet, in Invictus, the very idea of leadership coincides with humanity however the difficulties that leaders face deviate from Ransom. Rather than Malouf's idea of suppression, Eastwood's film explores the difficulty of embracing humanity and the idea that leaders must be able to empathize. It is Pienaar who emphasizes that leaders must "lead by example" – someone who people can follow as opposed to the distant "map" and "figurehead" that Priam embodies. Pienaar is one that must be able to ingratiate himself with his people through via a deeper emotional appeal, captured as he huddles and motivates his teammates in rugby games to suggest a sense of brotherhood. Thus, in contrast to Priam who is rather distant to his people and is human emotion is thereby suppressed by his role, Pienaar on the other hand must be able to embrace his more emotional side to lead – a concept Eastwood explores as a difficulty for leaders in Invictus.

So, we see, then, as Eastwood and Malouf differ in the ways they represent leadership, what unifies the two is that they concur that leadership is difficult. Whether it be being able to move on from one's past to lead, or having to convince one's followers of a vision, there is a struggle to do this for all leaders. Yet, for Ransom, leadership is limiting of one's humanity, Eastwood on the other hand rather suggests such a burden is not as prominent