What makes a society strong and what destructs it.

Literature, Mythology

In our readings, we have seen examples of how society can be undermined or destabilized. Among the major causes of such damage are: injustice, lack of respect and responsibility to others, self-interest, abuse of power, conflicts, war and fighting. For example, in Hesiod's " Thegony", we can see that Auranos and Cronus were unjust and self-interested leaders, because they only cared about themselves. Auranos was only interested in mating with Gaia. He did not care about his children; therefore, he sent them back to Earh. Cronus hated his children. In addition, he was afraid that they will overthrow him, so he swallowed them. As a result, there was no balance of rights and responsibilities in that society. Therefore, they were opposed and their power was taken away by their successors. Another example of the destruction of the society can be found in the Hesiod's, Works and Days, " Five Ages". During the silver era people were hurting each other, and they also refused to honor gods. During bronze era people only cared about fighting and war. People from these two eras did not care to improve the quality of their lives. As a result, they all killed each other and their society came to the end. Self-interest is another destructive behavior for a society. For example, in the Hesiod's, Theogony, " Prometheus", main character, Prometheus steals fire from Zeus and brings it to people. Prometheus makes Zeus look weak. In response, Zeus orders to create Pandora that will bring diseases and sorrows to people. Here we can see that Prometheus self-interest to look strong and smart causes whole society to suffer. Demeter from " Homeric Hymn to Demeter" is also driven by self-interest which is to reunite with her daughter Persephone. Her motive leads to the abuse of power. She takes away Earth's fertility that causes famine and suffering off

all mortal men. As a result, society is destabilized by riots and civil war. In Thucydides', " The Peloponnesian War" the consequences of the Trojan War and exhaustion of the Athens and Sparta in warfare causes the damage and weakness to the society. Here we can see how personal problem of loosing a wife led to the Trojan War , a war which involved most of the population of the society. Since, the leader left and there was no stability and strong centralized power, neighbors could easily take over the territories. Such two greatest powers as Athens and Sparta come to collapse as they draw each other to exhaustion by constant warfare, and as the interstate rivalry created dangerous instability in the society. We have also seen examples of how to make a stable society. Among the main principles are: fair and just leaders, distribution of power, respect and honor to gods and people, bonds and alliances between people and states, no class wars, no tyranny, mysteries. For example, in the Hesiond's " Theogony", Zeus acts as a fair and just leader. He equally distributes power among the gods. He demanded respect among gods and among people. We can see that there was a strong central authority which brought balance and united people in shared purpose, such as shared identity, rights and responsibilities to the state. To stabilize a society it is also important to assure that no one will threaten its strength and solidity. For this the alliances should be created with those who can provide manforce and support. We can see that Zeus creates alliances with Cyclopes and hundred-handers to fight over the titans. In addition, it is also important to protect the society from the civil wars, and the was between the states.. In the Homer's Illiad, " Book 21", we can see how Apollo refuses to fight with his uncle. Another important principle of strong society is to assure

that people respect each other and that they are responsible for their acts. In the " Homeric Hymn to Demeter", people are given mysteries only if they live just and fair lives. This makes people to fear to commit bad acts.