

Some months ago, I saw *Batman vs. Superman*, and it scared me. The lights were dimmed, the cell phone rules were announced, and the masquerade began. Flashbacks, burning crosses, and Greek sculpture whirled across the screen to a pseudo-Wagnerian soundtrack while Batman and Superman lolled about, puppeteered by the only 3-dimensional character in the film, the villain. The superheroes blew things up. Lex Luthor discussed theology. He may have lost in the end, but not before making a lucid argument for nihilism. During the last 15 minutes of explosions, Luthor's monologues against God, the superheroes' grunts, and the bombastic music escalated to a frenzy. I could take it no longer. So I left.

When my friends came out, I was a 75-year-old curmudgeon. I shook my cane. I ranted and raved. I exclaimed at the degradation of a culture that would spend money on that junk. Everyone began chatterjabbering opinions back and forth, and it was then, amidst a group of teenagers at a night after a bad movie, that I realized I enjoyed being insulted.

By "insult," I mean something worse than your run-of-the-mill *ad hominem*. A truly offensive comment makes you frantic to stop the itch of insecurity, of the question, "Am I really right after all?" Real offense stings, wakes you from complacency and taunts you through the initial tide of emotion, into an intellectual fight.

Batman vs. Superman offended me. As I vented my outrage, I realized my anger was not over the fall of Western culture, but over the movie's insult to my own worldview. The film's ideas were all recycled: it got its pro-Prometheus theme from the 19th century Romantics and its soundtrack from Wagner. My wailing about oncoming doom in America was nothing more than a red herring to distract me from the real issue: self-doubt. The little bit of truth in the villain's

nihilist arguments was that we are small. It could not be refuted. The beauty of it is that since I've allowed myself to see more of how small I am, the universe seems larger.

Why do I want to attend the University of Chicago? Because Chicago possesses the quality that makes all other qualities effective: it is BRAVE. After reading Dean Ellison's letter to the incoming class of 2020, I know U of C is a place where political correctness is subordinate to intellectual exploration. *Batman vs. Superman*, despite all my censure (and its failure at the box office), has something to commend it. It stimulated a teenager to examine herself and her beliefs.

I'd rather get used to standing on my own two feet, than let myself sit on flimsy opinions 'til they break. The kind of interaction that can challenge me, engage me, and open a window to reality is what I'm looking for. I want to become a citizen of the world, ready to fight in its arena, and I believe you, the University of Chicago, can give me the best preparation for this endeavor. Reject my opinions, destroy my fallacies, and deflate my ego, but please accept me. I guarantee we will keep each other on our toes.