





## *About the Staff*



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*If you would like to support this publication, please make a donation to The Citadel Foundation and specify your contribution to The Gold Star Journal. Thank you.*

## *A Letter From the Editors*

As editors, we are proud of our seventeenth installment of *The Gold Star Journal*. We hope you will read it at your leisure and enjoy the academic papers submitted by some of the best academic minds the Citadel has to offer. For this year, as with others, we have selected for you an assortment of papers we found to be outstanding. This rich variation of subjects is mainly due to the individual talent of the authors and the diverse academic environment fostered by the Citadel.

First we have a paper by Scott Holmes, which describes the Nassau Raid, one of the first engagements of both the Revolutionary War and what would become the United States Marine Corps. Following that, we have Lance Braye, and his paper, discussing the Darwinian evolution of religion. Then we have a paper from Nathaniel Madden decoding Mephistopheles and Justice Adam's portrayal as the Germanic Satan in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust: Part 1* and Heinrich von Kleist's *The Broken Pitcher*. After this we have graduate student Thomas Gorman and his paper which presents an argument identifying the merits of capitalism. To finish, we have Franklin McGuire and his paper "Icarus Floundering", illustrating his time, and the efforts of humanitarian aid, in Africa.

Recognition and appreciation are also due to Karl Mack of the Sun Printing Co. and John Whitten of Citadel ITS for his assistance and expertise in developing the design of this year's edition.

We would like to thank Dr. Mabrouk for her tireless patience and invaluable advisement in producing this year's edition, the sixteen previous editions, and we remain confident she will be a guide for editors who are to write editions to come, long after we have left this school.

*Lance C. Braye*

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# The First of Many: The Marines' First Amphibious Assault

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## Abstract

*The year is 1776. The Revolutionary War is very young and George Washington and his Continental Army are starving for gunpowder and weapons. They are doing their best to drive the Red Coats back. Back on November 10, 1775, the Continental Marines were formed. Their first major mission of their history would happen in March 1776. It was a bold and daring raid that resulted in triumph and catastrophe. The details were important, and the slightest mess up could result in the loss of the United States Marine Corps and the entire Continental Navy fleet. This raid would set the tone for generations to come.*

“At 2 P.M. Cast off from ye Warf In Company with ye Comodore Ship *Alfred*, *Columbus* & *Cabot*, Light airs from ye Westward & much Ice in ye River.”<sup>1</sup> These words were written down in a logbook by Lieutenant James Josiah. The date was January 4, 1776. The Warf that Lieutenant Josiah is talking about is right outside of Philadelphia and he is on board the Continental ship *Andrew Doria*. As Josiah is looking over the rails of the *Andrew Doria*, he is seeing the newly formed Continental Marines board his ship and the surrounding Continental vessels. Led by Captain Samuel Nicholas, over 200 Marines would be loaded onto these ships. The Continental Marines are not even three months old by this time, but what the Marines were embarking on was what would come to be their first amphibious assault in their long, illustrious future ahead. At this time of the year, the water was very cold and many parts of it were frozen. This made movement of the ships difficult and a few days would be put off on setting sail because of the weather. Eight ships would be in the fleet. The *Alfred* was the largest with multiple cannons. She had twenty 9 pounders, and ten 6 pounders. On her bow she had an elaborate figurehead of a man in armor drawing his sword as if he was riding into battle.<sup>2</sup> Most of the ships were newly built by the Continental Navy and were top of the line. They would be commanded by Commodore Esek Hopkins, who made his flagship the *Alfred*. The other ships in the fleet would be the *Columbus*, *Cabot*, *Andrew Doria*, *Wasp*, *Hornet*, the *Fly*, and the *Providence*.<sup>3</sup> Once on board, the Marines did not know where they were going or what their mission would be. This would all be briefed on the way down to their target.

Commodore Hopkins would be the only person who would know what the destination and targets were before he would pass on the information to Captain Nicholas. Hopkins was ordered by the Naval Committee to sail down to Virginia for support. If he was not going to do that, the Naval Committee and the Continental Congress

surely thought Hopkins would sail to Georgia or South Carolina as the campaign in the South was becoming a huge possibility. Hopkins had a better idea, however. He was going to sail to the Caribbean islands of the Bahamas. This would prove to be wise for Hopkins for the British had just sent two frigates and two sloops-of-war to Virginia, and Hopkins' fleet could have very well been destroyed. The same goes for Georgia and the Carolinas as the British were starting to build up their military mass there for a Southern Campaign.<sup>4</sup> The British

had been hinting to their superiors at the idea of an American attack in the Bahamas, but when Hopkins' fleet eventually sailed, the British believed his destination to be New York City or Boston. In so, Hopkins achieved in what

others did not by picking the Bahamas, and this was simple logistical needs of the army, surprise, and strategy.

Before the war, many American sailors had sailed throughout the Caribbean. They did it for trade for when they were once loyal to the British Crown. By doing this, the American sailors were very familiar to the waters of the Caribbean and also knew the islands and their inhabitants quite well. In fact, the islanders cared more for the Americans than the British, as long as they benefited from it. The islanders just cared for whatever deal they received more money from.<sup>5</sup>

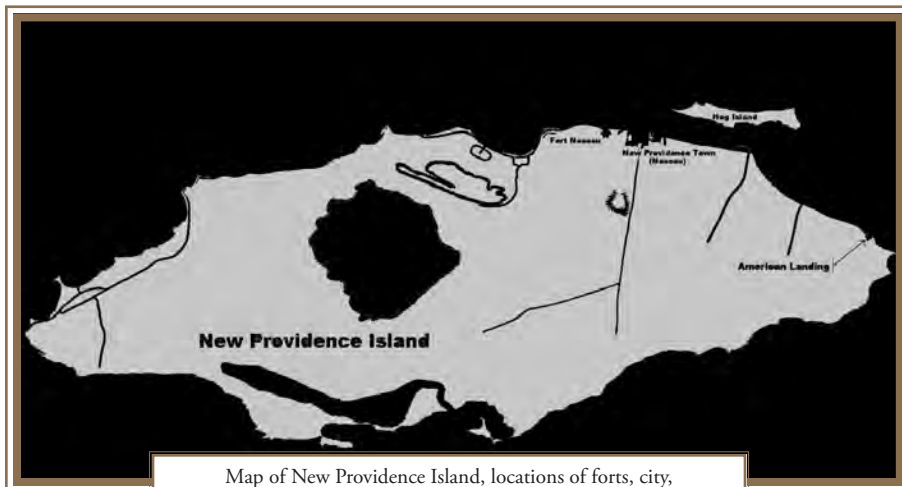
As the war went on, logistics for the Continental Army were not great. There was a serious lacking of heavy artillery and especially black powder. This is where Hopkins strategic aspect comes into view. Over the years, the British had set up

forts in the Bahamian capital city of Nassau. These forts consisted of cannons and huge armories that were full of gunpowder. The British had assigned a company of the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot to protect these supplies and weapons. What the Americans found advantageous to their cause was that this company of the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot had been called to Boston to reinforce their garrisons there. Also the British sloop HMS *Savage* only visited the harbor occasionally.<sup>6</sup> While Hopkins orders were to sail down to Virginia and reinforce there, his

decision of attacking the Bahamas was not totally against the Continental Congress' will. On November 29, 1775, just 19 days after the creation of the Marines, the Continental Congress realized

the mass stores of gun powder and cannon that the Bahamas provided, so they issued this resolution: "Information being given to Congress that there is a large quantity of powder in the Island of Providence, Ordered that the foregoing Committee take Measures for securing & bring[ing] away the said powder..."<sup>7</sup> Hopkins saw the opportunity for glory, and he was not going to let it slip away.

The fleet finally set sail in February with Hopkins and Nicholas after being stuck for six weeks in thick ice in the Delaware Bay.<sup>8</sup> While they waited in the ice, more and more reports came to Hopkins about how desperate Washington was in need for gun powder. Hopkins wanted to take action. Nicholas would be in command of over 200 Marines with his main two lieutenants being Matthew Parke and John Fitzpatrick.<sup>9</sup> As the fleet left the Delaware Bay, the Marines believed they



Map of New Providence Island, locations of forts, city, and American landing zones.

were heading to Virginia or further south as Hopkins orders said to do so. What the Marines did not know were what his orders said after dealing with Virginia. His orders ended with the phrase, "You are then to follow such course as your best judgment shall suggest to you as most useful to the American cause."<sup>10</sup> This legitimized Hopkins decision for the Bahamas even more after the resolution passed in November. As Hopkins sailed into the Atlantic, the risk grew greater. This was the first fleet that the Continental Navy had put together, and destruction of it would surely be devastating to morale. The men were poorly trained for maritime warfare, as they had only been merchants and knew the basics of sailing, but not the basics of fighting on the open ocean. The threat of a growing number of British warships in the area was looming. The British had deployed a 28 gun frigate, the HMS *Liverpool*, and there was a very good chance it could cross paths with the American fleet.<sup>11</sup>

*This was the first fleet that the Continental Navy had put together, and destruction of it would surely be devastating to morale.*

From the beginning, luck was not on the side of the Americans. Disease had found its way on board most of the ships of the fleet. Smallpox was a huge concern and on February 18, 1776, it became a reality. On that day, the *Alfred* had to bury a man at sea because he died of the disease. The next day, the *Columbus* did the same. Fear of the disease spreading was growing amongst the men and morale was not good.<sup>12</sup> The days following the deaths of two sailors, storms grew and the winds grew heavy. The fleet had lost visual contact of the *Hornet* and the *Fly*. While the fleet was wondering what happened, the reality was that the two ships had collided with each other. The *Hornet* was forced to return to port, the closest being Charleston, to make repairs. The *Fly* would make repairs and rendezvous with the fleet on March 1 in the Caribbean.<sup>13</sup> Two weeks went by and nothing horrendous had happened. The sailors' mo-

rale was lifting for now they were only about one day of sailing from their anchor point. However, tragedy struck again. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, the *Columbus* buried another sailor who died from smallpox. Hopkins reported in his logbook that four of his ships were infected with this disease.<sup>14</sup> Luck would now switch over to the favor of the Americans now, though. Later that same day of March 1<sup>st</sup>, the fleet was sailing down the coast and spotted two sloops from New Providence belonging to the British Navy. The flagship, *Alfred*, quickly caught up to them and seized them as the first prizes of the Continental Navy.<sup>15</sup> Later that afternoon, the fleet anchored on the southwest side of Grand Abaco in twelve fathoms of water.<sup>16</sup>

The assault on New Providence had two objective points. These two points were Fort Nassau and Fort Montagu. Both of these had guns and powder that the Marines could take back to the colonies to be used in Washington's Army against the British. The British had been moving some of the guns over the past months out of the fort along with troops to help reinforce Boston, but there was still enough guns and powder to make the mission a successful one. Fort Nassau was built in 1697 and was overlooking the western entrance to the harbor. It was a fort of superior technology and heavy firepower. The fort had carried in its lifetime cannon consisting of 12 pounders, 18 pounders, 8 inch bronze mortars, 5 ½ inch howitzers, and bronze Coehorn mortars. However, at the time of the attack, the fort was falling apart. The local loyalist militia thought the British infantry would kill themselves just firing the guns in the fort for how old the guns were and how the walls were probably not sturdy enough to withstand artillery fire. Fort Montagu was a different story. It was built from 1741 to 1742, approximately one mile east of Fort Nassau. It was more simplistic than Fort Nassau but larger and it guard-

ed the vulnerable rear entrance to Fort Nassau. Fort Montagu at the time of the attack consisted of cannon of 18 pounders, 12 pounders, 9 pounders, and 6 pounders. It also consisted of a large powder magazine, barracks, and a guardroom. Contrary to Fort Nassau, Fort Montagu was not falling apart. Fort Montagu did have one major flaw. Its simple square shape made it extremely vulnerable to any type of assault.<sup>17</sup>

March 2<sup>nd</sup> was the scheduled date of the assault. Hopkins knew the forts could be easy to take for the British did not leave a good number of infantry to defend them. Also, the local loyalist militia would be unprepared. The plan was to take the two sloops that were captured the day before and put the Marines below deck, hiding them. The ships were known to the locals so the Americans believed the sloops could come into port, unload the Marines, and then the Marines could take their objectives of Fort Nassau and Fort Montagu. Once the sloops entered the sight of Fort Nassau, the plan fell apart. There were warning shots fired and the British knew the sloops were not friendly. Hopkins and his fleet and the two sloops fled to hopefully attack the next day.<sup>18</sup> That night, Hopkins called for a council of war to figure out the next move. He wanted to go to the western side of the island to have the Marines attack the town from the rear but there was no road for a march and no water deep enough to make anchor. A decision was finally made.

As the American fleet sailed over the horizon and into the view of the British in the early morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, all hell would break loose on the island. The alarm guns would sound and troops would be called to arms. The British governor, Montfort Browne, decided the powder was necessary to defend and put Fort Nassau's commander, Major Robert Sterling, in charge.<sup>19</sup> The Marines made an amphibious landing at a point

called "The Creek" which was located a mile and a half south of Fort Montagu. The Marine Corps today is known for amphibious assaults, this would be their first one in their history. The first overseas attack by the young country of the United States had begun.

Over 200 Marines and 50 sailors took the beach with the *Wasp* and *Providence* in support.<sup>20</sup> They landed near a group of free slaves and the Marines encountered no resistance. Captain Nicholas made a report in his journal about the first amphibious landing. "The inhabitants were very much alarmed at our appearance, and supposed us to be Spaniards, but were soon undeceived after our landing."<sup>21</sup> The Marines under Nicholas formed into two columns and marched towards Fort Montagu. Under cannon fire from 110 local militia under the command of Browne, not a single American casualty was taken. Browne then took his militia to Fort Nassau and the Marines easily took Fort Montagu. The militia tried to "spike" their artillery by driving a nail into the barrel so the gun would not fire safely,

but the spiking was ineffective.<sup>22</sup> Nicholas and his Marines were tired. Nicholas said, "I thought it necessary to stay all night, and refresh my men, who were fatigued, being on board the small vessels, not having a convenience to either sleep or cook in."<sup>23</sup> Hopkins knew he could now take Fort Nassau, but to help save American lives and to show the courtesy of 18<sup>th</sup> century warfare, he announced a message to the British and the militia. "...if I am not Opposed in putting my design in Execution the Persons and Property of the Inhabitants Shall be Safe, Neither shall they be Suffered to be hurt in Case they make no Resistance."<sup>24</sup> Browne understood this and knew he could not defend the city or the harbor from the outnumbering American force. He did what he knew was best, and he knew the Americans wanted the powder. The powder was the single most important item Browne had,

*Once the sloops entered the sight of Fort Nassau, the plan fell apart.*

so what he did was loaded it all onto the HMS *St. Johns*. In total, it was over 100 barrels of powder and Browne would send it to the British occupied town of St. Augustine, Florida. This was Hopkins' major fault of the operation that would find him in trouble with the Naval Committee and in the likings of Congress. He failed to use his other ships of his fleet to block the very few lanes out of the harbor. The powder escaped under the cover of darkness aboard the HMS *St. Johns* and made it to its destination of St. Augustine, Florida.<sup>25</sup>

The following day on the 4<sup>th</sup>, Nicholas was met with an invitation from Browne to take the city and Fort Nassau if he liked. Nicholas wrote in his journal, "On our march I met an express from the Governor... The messenger then told me I might march into the town, and if I thought proper, into the fort, without interruption."<sup>26</sup> Not a single shot was fired and the Marines took the city and the fort. Browne was arrested in chains and taken aboard the *Alfred*.

The raid was a huge success. The Americans did manage to capture some barrels of powder. The fleet would spend two weeks just loading all of their captured prizes onto their ships. The prizes consisted of two forts, a city, 88 guns, and over 16,500 shells of shot.<sup>27</sup> On the *Andrew Doria* alone, 38,240 pounds of round shot were loaded into her storage areas. Hopkins had to hire a private sloop to carry some of the prizes

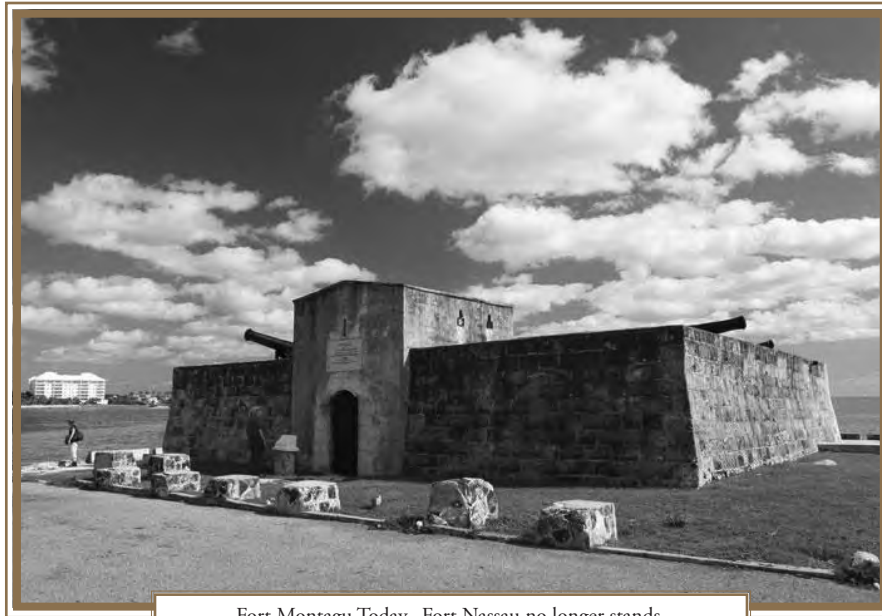
back with him, for he did not have enough room in his own ships.<sup>28</sup> The problems were not over, though. Sickness was still killing some of the men, and many took desertion on the island to get away from it.<sup>29</sup> The fleet finally set sail on March 16<sup>th</sup> back towards Rhode Island. The journey did not go without adventure. Sickness was still killing sailors but along the way they captured four prize ships. The Marines performed these captures with outstanding musket fire. They finally returned on

April 8, 1776 with seven dead and four wounded from the trip back. One of the dead included Lieutenant Fitzpatrick, one of Nicholas' personal friends.<sup>30</sup>

Upon return, people would be praised and people would be reprimanded. Captain Samuel Nicholas was

promoted to Major for his brave actions. Hopkins would lose his reputation by disobeying orders and attacking the Bahamas even though documentation said he could. He would also be reprimanded for not securing the lanes of escape from the harbor and allowing the most important thing they needed, the powder, to escape.<sup>31</sup> This would be the first of many of amphibious assaults conducted by the Marine Corps. It would be the first of many overseas attacks by the United States. It was astonishing in the fact that most of the sailors and Marines were untrained, yet performed as if they had been doing it for years. The artillery pieces greatly helped the artillery starved Continental Army.

The raid did have one major impact that would be more important than guns or powder.



Fort Montagu Today. Fort Nassau no longer stands.

The British were now forever paranoid. They knew they were vulnerable where they least expected it, and now they had to concentrate more naval powers in other areas that held guns and powder. It also hurt the British in that the guns and shot seized in the raid would be used against the British five years later at Fort Griswold and other battles.<sup>32</sup> Overall the raid was a huge success and goes down in history as such. The attack would be the first of many for a lot of things, and over the years, the Marines and the United States would take what they learned on the Raid of Nassau and turn it into an art form.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Charles Smith, *Marines in the Revolution: A History of the Continental Marines in the American Revolution 1775-1783* (Washington D.C. Library of Congress 1975) 41
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid Page 41
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid Page 41
- <sup>4</sup> No Author. "The New Providence Expedition." <http://www.awiatsea.com/Narrative/New%20Providence%20Expedition.html> April 17, 2012
- <sup>5</sup> Douglas Cubbison, "America's First Overseas Attack: Battle of Nassau. Page 14 (The Magazine Article Dr. Preston sent me.)
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid Page 14
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid Page 14-15
- <sup>8</sup> Charles Smith Page 44
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid. Page 41.
- <sup>10</sup> Douglas Cubbison. Page 15
- <sup>11</sup> Charles Smith Page 44
- <sup>12</sup> No Author. "The New Providence Expedition." <http://www.awiatsea.com/Narrative/New%20Providence%20Expedition.html> April 17, 2012
- <sup>13</sup> Charles Smith Page 46
- <sup>14</sup> No Author. "The New Providence Expedition." <http://www.awiatsea.com/Narrative/New%20Providence%20Expedition.html> April 17, 2012
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid
- <sup>16</sup> Charles Smith Page 46
- <sup>17</sup> Douglas Cubbison Page 16
- <sup>18</sup> No Author. "The New Providence Expedition." <http://www.awiatsea.com/Narrative/New%20Providence%20Expedition.html> April 17, 2012
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid
- <sup>20</sup> Douglas Cubbison Page 16
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid Page 16
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid Page 16-17
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid Page 17
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid Page 17
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid Page 17
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid Page 17
- <sup>27</sup> United States Marine Corps History Division
- <sup>28</sup> Douglas Cubbison Page 17
- <sup>29</sup> No Author. "The New Providence Expedition." <http://www.awiatsea.com/Narrative/New%20Providence%20Expedition.html> April 17, 2012
- <sup>30</sup> United States Marine Corps History Division
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid
- <sup>32</sup> Douglas Cubbison Page 18

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"Grace Set of the Sun" by Cadet Joshua Rodgers

On the Origin of Faiths: Using Religion to Explain Science and Vice Versa

Lance C. Braye



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Abstract

The debate between science and religion seems to be an eternal struggle, with evolution versus creationism serving as the current arena. With both sides often refusing to consider the other's logic, it seems like the two are clearly incompatible. In addition to this, religions such as the Abrahamic faiths have also been locked in a theological feud for centuries. A possible solution to the problem may be reached when the three faiths realize that they spring from a common ancestor and may very well be the product of evolutionary forces themselves.

There are two conflicts that are ever present in today's society. On one hand, there is the clash between the findings of science and the beliefs of religion. On the other, there is a cycle of antagonism between different religions themselves. Often, the roots of the quarrels stem from a misunderstanding on one or both sides. This phenomenon is repeatedly seen in the flashpoint subject of evolution and within conflicts of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Interestingly enough, both the issues of evolution and religious diversity can be explained in one fell swoop. Biological concepts are often displayed throughout life as recurring themes. Evolution is no exception to this principle. Much like Darwin's writing explained a biological concept and brought humanity closer to its animal counterparts, the intent of this endeavor is to explain evolutionary theory to the faithful while promoting understanding between the Abrahamic faiths by means of putting their developments in the light of evolution.

The development of the theory of evolution by natural selection was the direct result of Charles Darwin noticing similarities in organisms during his voyage on The Beagle (Keller 9). As such, it can be safe to say that some sort of evolutionary force may be active in any group where different entities that have existed for a considerable amount of time are seen to share a set of basic fundamental characteristics or principles. This is not hard to do with the Abrahamic faiths. It is common knowledge that all three religions believe in one God. In addition to this, the faiths put forth many of the same requirements for a believer to achieve a good afterlife and all share the concept of Paradise ("Comparison of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity"; Hale 1). Add to these commonalities the fact that all three can be traced back to the Middle East, and there is more than enough reason to surmise that there is some form of common descent between these faiths ("Comparison of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity").

In the first portion of his proposal on evo-



lution, Darwin elaborates on the concept of variation under domestication. By doing this, he seeks to explain the impact of selective pressures on a species by showing how organisms have been influenced by the desires of mankind (Keller 45). With respect to religion, the selective pressures of mankind can be demonstrated as also having an impact on the development of faith traditions. In essence, the major faiths and beliefs of the twenty-first century are the result of centuries of variation and selection due to humanity. This is best demonstrated by the emergence of denominations and sects within Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Just as it was a fact in Darwin's time that all breeds of domestic pigeons were descendants of the *Columbia livia*, the rock pigeon, it is a fact that all denominations spring from a central faith (Keller 44).

Variation amongst a group of related individuals is not rare in nature or religion. Darwin explained that these traits are inheritable. Some offspring exhibit the same rare trait that was observed in the parent (Keller 43). As such, inherited traits can be seen between denominations and the churches they sprang from. For example, all Protestant faiths as well as the Catholic Church recognize the Old and New Testaments of the Bible as sacred texts ("Comparison of Christian Beliefs").

A major part of domestic speciation is due to the fact that humans intentionally breed certain animals for desired characteristics. Some domestic species as we know them are the results of centuries of selective breeding. Entire breeds of animals from dogs to sheep have been developed due to this fact (Keller 45). By the same token, adherents have intentionally created denominations due to their own preferences. Such is seen with the creation of Ahmaddiya Islam in 1889. This sect of Islam was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

in Quadian, Punjab, India when he claimed to be the promised Messiah and taught doctrine on Jesus and jihad that were counter to orthodox Islam ("Ahmaddiya"). In Judaism, this intentional division is demonstrated by the rise of Reform Judaism in Germany, which was a direct "reaction against the perceived rigidity of Orthodox Judaism" in the nineteenth century. During this time, worship began to be conducted in German instead of Hebrew and there was a relaxed observance of dietary laws ("Reform Judaism"). As for Christianity, one would be hard pressed to find a religious division more intentional than the formation of the Church of England. When King Henry VIII of England was denied the ability to divorce his wife by the Pope, the one-time Catholic purposefully established himself as the "Supreme Head" of the Church of England with the Act of Supremacy of 1534 ("History of Anglicanism").

While some species and religious sects owe their development to someone's desire to create something different, some owe their current states to unconscious selection by mankind. This unconscious selection is due to the fact that people simply choose what they think is the best of anything without any intent of developing a new breed or type. Darwin explains this principal by using pears:

But the gardeners of the classical period, who cultivated the best pear they could procure, never thought what splendid fruit we should eat; though we owe our excellent fruit, in some small degree, to their having naturally chosen and preserved the best varieties they could anywhere find. (Keller 46)

Where religion is concerned, this sort of unconscious selection is demonstrated in gradual

*In essence, the major faiths and beliefs of the twenty-first century are the result of centuries of variation and selection due to humanity.*

changes that have resulted in the state of religions and denominations as they are known today. A Christian example of this type of development is seen in the origin story of the Catholic Church. Prior to the conversion of Emperor Constantine, the church was heavily persecuted, lacked a central authority, and was focused on survival. After the emperor was converted in 318 AD, however, the church began to adopt a structure that mirrored that of the government, ultimately culminating in the papacy (“Roman Catholicism”). In this scenario, there was no intention of changing the church into a world power. Instead, as Christianity increased in popularity and became the official religion of the Roman Empire, more organization was unconsciously selected for and led to The Vatican and global influence.

The next chapter of *Charles Darwin’s On the Origin of Species* elaborates on variation and its role in nature. The observations of Sir John Lubbock, a friend of Darwin’s, noted that there was variety on minute a scale as the branching of the main nerves close to the central ganglion of *Coccus hesperidum*. In accordance with those findings, all creatures within a species vary in some manner, providing the raw material that natural selection acts upon. These individual variations, given the right conditions, could potentially develop into different species, which are nothing more than continued iterations of varieties of the common ancestor (Keller 47-9). A look at any congregation regardless of religion will show you variation in some form, whether it is racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, or cultural (Rusaw 233). No two people are alike, even if they attend the same place of worship. Differences in lifestyle and interpretations of doctrine can develop into whole religions if given the proper scenario, just as variations in organisms can result in speciation. In

the sense of sects and denominations, the different forms of faith are just diverse varieties of the common ancestor faith they derive from. For example, the formation of Sunni and Shi’a Islam are the result of variation in the belief of who the Prophet Muhammad’s true successor was. Given the circumstances of a faith desperate for a new leader after the death of their founder, a split resulted that led to the bloody sectarian violence of today (“Shi’a Islam”). Despite such differences, the two are still just varieties of the common ancestor of Islam before the death of Muhammad.

Once he makes his case for variation, Darwin details the struggle for survival. As previously stated, all animals show some sort of variation that allows it to be perfectly adapted to its respective environment. This accumulation of beneficial traits is no result of mere chance. The best adaptations are simply passed down from parent to offspring by those organisms that survive and successfully mate. That in essence, is the definition of natural selection (Keller 52-3). With respect to spirituality, all three Abrahamic faiths have a mixture of characteristics from rituals to holidays to doctrine that make them perfectly tailored for their believers. Once again, this is not the result of a random accumulation of spiritual satisfaction. Religious practices are continually passed down from one generation to the next by those groups that successfully teach their younger members. This culminates in what one may call a sort of spiritual selection.

Natural selection stems from a struggle for existence that is driven by the extraordinary rate of increase of organisms. In short, living things multiply at such a rate that there are simply not enough resources to support them all, and this leads to eternal competition within and between species (Keller 55-6). Spiritual selection, on the

*Differences in lifestyle and interpretations of doctrine can develop into whole religions if given the proper scenario.*

other hand, does not derive from the lack of resources on the planet. The struggle in this case is for belief and is driven by a requirement to increase and the fact that this desire pits one religion against another. In all of the Abrahamic faiths except for Judaism until recently, evangelism, or what some would call proselytism, is a major component of the faith. In Christianity, this is a direct command from Jesus Christ himself, and is known as The Great Commission:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. / Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, / and teaching them to obey everything I have c o m m a n d e d you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (New International Version, Matt. 28:16-20)

With respect to Islam, they believe their message to be a universal truth as read in the Quran: "Verily this is no less than a Message to (all) the Worlds: / (With profit) to whoever among you wills to go straight. / But ye shall not will Except as Allah wills The Cherisher of the Worlds" (*Yusuf Ali Translation*, 81:27-29).

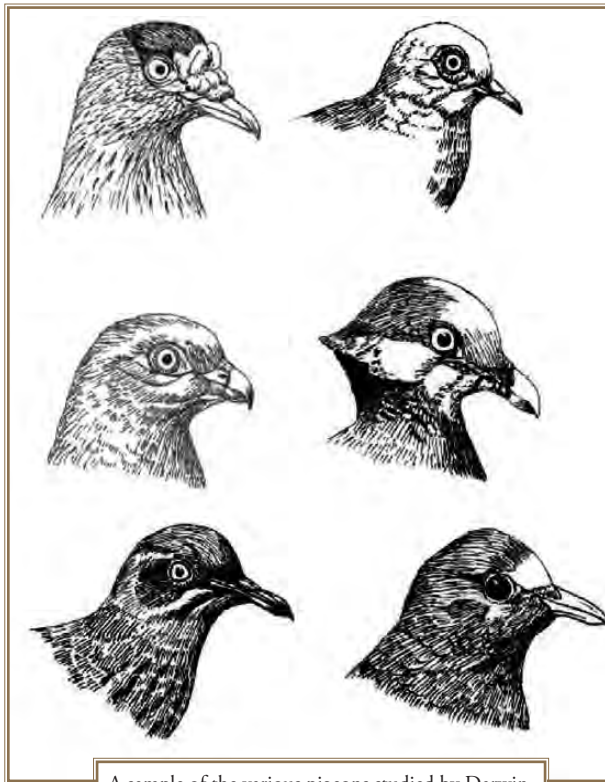
By virtue of the scriptures shown above, all Christians and Muslims must spread the influence of their faith due to direct orders. While

proselytizing is not a traditional aspect of Judaism, even that is starting to change. In fact, "no form of Judaism imagines that one must be Jewish to attain salvation or gain entrance to heaven." However, the intermarrying of Jews with Gentiles has become so popular in recent years that rabbis of Reform Judaism decided in 2010 at the 121<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis to encourage the conversion of spouses and

families of intermarried Jews (Hirschfield). With three of the world's largest religions vying for new souls each day, there is bound to be competition.

In nature there are natural checks that prevent the expected rate of increase that would outstrip the planet's resources. These limiting forces are climate, disease, species interactions, and competition. While some species are adapted to a climate, changes in the environment could lead to a scarcity of food. Disease is always present but especially becomes a factor whenever a population grows out of

control and endures an epidemic. Predation and succession are largely consequences of the fact that every individual of every species must ensure that it will be able to survive. As such, some populations are kept under control by other populations that feed on them while the predatory species is also kept in check by the amount of prey it has available to it. Relationships such as this are depicted in codependence webs. Succession as observed in forests that were hewn down demonstrates the concept of competition beautifully. If it were not for competition, the first organisms to colonize cleared woodlands would eventually grow out of



A sample of the various pigeons studied by Darwin.

control. However, eventually they give way to new groups of plants that will replace their older counterparts through competition (Keller 58-60).

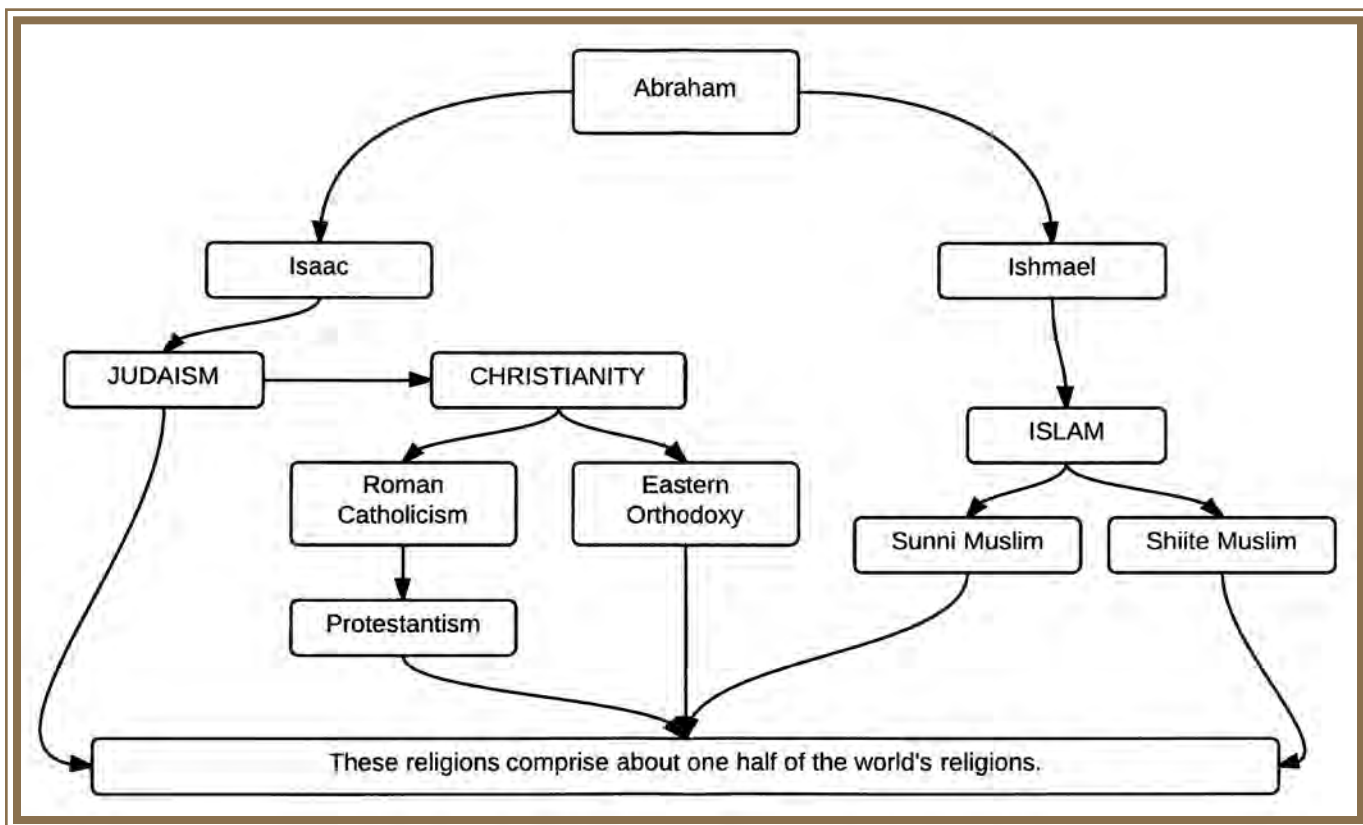
Essentially, if either faith group was in a position where there were no barriers to winning converts, then eventually there would virtually be no sin or inherent evil in the world, resulting in a type of world that each faith is eagerly awaiting the coming of. That result in itself would largely take away the goal of most faiths by virtue of accomplishing it and leads to all sorts of philosophical questions beyond the scope of this paper. While the physical environment, disease, predation do not have any significance in religious expansion, there are limiting factors. Three of these dynamics are culture, politics, and competition for converts. Culture can be a barrier to religious expansion largely due to the stereotypes it may promote. Many faiths are never even given the time of day due to improper opinions and beliefs about their practices. In regards to American culture, Islam has felt the greatest impact of this phenomenon in recent years. While there are many wonderful, law-abiding Muslims around the globe and in the United States itself, misconceptions of terrorism, misogyny, and draconian rules are a constant thorn in the side of Muslim evangelization efforts (Ali). Politics can get in the way of religious expansion whenever laws are passed against specific religious action. Legally speaking, these restrictions are usually in the form of laws against blasphemy, apostasy, and defamation of religion. The interesting aspect of this is that these laws in most instances are designed to protect religion. However, they also severely restrict any other religion besides the state's majority faith. It is easy to be found guilty of blasphemy and apostasy if you convert from the majority religion and profess your new belief. This is clearly a barrier to religious expansion of Christianity and Judaism since fifty-nine countries have some form of rule or policy that prohibits the three aforementioned crimes against religion, a majority of which are in the Middle East where Islam is the dominant faith ("Rising Restrictions"). The

third barrier to unlimited religious expansion is competition from other religions. Common sense dictates that one belief cannot convert everyone if there is another form of faith with the same goal in mind. In nature, organisms may go after the same resources and become competition for each other; it is the same for religions who go after the natural resources of heart, mind, and soul.

All of the biological information that has been covered so far results in natural selection. Just as humanity can select for desirable traits, nature itself selects for traits that are conducive to the survival of species. These traits just may confer basic survival or may prove advantageous in mating and therefore be the result of sexual selection. Simple geographic isolation also provides a mechanism of selection with regard to speciation (Keller 61-75). The benefits of survival due to natural selection may have played a role in the development of religion itself. The dominating theory on the evolution of religious tendencies is known as the Standard Model. According to the standard model, religion is not necessarily an adaptive mechanism designed to promote faith in a higher being, but rather an evolutionary side effect of the cognitive evolution of the human mind. Cognitive adaptations that may have indirectly caused religion are those related to agency detection, theory of mind, and folk ontology. Some researchers have proposed that religion was itself an adaptation of genetics or cultural groups. While there is not substantial evidence for genetic evolution of religion, it could be possible given the millennia that religion has existed that over time genes that make religion easier to acquire could have accumulated in humans. In the cultural adaptation approach, it is hypothesized that religion allowed a form of artificial kinship to form between unrelated members of a group, allowing the development of altruism and group cohesion that helped the group survive. There is even evidence of religion being linked to overall fitness with religious societies out-persisting, producing more offspring, and cooperating better than nonreligious societies (Powell 460, 473, 476). In a way,

religion can also be at the mercy of sexual selection. All three Abrahamic faiths contain scripture against intermarriage with members of a different religion. This can be found in Deuteronomy 7:3-4 in the New International Version of The Bible and Surah 2:221 in the Yusuf-Ali translation of The Quran. By virtue of these scriptures, adherents of a faith will seek to marry and reproduce with those of a similar belief. Geography can also come into play with the development of religion. An example of this that has already been discussed is the dominance of Islam in the Middle East and how it has shaped spiritual policy in that region. Even the nonreligious in such an area of the globe will have some form of belief or morals in line with Islam due to the fact it permeates everyday life in those countries. If a cultural group is isolated within a region that is dominated by a belief, it may develop into a separate denomination or sect just as an isolated population of squirrels could lead to a new breed. Again, such a case has been shown with the development of Reform Judaism in Germany.

Together, all this makes for a convincing argument that all things are related in a sort of Tree of Life. This is displayed in biology by way of phylogenetic trees (Keller 76). A similar tree can be constructed with regard to the Abrahamic faiths when each groups claim to descent from Abraham and the Bible are put in context. According to the Bible, Christians and Jews are descendants of Abraham by his son Isaac, who they say was the promised seed. Abraham's firstborn son, Ishmael, is who Muslims claim to be the promised seed and their ancestor (Knowles). Based on these findings and the fact that Isaac was of the same faith as his father, it can be said that Islam and Christianity both descended from Judaism. To put this in a "tree of spirit" as shown below, Abraham would be the source of ancient Judaism, carried on through his son Isaac. Islam would begin to branch from Judaism at the time of Ishmael's banishment and eventually become its own religion with the message of Muhammad. After the birth of Ishmael but before the founding of Islam, Christianity would



branch off from Judaism during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. These major divisions as well as traditional Judaism would then branch off into their own respective denominations over the course of history into those that are in existence today.

Now that it has been clearly shown how natural and spiritual selection work and how the organisms and beliefs they affect can vary, it is necessary to describe the laws that govern such variation and drive the selection. Two important factors in every case for variation are the nature of the organism and the nature of the conditions (Keller 80). Spiritually speaking, those factors could be the nature of the believer and the cultural environment they live in. It has already been established how culture can influence beliefs through stereotypes, laws, and majority religions. Just as the type of organism and its environment are crucial to types of variation in living creatures, the type of believer and their cultural environment will dictate the forms of variation in belief. For example, adherents living in a more liberal society will vary from a retaliatory conservative set of beliefs to a liberal spiritual outlook that goes with the flow of the respective culture. This can be seen in the wide scope of approaches to Christianity in the United States.

While traits were considered to be the product of use and disuse until disproved by Thomas Wollaston and his beetles, it is now known that they are controlled by genetics. By virtue of the recombination of genetics, underlying recessive traits some time arise in offspring of different breeds, pointing to a common ancestor (Keller 82, 85). In the realm of religion, the controlling aspect of spiritual evolution must be passed down from parent to offspring like genes. No matter the faith, a majority of parents proselytize their children by how they raise them (Leslie). If all parents of a

faith raised their children the same way, then the unit of inheritance for religion would be whatever holy book the parents use. However, parents of the same faith still raise their children differently, meaning that the unit of religious inheritance must be interpretation of beliefs. Just like genes are recombined in fertilization, interpretations of faith are recombined when two people decide how they want to raise their children with respect to religion. Even in cases of a single parent, interpretations are further recombined by influences of life and personal interactions that every person

experiences, resulting in a form of horizontal interpretation transfer like the horizontal gene transfer of bacteria. In turn, interpretations of faith are passed down from generation to generation, occasionally forming new denominations or, as in the case of Muhammad's interpretation as well as the interpretation Christ's disciples, entirely new religions. Continuing with the gene-interpretation analogy, common interpretations or beliefs signify related beliefs just as shared

genes give clues to related species. The aforementioned characteristics of monotheism and affiliation with Abraham give clues to the relatedness of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam in this way.

It is important for the three faiths to learn about one another and realize their common descent in order to stop the stereotypes and violence between them. It is also crucial for the science and spiritual-minded to do the same with each other to end their quarrels. The theory of evolution, whether biological or religious, is not intended to be a divisive subject. Instead they are both meant to be a means of better understanding not only the world around us, but each other. While they are not perfect theories, it is hoped that they make sense to all and explain the commonality of all living organisms and Abrahamic faiths.

*Islam would begin to branch from Judaism at the time of Ishmael's banishment and eventually become its own religion with the message of Muhammad.*

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## The Devils and the Details: Justice Adam and Mephistopheles

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### Abstract

*The dramas Faust: Part 1 and The Broken Pitcher both incorporate figures of deceit and temptation that, on the surface, display several vestiges of a typical Western Satan. The characters of Mephistopheles and Justice Adam in the respective plays are both presented in the context of biblical allegories and assigned various traits that cast them as devilish figures of pure malevolence. Through careful analysis, this paper examines the Satanic imagery around both characters to show that though both characters exhibit somewhat demonic traits, both are ambivalent, almost comic figures.*

In their dramas *Faust: Part 1* and *The Broken Pitcher*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Heinrich von Kleist, respectively, both incorporate figures of deceit and temptation that, on the surface, display several vestiges of a typical Western Satan-figure, a being of pure evil often adorned with hooves and horns, and always on the hunt for the souls of men. The characters of Mephistopheles and Justice Adam in the respective plays are both presented in the context of biblical allegories and assigned various traits that, on the surface, cast them as devilish figures of pure malevolence. However; through careful textual and plot analysis, the guise of devilry falls apart in Adam and Mephistopheles's cases and reveals far less evil personas and roles. Both Adam and Mephistopheles exude the appearance and behaviors of satanic figures in their respective roles; however, closer examination of Mephistopheles's role as a lesser spirit through the theories of Jane K. Brown will allow for similar interpretation to be applied to the understanding of Adam's role as an ambivalent figure of human weakness and folly in *The Broken Pitcher*. The basis for this alternative reading of both dramas is found first in *Faust: Part 1*, in the "Prologue in Heaven" and the so-called "Pact Scenes" where Mephistopheles is introduced and supposedly characterized as a form of the devil. The supposed "satanization" of Justice Adam then runs throughout the description of events that befall Adam, as well as various passages that characterize the judge in *The Broken Pitcher* before analyzing common symbolic parallels shared by the antagonists and their roles in the respective biblical parallels of the dramas.

When first introduced to Mephistopheles in "The Prologue in Heaven" and "The Scene in the Study", the reader is initially reminded of the biblical story of Job, in which God and Satan make a bet that Job, a devout follower of God, will not renounce his faith, even when tried and tested to his very limits. Likewise, The Lord and Mephistopheles discuss the state of Dr. Heinrich Faust,



and Mephistopheles wagers “What will you bet?... If unto me full leave you give,/ Gently upon my road to train him!” (Goethe 11). He even goes so far in soliloquy to ponder “It’s really kind of such a noble Lord/ So humanly to gossip with the Devil!” (Goethe 13). Here, Mephistopheles is presented in parallel to Satan in the story of Job. When he introduces himself to Faust, however, the spirit presents himself much differently, using such monikers as “Part of the Darkness which brought forth the Light” and “Part of the Power, not understood,/ Which always wills the bad and always works for the good” (Goethe 46-47). The supposed Devil is using extremely ambiguous diction in his introduction to “Goethe’s Job” (Brown 73). This intentionally confusing choice of words speaks less to a spirit of pure evil and more to one who stands in league with the equally-confusing nature of the Spirit of the Earth as seen earlier in Faust’s Study. After the bet is made, the spirit implores the doctor to “Let the lying spirit bind thee” (Goethe 63). Mephistopheles repeatedly refers to himself as a spirit, but one of extremely odd ends, and, in contrast to the Satan seen in the Book of Job, he does not make any reference to what will become of Faust’s immortal soul, or even if he wants his soul over an unspecified idea of servitude, nor are there any references given to any sort of hell as a destination for a losing Faust. Through his introduction of himself in the “Pact Scenes”, the being of negation has aligned himself more with the spirits already hosted in the Doctor’s study as opposed to a supreme being of evil as is expected in a Western Satan-figure who would have arguably demanded his soul for material wealth or understanding as opposed to making bets with a mortal.

In her book, *Goethe’s Faust: The German Tragedy*, Jane K. Brown supports the idea that Mephistopheles is not a satanic being at all. Brown

contends that several conditions surrounding the “Pact Scenes” of the story point to Mephistopheles as a another “nature spirit” to whom Goethe only grants “control of nature spirits, the elements and the animals” and that “Mephistopheles stands alone” (Brown 68). Opposed to the traditional understanding of a “deal with the devil”, “Mephistopheles states explicitly at the beginning of the second study scene that he has come to offer Faust the experience of life”; in addition to this, Brown also contends that “Even the cloak on which [Faust and Mephisto] ultimately depart is not really magic; it floats perfectly naturally on the hot air generated by Mephisto’s control of the elements” (Brown 68, 69). Nor is fire his single or strongest element, which is apparent when he admits to bending “earthquake, tempest, wave, [and] volcano’s brand” (Goethe 47). Seen in this light, Mephistopheles is far from a hellish figure of fire and brimstone; he even seems more akin to such figures as a Shakespearean Puck in that he has some minor control over elements

and uses them to ambivalent means, if nothing else, to satisfy a curiosity. Mephistopheles is still supernatural and Goethe’s creation of him toys with biblical elements, but the comical and ambivalent way in which the spirit is constructed early in the play suggests that Mephisto is more of a deceitful being of the natural realm, bearing the vestiges of a devil rather than a form of Lucifer himself.

When Heinrich von Kleist published *The Broken Pitcher* in 1808, he, like Goethe, wrote a play that toyed with the concept of religious parallel. The main characters, Adam and Eve, are caught in a courtroom farce regarding the breaking of Mrs. Martha’s, Eve’s mother’s, pitcher the night before. Several things are simply not known about the case, or the events that occurred in Eve’s bedroom, nor is anything revealed about the wounds Adam

*The reader is initially reminded of the Biblical story of Job.*

sustained the night before in what is comically referred to in the original German as the “Adamsfall”, an allusion to the fall in Eden. Several attempts are made by Adam to conceal the facts of the night before and the reason he has not only injured himself, but has also lost his powdered wig in the process.

The initial and most prevailing parallel between the two German works is the very loose adherence to their biblical parallel. In a very similar fashion to Goethe’s deviance from the rigid constructs of the story of Job, Kleist’s interpretation of the fall from paradise has several incongruences which will later reveal the true nature of Justice Adam. The story begins as Adam is confronted by Link, the court clerk and is asked, “What happened to you, Adam? What befell?” (Kleist 3). After Adam’s initial explanation that “with that blasted ram/ jutting out from the stove I strove in battle,” his clerk replies with the assertion that “No Adam fell before” (Kleist 5). Kleist makes several references to the Book of Genesis, and in doing so, sets up a similar biblical foundation to that of Job in Faust: Part I, and, like Goethe, breaks from it in character as well as thematic elements. The Genesis parallel is broken primarily by the fact that Adam, the prelapsarian man, has now become the deceiver about whom Eve fumes in saying “How that villain lied to me,” and whom Mrs. Bridget regards as “the good-for-nothing vile deceiver!” (Kleist 68). Whereas the Biblical Adam is meant to be deceived, the text has him cast as a deceiver, and, for that reason as will be discussed below, a combination of both the fallen man and the story’s Satan-figure.

Several comical allusions are made throughout the one act play to cast upon Adam the vestiges

of Satan in similar fashion to Goethe’s introduction of Mephistopheles in Faust: Part I. Adam’s initial explanation of how he received his wounds during the night of the “Adamsfall” is that he fought “with that blasted ram/ jutting out from the stove” (Kleist 5). The stove—a house for fire, smoke and brimstone—appears to be a likely origin of injury for a man who now bears the marks of a ram, a well-known biblical symbol for Lucifer. The motif of Adam as a being of fire and brimstone is continued by the testimony of Mrs. Bridget, who was present in the adjacent garden to Mrs. Martha’s house the night the pitcher fell. Mrs. Bridget testifies that, in the garden, she saw “then, from there, human foot and horse’s hoof” (Kleist 5). Adam is the bearer of the “horse’s hoof” due to his club-foot, first addressed in Scene 1 of the drama, despite his best efforts to conceal this fact later in the testimony (Kleist 4). Both of these elements align themselves not only with traditionally accepted vestiges of Satan, but also with those possessed and invoked by Mephistopheles in Faust: Part I.

The horse’s hoof speaks to the same idea of dual-role symbolism in that Adam has already been branded by the mark of a goat, and now is awarded by Kleist with a hoof, a traditionally accepted mark of the devil in the Western world and an attribute given to Mephistopheles by Goethe. Adam is little more than a flawed man, just as he confesses in Act 1 when he says “Still, here I stumbled. For each man bears,/ Within himself, his own stumbling block” (Kleist 3). Adam and Mephistopheles’s hooves, as well as Adam’s bestial mark are as much a guise as is Adam’s missing powdered wig. Adam’s “hoof” is actually a deformity that only affects one of his feet and Mephistopheles confesses on “Walpurgis Night” in response to Faust’s question of his introduction to the crowd as “wizard or of devil” that “The Garter

*The most prevailing parallel between the two German works is the very loose adherence to their biblical parallel.*

does not deck my suit/ but honored and at home here is the cloven foot” (Goethe 155). As an antagonist, Adam is given the “horses hoof” but only incompletely and as an infirmity which can be interpreted as a symbol of imperfection as opposed to a mark of evil; likewise Mephistopheles humbles himself before the crowds of the supernatural as merely one who bears a respected mark instead of a mark that would crown him a Master of Hell.

Mrs. Bridget does not only speak of Adam’s deformity in her testimony; she also speaks of shapes made upon the ground. When asked about what she saw in the garden on the night of *The Broken Pitcher*, Mrs. Bridget also claims that “First by the trellis where he leapt, look you—/ A circle, so wide, churned up in the snow” appeared. The circle itself is not a demonic symbol, especially when looked at only in the context offered by Kleist’s drama; however, in the context of Goethe’s work, the circle becomes half of the parts necessary



Eugene Delacroix’s lithograph of Mephistopheles

to construct a pentagram or a Symbol of the Macrocosm, both of which are drawn by Dr. Heinrich Faust during his venture into the supernatural arts. When viewed as an allusion to *Faust: Part 1*, the circle in the garden, like Faust’s pentagram is incomplete. This incomplete symbol, along with that of the horse’s hoof, speaks to the idea that Adam, though comically cast as a Satan-figure, is little more than a poorly-clad and incomplete devil. The ram mark upon Adam’s head is likewise a result of human imperfection in that it was obtained by either clumsiness or, even drunkenness, which is

likely, due to the fact that he does not remember the “Erste Adamsfall” when asked about it and could be interpreted as offering the double meaning that Adam is rather an *alte Ziege*, or old goat who only appears to be satanic. Because of these incomplete and superficial marks, Adam should not necessarily be interpreted as a being of evil, but rather as one of imperfection who uses deceit—such as his lies to the Chief Justice or Ruprecht’s falsified draft letter—simply to satisfy human weaknesses like pride and lust. Adam’s lies also give rise to an accompanying interpretation to the snow-circle. Due to the joking way that Mrs. Bridget unknowingly casts Adam as a devil figure, the circle can be interpreted as a *Teufelskreis*, literally a devil’s circle, which translates to a “vicious cycle”. Through his deceit Adam has created a scenario of which he cannot escape without serious legal retribution, offering further support to Adam as a creature of weakness and folly.

*The Broken Pitcher* and *Faust: Part 1* are products of the same era in German Literature.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was even the director of the Berlin Theater the night that *The Broken Pitcher* premiered in 1808, over twenty years before the completion and publication of the second part of Goethe’s tragedy, which gives credence to the idea of possible dialogues between the two (Neumann 61). Both dramas invoke widely accepted ideas of biblical allusion and draw strongly upon biblical parallel before altering the course of events. Both playwrights also incorporate leading antagonists who are easily mistaken for the devil due to their superficial attributes before reveal-

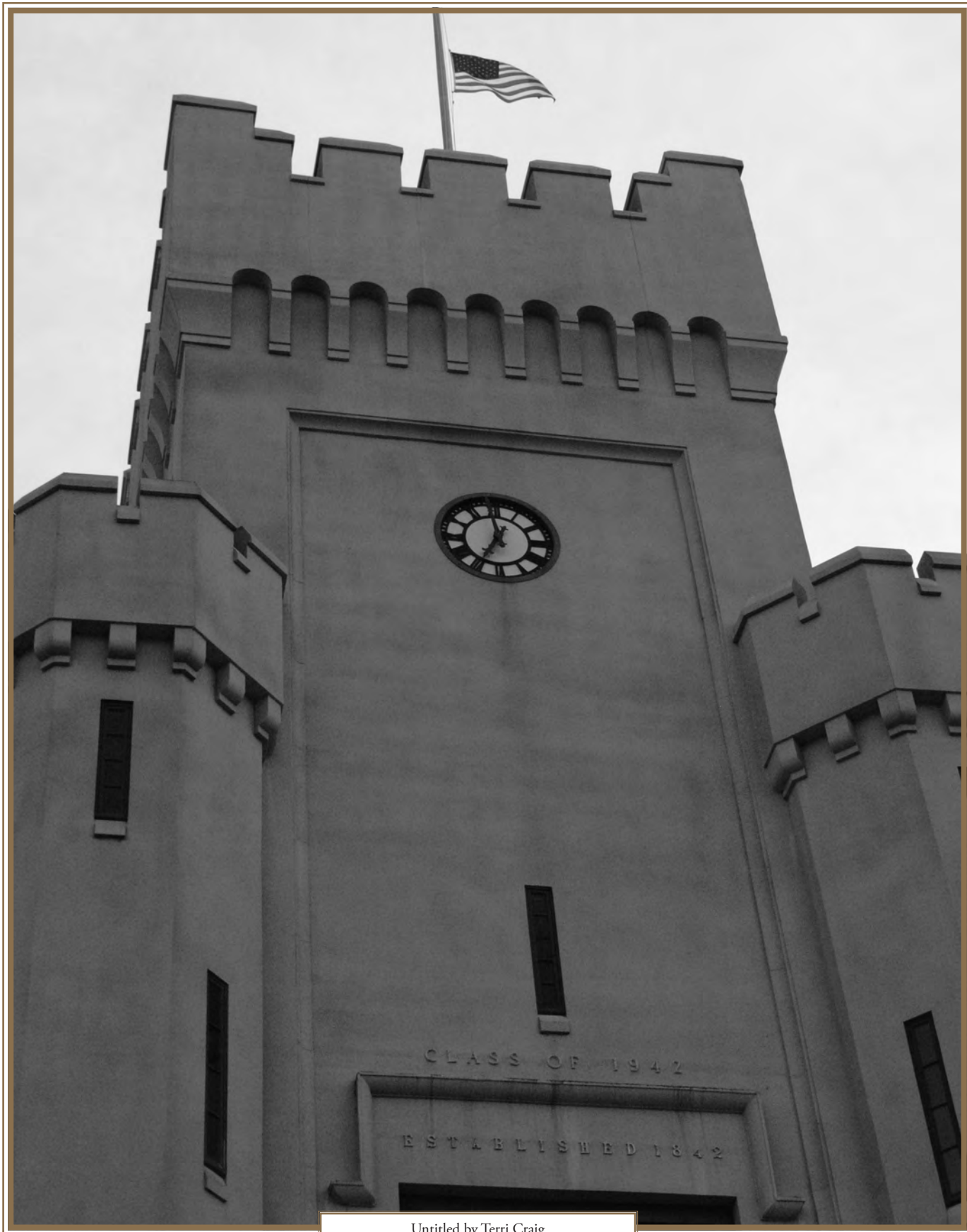
ing the ambivalent nature of their deceit and folly. By looking at the flawed antagonist, Justice Adam, through the same lens that Jane K. Brown uses to examine Mephistopheles, both antagonists can be seen as parallels, sharing the guise and appearance of Lucifer but holding none of his true malevolence.

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Untitled by Robert Keener



Untitled by Terri Craig

## Capitalism: If History Has Taught U.S. Anything...

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### **Abstract**

*The manner in which a nation organizes its economic activities largely decides its fate. Here in the U.S., the economic pendulum swings across the spectrum of economic arrangement. This study examines the principles of socialism and capitalism and examines the nature of man in order to determine which is best. Before making recommendations for the future course of the American economy, we shall take a look back at Rome and how its economic policies played a role in its fate.*

Every human civilization that has ever come into existence, from prehistoric times up to the present day, has been forced to produce in order to preserve its existence. The manners in which these civilizations have organized production and allocated their scarce resources have, by and large, determined the amount of individual, political, and economic liberties that each member of a society will possess<sup>1</sup>. These economic organizations largely control every citizen's standard of living and ultimately play a large role in the success or failure of every society. In terms of economic policy, then, the long-term results lead to either existence or non-existence. Sadly, a brief examination of the history of mankind confirms that our decisions, more often than not, have led to failure and, ultimately, non-existence.

Over the past century, we have witnessed, here in the U.S., the economic pendulum swing back and forth across the spectrum of economic arrangement. The era of unregulated free trade of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was brought to an abrupt halt by the Great Depression and FDR's New Deal regulations. Thirty years of prosperity ensued until rising unemployment and inflation, known as stagflation, gripped the nation in the mid 1970's.<sup>2</sup>

This time it would be Ronald Reagan directing the winds of change through deregulation and laissez faire style of Reaganomics.<sup>3</sup> Today, President Barack Obama has met the Great Recession of 2008-09 with a new period of regulation and deficit spending. Each change in direction, as is often the case throughout history, was ushered in by a period of crisis and public panic. Now, with the benefits of time to deliberate and the knowledge of historical experience, we should ask ourselves a fundamental question: Economically speaking, what has history taught us and how do we achieve sustainable prosperity and growth?

According to Milton Friedman, "there are only two ways of co-ordinating the economic activities of millions. One is central direction involving

the use of coercion – the technique of the army and of the modern totalitarian state. The other is voluntary co-operation of individuals – the technique of the market place”; also known as the invisible hand of the free market.<sup>4</sup> Throughout his history, mankind has more frequently than not turned to central direction to arrange his economic affairs. These measures have been referred to by names such as socialism and communism; however, for our purposes, we will refer to them as collectivism, so as to reference all forms of collective economic orders.

To centrally direct the economy of a state, as collectivism attempts, is an extremely complex task for any government to undertake. In the words of F.A. Hayek: “It must, of necessity, take sides, impose its valuations upon people and, instead of assisting them in their advancement of their own ends, choose the ends for them”.<sup>5</sup> Even the initial step of gathering the information necessary to make decisions for individuals is practically impossible because of the constantly changing needs of each individual.<sup>6</sup> Quickly it becomes painfully clear that while collectivist governments distribute many things to their citizens, liberty cannot be one of them. Even the freedom of thought is a threat to the leaders and therefore an enemy of the state. In this type of society, the value of the individual is void as his only purpose is to serve the state; a purpose commonly wrapped in ambiguous guise of the “common good”.<sup>7</sup>

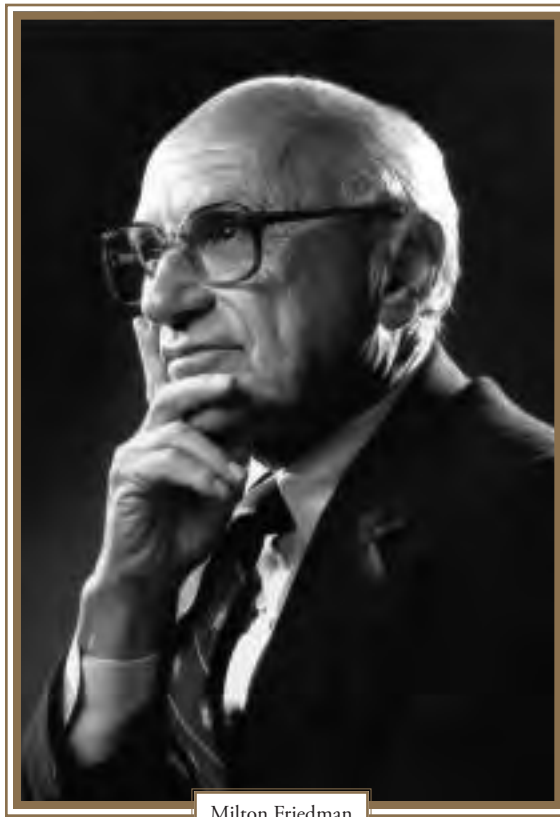
As a result of the complexity of its task, a collectivist government must be ever expanding in size and authority. As the state gains control over industry, any competition that may exist in the

market is systematically rooted out. As the competition in the market begins to evaporate, so with it goes the personal incentive to produce at a high level as well as the innovative ideas that are produced by and dependent upon it. The citizenry, now void of the entrepreneurial spirit, abandons ideas of productivity and ingenuity and instead become dependent upon the establishment; as if in an infantile state. Now directly burdened with the welfare of the masses, the government must quickly turn to arbitrary law to meet the constantly changing needs of its dependents. This is a process that begins with regulation, then grows into monopolies, and ultimately evolves into government control of everything from the price of a loaf of bread to how an individual earns a living.<sup>8</sup>

As the overall scope of government expands, so grows with it the bureaucracy and the financial burdens inherent with sustaining such a system.<sup>9</sup> In *The Road To*

*Serfdom*, Hayek explains: “To be a useful assistant in the running of a totalitarian state, it is not enough that a man should be prepared to accept specious justification of vile deeds; he must himself be prepared actively to break every moral rule he has ever known if this seems necessary to achieve the end set for him”.<sup>10</sup> As all incentive for personal advancement through honest and productive means has been destroyed, individuals of a lower moral quality stand ready to do what is necessary to attain a bureaucratic position. A new breed of leadership concerned only with preservation of power is, hereby, born.

As government expenditures rise, on account of a larger overall structure and scope, as



Milton Friedman

well as less effective and more corrupt policies, the administration is constantly searching for new ways to raise revenue. At this point, most governments hand down hefty rounds of taxes and tariffs. Whenever these measures have been insufficient to cover the expenditures, as Milton Friedman says, "The only other way to finance higher government spending is by increasing the quantity of money".<sup>11</sup> This move begins a downward spiral that devalues the state's currency and brings about vicious inflation. Left unchecked, this inflation can destroy monetary systems; thereby sending mankind back into a primitive state of bartering or, even worse, serfdom.

The road less traveled in terms of economic organization has been the market based economy. Often referred to as Capitalism, the free market system allows the individual to take command of their economic destiny through voluntary exchange and by providing a smaller, much simpler role for government to play in society. In *Capitalism and Freedom*, Friedman lays out the foundations of the free market with two basic requirements: "(a) that enterprises are private, so that the ultimate contracting parties are individuals and (b) that individuals are effectively free to enter or not to enter into any particular exchange, so that every transaction is strictly voluntary".<sup>12</sup> This type of arrangement minimizes government interference into the marketplace and effectively separates economic power from political power.

The economic freedom provided by the free market system creates a level playing field which producers and consumers can utilize to engage in exchanges. As a result of specialization

of function and division of labor, the consumer is protected by the fact that there are numerous producers to exchange with, and vice versa for the producers. Each individual is thereby protected by the economic options and freedoms they possess. The attempts of each individual to be productive in the market, indirectly, lead toward a more prosperous society.

Adam Smith affirms this notion in *Wealth of Nations*: "As every individual, therefore, endeavours as much as he can both to employ his capital in the support of domestic industry, and so to direct that industry that its produce may be of society as great as he can".<sup>13</sup> Smith went on to tag these indirect effects as "the invisible hand".

The government, although purposefully serving in a limited capacity, has many important roles to play. Obviously a government must provide a military to protect its citizens against external threats. To settle internal disputes, a govern-

ment must develop a justice system with consistent courts and laws to protect the individual. A consistent and effective justice system will, as Hayek says, "make it possible to foresee with fair certainty how the authority will use its coercive powers in given circumstances and to plan one's individual affairs on the basis of this knowledge".<sup>14</sup> Equipping the public with this type of foresight gives individuals confidence to make investments in the marketplace; which ultimately lead to economic growth and higher standards of living.

Perhaps the most important responsibility of the government is to provide a stable currency with which to facilitate commerce. In the absence of a stable currency, a modern free society cannot exist because there will be no funding to support





the institutions on which such a society depends upon (military, courts, banks). In her epic novel *Atlas Shrugged*, Ayn Rand, through the industrialist Francisco d' Anconia, vividly depicts the purpose of money: "Money is a tool of exchange...Money is the material shape of the principle that men who wish to deal with one another must deal by trade and give value for value...Blood, whips and guns – or dollars".<sup>15</sup> In a capitalist society, a government is limited enough to survive off of minimal taxation of its citizens. As a result, the money supply can remain steady, capital gains can be reinvested, rather than taxed, and the economy can experience sustainable growth and prosperity. This concludes our synopsis of the two types of economic organization.

Now let us turn our attention to the nature of man. In *The Virtue of Selfishness*, Ayn Rand, through her Objectivist Theory, provides, perhaps, the most comprehensive analysis of the nature of man of any offered. As the name of her theory suggests, Rand proclaims that ethics are an objective issue not to be diluted by personal feelings or desires, or "whims" as she calls them.<sup>16</sup> While grounded in the idea of objectivism, Rand's theory stands upon three principles: reason, mind, and reality.

Rand begins her explanation of the nature of man with the idea of value. She explains that value can only exist when there are alternatives available. Through John Galts speech in *Atlas Shrugged*, she explains that "The existence of inanimate matter is unconditional, the existence of life is not: it depends on a specific course of action... It is only a living organism that faces a constant alternative: the issue of life or death".<sup>17</sup> Therefore, a living entity is the only entity which can realize value.

Rand goes on to explain that each living entity has the responsibility of performing certain tasks to preserve its existence. This primarily consists of the consumption of products which will give it energy as well as the tasks required to attain those products. These tasks, of which the entity has

no choice upon, are predetermined by the nature of the entity. If an organism fails to complete these basic functions, death, or non-existence, is the result. Maintenance of life, therefore, has to be the "ultimate end" of every organism.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, as Rand says, "An organism's life is its standard of value; that which furthers its life is good, that which threatens it is evil".<sup>19</sup>

The existence of good and bad values presupposes some sort of mechanism to differentiate between the two. Simple organisms such as plants have automated mechanisms to direct them towards life sustaining actions; water, sunlight, and nutrients in the soil are, therefore, good values for a plant. However, for all conscious animals, including man, this mechanism is the sensation of pleasure, for life sustaining actions, and pain, for life threatening actions. Consequently, consciousness, for the entities which possess it, "is the basic means of survival"; and the amount of action required to maintain the survival of the entity is in accordance with the scope of that entity's consciousness.<sup>20</sup>

The animals which hold a lower level of consciousness are limited strictly to the function of instantaneous sensation. The sensation of pleasure and pain instinctively keep the animal constantly attracted to pathways (eating, resting, reproducing) which will help it thrive. This, therefore, negates any possibility that the animal could ever purposely act in a manner which would be detrimental to its own existence.<sup>21</sup> On the opposite end of the spectrum, animals with a higher level of consciousness can comprehend and retain a catalog of actions that produce pleasure and pain and, therefore, keep a conscious log of which pathways of behavior will be most beneficial to their existence. This conscious log of memories and ideas are what is referred to as "perception".<sup>22</sup> With the ability to perceive, these organisms can assimilate a "perceptual reality", as Rand calls it, which allows it to learn skill sets, such as hunting, which are beneficial to their survival. This perceptual reality will forever direct the organism down the path which

will maximize its existence and, again, prevent it from consciously acting in a manner which would be detrimental to survival.<sup>23</sup>

What separates man from every other conscious animal is the fact that man's consciousness is volitional. In other words, man has the unique ability to behave in ways which are detrimental to its survival; suicide being the most vivid example. This is made possible because of man's ability to integrate his perceptions into conceptual knowledge, which are derivatives of conceptual values.<sup>24</sup> However, this ability to develop concepts, unlike the physical sensations of pleasure and pain, is far from innate; it requires action on man's behalf. The process of conceptualizing is, here, best described by Rand:

It is an actively sustained process of identifying one's impressions in conceptual terms, of integrating every event and every observation into a conceptual context, of grasping relationships, differences, similarities, in one's perceptual material and of abstracting them into new concepts, of drawing inferences, of making deductions, of reaching conclusions, of asking new questions and discovering new answers and expanding one's knowledge in an ever-growing sum.<sup>25</sup>

This unique process is what makes it possible for man to reign supreme over the Earth. This process is called thinking, and it is directed through the faculty of reason.

At this point, the three principles upon which Objectivism stands are clearly visible. The ability to reason, by which man gains knowledge through the integration of his experiences, observations, and thoughts, is his ultimate tool of survival. Reason is provided to man through the use of his mind in a focused manner; though man also has the choice to un-focus his mind and, thereby, destroys his ability to reason. Through these faculties, man has the ability to effectively solve prob-

lems which are presented to him through the reality of his existence. The reality of his condition is something that can never be whimsically altered by will; only improved through productive thoughts and actions. In the following sentence, Rand sums up the nature of man through her Objectivist theory: "The Objectivist ethics holds man's life as the standard of value – and his own life as the ethical purpose of every individual man".<sup>26</sup>

At this point in our investigation, it has become evident that the free market is the only form of economic organization that is compatible with the nature of man. As man's nature dictates that his highest purpose is to perpetuate the existence of his own life, capitalism is the only system which provides man the freedom to fully utilize his most potent tool for survival: his mind. Furthermore, if man is provided with the opportunity to fully use his focused mental faculties, his reasoning and logic will undoubtedly lead him towards the economic order which has, throughout history, a proven track record of creating growth and prosperity: capitalism. However, before we look ahead for a future economic course, perhaps it would be beneficial to, first, take a glance into the past. As the United State of America has now, in its youth, become one of the greatest civilizations to ever exist, with regards to economic growth and prosperity, perhaps we should look, briefly, to one of the world's former superpowers, Rome, for some guidance and clarity on how to, or not, chart our future course.

As the sun set on the Roman Republic and began to rise on the Roman Empire, the glorious days of free enterprise would be numbered despite the fact that the empire's first emperor, Augustus, heavily favored the free market system. Upon taking the throne, Augustus implemented a number of policies geared towards enhancing the free market system. These policies included eliminating the corrupt and oppressive tax farming system and replacing it with a more fair and predictable flat tax on individuals with a low rate, slashing entitle-

ments, and investing in harbors and roadways to facilitate trade and communication.<sup>27</sup> However, despite the efforts of Augustus, the policies of his predecessors and followers to the throne would seal the Roman fate.

Spending by the Roman government became an enormous burden for the empire to bear. By and large, the bureaucracy (which consisted of government officials and military personnel), and grain entitlements were the two areas which required the bulk of the spending. During the time of the Roman Empire, Rome's huge amounts of territories were constantly under siege, thus necessitating a large and mobilized army. Furthermore, as Bruce Bartlett says, "it was now explicitly understood by everyone that the emperor's power and position depended entirely upon the support of the army".<sup>28</sup> This meant that the army's needs and wants were top priority, regardless of the costs. This passage from one of Augustus' ancient writings detail how burdensome these costs could be:

To acquire lands for soldier-colonies I paid 600,000,000 sesterces (thirty million dollars) for Italian farms and 260,000,000 sesterces for land in the provinces...and to soldiers whom I sent back to their native cities I gave gratuities amounting to 400,000,000 sesterces etc.<sup>29</sup>

Even more telling was the fact that, later, during the reign of Diocletian, half of the adult men of the empire were on the government payroll.<sup>30</sup> Clearly, the bureaucracy was expanding out of control.

Beginning with Gaius Gracchus in 123 B.C., the Roman government began subsidizing grain to its citizens by selling them monthly rations at a fixed rate.<sup>31</sup> Initially, this policy was implemented to stabilize the price of corn as it had

become erratic from seasonal fluctuations.<sup>32</sup> However, as most government programs do, this program only got larger. In 58 B.C., Clodius altered the policy to make the grain distributions free.<sup>33</sup> This resulted in an influx of farmers and freed slaves into the city to become government dependents. By the time of Augustus, around 320,000 Roman citizens were receiving free grain from the government, although he would slash this number to 200,000. However, in 274 A.D., Aurelian would yet again alter this policy by making entitlements hereditary and to, instead, distribute baked bread along with salt, pork, and olive oil; even entertainment, at this point, was provided by the government (Reed). The rug-

ged individualism that existed during the Roman Republic was now a thing of the past.

As the Roman government's demand for revenue increased, the policies they devised to raise the funds became more and more unscrupulous. Obviously, heavy-handed taxation and tariffs were handed down. As these policies lost their effectiveness because of rising debt and inflation, government stooped to more devious methods that included trumping up charges on the wealthy in order to confiscate their properties and demanding tributes to be paid from the provinces for petty reasons (Bartlett). Then, beginning with the Em-



Gaius Julius Ceasar Augustus

peror Nero (54-68 A.D), the state began a series of currency devaluations in an attempt to boost revenues. Initially, Nero reduced the silver content in the denarius to 90 percent (Bartlett).<sup>34</sup> However, Nero's successors would follow this precedent of currency debasement. By the year 268 A.D., the denarius would contain only .02 percent silver and lethal bouts with inflation would devastate the region.<sup>35</sup> As a result, the people of Rome began to hoard the old currency while paying taxes with the new currency, effectively further reducing the states revenues. A series of wage and price controls would, thereafter, be implemented. However, there would be no stopping the downward spiral of the once great Roman Empire.

One last major attempt would be made to salvage the Roman economy by the Emperor Diocletian. Upon assuming the throne, Diocletian was faced with a worthless currency, skyrocketing prices and wages, and a population in a desperate state of panic. By this time, says Tenny Frank:

...there was little evidence in the people of the old-time vigor, the spirit of independence and self-reliance, the capacity to meet new situations, the mental alertness, the refusal to accept defeat that once had characterized the Romans.<sup>36</sup>

Diocletian took action with the oppressive and infamous "Edict of 301". This law would design a stringent set of wage and price controls which were enforceable by death. In addition, the tax system was re-organized to directly requisition products required by the state, instead of collecting the worthless currency, from individuals who were to be forbidden from changing occupations or locations; also punishable by death.<sup>37</sup> The state now controlled all production and the citizens were merely serfs. The Edict would be a complete failure and repealed after Diocletian's resignation. The Roman economy would never recover and the Empire would collapse a little over a century later. These events can be properly summed up

with Kershner's First Law: "When a self-governing people confer upon their government the power to take from some and give to others, the process will not stop until the last bone of the last taxpayer is picked bare".<sup>38</sup>

Although there were also social and political factors that contributed to the downfall of the Roman Empire, the atrocious economic decisions made by the leaders played an overwhelming role. Over a long period of time these policies eroded away the foundation of individualism and free enterprise that made the Empire possible to begin with. If there is one lesson that we should take away from the story of the Romans, it is that all great civilizations, the United States included, are capable of destroying themselves. Today, in America, we as a people, armed with the political and economic freedoms necessary for such a task, still have the opportunity to preserve our free market heritage and our individual freedoms. To do so we must embrace and improve upon the system that has created so much for so many: Capitalism.

Every citizen of the United States, as the primary participants in the free-market system, has the power to improve upon our capitalist system. This is possible because we, as the owners of the various private enterprises, create the moral fabric of the business community. This is extremely important because, historically, government regulations have been reactionary policies which are implemented on moral grounds to protect the rights of consumers from harmful practices. This has been evident in recent times with the passing of regulations on the healthcare, financial, and oil industries. Immoral actions on the part of a handful of individuals, such as Bernie Madoff for example, can result in the regulation of an entire industry.<sup>39</sup> To combat this phenomenon, the promotion and practice of ethical business practices are essential in the realm of the business community. Practiced collectively, we can keep the governments regulatory targets off of the business community and shorten the gap between Wall Street and Main Street.

As a nation, we must also come to the realization that we simply cannot afford to take care of every individual citizen. The American welfare system is largely inefficient and very disruptive to our free market system. Our public housing units often create troubled neighborhoods and ballooning healthcare costs are driving up the deficit via Medicare/Medicaid. Furthermore, an extensive and paternal type of welfare system eradicates the rugged individualism that makes Americans unique and transforms them into unproductive wards of the state. This is not to say that we should abandon our attempts to alleviate poverty. However, we must ensure that the effectiveness of every dollar that we spend on this cause is maximized and that the interference to the marketplace is minimized. For this, I would prescribe Milton Friedman's idea, as presented in *Capitalism and Freedom*, of using a "negative income tax" to "set a floor" for individual income.<sup>40</sup> This would provide those enduring poverty with the assistance they need while forcing them to be responsible for making crucial decisions.

In the two-hundred and twenty years since the ratification of the Bill of Rights, American citizens have been able to enjoy the legal protection of their natural rights and liberties. In order to properly secure our economic rights and cement the manner in which we allocate resources amongst our people, I propose an Economic Bill of Rights. This bill would stand on three pillars; the first of which is free trade. The free trade amendment would effectively limit the powers of the government to impose regulations upon industries or interfere with free trade in any manner, domestic or international.

The second pillar of the bill would be low government spending. In the past, Congress has

attempted to cap federal spending with legislation that includes the 1985 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act and the 1990 Budget Enforcement Act.<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, these caps failed because Congress would always find a way to get around the rules with exemptions and emergency spending. With this in mind, I would forgo the implementation of more spending caps and instead recommend heavy budget cuts to the American military empire and entitlement programs. These cuts would need to reduce federal spending from its current level, which is nearly 25 percent of GDP in 2011, down to at least 21 percent of GDP, which is slightly above the forty year average.<sup>42</sup> It may also be beneficial to pair this amendment with another that requires Congress to balance the budget. The final pillar is a stable currency. This amendment would basically tether the money supply to economic production and growth and, thereby, prevent government officials from devaluing or manipulating the currency valuation.

The United States is not immune to the fate that awaited Rome and the other nations that have implemented collectivist policies. However, with the near toxic political environment that currently exists in Washington, it would be quite a task to pass such a bill such as the one just proposed. Yet it is hard to imagine that the passing of an Economic Bill of Rights would be more difficult than the passing the original Bill of Rights. The founding fathers of this country used reason and logic to convince the nation of the benefits of Federalist system. As believers in economic freedom, we must follow the same path to convince our fellow citizens of the benefits that will derive from the preservation and enhancement of the free market system. History has shown what awaits us if we are to fail this mission: non-existence.

*Every citizen of the United States, as the primary participants in the free market system, has the power to improve upon our capitalist system.*

ENDNOTES

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Untitled by Dr. Suzanne T. Mabrouk

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## Icarus Floundering: An Ethical Response to Inequity

*Franklin McGuire, Jr.*



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### Abstract

*What is the proper response to the inequities we see all around us, especially in the developing world? Do we have a responsibility to directly intervene to alleviate suffering if we know that suffering is occurring? This essay tackles these questions and others as it explores the ethics of aid. By relating some of the author's experiences last year in Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda, this essay hopes to challenge and inspire readers to reevaluate their understanding of ethics and rethink their approach to aid. While everyone's response to international challenges and crises will be unique, a proper ethical framework ultimately refuses to accept a sidelined status quo, choosing instead to act with both pragmatic wisdom and compassionate urgency.*

*"To know what is right and not do it is the worst cowardice."*

—Confucius

*At first I had tried to avoid stepping on the hymn books. It didn't seem right to walk on those words, to tread on songs sung just hours, days before. But by the time I had already walked through the debris of two or three burned-out churches in Nigeria last summer, I had grown numb to the charred song books and Bibles strewn across the ground beneath me. Instead my boots would push through the rubble, forcing me to survey the all-too-common scene before me. Against the sides of buildings, twisted heaps whose mangled steering wheels and melted tires betrayed their suicidal purpose. Angled, charred beams and collapsed roofs and shoes. Everywhere shoes, large and small. Smoke, sometimes — and always dust. Heat. Inside and outside me. White plastic chairs, some melted; red artificial flowers fallen from their places on overturned altars offering brilliant hints of color through the ash. And always a sadness — a heaviness — a confusion. My small home town was thousands of miles away in Middle America. I had seen pictures of these things before, but had never seen these things, smelled these smells. Why were people killing each other here and why was I there? Was I supposed to do something; was I even able to do something? Unsure of the answers, I left my journal in my backpack that night.*

I spent over half my last summer in Africa. Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda showed me aspects of my world and myself I hadn't seen before and prompted deep questions I feel I am still answering. I struggled then and I still struggle now to put the experiences into words. From my perspective today, though, I see it as a collision point in my life and a conversion point in my mind for myself, my ambitions, my convictions, and my ethics. The experience forced me, above all else, to reexamine my ethics and re-explore my hopes for my life as I sought to discover my role in what I had seen.



An undergraduate student from a small town in suburban America, I had never left the United States until a few years ago and had never been to Africa until last June, when I landed in Nigeria for the first time. I was with a small team of humanitarian workers from a British NGO (non-governmental organization) and our mission was to investigate the ongoing religious violence in Nigeria's Middle Belt region — the area between the nation's predominantly Muslim north and largely Christian south. I had been studying the conflict for some months already in my role as a volunteer analyst at the NGO's office in London, but nothing I could read in a newspaper or summarize in a briefing could have prepared me for the actual situation on the ground. I met people whose friends and family had been slaughtered just days and weeks before, people who had been tortured with machetes, people who had seen their homes broken into, their livelihoods de-

stroyed, their wives raped, and their children beaten. It was sadness, pain, and evil on a level I had never before experienced.

I saw a different kind of pain when I finally left Nigeria and went to South Africa for the next chapter of my work. In Cape Town I discovered a place much more like the London I had left, or so I initially thought. *This must be a modern city of progress*, I remember reflecting with some relief as I sipped a chilled drink and looked out on Table Mountain and the city bowl while descending toward Cape Town International Airport.

My initial perceptions were almost immediately challenged, however, on the bus ride from the airport when I passed through Khayelitsha, a huge collection of tin, boards, and riotous color I was told was called a "township," home to nearly half a million people in less than twenty square miles. The rest of my time in Cape Town further revealed to me a city of strange contradic-

*I met people whose friends and family had been slaughtered just days and weeks before...*



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tions, extremes, and inequities — I would spend my afternoons witnessing severe pain, loss, and sorrow at the city’s innumerable AIDS orphanages before heading downtown in the evenings for dinner with friends in Camps Bay, one of the most affluent areas of the world I had ever seen. Just as the religious violence and death I had witnessed in Nigeria had done, these images and experiences confused and challenged me.

I spent the final leg of my time in Africa in Uganda, one of the most beautiful countries I have ever visited. There I focused on the fields of education and health, spending time volunteering in a rural health clinic and touring numerous schools of various kinds. The greatest challenge I saw there was not religious violence, as in Nigeria, nor extreme economic inequity, as in South Africa, but a lack of access to effective resources for a majority of the population. The medical clinic in which I worked has brought some relief to its area, but before an American NGO built it, the only medical facility available to the town’s residents was the local government clinic which is overcrowded and filthy. Effective schooling is also a difficulty in many areas — I met so many bright, intelligent, motivated people my age who felt unable to advance in society because of their lack of access to education.

Meeting people my own age and comparing their opportunities to mine was one of the most humbling things I experienced while I traveled. Repetitive exposure to such groups from country to country, place to place, and day to day over the summer was, at first, merely interesting from a cerebral level. That offhand interest gradually took root, however, and grew into a more serious concern. That concern, in turn, ultimately morphed into a question — a single deep, overriding question that gradually consumed me, a question that demanded consideration every time

I touched another battered door on a shattered church, or looked into the eyes of a speechless child suffering from malaria or orphaned by AIDS, or walked through a school filled with children in shabby-but-kept-as-clean-as-possible uniforms doing their best to wrestle a good education out of the incredibly little available to them... That fundamental, deeply-personal question would not go away, and still remains: *Knowing what I now know, what should I do?*

That question, of course, encompassed other questions and gave rise to other concerns. *Do these people even need my help?* I constantly wondered. Was my concern legitimate, or was I applying unrealistic American norms to fundamentally different cultures in a poor show of cultural sensitivity? *Can I even accomplish anything at my age? For whom am I responsible and to whom am I beholden?* Am I responsible for what I’ve now seen? These questions and experiences challenged my understanding of both myself and my world and forced me to reexamine my ethics. Beyond just myself, however, I believe these are fundamentally important questions for us all to ask ourselves in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. In a world such as ours today,

what is our proper personal response to the extreme suffering and inequity we see in places like Africa? What is the right thing to do? What is the ethical response?

In asking these questions we begin to immerse ourselves in the delicate, difficult issue of aid ethics. Generally speaking, the question is one of whether it is better to help the apparently “less fortunate” of our world because of their needs and our supposed ability to fulfill at least some of them, or if it is better to refrain from such altruism out of a concern that our (often culturally-insensitive) efforts will hurt and hinder more than they will help. This is, of course, an

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especially important question for governments in their foreign aid considerations, although for our purposes here I am most fundamentally concerned with our individual personal responses as unique moral agents to the inequities and lack of opportunities we see with so many people in places like Africa.

I believe that a proper view recognizes the unique difficulties involved in aid ethics, but I also believe that, despite its challenges, few subjects could be more ethically important in today's world. In the Foreword to *An Ethical Compass: Coming of Age in the 21st Century*, Thomas Friedman explores the increasing interconnectedness and interdependency of today's world: "The more connected we are, the more ethics and ethical leadership matter, because a moral breakdown in one country, region, market, or institution can affect so many others so much more easily and so much more profoundly."<sup>1</sup> Africa's current explosion in growth will only make it even more closely connected with both the United States and the rest of the world over the next few years, making ethical leadership from both within and without the continent more important than ever.

Last year, in order to better understand the current progress and future direction of Africa and its constituent nations, McKinsey & Company conducted an exhaustive study of the continent. Its findings asserted that "Africa's long-term prospects are strong, because both internal and external trends are propelling its growth."<sup>2</sup> McKinsey & Co's report on the study in the *Harvard Business Review* cites a decline in major armed conflicts, an expansion of government-sponsored market-friendly policies, and the continued revenue stream provided by Africa's abundant natural resources as reasons to assume Africa will continue to grow in global strategic importance.

While these findings support the importance of "the question" — in that they lend additional urgency and utility to an exploration of how we are to respond to aid ethics — they do not, notably, *answer* the question. Africa's growth has not made it immune to the concerns of past years and decades: even the optimistic study from McKinsey takes care to emphasize that, in Africa, "the infrastructure is still poor; talent is scarce; and poverty, famine, and disease afflict many nations."<sup>3</sup> We must accept that, while Africa's challenges are

not going to disappear overnight, its interconnectedness and interdependency with the rest of the world *has* exploded overnight, making these concerns and our responses to them even more public and even more important.

What then — to get back to the initial question that haunted me all summer — is the proper, ethical response to this matter of aid ethics? Concerning ethics, Wittgenstein and Moore, and W. D. Ross, have termed the ethical action the one which is based on “the general enquiry into what is good” and the one with the best “tendency...to promote general good,” respectively.<sup>4,5</sup> Building on this theme of ethics concerning itself with the good action as the right action, British philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe brings in the idea of justice by further asserting “that a good man is a just man.”<sup>6</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. also operated, it seems, under a belief that ethics and goodness and justice were fundamentally bound together. In his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” he warns, “We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people.”<sup>7</sup> The silence of the good people, conscious or not, upheld injustice and allowed it to perpetuate, making it unethical.

Rushworth M. Kidder, founder of the Institute for Global Ethics, addresses the ethical failure of “appalling silence” in his book, *How Good People Make Tough Choices*. Here he refers to Flemish painter Pieter Brueghel the Elder’s work, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* and Auden’s reflections on it in his “Musée des Beaux Arts.” In this poem, Auden discusses the visual depiction of the ancient story of Icarus and his wings of wax:

In Brueghel’s Icarus, for instance: how  
 everything turns away  
 Quite leisurely from the disaster; the  
 ploughman may  
 Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,  
 But for him it was not an important fail

ure; the sun shone  
 As it had to on the white legs disappearing  
 into the green  
 Water; and the expensive delicate ship that  
 must have seen  
 Something amazing, a boy falling out of  
 the sky,  
 Had somewhere to get to and sailed  
 calmly on.<sup>8</sup>

This is the failure of appalling silence — of witnessing great need and having the ability to do something about it, as the ship in Auden’s poem does, but refusing to act, refusing to break the status quo.

Insofar as ethics is concerned with justice, and justice is intimately bound up with fairness and equality of opportunity, then the ethical action will be the action that best advances fairness and increases equality of opportunity. This is the principle from which we get our moral imperative to act. What I saw in Africa defined injustice for me, as I have hinted already. The economic side of all I witnessed was most unjust of all. The young people with no opportunity for advanced education, the parents and grandparents stuck in subsistence economies, and the villages, cities, and even nations completely unable to climb the ladder of opportunity — this is the essence of a system crippled by injustice. Add religious and racial violence and massive healthcare challenges and inequities and the system becomes even more difficult; escape becomes even more hopeless. And it’s not a clinical academic issue anymore. For me, childhood malaria is not a sterile statistic of a certain number of children dying every minute from a preventable disease — it’s Moses, six years old and shivering on a hard cot in a rural clinic in northern Nigeria; did he make it through that night? Unemployment isn’t a battery of statistics on a speechless page — it’s Samkelo, who pumped my gas in Cape Town, glad for a job but fearful for his unemployed and uneducated brothers in Khayelitsha. And global educational inequities aren’t something to discuss

in a philosophy class — they're the realities I saw painted across countless faces in the schools I visited in Uganda, schools with libraries with no books and infirmaries with no supplies and dormitories with no safe water. This is inequity to me, and the injustice is the growing advantage Africa and its people and resources offer the world, but the lack of meaningful aid and assistance we offer back. I — we — are watching Icarus fall, but what will we do about it? The first step must be to accept our responsibility to step out of our status quo and do something. It is the only option, ethically speaking, since a key part of ethics is doing good by spreading justice to places and people trapped in unjust systems.

Once we come to this conclusion that our knowledge of injustice does ethically obligate us to take some action against it, though, the next great question becomes one of pragmatics — *what exactly am I to do?* This question and its answer are just as important as the question which prompted us to involve ourselves in the first place. In other words, *how* we involve ourselves is just as important as *that* we involve ourselves.

The answer to this question lies in an ancient concept from the field of virtue ethics known as phronesis. *Phronesis* is the concept of a practical or moral wisdom that deeply informs a moral agent's ethical decisions and actions. An advanced understanding of phronesis, formed through a lifetime of personal experience and learning, is what separates an ethical adolescent from an ethical elder and connects good intentions with practical results. Both the adolescent and the elder act within an ethical system, but the older agent's system will

be more practically informed, helping her make better decisions.

Our own actions in any foreign culture like Africa must be informed by phronesis. This is the great qualifying element to the conviction that we must do *something*, and is thus the redeeming input that practically shows us just *what* we must do. Phronesis keeps us from a reactionary “ready-fire-aim” attitude toward aid that says any and all aid is good. An ethical approach to aid informed by phronesis rather seeks education first as it tries to

understand a people and their particular hopes, dreams, fears, and challenges. NGO research and policy recommendations gave me plenty of ideas about what needed to be done and what could potentially be done before I arrived in Africa, but until I had visited the villages and the townships and the cities I could never have understood the human and cultural element of the constituencies I and others were trying to help. By seeking to learn before we act and basing our actions on what we learn about a people and a culture, we can rescue our aid — personally and institutionally — from becoming

mere trinkets and hand-outs we offer wrongly, albeit sincerely. Phronesis shows us how to connect conviction with action, keeping our ethical system robust and effective.

For my own part, I see my experiences in Africa last summer as largely educational. Yes, I did act and try to help where I could, but I tried to actively resist adopting reactionary attitudes to the people I met and the things I saw. I wanted to learn, because I knew it would not be my last time in Africa, and I wanted to be ready for the next time, ready to come back and offer real assistance.



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I haven't waited for the second trip, however, to begin connecting my convictions with actions in my response to the ethics of aid. When I returned to The Citadel in August, I enlisted the help of several professors and administrators, working with them to raise \$45,000 to start a new annual program, the Honors Experiential Leadership Program (HELP). This program will expose eight other cadets to lecture-based teaching from eminent scholars and humanitarians this spring in addition to involving them in independent research projects focused on various facets of Africa and its opportunities and challenges. The program will culminate in a two-week capstone trip to Uganda where we will work in a sustainably-modeled Ugandan health clinic while further researching our independent projects. My own project will focus on social entrepreneurship as I seek to start a new social enterprise in Uganda with a local friend from my last visit there, Mustafa. The entire experience — which marks the first trip to Africa for each of the other eight students in the program — will be focused on the very questions I could not escape last summer as we seek to embrace our role of extending ethical aid and assistance by expanding justice and opportunity in a system constantly guided and informed by phronesis. Indeed, I consider the HELP program to be the opening salvo in a larger campaign to raise awareness and fight injustice in one of the world's most promising but troubled places.

My answer to the questions seared into my memory by Moses, Samkelo, Mustafa, and countless others does not end with HELP. This new program is just a beginning, an opportunity to develop additional phronesis, and an initial response to my answers to those questions — *What must I do? What can I do? Is my help even needed? Am I responsible for what I've now seen?* I am choosing to run away from my status quo and jump into the water to swim toward Icarus because I do believe my help is needed, valuable, and required. I will not be one of the "good people" who live in "appall-

ing silence." Indeed, as long as there remains in the world mindless inequity of which I am intimately acquainted, I cannot just stand by and watch and still maintain my ethical integrity. None of us can. Of course, our responses will all look different, but the important thing is that we do respond, that we follow our ethically-defined convictions with phronesis-led action for the purposes of advancing good and advancing justice across the world. "To know what is right and not do it is the worst cowardice." Icarus is floundering — will you jump in with me?

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, forward to *An Ethical Compass: Coming of Age in the 21st Century: The Ethics Prize of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), Kindle edition.

<sup>2</sup> Mutsa Chironga, Acha Leke, Arend van Wamelen, and Susan Lund, "The Globe: Cracking the Next Growth Market: Africa," *Harvard Business Review*, May 2011, accessed December 1, 2012, <http://hbr.org/2011/05/the-globe-cracking-the-next-growth-market-africa/ar/1>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, "A Lecture On Ethics," in *Ethics: Selections from Classical and Contemporary Writers*, ed. Oliver A. Johnson (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1989), 347.

<sup>5</sup> W. D. Ross, "The Right and the Good," in *Ethics: Selections from Classical and Contemporary Writers*, ed. Oliver A. Johnson (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1989), 370.

<sup>6</sup> G.E.M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33, No. 124 (January 1958).

<sup>7</sup> Richard Stearns, *The Hole In Our Gospel* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 190.

<sup>8</sup> Rushworth M. Kidder, *How Good People Make Tough Choices: Resolving the Dilemmas of Ethical Living* (New York: Harper, 2003), 103.



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