

April 2025

VOLUME XVI, ISSUE IV

PEGASUS

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CAUX ROUND TABLE FOR MORAL CAPITALISM
NETWORK LOOKING AT BUSINESS ABOVE THE CLUTTER AND CONFETTI



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Introduction

In the April edition of *Pegasus*, we tackle vital issues from friendship to justice. As has been a recent theme, our essays are focused on mending the brokenness we see in various parts of our culture, with an emphasis on our own responsibilities as citizens. All of this flows from the Caux Round Table's arguments in favor of moral capitalism.

In the opening essay, Steve Young, global executive director, seeks a different path to tackle the challenges of racism and discrimination. In his essay, "Friendship: The Better Way Forward to Disenfranchise Racism and other Invidious Discriminations," Steve makes the case that the approaches of "woke" and "DEI" have been found wanting, sometimes blowing with the wind. To that end, he notes how many companies have abandoned DEI. That shift in course hardly means racism and discrimination have scurried to another province, but many find the DEI and woke approach wanting and ineffective, building more barriers than respect and connections.

Steve leans into the concept of friendship, as articulated by Aristotle and Cicero, as an alternate path. Instead of focusing on differences, why not focus on friendship? "Why not train for friendship? Starting in pre-school?" He asks. Underscoring his point, he notes that Aristotle saw friendship not just about play, but a "virtue shaping the soul's relationship with reality." It is a requirement for moral living within a robust society. "Friendship seems to be the bond that hold communities together," according to Aristotle.

Along with his calls for a renewed examination of friendship, Steve argues that we also must be much more reflective about our own actions as we seek solutions to racism and discrimination. To that end, he offers helpful guidance about how to engage in creative reflective thinking.

Friendship helps build trust. In his essay, "Justice Through Enlightenment and Trust: Sustaining Moral Markets and Governance," Michael Hartoonian, associate editor, argues that enlightenment is vital to trust and justice. "Enlightenment means expressing your own ideas, *but* those ideas must be rooted in long and rightful habits and most of all, in human wisdom. Without wisdom, action and agency becomes directionless."

Along with the importance of being a thoughtful and contributing citizen, the pursuit of justice is of paramount importance to societies that strive for a moral approach to life, capitalism and friendship. "The search for justice is a complex problem that needs the attention of all people who would lead sustaining lives of harmony and meaning."

We hope you enjoy this month's essays. And as ever, we welcome your feedback.

Dave Kansas
Editor-at-Large
Pegasus



Friendship: The Better Way Forward to Disenfranchise Racism and other Invidious Discriminations

Stephen B. Young

What divides us? What unifies us? What builds social capital? What destroys social capital?

Shakespeare spoke to these questions in his tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet*:

*O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name.
Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy:
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand nor foot
Nor arm nor face nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O be some other name.
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;*

In January 1981, I was in a gathering of new Hmong refugees who had just come from a camp in tropical Thailand to St. Paul, Minnesota, in time for snow and freezing weather. The center of attention in the small house – its living room packed with standing clan elders – was General Vang Pao, the accomplished and charismatic Hmong leader. I sensed unease in the group. I asked my host, Ly Teng, “Are they worried?” He replied: “Yes, very worried. If General VP should die, what will happen to them?”

I realized they had no knowledge of American history and so of the successful assimilations of immigrants from many cultures into an “American” setting. As the only American there and as a friend of General VP, I thought I should speak up. General VP gave me the floor.

I started by saying that, yes, General VP will die; that you and I will die. The issue before us is not death, but how we use the time given to us. Here is how the Hmong will succeed in America. You can learn from the experiences of others – Irish, Italians, Germans, Chinese, Japanese, Mexicans. I went on a bit, then decided to make predictions as to what will happen to their children and grandchildren. I stressed that education and work will bring success and wealth to the younger generations and pride to their parents and grandparents.

But then I added a very sensitive ethnic point – out-marriage. A few of their children, but many of their grandchildren, will not marry Hmong and will bring new cultures into Hmong homes. I even said: “Some of your grandchildren may even marry Vietnamese.” They were shocked and very obviously dismayed at such a prospect – finding refuge in America at the risk of losing ethnic solidarity?
Capulets don’t marry Montagues.

(By the way, my wife is Vietnamese.)

When an undergraduate at Harvard College, I audited Professor Erik Erikson’s class on human psychology – how we get to be who we are. Then, he was presenting his new concept of *pseudospeciation*, the proclivity of human persons to imagine other homo sapiens as actually belonging to a different species and so not in communion with ourselves. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pseudospeciation>)

Finding differences, I guess, is as old as humanity – my truth, your truth; my gender, your gender; my family, your family; my tribe, your tribe; my race, your race; my culture, your culture; my religion, your religion; my nation, your nation.

Russian, not Ukrainian;
Palestinian, not Jew; mainland
Chinese, not Taiwanese;
proletarian, not bourgeois;
Athenian, not Spartan; Greek,
not Persian; Roman, not
Carthaginian; Jew, not Philistine.



Over the last 5 years in the U.S., efforts – I think quite well-intentioned – have been made to “overcome” the different forms of *pseudospeciation* involving “white” people and “black” people or “African Americans” and “peoples of color” other than white under the name of

becoming “woke.” There has been a powerful cultural movement calling on those with racial “privilege” to step up and own our overt or unconscious biases, prejudgments that distance ourselves from or demean others due to their alleged or assumed “*pseudospeciation*.”

The effort at making a virtue out of diversity and inclusion was expanded to encompass modes of gender and sexuality, where “toxic masculinity” was to be overcome as a component of Americanism and gender fluidity celebrated.

The anthropological assumptions used to legitimate critical theory hold that norms are created and imposed to further the views and interests of power elites as institutionalized cultural hegemony sustaining economic and political inequalities. Therefore, those of races so denounced as “privileged” or with achievements higher than the median were required to undergo some version of introspection and thought reform. They were expected to separate themselves from undesirable traits, feelings and understandings and become “new” and “better” persons capable of empathy and welcoming all to the table of agenda-setting and decision-making.

The effort to instill and enforce respect for others and give them preferences in participatory entitlements was titled “diversity, equity and inclusion” or DEI for short.

But whatever the good intentions – “the road to hell is paved with good intentions” – woke and DEI were divisive in their impacts and immoral in their applications. As Immanuel Kant argued: “Human persons are ends in and of themselves, not means to be used to achieve the ends of others.”

Consider this set of facts:

An example recently in the news on DEI racial discriminations cited internal quality assessments from the decision-making process at the Harvard Law Review.

Internal communications made public reveal how DEI racial discrimination determined publication outcomes for professional reputations of law professors at the Harvard Law Review, a journal managed by students at Harvard Law School. The Law Review’s decision-making process to publish or not to publish an article, as a matter of policy, considers “both substantive and DEI factors.”

“This author is not from an underrepresented background,” an editor wrote in the “negatives” section of an assessment of the quality of an article submitted for publication. The piece, which concerned criminal procedure and police reform, did not make it into the issue.

Seven assessment memos argued that an author’s minority status counted in favor of publishing their article. “The author is a woman of color,” read one 2024 assessment review. “This meets a lot of our priorities!” Another memo, from 2022, said that one “pro” of an

otherwise weak article was that it had been “written by a woman of color outside of the T14,” a reference to the top 14 law schools that dominate legal scholarship.

Still another recommended a piece on the grounds that it would “help advance [the] career” of a “young academic of color on an upward trajectory at UVA.”

One 2024 spreadsheet stated that Shirin Sinnar, a professor at Stanford Law School, would be “the first hijabi, Muslim woman to write the foreword.” Other scholars got points for being “one of few Latino professors in this space” or, in the case of critical race theorist Mari Matsuda, “the first tenured female Asian American law professor in the U.S.”



But what are we to make of the fact that between 1995 and 2018, the data show, nearly every author chosen to write the forward to the Review’s annual issue on U.S. Supreme Court opinions – a very prestigious and career-enhancing assignment – was white. Since 2018, only one white author has been chosen to write a foreword, arguably the most prestigious honor in legal academia. The rest – with the exception of Jamal Greene, who is black – have been minority women.

Every action has its consequences – for better or worse.

Advocates rarely consult journals like the Harvard Law Review, said O.H. Skinner, Arizona’s former solicitor general, because the journal’s obsession with DEI has led to “ever more ridiculous levels of academic myopia” and pushed the most pressing legal questions to the side.

For the Caux Round Table, the germane question thus became: should wokeness and DEI be integrated into the practices of moral capitalism?

On Christmas Day 2020, I wrote a first draft of a commentary for the Caux Round Table. My considered answer then was that, no, wokeness cannot be aligned with moral capitalism. One of the carols I had been listening to that day asserts: “God today has poor folk raised and cast adown the proud.”

I then circulated a commentary, saying in part:

Wokeness is a prideful, moralizing narrative about good and evil. Like many narratives, first and foremost it serves the interests of the narrator. In a sense, it hews to that peculiar American Calvinist tradition of the Jeremiad – prophetic voices predicting doom for sinners and salvations for true believers. As in the Old Testament, revered by early Calvinists, prophets are tellers of narratives. They spin a story of walking in God’s ways and never straying from his purposes, with woe to befall all those who fall short of his righteous demands.

Just so did columnist Gerard Baker in Monday’s Wall Street Journal put wokeness into historical perspective: “Astute historians have observed that the wars of religion that seemed to define pre-Enlightenment history never really went away. The religions just got new labels. Secular ideologies that supplanted the old confessions seized the mind with the same sense of spiritual mission. The loyalties they demanded were more divisive and even more destructive than anything organized religion ever managed. In the 19th century, it was nationalism. In the 20th, communism and fascism. In the 21st, woke cultural nihilism is the dominant confession and a fanatical one.”

Narratives are of the same genre of human cultural production as parables, fairy tales, myths, fictions, tall-tales and fables. Many narratives rely upon invented characters to carry a story line. Narratives are most often shaped by our imaginations, even by our dreams and other unconscious simulations of reality. They often creatively draw upon our emotions, fears, resentments, aspirations, love and compassion, insights, speculations, hopes and irrational calculations.



The telling of a tale provides no basis for our estimating its truth value. It might be true, but then again, it might not. Narrators need to be assessed for their meeting a burden of proof before their tale can be taken seriously as fact and its moral content as legitimate.

Two years later, I wrote a second commentary rejecting DEI’s claim to advancing social justice. said:

This essay proposes a post-modernist deconstruction of the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) discourse regime as a malign roadblock hindering access to justice. The essay points out tension between social justice and justice for individuals. What some seek as “social” justice, the past white supremacist advocates for slavery, can be discriminatory and harmful to individuals. Systems discourse can easily marginalize the claims of individuals for justice.

Executive summary:

- *DEI discriminations do not square with the morality of equity.*
- *DEI discriminations are racist along the lines of German national socialist privileging of some volksgemeinschafts over others.*
- *DEI discriminations marginalize the moral dignity of individuals.*
- *What rests on racism and intolerance of some can never be just.*
- *DEI policies conflict with the Caux Round Table Principles for Government.*
- *DEI lacks moral credibility as proposed by Aristotle, Jesus, Aquinas, Adam Smith, Confucius and the Buddha.*

In 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court, in the case of *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, decided that racial preferences in university admissions are unconstitutional.

In 2024, a number of prominent companies scaled back or removed their diversity, equity and inclusion programs, citing legal concerns, shifting priorities or external pressure. Companies like Lowe's, Walmart and Boeing were among those that rolled back DEI policies. Other companies that made changes include PepsiCo, GM, Google, Disney, GE, Intel, PayPal, Chipotle and Comcast. Additionally, Home Depot dropped diversity language from its annual report.

Later, the following American firms abandoned their support for DEI:

- Meta: Ended major DEI programs, citing legal and policy changes, according to an internal memo obtained by Axios.
- McDonald's: Scaled back its DEI programs, citing the legal environment and the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action.
- Ford: Scaled back DEI initiatives, according to the HR Grapevine.
- Target: Ended its DEI initiatives, according to the Reno Gazette Journal.
- Amazon: Halting some DEI programs, according to an internal memo.
- Goldman Sachs: Scaling back DEI efforts, both in terms of public mentions and internal programs.
- PepsiCo: Ending some of its DEI initiatives.
- Google: Scrapping some DEI hiring targets, according to AL.com.
- Walmart: Ceasing several DEI initiatives, including racial equity training programs and funding for Pride Month.
- Lowe's: Scrapping some DEI policies, citing the legal environment.

- Citigroup: Will end goals related to hiring a diverse workforce, according to Bloomberg.
- Brown-Forman: No longer tying executive compensation to DEI progress and removed workforce and supplier diversity goals

On January 20, 2025, the day of his inauguration as President of the United State, Donald Trump signed Executive Order 13985 that:

The Director of the Office of Management and Budget, assisted by the Attorney General and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, shall coordinate the termination of all discriminatory programs, including illegal DEI and “diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility” (DEIA) mandates, policies, programs, preferences and activities in the Federal Government, under whatever name they appear. ... Federal employment practices, including Federal employee performance reviews, shall reward individual initiative, skills, performance and hard work and shall not, under any circumstances, consider DEI or DEIA factors, goals, policies, mandates or requirements.

On January 22, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order seeking to protect the fundamental civil rights of all Americans as individuals by terminating radical DEI preferencing in federal contracting and directing federal agencies to relentlessly combat private sector discrimination. His order was intended to enforce “long-standing federal statutes and faithfully advances the Constitution’s promise of colorblind equality before the law.”

On April 11, 2025, the Trump Administration sent a demand letter to Harvard University. One of the demands was that Harvard discontinuation all its DEI efforts:

The University must immediately shutter all diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs, offices, committees, positions and initiatives, under whatever name, and stop all DEI-based policies, including DEI-based disciplinary or speech control policies, under whatever name; demonstrate that it has done so to the satisfaction of the federal government; and demonstrate to the satisfaction of the federal government that these reforms are durable and effective through structural and personnel changes. By August 2025, the University must submit to the government a report – certified for accuracy – that confirms these reforms.

The Gates Foundation then ended racial exclusion in its college aid initiatives – expanding participation to all students, even whites.

On April 23, 2025, President Trump signed another executive order “to eliminate the use of disparate impact liability in all contexts to the maximum degree possible to avoid violating the Constitution, federal civil rights laws and basic American ideals.”

Disparate impact liability is a legal theory of responsibility to prevent outcomes that have one race or another DNA commonality or stereotype of personality less advantaged than others in the statistical distribution of role responsibilities. The premise of the theory is that, without any showing of wrongful intention in fact, such disparate outcomes are indeed caused by intentional discrimination against those who end up with lower participation rates in the ranks under scrutiny.

President Trump's executive order held:

A bedrock principle of the United States is that all citizens are treated equally under the law. This principle guarantees equality of opportunity, not equal outcomes. It promises that people are treated as individuals, not components of a particular race or group. It encourages meritocracy and a colorblind society, not race- or sex-based favoritism. Adherence to this principle is essential to creating opportunity, encouraging achievement and sustaining the American Dream.

But a pernicious movement endangers this foundational principle, seeking to transform America's promise of equal opportunity into a divisive pursuit of results preordained by irrelevant immutable characteristics, regardless of individual strengths, effort or achievement. A key tool of this movement is disparate impact liability, which holds that a near insurmountable presumption of unlawful discrimination exists where there are any differences in outcomes in certain circumstances among different races, sexes or similar groups, even if there is no facially discriminatory policy or practice or discriminatory intent involved and even if everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed. Disparate impact liability all but requires individuals and businesses to consider race and engage in racial balancing to avoid potentially crippling legal liability. It not only undermines our national values, but also runs contrary to equal protection under the law and therefore, violates our Constitution.

On a practical level, disparate impact liability has hindered businesses from making hiring and other employment decisions based on merit and skill, their needs or the needs of their customers because of the specter that such a process might lead to disparate outcomes and thus, disparate-impact lawsuits. This has made it difficult and in some cases, impossible for employers to use bona fide job-oriented evaluations when recruiting, which prevents job seekers from being paired with jobs to which their skills are most suited – in other words, it deprives them of opportunities for success. Because of disparate impact liability, employers cannot act in the best interests of the job applicant, the employer and the American public.

Disparate-impact liability imperils the effectiveness of civil rights laws by mandating, rather than proscribing, discrimination. As the Supreme Court put it, "[t]he way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race."

Disparate impact liability is wholly inconsistent with the Constitution and threatens the

commitment to merit and equality of opportunity that forms the foundation of the American Dream. Under my Administration, citizens will be treated equally before the law and as individuals, not consigned to a certain fate based on their immutable characteristics.

Polls show that 70% of Americans, including a majority of African Americans, support elimination of racial preferences. African American columnist Jason Riley wrote in the Wall Street Journal that “Black advancement never depended on racial favoritism” and that our collective “real moral obligation is to stop discriminating by race altogether.”



However, the interpersonal, cultural, economic, social, political end-state sought by woke advocates and DEI programs is most worthy. It transcends *pseudospeciation* and realizes the humanity and possibility inherent in every person. A new way forward to reach that end-state is needed, one that does not depend on racism and presumptions of inherent “bad” thinking, starting in vitro, on the part of others who inherit differences or who, through no fault of their own, learn ways different from our own.

Such a way forward was given to us long ago by Aristotle in Greece and Cicero in Rome.

They proposed friendship as the basis for solidarity – individual with individual, Capulet with Montague.

Shakespeare ends his Romeo and Juliet tragedy with reconciliation and friendship. He has the prince ask:

*Where be these enemies? – Capulet, Montague,
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
Capulet
O brother Montague, give me thy hand.
Montague
But I can give thee more,
For I will ray her statue in pure gold,
That whiles Verona by that name is known,
There shall no figure at such rate be set
As that of true and faithful Juliet.*

Capulet
As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie,
Poor sacrifices of our enmity.

A reconciliation between the fathers too late to save the young lovers.

And so did Abraham Lincoln end his second inaugural address in 1865 looking forward to an end of the Civil War with an invocation of friendship:

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, ... let us strive on ... to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

In his first inaugural address, imploring the Southern slave states not to go to war, Lincoln had spoken of friendship:

“We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

Those who promote woke and DEI often speak of the need for “safe spaces” protecting us against slights and worse from others. Don't friends provide us with just such “safe spaces?”

Why not train for friendship? Starting in pre-school?

Aristotle considered friendship not as a playful disposition, but as a kind of virtue shaping the soul's relationship with reality. It is most necessary for living, he said: “Friendship seems to be the bond that hold communities together.”

So, forging bonds of friendship across lines of skin pigment or religion builds new community. “All friendship involves association,” he said.

Aristotle aligns friendliness with justice – giving to the other his or her due. This is acting towards the other with equity.

Friendship produces a kind of “equality,” wrote Aristotle. It can emotionally and psychologically level out differences in status and wealth.

He thought there are three kinds of friendship, each based on a kind of mutual affection and appreciation of a quality in the other. One is recognition of utility in the relationship. Second is experiencing pleasure in the relationship. A quality of excellence in one person can bring pleasure to another. So, becoming aware of excellence in others brings about friendships that welcome us.

These two kinds of friendship, however, are easily dissolved if the other party ceases to be a source of pleasure or utility. Third is friendship based on goodness – each loves the other for what and who they are, not what they provide. Friendships based on character are lasting.

The third kind of friendship is strengthened by trust. But lose that trust and such friendship dissolves. The intention counts in friendship and in virtue.

So, if you want to belong, to be accepted, be friendly and keep your shining points of excellence well-polished.

Cicero thought that friendship was the most valuable of human possessions, no other being equally suited to the moral nature of man or so applicable to every state and circumstance.

He insisted that friendship could extend its kindly offices giving to both responsibilities and comity in serving the other because “nature disposes the heart to engage in friendship from nobler and more generous inducements than obtain by mutual good offices advantages.”

Cicero was confident that “virtue enlarges the soul with sentiment of universal philanthropy” so that friendship is soul work. Soul work heals self and other. It creates the “better angels of our natures.”

Cicero denied that friendship could ever be only “a mercenary contemplation of utility,” noting that the “generality of the world giving just so much of their regard to each as is equal to the profits they respectfully produce – seek that merit in others which can be turned to interest.”

He wrote: “Amity cannot be produced by a motive of interest alone. In genuine friendship, there is an unconstrained and spontaneous emotion not from a cool calculation of advantage. ... Those who are virtuous charm us, captivate us, inspire us with some degree of affection towards those persons.” In friendship, there is the echo of the Golden Rule – treat the other as you would want to be treated in those circumstances.

True friendship is absolutely inconsistent with every sort of artifice and duplicity. Relationships worth the name of friendship are founded on that which honor and virtue will justify. Moral signatures certify one as deserving acceptance as a friend so look for “others with strict and irreproachable manners, those with steadiness and constancy of temper.”

Duty of admonishing and reproof – friendship subject to duties of moral obligation – frankly lay open to each other our thoughts, inclinations and purposes without the least caution, reserve or disguise. Offer advice with an unreserved and honest frankness of heart.

Thus, can friendships “cross disparity of rank and talents,” whereby a friend raise up the efficacy of the consequences attended on those less endowed with advantage and capability.

As presented by Aristotle and Cicero, friendship leads to character – trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Isn't this what we want in each and every one of our people?

Friends do not stereotype. They relate to the particular in another.

Martin Luther King Jr., in 1963, notably said to the American people: "I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

Harvard's Danielle Allen, African American by birth, is now promoting what she calls "pluralism" – social and organizational mores where people live and learn together, making everyone feel welcome. Her pluralism in schools proposes to help students navigate the conflicts that can absorb their psychic energies and strain their social competencies. Is this pluralism not creating ties of friendship?

So, how might you train for friendship?

Aristotle and Cicero gave us a way: they looked to our inner voice which speaks privately to us on who we are and who we should be. The insight was anciently stated by Heraclitus as *ethos anthropos daimon*, which I translate as "moral sentiments are motivations driving human persons." The more familiar translation is "character is destiny." *Daimon*, in Greek, refers to a spirit within, a guardian conscience, which acts independently from our fears and passions, to lead us in decision-making.

Now, the Caux Round Table, following the Jesuit practice of daily examining what you did yesterday, proposes a simple practice of daily reflection. Using such reflection, you can improve your capacity for being a friend.

Creative Reflective Thinking

We all take or make time to listen inwardly. It may be when on a walk in nature or in the shower. Many dialogue within. Others just think. Sometimes, at an unexpected instant, an intuition comes. These insights or intuitions often point to great truths. Usually, such creative reflective thinking is very helpful, but sadly, we do not normally make an effort to develop a regular practice of cultivating them. Here are some steps to help inculcate this practice.

1. Practice disciplined listening to oneself.

Make time for reflection. Start with 10-15 minutes a day, with no interruptions. We can lengthen this time as we continue. Try to take these moments at the start of the day or at a time when we feel fresh and can best free ourselves for a while from the pressures of life's demands. As well as giving dedicated time, try finding a special place for these moments of quiet concentration.

2. Prepare yourself properly.

Spend a few minutes with a book or article that inspires our thinking. Some people meditate, pray or do breathing exercises or physical exercise to prepare. Take a hot drink to a comfortable place to sit and think. If our mind presents us with a list of things we need to do, write them down to free our thinking. Be open to unexpected thoughts. Be patient until we find a method that works for us. Remain flexible to make adjustments as needed and for the different seasons of our life.

3. Keep at it until reflective thinking, which accesses our inner resources, is part of our normal thinking all the time.

The daily, disciplined time of reflective thinking, once learned, will never lose its value. With practice, it will also develop in us the ability to listen inwardly all the time, even while interacting with others. This can be while we are speaking on the phone, in the midst of a conversation at home or school or in our office, during an argument or at a meeting discussing an important issue.

4. Use this practice of reflective listening at points in our day when extra thoughtfulness is most needed and helpful.

For instance, when facing a decision or having to make an urgent judgement call. Before starting a task or embarking on a project. When we read or hear something that challenges or inspires us. Before meetings and important phone calls.

Stephen B. Young is Global Executive Director of the Caux Round Table for Moral Capitalism.

Justice Through Enlightenment and Trust

Sustaining Moral Markets and Governance

Michael Hartoonian

*“...And what is justice?”
-Plato*

*“It is mutual trust,
even more than mutual interest,
that holds human associations together.”
-H. L. Mencken*

Introduction

In this essay, we will continue our investigation into a global ethic through three central questions that address justice by way of trust, wisdom and enlightenment, all being necessary standards for living a life of meaning. I will sometimes inter-change the concepts of wisdom and enlightenment, as they often overlap in meaning and understanding. This is true today and always has been true, but it is revealed only under the necessary human condition of understanding that justice comes by law encased in ethics, that wisdom comes by virtue, enlightenment comes by critical thinking and scholarship and that trust comes by rightful market and cultural relationships. Achieving these conditions results from an investigation of the following questions:

- How shall I come to be enlightened in order to achieve moral wisdom and understand justice?
- How shall I conduct myself in relationships with others?
- How should we govern ourselves, taking account of both our internal/mental architecture and transactions and relationships with others in the larger communities in which we live, work and play?

As we struggle to answer these questions, we will stumble across the necessities (attributes) of justice, which may give us access to the sustainability of moral markets and moral governments.

Enlightenment

How do we come to know anything? To be enlightened, fundamentally, means to be intellectually free with the ability to entertain the real possibility that you are wrong about your knowledge claims. It means having original ideas that can be expressed with full reason, civility and respect for the history of knowledge and human nature. It means putting yourself in the venerable position of admitting that you are fundamentally ignorant and that we can never learn anything until we admit that we don't know how the world really works or why people behave as they do, but are capable and willing to put in the work to learn. Indeed, given the task ahead, why should we care about learning and being enlightened and wise?

We might ask the question this way: what is the purpose of enlightenment? Well, would it not be refreshing to even hear something like *enlightenment's purpose is to have people become more interesting. Enlightenment means becoming a loving critic of your home, community and republic. It is to understand virtue and critical thinking and to learn, judge and create the several epistemologies of the liberal and civic arts – which include science and mathematics. Being enlightened or educated (not simply trained) is to understand the fullness of what it means to be human. Enlightenment is to approach life with fresh vision and eternal virtue.*

This enlightenment is best defined by the interrelationships of attributes among wisdom, trust and justice. One concept can only be defined by engaging all three ideas. That is, to be just, one must also be wise and trustworthy. To be trustworthy, one must be just and wise. And to be wise, one must be just and trustworthy. These competences demand a deep knowledge of the several academic fields that create and use the arts, sciences and the humanities. That is, the interconnections and synergies among discovered, created and revealed knowledge.

Without this basic understanding, you enter the world of “Alice in Wonderland,” where words mean anything and nothing. You travel life's byways without direction and you have difficulty finding meaning or love. Take, for example, the political nonsense over the slogan diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

Observing the slogan through the unenlightened “looking glass” of contemporary media, the three words mean nothing or anything you want them to mean, depending on one's political persuasion, not knowledge. To be very brief, diversity is simply a natural phenomenon. It doesn't matter what metric is used. All things and people are different, one from the other. It's a given. However, what media and their followers don't get is that within a social, political or economic sense, the logical extension of diversity is anarchy, a precursor to the fallen state. Without an understanding of unity, together with diversity (*e pluribus unum*), working together, there is no harmonious society. Diversity is one of those motive concepts that needs to be balanced with another motive concept in any functioning group, even a football team. Equity has its own epistemological history and meaning connected to worth,

like equity in a property or skills owned by a person. It has to do with the measure of earned rewards, over time. As civic and civil human beings, we should know that by virtue of being human, we all SHOULD have equal rights under the law and if the law or its application does not provide this equality, the secret is to change the laws and their administration, not the meaning of words. Of the three concepts here in review, identity is the most difficult to comprehend. To the degree that one narrows the focus of identity, to that same degree you destroy it. Identity is a complex and compound idea. It can never be a focus on just race, gender, location or culture, each by itself. To focus on one or two attributes destroys identity. You have a set of personal skills, a location on earth, a given size, ethnic heritage, citizenship, personality, personal relationships, etc. Identity is a sum of all this and more. It takes an individual a lifetime to answer the question: who am I? As a slogan, it carries no meaning. So, DEI is meaningless to the degree that we do not have deep knowledge of culture, language and history. Believing that DEI will destroy or save us is nonsense. Mouthing the slogan without knowledge is simply ignorance signaling.

Enlightenment means expressing your own ideas, *but* those ideas must be rooted in long and rightful habits and most of all, in human wisdom. Without wisdom, action and agency becomes directionless.

How does one become enlightened? If you can't understand and act on this question, you live from hand to mouth.

Trust

How shall we conduct our lives with others? The fundamental mistake we make when thinking about trust is a categorical mistake – we believe that trust has to do with transactions. It doesn't. Trust is all about relationships. Trust cannot be found within political or economic conceptualizations. Trust is a cultural foundation or anchor. Government and economies live downstream from culture. Whenever you are confused about whether the market or culture comes first, it is already too late. That is because culture is the manifestation or measure of the health of a society's moral fabric. The market can only follow.

There are, of course, many criteria by which to measure the health of a society – debt load, education levels, demographics and functional infrastructures. But these all depend on culture or the charmed relationships people share with their God, their nation/state, their families and even their own bodies. Once the culture is unmoored from its ethical, aesthetic and moral anchors, fear and uncertainty about identity and the purpose of life will dominate thinking. One measure of this is drug use and suicide rates, poor achievement in school, dysfunctional families, corruption in government and in the market and loss of confidence in institutions and even in oneself. Culture teaches us about implementing the behavioral law of discrepancy. This theory is implicit in all functioning cultures. The discrepancy theory tells us to live our private and public lives so we understand three elements of the successful

society. One is to be as honest as possible about the present condition of country, firm, family and self. This is no easy matter because the human mind has to work hard to see what is happening today and the condition of all relationships. What is the private/public debt level? The quality of our education? The quality of healthcare and our food, air and water? How do we treat each other?

In any community or any contemporary condition, there can always be improvements. You want to be better at X tomorrow than you are today. The question begged is how do we get from what is to what ought to be better? The answer will be found in the cultural heritage of the human family. Using the interrelated criteria of justice, wisdom/enlightenment and trust, it is possible to move forward, to bend the arc of personal and social history toward the ethical and our better angels. Of course, to move from what is to what should be must be understood as moving targets and demand tasks that will be forever ongoing. We will need four elements in our journey. One, an irresistible idea and functional image of the future. Secondly, benevolent and wise leadership. The third need is private and public resources of time, skills and money and the fourth is a coalition of people who understand the difference between the right and the good, between character and style, between knowledge and information, between aesthetics and ugliness and between being a subject and being a citizen. This is the stuff of successful policy and decision-making: ideas/imagination, leadership, resources and a coalition of people willing to work for something more just, wiser and more trustworthy.

Justice/Wisdom is Service to Civic and Civil Behavior

Wisdom is knowing the greatest goal and good in any situation, how to achieve that goal, to see beyond the present situation and to understand the interconnection of all things. Wisdom is also understanding that people do not behave according to the facts as others see them. They behave in terms of what seems to them to be so. To many, if not most, it was once a fact that the earth was flat and at the center of the universe. Facts are inert until placed into a knowledge framework with logically organized concepts and attending questions to be tested and falsified. Wisdom provides the criteria to approach the good – life, family, community and state. While using knowledge that has passed the test of time, wisdom allows one to approach understanding what it means in moral relationships. It asks what is the purpose of life? The answer is in understanding that wisdom/trust/enlightenment (is) the passport to justice.

All of us have a *justice (wisdom/enlightenment) profile* that we build and refine each day we live. The profile is constructed from decisions we make regarding value preferences. For example, the choices we make between self-orientation (orientation toward obedience and punishment) and orientation toward others (toward universal riskier and logical principles and conscience). Also, we make choices between the situation we are in or we may look for more general values. I'm honest in the situation or honest generally? Both? And finally, are our choices based on the goal we are trying to achieve or on a mode of conduct that may or may not be consistent with that goal?

Justice Continua

Self-Orientation-----Other-person Orientation

Does your (actor) behavior, including what you say, manifest itself in a commitment to personal wants and avoidance of punishment or in self-accepted principles and a concomitant concern with the establishment of mutual respect and respect?

Situational-----General

Does your (actor) behavior, including what you say, manifest itself in consistent (at all times and in all places) adherence to a particular explicit or implicit set of rules or is the behavior contextual or situational?

Goal-----Modes of Conduct

Does your (actor) behavior, including what you say, manifest itself toward an established (explicitly or implicitly) goal or is the behavior more consistent with personal conduct which may or may not help in the attainment of said goal?

Let us now ask: What profile of justice (position on the three continua) is most consistent with concepts of trust, enlightenment and wisdom – understood here as attributes of justice?

The position on each continuum is an ongoing argument among citizens who are truly interested in applying justice for all, including justice's sanctions. The just society, as the just individual, has an interior architecture manifesting itself and preforming in rightful behavior and harmonious relationships.

Justice as Performance

I believe it was Emerson who said, "I can't hear a word you're saying; who you are is speaking too loudly."

What justice profile (position on the three continua) is most consistent with the attributes of justice as defined by the composite and disciplined literature of religion, philosophy and empirical observations? These are presented for your discussion and application and further research.

	Self-Orientation	Mutual Respect
I.	I-----X-----I	
	Situational Ethics	General Ethics
II.	I-----X-----I	
	Terminal Goal	Modes of Conduct
III.	I-----X-----I	

First, notice that the placement on the value continua are not at the extremes of value claims. Again, justice is an ongoing, ethical argument. Thus, the reasons for the above placement (X) on the three continua rest on arguments presented in this essay and are based on historical and philosophical discussions of justice, including those of Confucius, Plato, the Prophet Muhammad, Jesus, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid, Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert Putnam, Arthur Danto, Ernst Cassirer, Suzanne Langer, Michael Shermer and Neil Postman.

The position continuum #1 (other people orientation) calls attention to the principles of justice as obligation (moral) to respect the rights or claims of another person. The position on continuum #II (general or universalism value position) calls attention to the principle of justice as an obligation to rationality, involving the willingness and skill to weigh value choices in the light of general (inclusive) moral values. The location on continua #III (midway between terminal and instrumental values) calls attention to the principle of justice as both a reason for action (goal or terminal value) and a rule of action (mode of conduct). Justice implies a balance between reason and rule.

Conclusion

The search for justice is a complex problem that needs the attention of all people who would lead sustainable lives of harmony and meaning. That attention must focus on all the wisdom and trust available from all ways of knowing – historical, scientific, as well as from the arts and Mathematics. This focus would also include a deep understanding of language and culture, built on history and (rightful and universal) relationships. Some may want to argue that language and culture have little purpose in the pursuit of justice, but it is exactly that element that allows one to see the context and perspectives of the dynamic life lived in community. This condition is critical because it is far from clear to what extent and by what methods we can probe the value-belief systems of individuals and groups. And to this point of free inquiry, it is not only possible, but also necessary that we become enlightened in virtue and reason. I would like to say to those who believe that only a small number of humans are capable of this enlightenment, you know little about philosophy and even less about being human.

The standards of such human investigations present and represent the ongoing issues that must be debated, applied and debated again. Such is justice, which comes by wisdom and wisdom comes by trust and trust does not come easy. As a teacher, I have learned many things about enlightenment and the most important thing I have learned is that trust is its generator and the pathway to creating the just community.

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