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The Moral Capitalist: Dimensions, Attributes and Assessments by Michael Hartoonian  

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Cartoons Curated by Stephen B. Young
Introduction

This issue of Pegasus, you could say, is about social justice.

Social justice is the defining issue of our time for our global community. The elimination of poverty; providing justice for all people who depend on our planet’s environment; putting behind prejudices based on race, religion and ethnicity; and finding new ways of expressing gender and human sexuality when not everyone is personally comfortable with such innovations.

Social justice puts before us the tension between the individual and the community. Is what is just for the individual always a common good for others? Is what some consider to be necessary for the common good always just for every individual?

What is justice, after all? And who gets a say in fixing the definition?

And: what is social? Is it a real thing, carved in stone like the idols on Easter Island or just somebody’s narrative?

In this issue, Michael Hartoonian elaborates on individuals who can contribute to social justice in capitalism, directing our focus to the work (or vocation?) of persons to shape organizations and social outcomes.

I use the coincidence of the publication of this issue with the anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence on July 4th, 1776 to argue for government as a trust to benefit the people who, in turn, are citizens conferring such authority on those chosen to serve the public.

It seems to me that no matter where you look in our world, there is much work to be done in the name of social justice.

Stephen B. Young
Global Executive Director
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“How selfish so ever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.”
— Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*

### Introduction

#### Defining the Attributes of a Moral Capitalist

Who is a moral capitalist? What intellectual and emotional attributes describe the moral capitalist? Do you think of yourself as a (moral) capitalist?

We would like to address these questions through a series of defining characteristics and attending questions. To this end, the Caux Round Table is starting a conversation about the substance and behavior of one who might be or become identified as a moral capitalist.

To begin, here are some motive characteristics and questions to consider. A moral capitalist:

- Has internalized a set of research-based theories regarding the relationships among wealth creation, morality, democratic governance and capitalism. Can any commercial practice be credible absent a theoretical footing?
- Reaffirms idealism. In light of the last 150 years of recent history, would such an affirmation of idealism be seen as foolish?
- Integrates knowledge, believing that laws of the material world, the intrinsic unity of knowledge and the potential of indefinite human progress are realities to simply being human. In the light of modern curricula at our universities, is it possible to gain an educational foundation which would harvest the love and pursuit of wisdom? Who would hire such a person?
- Can explain (through argument and behavior) that moral capitalism is not an oxymoron. Why must capitalism, by definition, encompass moral behavior?
- Acts to create a climate where being a loving critic of the institution and nation is encouraged. Can love or for that matter, justice, be unconditional?
- Teaches that commerce without ethical applications causes markets to become expensive, sluggish and corrupt. How can markets best allocate values, costs and profits? What role should the government play in the market?
- Performs with the knowledge that real wealth (excellence) can only be created by people who are enlightened, healthy and understand reciprocal duty. Why does the creation of worth and wealth demand that all employees, from the CEO on, have skin in the game?
The Caux Round Table is in the process of developing a series of assessment/learning instruments for firms of all sizes to enhance their ability to create wealth, character and contributions to the larger community. Proceeding through a sequence of conversations, surveys and activities, we will address theoretical frameworks, tested methods and techniques and assessment loops to establish excellence in leadership and continuing growth.

There are, at present, 9 suggested models under consideration, each addressing personal identity and institutional health. The challenging assumption driving this sequence is – the moral capitalist will enhance the quality and worth of the firm and be a positive model in the larger community.

Components:

- Defining the moral capitalist.
- Developing the firm’s identity.
- Governance and ownership.
- Principles, practices and policies.
- The market power of a civic business.
- Dealing with democratic values tensions in your firm.
- How is wealth really created?
- Becoming a teacher of moral capitalism.
- Working with others to implement the capability and economic power of a moral business.

These are examples of seminars (including readings, face to face meetings, lectures and self-assessments) that the Caux Round Table will be able to provide for you and your business. The knowledge and skills gained through these experiences will enhance your firm and all within it. Two of the major ideas to be addressed within these models are:

1) That a moral capitalist understands wealth as excellence.

2) Sees moral capitalism as a process that is uncommonly good and beautiful, rising far above what is vulgar and ordinary.

While this may appear to have nothing to do with economics, it is a central belief of the moral capitalist that is, understanding profits as byproducts of quality in all aspects of life and life’s relationships.

We will discuss the operating theory (conceptual framework) of moral capitalism, that being stewardship. The epistemology of the word stewardship derives its meaning from origins in classical Greece. The Greek word oikonomos means manager of the house. In early English, the word came to mean, “One who cares for another’s property.” The attributes of the concept include: 1) an entrustment by the owner, 2) a responsible worker and 3) a final accounting.
And of what are we stewards? Simply, the ideas and ideals of high purpose that must find their way into the market.

We start with the notion that a moral capitalist is an entrusted and accountable servant of our culture (writ large), to our contemporaries and to our children. More, the principle of stewardship is particularly relevant to the private enterprise system and representative democracy. This is moral capitalism’s mission:

_The life's work of the moral capitalist is to create wealth (excellence). The dynamic system needed to create wealth is fundamentally to ratchet up freedom and ratchet down structure by creating and improving an organizational complex (firm, institution or nation) through establishing an umbrella of integrity, maintained and lifted by continuing education. The goal of that education is to develop citizens of the firm and state who have agency to make decisions and become owners who have skin in the game, thus, understanding that personal interest is best served by addressing common interests._

**Walking Away Money**

There’s a saying in business and in the military called walking away money or “f....k you” money. It means that you should always have enough resources and conscience to walk away from a situation inconsistent and contrary to your ethical principles. Allegiance to law and conscience take priority over loyalty to self-aggrandizement and profit. Real leaders in the military and every other foundational institution in a market republic must make it clear that morality drives policies. If that isn’t the case, the republic atrophies and the market becomes expensive, sluggish and corrupt. This, the moral capitalist knows, practices and, thus, is able to harvest riches in wealth and happiness, even beyond imagination.

As Adam Smith made clear in his book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, our needs are a function of passion, defined by our sympathy. The word empathy would be the word used today. In the 18th century, sympathy meant feeling the world as the other. It was similar to the 18th century notion of happiness, which meant public, not personal, happiness. Both ideas also engaged cultural relationships with children, parents, God, other people, environments, modes of communication and imagination.

In essence, we live in a moral web. To live outside that web or system invites one to behave as an idiot (from the Greek, idios, - a man alone). A person alone has no business, no friends, no purpose and no life; only an existence. A good example of the man alone is Ebenezer Scrooge, before his epiphany (in Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*).
In his second book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), Smith lays out the understanding and workings of the “invisible hand,” which is based on his moral sentiments and defines the essence of capitalism, of which Adam Smith is the father.

Any discussion of the attributes of the moral capitalist could do no better than to start here with Adam Smith.

**Money, Wealth and Worth**

In Alfred Lord Tennyson’s “Ulysses,” we see a man who, late in life, feels that there is more to do, more adventure and more good to bring to others. But does he have the will? Here is Ulysses’ answer given by Tennyson:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{We are not now that strength which in old days} \\
\text{Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;} \\
\text{One equal temper of heroic hearts,} \\
\text{Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will,} \\
\text{To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.}
\end{align*}
\]

“And not to yield,” that is, to have the will and agency to know the differences among notions of money, wealth and worth and not to give in to money.

We understand that most people have high admiration for money and riches and the stuff it can buy. It has also been made clear through religion, literature and history that such desire for money is the main source of corruption because we believe that if one is rich, they must be right. We want to be right too, so we develop a deep confusion between profit/money and worth/wealth.

Of course, what a person wants most is joy or happiness, but through contaminated cultural content, we have come to believe that money is the path to happiness. Again, when we refuse to entertain the counterintuitive idea that the fundamental values of happiness and capitalism are harmony, generosity and compassion, we fall from the moral web of meaning and purpose, becoming the idiot. To understand this is the beginning of virtue and virtue is uniquely human because it is congruent with joy. To the degree that culture and attending institutions deny this principle, to that same degree, people lose their humanity.

How can we understand worth as an attribute of the moral capitalist? How is worth different from money? And what relationships do these two concepts have with wealth?

The answers to these questions will frame our discussion and provide the metrics for assessing the essence and degree of moral capitalism practiced in your work and life.
Moral Capitalists and the Tensions that Define Their Character

Let’s start with conceptions of worth, money, wealth and imagery. From these tensions, we will move on to other, more objective behaviors.

- **Worth v. Money**

  The moral capitalist is first interested in the question – what is my life’s work (vocation or calling)? Not so much in the questions – what is my job? What is my income? Your worth is, first and foremost, about your character. We have all known people who we would describe as worthy or a person of high character who may not have much money or income. We also know people with a great deal of money who have poor character and are worth-less. The moral capitalist understands the tensions and relationships between money and worth and can put first things first. Worth is a life’s path. It takes time, patience and courage to build. It’s known as patient (human) capital. Before anything else, moral capitalists build patient capital in themselves and others. This is their seedbed.

- **Wealth v. Imagery**

  Wealth is an aesthetic reality. Imagery is an illusion. Are you real or simply an image created and made famous by the vagaries of taste, transitory cultural norms and intentionally creative publicity? The moral capitalist knows the difference.

The second group of tensions that the moral capitalist must address include citizen versus subject, generational covenant versus immediate gratification and freedom versus structure.

- **Citizen v. Subject**

  The concept of citizen presented here brings together political and philosophical assumptions that form a theory which I call multidimensional engagement. The first assumption, which is personal in nature, focuses on the role of citizen. This is in opposition to understanding the individual as subject. In a political sense, one can only be a citizen or a subject. This means that an individual, by choice, can be a citizen of a school and at the same time a subject of the state. In a democracy, however, one should choose to be a citizen of all the institutions in which he or she is engaged. It is rare indeed to even have the choice of being a citizen, for citizenship is only possible within a democratic structure. And as we know, democratic structures are complex in their non-formal alliances, subtle in their social constructs and information sharing and extremely slow in developing. The citizen carries a personal or private mind-set that is very different from the worldview of the subject. *The citizen, while being a loving critic of the firm or republic, is also the prime creator of both common and private wealth (where wealth is understood as the creation of excellence).* The subject, on the other hand, is an individual ready to follow orders, consume wealth and
live a life of social isolation. The moral capitalist must make the most of these differences; diminishing the role of subject, while enhancing the identity of citizen, both within the firm and the larger community.

The second assumption, which is public in nature, rests upon the relationships that must exist between individuals and institutions or between and among institutions. The theory, simply stated, is that in a market economy and democratic republic, the several institutions that constitute the community and the individuals within them must understand and practice reciprocal duties with one another. It also asserts that a citizen should be a citizen of all the institutions to which he or she belongs. For example, an individual is a citizen of the family, school, firm or business and place of worship, as well as of the city, state and nation. In fact, if people do not see themselves as citizens of the institutions in which they work, play, learn and live, it is problematic as to whether they can be citizens of a city, state or nation simply because the vigor of any one institution must be directly correlated to the constrains of the others. Citizens, unlike subjects, ask, “What can I do for my family?” Not, “What can my family do for me?” Those questions apply to all institutions. What can my family do for the school? What can the school do for the community? In these ways, we build reciprocal duty, where responsibility and freedoms are expanded and institutional structures reduced.

• Generational Covenant v. Immediate Gratification

Moral capitalists play the “long game.” They understand that virtue only comes through perspective. Ancestors, as well as their children’s children, all have an eye on their behavior. What would my grandfather think of me? What would my great granddaughter think? Will I leave her the best of me? There is a moral light that shines on us from the past and future, illuminating our very essence. The moral capitalist embraces that light because it will allow greater wealth and happiness. Living for today and immediate rewards will, by definition, suck virtue from any human being. They who do not incorporate the perspective of several thousand years to their lives live from hand to mouth. Such people can only focus on the vulgar self; hardly a moral being.

• Freedom v. Structure

Moral capitalists understand that only citizens produce wealth (excellence and profits). Citizens, in order to achieve this excellence, need a large degree of freedom, commensurate to their ability to embrace responsibility. People, all people, will always need some structure, but the moral capitalist works to enhance freedom and minimize structure. Again, as stated above, this can only happen within a climate of integrity, where there is continuing learning opportunities for everyone in the firm. The same would be true of families and the society as a whole.
The Conversation Continues

The above discussion will serve as a conceptual framework for the Caux Round Table in the process of developing a series of assessment/learning instruments for firms of all sizes “to enhance their ability to create wealth, character and contributions to the larger community.” Here, in this circulation of Pegasus, the conversation begins and will proceed through a sequence of new conversations, surveys and activities. As suggested above, participants will engage theoretical frameworks, work with tested methods and techniques and assessment loops to establish excellence in leadership and continuing growth to be a moral capitalist.

We all have work to do.

*Michael Hartoonian is Associate Editor of Pegasus.*
What Are Governments for Anyway?

Stephen B. Young

Why do we have governments? So that, as the Athenians said during the Peloponnesian War, the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must?

Human communities seem always to have had rulers or hierarchy where some are more equal than others since we gave up hunter/gathering, moved into settlements and took up agriculture.

On July 4th, 1776, American politicians, chosen by their local communities, the British colonies in North America, put on paper a theory of government. Following the recommendations of Protestant English political philosopher John Locke, they insisted that governments had duties to serve the people, that governments were a trust, holding powers given in trust to promote the welfare of those who had entrusted such powers to them.

Governments were, thus, re-centered on stewardship and denied the dominion of arbitrary and capricious, self-serving mastery of society.

Locke said that when governments act contrary to their trust, they lose their authority. They act against the trust reposed in them when they “make themselves or any part of the community masters or arbitrary disposers of the lives, liberties or fortunes of the people.” By so doing, governments put themselves in a state of war with the people, who are thereby absolved from any further obedience. The people may discard such a government and replace it with one they find better for their safety and good.

By a breach of trust, governments forfeit the power which the people had put into their hands.

Locke asked: “The end of government is the good of mankind and which is best for mankind, that the people should always be exposed to the boundless will of tyranny or that the rulers should be sometimes liable to be opposed when they grow exorbitant in the use of their power and employ it for the destruction and not the preservation of the properties of their people?”
He concluded his essay on government by asking this question: “Who shall be judge whether the prince or legislative act contrary to their trust?” He replied: “The people shall be judge; for who shall be judge whether the trustee or deputy acts well and according to the trust reposed in him, but he who deputes him and must, by having deputed him, have still the power to discard him when he fails in his trust?”

Actually, we can see Locke’s theory at work in the recent decision of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to step down as leader of the Conservative Party and so also as prime minister.

The July 4th, 1776 Declaration of Independence of the British colonies in North America affirmed Locke’s proposal:

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. --That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.*

The Declaration then goes on to specify 28 breaches of trust on the part of King George III and his minister in their governance of their colonies in North America.

(On a personal note, one signer of the Declaration was Lewis Morris of New York, a collateral ancestor of mine through my maternal Grandfather, George Maurice Morris.)

After securing their independence through war (by what Locke called, “an appeal to Heaven”), the colonies provided a federal government for themselves by adopting a constitution on June 21st, 1788.

That constitutional document took the form of a deed of trust. The donors of powers in trust were “the people of the United States.” The trustees so empowered were the officials of the federal government in its three departments – the legislature, the executive and the judiciary.
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The Preamble to the Constitution set forth the purposes of the trust – the duties to be faithfully executed by government officials in their various offices.

The Preamble instructs the government of the United States as act for these ends: “To form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.”

(The Preamble was written by Gouverneur Morris, half-brother to Lewis Morris and so also a collateral ancestor of mine.)

We might derive a better understanding of the legitimation of government provided by the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution by contrasting them with constitutional preambles from other schools of political philosophy.

A rival approach to government was proposed by Thomas Hobbes in English and much, much earlier by Mozi in China. This approach is government as the commander of the people, their master and teacher. In this scheme, values and purposes flow from the government to all the people subordinate thereto. The people are, thus, not empowered to ever question, challenge or – Heaven forbid – overthrow the state.

This is government by command.

This morality of government is expressed in the Constitution of Russia:

*We, the multinational people of the Russian Federation, united by a common fate on our land, establishing human rights and freedoms, civic peace and accord, preserving the historically established state unity, proceeding from the universally recognized principles of equality and self-determination of peoples, revering the memory of ancestors who have conveyed to us the love for the Fatherland, belief in the good and justice, reviving the sovereign statehood of Russia and asserting the firmness of its democratic basic, striving to ensure the well-being and prosperity of Russia, proceeding from the responsibility for our Fatherland before the present and future generations, recognizing ourselves as part of the world community, adopt the CONSTITUTION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.*
This Preamble notes the motivations of the Russian people in setting up a government over themselves, but does not bind that government to any duties of service and fidelity.

Article 2 of the Russian Constitution, however, does speak somewhat of government’s trust responsibility: “Man, his rights and freedoms are the supreme value. The recognition, observance and protection of the rights and freedoms of man and citizen shall be the obligation of the State.”

The Preamble to the Chinese Constitution states simply the command and control nature of the Chinese state:

This Constitution affirms, in legal form, the achievements of the struggles of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups and stipulates the fundamental system and task of the state. It is the fundamental law of the state and has supreme legal force. The people of all ethnic groups, all state organs and armed forces, all political parties and social organizations and all enterprises and public institutions in the country must treat the Constitution as the fundamental standard of conduct; they have a duty to uphold the sanctity of the Constitution and ensure its compliance.

The Preamble further elucidates what ideology will inform government policies and actions:

The fundamental task for our country is to concentrate on achieving socialist modernization along the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We the Chinese people of all ethnic groups will continue, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents, the Scientific Outlook on Development and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, to uphold the people’s democratic dictatorship, stay on the socialist road, carry out reform and opening up, steadily improve the socialist institutions, develop the socialist market economy and socialist democracy, improve socialist rule of law, apply the new development philosophy and work hard in a spirit of self-reliance to modernize step by step the country’s industry, agriculture, national defense and science and technology and promote coordinated material, political, cultural-ethical, social and ecological advancement, in order to build China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The Chinese Constitution is, thus, a work program for the people, as they are to be directed
by the Communist Party and the government authority it establishes.

The Preamble describes the power structure ruling China and its accomplishments:

*The people’s democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on an alliance of workers and peasants, which in essence is a dictatorship of the proletariat, has been consolidated and developed. The Chinese people and the Chinese People’s Liberation Army have defeated imperialist and hegemonist aggression, sabotage and armed provocations, safeguarded national independence and security and strengthened national defense. Major achievements have been made in economic development. An independent and relatively complete socialist industrial system has now basically been established and agricultural output has markedly increased. Significant advances have been made in education, science, culture and other fields and education about socialist thought has made notable progress. The lives of the people have been considerably improved.*

We might well consider the distinction between government as trustee and government as master. When the government is a trust reposed by the people, the people are citizens. When the government is master, the people are subjects.

Which would you rather be: citizen or subject?

The Caux Round Table has made its choice. Our Principles for Government hold that:

**Public power is held in trust for the community.**

*Power brings responsibility; power is a necessary moral circumstance in that it binds the actions of one to the welfare of others.*

*Therefore, the power given by public office is held in trust for the benefit of the community and its citizens. Officials are custodians only of the powers they hold; they have no personal entitlement to office or the prerogatives thereof.*

*Holders of public office are accountable for their conduct while in office; they are subject to removal for malfeasance, misfeasance or abuse of office. The burden of proof that no malfeasance, misfeasance or abuse of office has occurred lies with the officeholder.*

*The state is the servant and agent of higher ends; it is subordinate to society. Public power is to be exercised within a framework of moral responsibility for the welfare of others. Governments that abuse their trust shall lose their authority and may be removed from office.*

*Stephen B. Young is Global Executive Director of the Caux Round Table for Moral Capitalism.*
"If you win, the game is rigged, but if I win it's flawless and beyond critique."

"Unfortunately, folk music is only effective against societal ills."
WE, the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

ARTICLE I

Sec. 1. All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Sec. 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several States, and the elective districts thereof; and each State shall elect a number of representatives proportioned to its population according to the enumeration hereinbefore directed; but the number of representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but shall be as near as may be to the number determined by dividing one thousand six hundred and eighty persons, as by the last census, into the number of inhabitants of each State; and the representatives shall be chosen annually.

Sec. 3. No person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the age of thirty years, and been a citizen of the United States for seven years, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

Sec. 4. The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other officers; and shall have the power of impeachment.

Sec. 5. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two senators from each State, chosen by the legislature thereof for six years; and each senator shall have one vote.

Sec. 6. The Senate shall have the sole power to try all impeachments. When sitting for that purpose, they shall be on oaths or affirmations. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside; and no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two thirds of the members present.

Sec. 7. Judgment in cases of impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust, or profit under the United States: but the party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to indictment, trial, judgment, and punishment, according to law.

Sec. 8. The Congress shall have power to dispose of and apply all funds and property belonging to the United States and shall make all needful rules and regulations respecting the Bounty and Interior Department.

Sec. 9. The Congress shall have power to declare the Rules of Procedure in the Senate and House of Representatives, and to punish the Breach of such Rules with Journals.

Sec. 10. The Congress shall have power to enforce all Laws of Congress sequestration of all offenses against the United States, shall be removed from office, and shall concease the functions of their offices, in the manner in which the same shall be directed by law.

Sec. 11. No Person holding any Office of Trust or Profit under the United States shall be a candidate for any other Office under the same Government.

Sec. 12. No Senator or Representative shall, during the time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil Office under the authority of the United States, which shall have been created by the立法者 for, or be in any manner connected with his Office; but this Regulation shall not apply to any Office of honor, trust, or profit.

Sec. 13. No man shall be a Senator or Representative, or hold any Office of Trust or Profit, who, having ten years ago entered into a contract for a reward or consideration, shall be paid for any service or labor done or performed, or to be done or performed, by any other person at any time after such contract shall be made, or which shall be paid or allowed for any service or labor which shall be done or performed by any other person at any time after the same shall be made.