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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

Welcome to our special year-in-review *Pegasus*, which examines important work we've done in the last year and also includes a formidable essay from our associate editor, Michael Hartoonian, focused on the notion that our global dialogues indicate that we may be entering the end of an epoch.

During 2024, we covered a lot of ground at the Caux Round Table. One of our more ambitious projects focused on the covenants of the Prophet Muhammed. In conversations with various Islamic and Christian thought leaders, Steve Young has led a re-evaluation of the covenants, especially as it relates to relations between Islam and major global religions. As Steve notes, the covenants “provide a way forward towards reconciliation and peace.” This concept is as vital as ever, underscored by the conflicts in the Middle East. Our work has received positive feedback from Islamic scholars, as well as from scholars at the Vatican. Strong affirmation and warm endorsement were received from the Pope and from Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

The Caux Round Table in 2024 began work on pulling together a series of essays focused the 250th anniversary of Adam Smith's book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. De Gruyter publishing will publish this collection of essays to mark this seminal anniversary that says a great deal about the importance of moral capitalism.

Also in 2024, our annual Dayton Award that acknowledges important contributions to the Twin Cities community went to Liz Collin of Alpha News for her documentary, *The Fall of Minneapolis*. The daring film took a deeper look at the death of George Floyd while in police custody, an event that rocked the Twin Cities and the entire country.

The Caux Round Table also introduced a certificate program focused on moral capitalism in 2024. The program, which includes a series of videos produced by Caux and hosted by Steve Young, culminates in the awarding of a certificate after participants write a short report about their engagement with the videos. We've received positive feedback on the program and will continue to expand our educational work in 2025.

Throughout the year, we had many strong essays in *Pegasus*. In the December issue, we focused on moral capitalism's role in ending slavery. In addition, we augmented that essay with another that focused on the importance of social capital and moral infrastructure.

Our October edition evaluated the important interplay of moral capitalism and the importance of citizenship. The theme of citizenship occurred in several essays during the course of the year, underscoring the importance of good citizenship to the positive evolution of our changing polities. Semi-related, the August *Pegasus* took deep dives on immigration and the ethics of comity. Immigration, of course, became a key factor in the 2024 presidential race.

Essays on poverty peppered several issues of *Pegasus*, including the May issue, which examined aspects of wealth and poverty.

We encourage you to page through the issues of the past year. A collection of essay headlines can be found [here](#).

Lastly, as is our custom, we kick off the year not just with a year-in-review, but also with a meaty essay. As noted above, Michael Hartoonian delves deeply into the notion that we are entering the end of an epoch. That, of course, raises the question of what's next? In writing about the end of an epoch, Michael also raises many questions that require fresh examination. Among them: What is Truth and What is Happiness? I encourage you to read it.

Happy 2025 to all of you and we thank you for your continued support.

Dave Kansas
Editor-at-Large
Pegasus



2024 Year in Review

Introduction

2024 for the Caux Round Table was, I would say, a year of transition towards fundamentals – fundamentals of ethics, fundamentals of reality which should, in good times and in bad, drive our thinking and our actions. Divisiveness and fragmentation, never good for human well-being, seem to be on the increase demanding our response – either to go along with the flow or to seek remedial countermeasures, say, peace in Palestine/Israel and in the Ukraine and better government most everywhere.

As 2024 ended, there was again trench warfare in Europe and again conflict within the Abrahamic family of religions in the Middle East. In Africa, the American Secretary of State made public his conclusion about genocide in South Sudan and since 1996, war in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has claimed an estimated 6 million lives. The BRICS alliance recently proposed its own terms for world order, independent of the Pact for the Future proposed by the United Nations. Russia and China have proposed a world order centered on the prerogatives of “civilization states.” China, in a move without precedent in human history, seeks to impose its sovereignty over the South China Sea or what the Vietnamese call the “Eastern Sea.” The challenge of clashing civilizational communities – religious and ethnic, the West and the Rest, North and South – is with us yet.

In Europe, effective and respected governance at the national and E.U. level is hard to find. In Canada, a political transition is under way. In the U.S., divisive factionalism – just as feared by its founders in 1787 – has taken sway over public affairs. Re-elected President Donald Trump has proposed tariffs as barriers to trade and market rationality and new arrangements for Greenland and the Panama Canal.

Under these circumstances, of what use are ideas about moral capitalism and moral government?

Our primary efforts, then, have been intellectual – to shape thinking and values. For it is thinking and values which drive human actions.

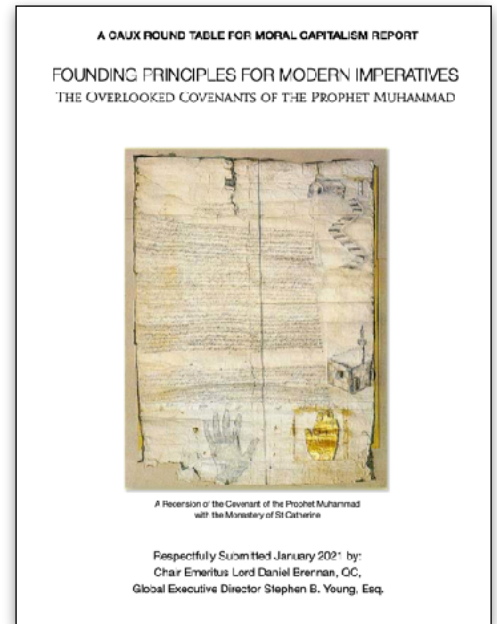
As one of our fellows likes to say: “Behavior is the residual of values.”

Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad

Perhaps our most important work was continuation of the study of the covenants given by the Prophet Muhammad to respect and protect Christians and Jews. With the war between Hamas, Hezbollah and the Jews of Israel, the covenants provide a way forward towards reconciliation and peace. Moreover, they provide a new way of looking at the teachings of Islam and righteous Muslim practices towards Christians and Jews around the world.

Our colleagues, Professor Ibrahim Zein and Dean Recep Senturk of the College of Islamic Studies at Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Doha, Qatar, presented facts and analysis of the Prophet's covenants at the Vatican in June in the Georgetown Lecture on Contemporary Islam at the Pontifical Institute for the Study of Arabic and Islam. Dean Recep presented Pope Francis with a copy of Professor Zein's book, written with Ahmed El-Wakil, *The Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad* (Routledge Studies in Islamic Philosophy).

The Pope had previously expressed in a letter his gratitude for making available to him our report on the covenants of the Prophet.



Teaching Moral Government in Ukraine

The Washington Institute for Business, Government and Society has asked to use our ethical Principles for Moral Government in a program in the Ukraine to reduce corruption by teaching government officials, at all levels, principles of stewardship and public trust. The principles and our handbook, including assessments of agencies and public officials, will be translated into Ukrainian.

The project could set a precedent for training and cultural adaptation within government institutions in other countries.

The institute describes itself as follows:

The Washington Institute for Business, Government and Society is a global nonprofit organization created to bridge critical gaps by facilitating collaboration between public and private sector leaders. As a nonpartisan translator and global voice, we stimulate cooperation and meaningful action, leading to tangible results.

We bring together proven leaders from corporate foundations, government institutions, nonprofit organizations, trade associations, businesses, academia and other entities

relevant to our goals and mission. Our board of governors and advisory council are made up of former heads of state, chief executive officers of major corporations, distinguished academics, award-winning journalists and other accomplished leaders who help define today's global environment. The Council also includes young people who hold promise as tomorrow's trailblazers. We are fiercely independent and determined to address vital, often overlooked issues.

The institute's proposal states:

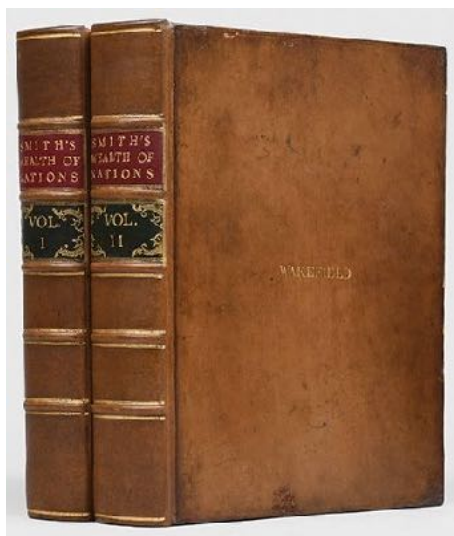
Mission Statement: At a time of war, the Ukraine Ethics Project is intended to assess and to create a multifaceted, real and viable solution to the serious scourge of corruption in Ukraine from “the ground up” and to instill a new mindset focused on ethics, integrity, transparency and accountability in business, government, academia and across society.

Project Overview: This effort is intended to provide the people of Ukraine with a definitive roadmap to tackle corruption today and tomorrow and to provide an example to other countries of the world who face many of the same serious ethical challenges.

While the external enemy of Ukraine has been Russia, the internal enemy has been and remains corruption. Although concrete steps on the national level have been taken to root out this scourge, corruption remains a significant challenge. It limits foreign investment, deters opening new commercial operations from the West and blocks the country's membership in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (“Ukraine is Still Too Corrupt to Join the West” ... Foreign Policy, July 29, 2024).

The Ukrainian partners in the program are the Economy of Trust Ukraine Academy, Mayors' Club of Ukraine and Ukrainian Catholic University.

Essays on *Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith



De Gruyter publishing accepted a proposal for the Caux Round Table to edit essays on the thinking, influence and importance of Adam Smith's book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, looking back 250 years since its publication in 1776. A number of our fellows and others have graciously agreed to submit chapters on the current applicability of Smith's observations and insights, the alignment of his thinking with moral capitalism and various religious traditions and the intersection of his book on capitalism with his previous book on moral sentiments.

Dayton Award

The Caux Round Table has, in recent years, given awards to those in Minnesota who have distinguished themselves selflessly in leadership in living up to the ethical standards of moral capitalism and moral government.

In its Principles for Moral Government, the Caux Round Table advocates the importance of discourse for guiding the work of public officials holding a public trust of service to citizens for protecting their interests and advancing their well-being. Excellence in discourse demands ethical journalism in the search for truth and for the quality of debate and discussion, leading to optimal, realistic and aspirational public opinion and resolve.

The 2024 Dayton Award was presented to Liz Collin of Alpha News for her documentary, *The Fall of Minneapolis*. The film looks behind the very emotional tropes, cant and performative depictions of the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis while he was in police custody on May 25, 2020. To recall the words of American Poet Robert Frost:



*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Liz courageously took the road less traveled by and that has made a difference in public understanding of truth.

Jinju Conference on Korean-Entrepreneurship

Caux Round Table Fellow Lester Myers, Claire van den Broek of True Price, based in The Netherlands, Prae Piromya of the Sustainability and Entrepreneurship Center at Sasin School of Management, Chulalongkorn University and Steve Young of the Caux Round Table, made presentations at a fascinating conference in Jinju, Korea on what some there call “human-centered entrepreneurship.”

Claire spoke on what is a “true” price, given all the externalities – positive and negative – of goods and services brought to markets. Prae spoke on the Thai Buddhist moral philosophy of following the middle way with reason and moderation in our decision-making. Lester spoke on entrepreneurship, sustainability and flourishing, really as entrepreneurship as a vocation, saying: “The practice of entrepreneurship reflects habits for a) creating value though identifying opportunities, b) judging well which risks are worth taking, c) innovating in taking those risks to

optimize human, financial, social and environmental capital and to reflect quality growth. The source and summit for forming and reinforcing these habits is vocation, an encompassing calling, whereby entrepreneurship is a way of life. Practicing entrepreneurship well requires balancing attention to the quality of these habits with mindfulness regarding their purpose for positive transformation of oneself, one's work and the world.”

The Caux Round Table delegation there learned about the teaching of a 16th century Korean scholar, Jo Shik, who, in my opinion, articulated a vision of moral business very similar to the thinking of Mencius in China and the Caux Round Table's ethical principles for the management of stakeholder relationships. By remarkable and wonderful coincidence, one of the Korean scholars at the conference was a descendant of Mencius.

Educational Certificates

The Caux Round Table provided online a certificate in moral capitalism, based on its [nine playlists on YouTube](#). The playlist subjects include the decision styles inventory, global markets, humans and technology, prices and valuations, sustainability and growth, religious and philosophical perspectives, ethics and markets, Caux Round Table principles and the moral community and money and finance. Upon watching the playlists and completing a short report, a certificate is awarded.

New Initiatives

Three new initiatives were launched during the year:

- Revitalizing St. Paul. The economic vitality of downtown St. Paul, Minnesota, has greatly declined since the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the introduction of working from home for most employees. Stores and restaurants have closed. Personal security became more problematic at times and no new investments were made. Then, given the death of an owner, large office buildings, only partly occupied, were suddenly on the market with few buyers taking interest. The Caux Round Table then reached out to Professor Tom Fisher, former dean of the College of Design at the University of Minnesota, to convene round tables around design thinking as to what can be done to revitalize and restore St. Paul's economic well-being and its stock of social capital. The premise of the project is that following the Caux Round Table's Principles for Business can lead to decisions and actions that will restore prosperity for all stakeholders, social flourishing and augment individual human capital accounts.
- Establishing a collaborative educational effort with the Center for Professional Ethics at Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. This envisions the offering, in person and online, mini-certificates in moral capitalism and moral government.

- Establishing a collaborative media presence for the Caux Round Table and its principles with Alpha News in Minnesota. Alpha News will assist us in developing podcasts and other sources of commentary and education on the internet. The Caux Round Table will support Alpha News in the making of documentaries and coverage of current events.

Publications

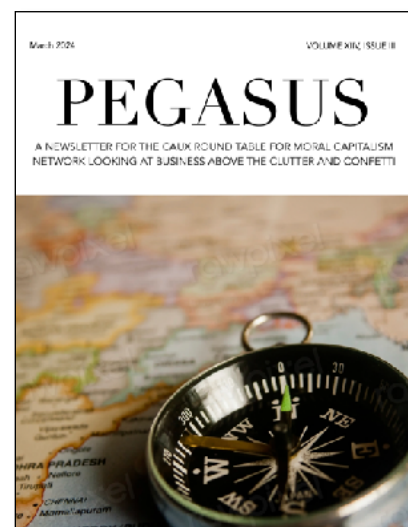
Global Executive Director Steve Young wrote a commentary for *Directors&Boards*, a leading journal in the U.S. on corporate governance: “For Boards, It’s Fiduciary Duties First, Effective Altruism Never.”

Fellows

Former dean and Professor Orn Bodvarsson was appointed a fellow. Quarterly Zoom round table meetings of fellows were held so to provide us with insights and awareness of contemporary challenges facing the implementation of moral capitalism and moral government.

Pegasus

Twelve issues of *Pegasus* were published. Several themes organically emerged from the round table discussions on Zoom, through in-person meetings in St. Paul and in staff analysis of global trends. A special issue on good governance – the uncommon quest for common ground – was published in honor of the late John Brandl, former dean of the Humphrey School of Public affairs and state legislator.



Zoom and In-person Round Tables

A number of Zoom and in-person round tables were held throughout the year, including:

- “I Don’t Know about God, But is Higher Education Dead?” (Zoom)
- “Cultivating a Better Understanding of AI” (in-person)
- “Sufficiency Economy Philosophy” (Zoom)
- “American Education” (in-person)
- “The Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad and Reconciliation between the Jews and Palestinians?” (Zoom)
- “What’s the Point of Higher Education?” (in-person)
- “Between Sovereigns – Displaced Persons: What is Their Rightful Place?” (Zoom)
- “Who is a Citizen and Why Should We Care?” (in-person)
- “Peoples’ Thoughts about U.S. Election” (Zoom)

Email Notices

Many email notices on relevant and timely topics were sent throughout the year, six of which were:

- “New Argentine President Sees “Morality” at Work in Capitalism”
- “In Corporate Board Rooms – Fiduciary Duties Only, Not Effective Altruism Ever!”
- “Boeing: Failing at Moral Capitalism”
- “An Historic Contribution to Interfaith Understanding within the Family of Abrahamic Religions”
- “Where Have All the Leaders Gone?”
- “Moral Capitalism in 16th Century Korea!”

Website and Social Media

Approximately 10,000 people visited our website throughout the year. The average visitor viewed at least two pages thus the website had approximately 20,000 views. Our website is updated frequently with news, regular commentaries, upcoming round tables and events, and more.

We posted regularly to our social media, which included new videos to YouTube and posts on Facebook and Twitter

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The Moral Synergy of Nature and Reason

Toward a New Global Ethic

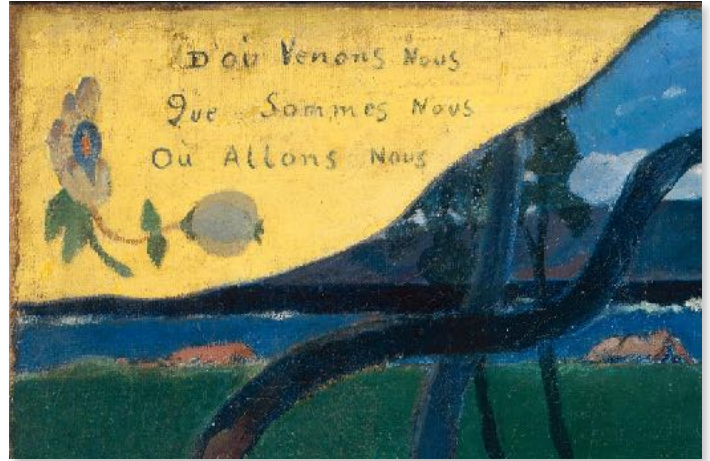
Michael Hartoonian

*As man advanced in civilization,
And small tribes united into larger communities,
The simplest reason would teach each individual
That he ought to extend his social instincts
And his sympathies
to all the members of the same nation,
Though personally unknown.
This point being once learned, there is only
An artificial barrier to prevent his sympathies extending,
To all people.
-Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1871*

Introduction

The operational metaphor presented throughout this essay is one of a flowing river with attending tributaries, where the river is human history and the tributaries flowing into the main stream ideas of technical and moral significance continually defining and redefining the nature of being human within (and absent from) community, culture and civilization. The flowing river is beautiful, terrible and never ending. The Garden of Eden is a dim memory and so like the journeys depicted in Homer's "Odyssey" and Virgil's "Aeneid," we look to go home again or build a new home in a new place. But the questions remain: what is our identity? Who are we?

Perhaps, like Darwin, I'm an optimist. But from where does such optimism come? From literature? From stories told within families? Certainly not from history. The history normally told of the human past is filled with pain and blood, interspersed with short periods of peace and progress. It has been argued by many that at any time in human history, you can count at least fifty wars going on across the globe semiannually. In this essay, we will take a closer look at some periods of tragedy and triumph, with an eye on the changes in human intellectual constructions and the philosophical questions raised, particularly as people attempt to bend the arc of history toward morality. From my evidence, that bending is real in that people have over the last 5,000 years continuously behaved in a more harmonious way toward both the environment and each other (see for example, Low, Bobbi, 1996; Edgerton, Robert, 1992; LeBlanc, Steven, 2003).



But today, given the scale of populations, the advent of AI and the awakening of a new and untethered/contentless tribalism, it's time to admit that we are at the end of an epoch that we once called the age of reason.

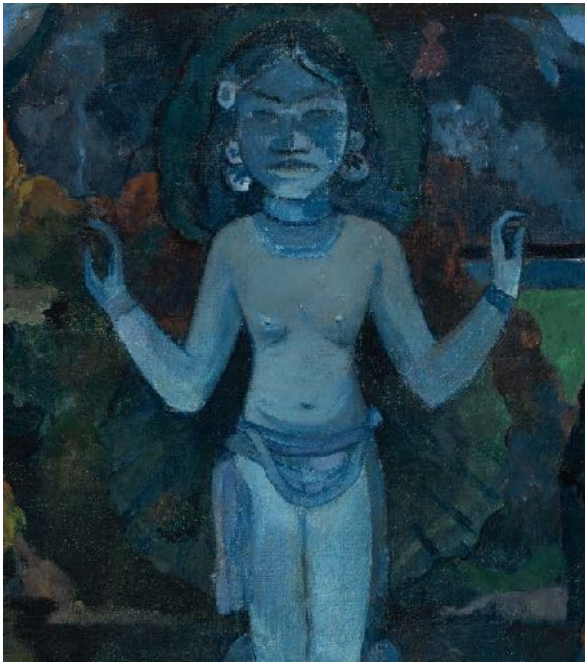
The end of a philosophical epoch comes when we run out of real questions and engage in philosophizing meaningless arguments about the difference between entertainment and amusement, between liberal and conservative or between needs and wants. More importantly, as we can plainly see today, all philosophical periods confront the second law of thermodynamics – everything is (always) going to hell. As an aside, it is the case that natural entropy is tied to gravity (a closed system) and has been increasing over millions of years, foreshadowing the end of earth and our solar system. Philosophic epochs are not tied to gravity, as they have the potential to be open systems, but are tied to the natural desire of the human being to be in community, as well as the ability to create or destroy community. The second law applies to the destruction of community and is fixed to the vicissitudes of the human spirit that complements “the natural human animal.”

At such “times between the times,” as we are living through today, our natural selves demand a correction in our cognition so we can create a new philosophical system that attempts to expand freedom of will and an inclusive understanding of nature, community and reason.

As an example of this cognitive correction and while there are many such examples throughout time and place, we will look at such a time in the 18th century – what was called, in Europe, the Enlightenment, the time of the scientific revolution, the Age of Reason because it is that cognition of reason that has pretty much been destroyed. But first things first.

Two Hundred Years of Religious Wars

A new technology, the printing press, opened the 16th century and from 1517, when Martin Luther published his 95 Theses attacking the Church's sale of indulgences, the Protestant Reformation and then the Catholic Counter-Reformation began throwing Europe into two hundred years of religious conflict, war and profane ideologies. From the early 1500s until the late 17th century and with the continuing growth of Protestantism, religion often became a proxy for political conflicts, as leaders used religion to extend political power. This logically



led to a great deal of social instability, as religious conflicts coincided more and more with social, economic and class tensions. Even issues like inflation and immigration took on a religious overtone. With religion as your path to all truth, you didn't need evidence or reason. You could just insist that it is God's will. This worked well with uneducated people and with those whose chief motive was to further self-interest or help build political stability to serve the powerful few. However, "blind faith" always leads to certainty and intolerance, which leads to violence, persecution and war. And with the second law in full control, Europe had aggressions and bloodshed. Almost one-third of the population died in "religious" wars. After decades and decades, these wars did get tiresome, but not until the Age of Reason – the Enlightenment

– helped many see the absurdities in blind faith and certainty. Faith and reason only work with uncertainty, as if you are certain about everything, there is no need for faith. Most church leaders could not understand this simple truth. It took empiricism and reason to clear the mind and awake people from a long nightmare.

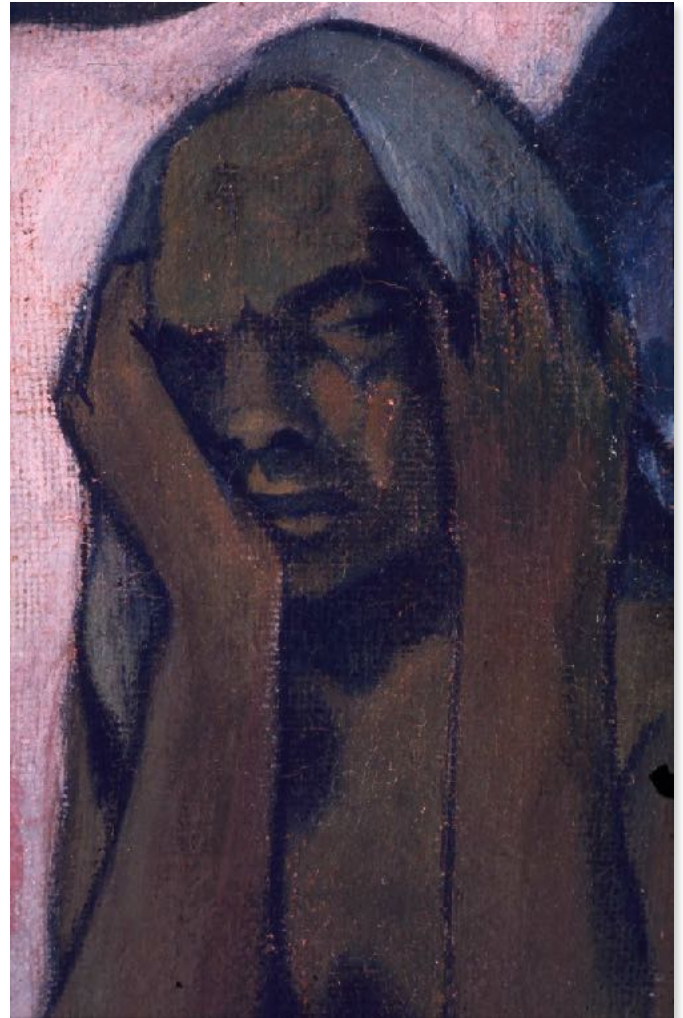
Nature's God and the Tension between Reason and Blind Faith

With the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th, there was great push back on science and reason. There was the Second Great Awakening (1800–1840), Romanticism (1800) and most influential, a book read around the world, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). By the late 1820s, it became a worldwide best seller and sparked conversations about science run amok. The arguments among reason, empiricism and religious faith continued throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and well into the 21st. At different times, different worldviews held sway. But the entropy of scientific thought allowed illogical and illiberal minds to take over political thought and economic policies. Twenty-five years into the 21st century, we are still only dimly aware of the end of the Enlightenment and now must turn our attention to crafting a new philosophic epoch that will not separate reason from nature, but develop a synergy between them.

Toward a New Global Ethic: Connecting Human DNA with Human Freedom and Inclusion

What happens at the beginning of a new philosophical epoch? Simply stated, ideas from the wisdom of the past are paired together. Here, we will pair human nature with ideas that are fundamental to freedom, inclusiveness and stewardship.

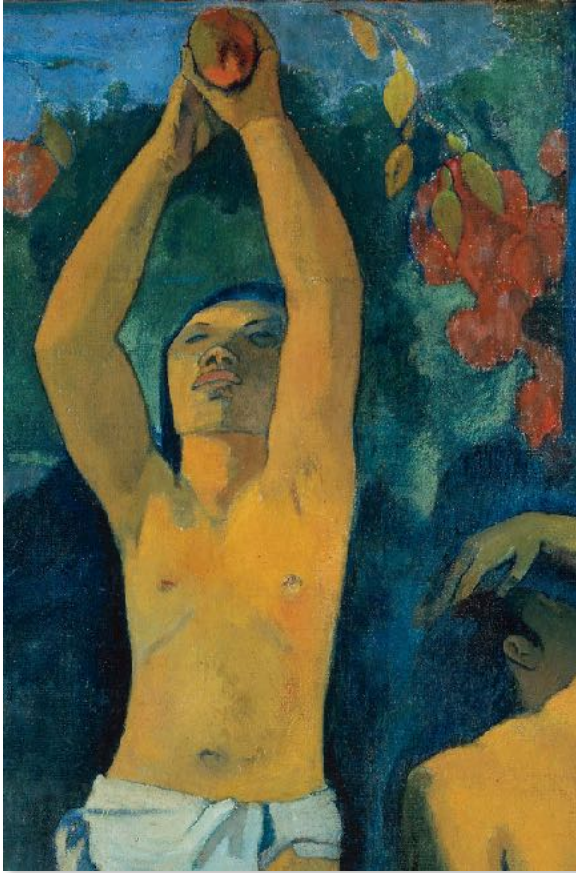
It is tricky to talk about human nature, our DNA and our record of benevolence, accounting for the influence of the community and the values that drive it. If the human being is “hard wired,” what is he or she hard wired to do? To think? To be? There is no evidence of this creature because an individual living apart is not and never was. We might say that an argument made without evidence can be dismissed without evidence. We also know that survival is based on belonging to a “community.” But if that community becomes a closed system, it will atrophy. The community only survives if individuals are moral agents made possible through being free (free will), innovative and willing to join in concert with others to create community harmony, with the understanding that “I’m better off if the community is better off.” This is the genius of the liberal (arts) society, where civic virtue is nurtured.



As we look around the world today, we see dictators, oligarchs, deniers of science and religious teachings and individuals simply interested in self-amusement, the accumulation of wealth and power and proud of their lack of learning. They simply kick problems down the road, leaving their children to “suck-it-up.” As a result, in our schools, we are witnessing more and more children who have little interest in learning and more interest in style rather than character. To be sure, there are many, many people who want to be good neighbors and citizens, but you can only be a citizen within a democratic, inclusive, merit-oriented and peaceful society. A felon cannot govern a republic and a leader of character cannot govern a community of felons or anti-civic virtue individuals. It should be clear that *quality of life*, understanding that humans are social, as well as rational animals, is based on both human nature and the constructed community of virtue. Virtue is taught by the community and is learned by citizens. From this synergy, we study, debate and implement standards of knowledge, behavior and of governance.

A Framework for Developing a New Global Ethic: Concept and Their Flow

The engaged concepts of a new philosophic epoch and its attending ethical framework cannot be created out of whole cloth. It must rely on human DNA augmented by the changing context and content of psychological evolution and our ancestors' actions and reactions to the

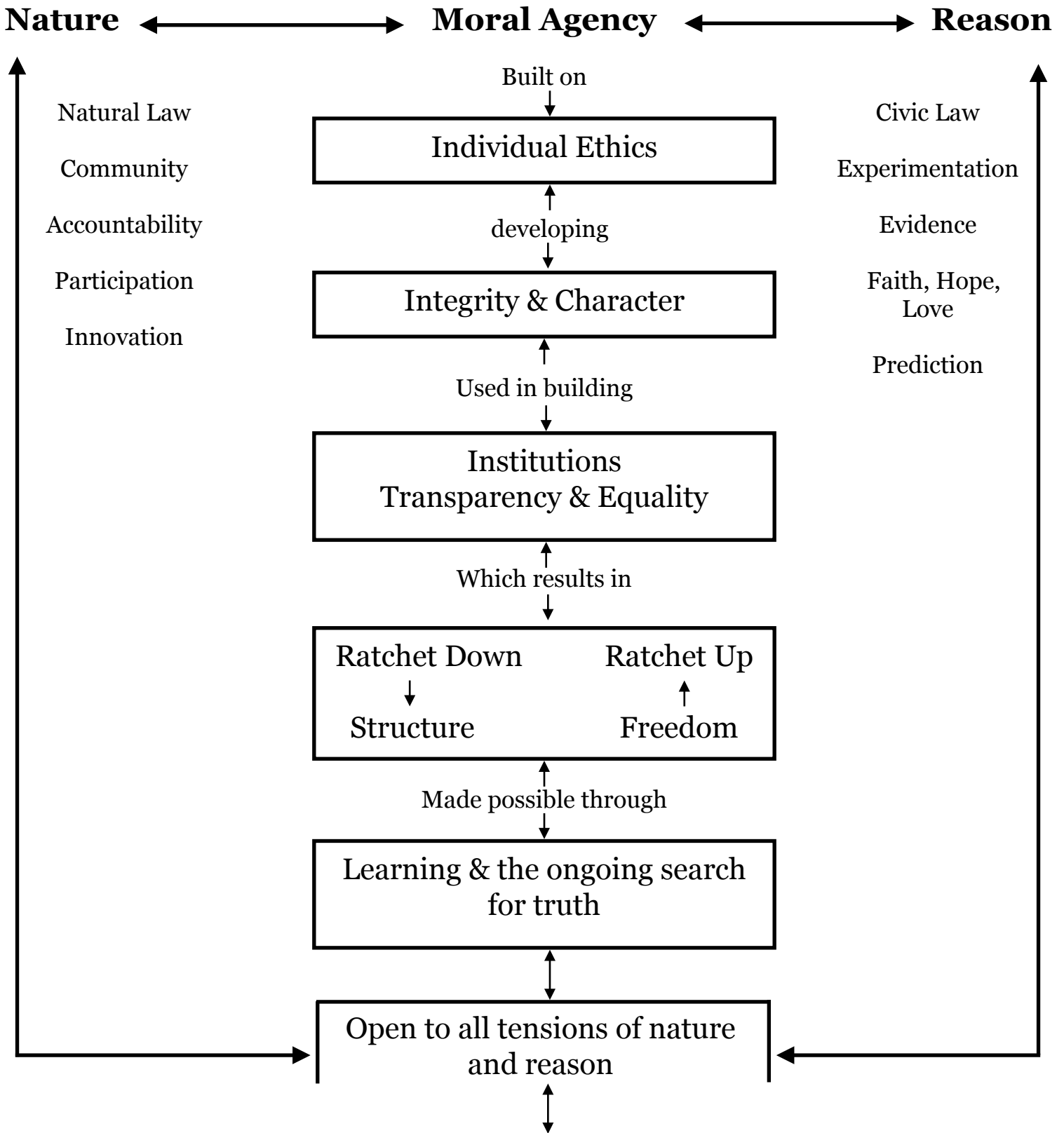


building and destroying of community. Over time and the study of many cultures regarding how values of personal autonomy, rule of (community) law, attempts at justice and equality, more successful attempts at monied and political dictatorships, education and innovation, closed and open societies, we know that there are moral sensitivities that work. I will list the most fundamental ideas from our understanding and go on to place those ideas onto a flowing or dynamic, open system. This system will present and represent the discussion starter for a new global ethic – a new philosophic epoch. What we believe is most basic here are the debates that must ensue over the natural and learned reason/virtues of human beings. Such a basic list would include, but not be limited to: love, aesthetics, truth, justice, equality, goodness and freedom. These concepts form the ethical framework of our discussion. They are the invisible moral superstructures upon which grace must depend. All good things, including the good life, come by grace and grace comes by these basic values and these ideas do not come easily. The creation of a

new epoch is hard work, but in the end, it is worth it. Will we get it right this time? This is the wrong question. The better question is: do we have the courage to dismiss egos and get to our common work?

The following chart/framework brings together the elements of nature and reason in a flow that can, with education, writ large, create a new philosophical epoch and a new ethic.

We start with moral agency as the interrelationship of reason and nature, which is built on individual ethics, which develops personal integrity and character. Character is in play to build institutions with transparency and equality, which results in all institutions ratcheting down structure and ratcheting up freedom. This condition is made possible through education and the ongoing search for truth, which, in turn, is open to all tensions of nature and reason. The system is open! Through interactions and learnings from nature, we are able to understand and use natural law, the good community, accountability/stewardship, participation and innovation. Through the learnings (and behaviors) from reason, we are able use civic law, experimentation, evidence, faith (hope and love) and prediction.



Returning to the metaphor of the river, we see in the above framework the power of flow. This is the operational energy needed to understand how we move to a new philosophical epoch and toward a new global ethic. The head waters of the mainstream are formed by the intersection of nature and reason (see Steven Pinker’s *Enlightenment Now*), while the tributaries add human and natural synergies such as law, experimentation, community, accountability, faith, innovation and prediction. These flow into the main river to form the dynamics of institutions, learning, character, personal ethics and moral agency, the heart of the new global ethic.

Conclusion

*The end of a philosophical epoch comes
with the exhaustion of its motive concepts.*
-Susanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, 1942

Occasionally, a radical break appears in the continuity of time that shakes the foundations of society and its traditional values, declaring those values irrelevant to the vagaries of the present. Those breaks in time are the “times between the times,” one of which we are in now and trying to decide if we should embrace the historical fracture with all its fears and opportunities or ignore it, even at great peril.

Minor breaks in time and value orientations are often related to changes in technology and demographics. Major value transformations and breaks in time, however, are related to changes in relationships. As an example of the latter, consider the time in western history at the end of the 15th century. This period saw the high point of the Renaissance, experiencing the birth pangs of the Enlightenment and the start of the modern global age. Innovative technologies and migration patterns began to point Europe in a different direction, complete with its old set of questions that suddenly needed answers in a new reality. The different and separate worlds of Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas started to move together in awkward, yet irresistible patterns, as food, dress, government, church and business began to change in form and function. All of this notwithstanding, the break in history that produced this time between the times was the realization that questions had to be raised about relationships and their attending values. Consider the questions:

- What is a human being?
- What is my relationship to God?
- What is my relationship to the state?
- What is my relationship to my mother? Father? Children?
- What is my relationship to the earth (the environment)?
- What is wealth? Knowledge? Justice?
- What is a state?
- What is a church? What is a school? What is a family?

When these or other relational or ethical questions are posed, we can be assured that a philosophical epoch is about to end. Before a break in time, the questions need not be raised, for everyone tacitly knows the answers and raising questions would be seen as heresy, deviant behavior or worse. And now, five hundred years later, that epoch is, indeed, ending and we find ourselves entering a new break in time. The old, yet contemporary relationships that we once created with the earth, with the state, with God and with each other and their attending ethical claims have long receded and simply are not working. Our economic well-being is in jeopardy and we don't know why or what to do about it. We watch as our social systems seem

to be breaking down. They aren't working, not because the questions, ethical claims or relationships are inappropriate – not at all. The questions must be asked again, but we need to understand that the knowledge needed for their answers is so different from that time five hundred or even fifty years ago, that a whole new conversation or civic discourse must be started. That discourse might start with issues of energy, healthcare, immigration, war and jobs, but the conversation and debate must focus on relationships and value (virtue) claims. If we can't do that, the republic will not get through this uncertain time. If we can debate and act on these questions in a way that will reclaim our moral authority, we will emerge with our principles and lives intact.

Consider:

- How will we live?
- Where will we live?
- What will our life's work be?
- What is knowledge?
- What is truth?
- What is the highest good of being human?
- What is the proper relationship between the individual and family, God, society and the earth (understanding that there is a reciprocal duty among all of these)?
- What is happiness?

These are not just philosophical questions that would be nice and interesting to discuss in a classroom, in the media or over the internet. These are necessary inquiries that will determine our future. The first three questions, particularly, demand a careful study of morality and the synergy between nature and reason.

I would simply ask that those who can learn, debate and teach the flow of a new philosophic epoch, a new global ethic, look at the open system of moral agency presented here as a discussion starter.

Michael Hartoonian is Associate Editor of Pegasus.

(Please note: The Caux Round Table 2025 Global Dialogue, held April 11-13 in Arlington, V.A./Washington, D.C., will be on a new global ethic. Additional information will be available shortly.)

The logo features a thick, black, hand-painted circular brushstroke that is open at the bottom. Inside the circle, the text "CAUX ROUND TABLE" is written in a teal, sans-serif font, and "FOR MORAL CAPITALISM" is written in a black, sans-serif font below it.

CAUX ROUND TABLE FOR MORAL CAPITALISM

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