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# Past Answers to Present Problems

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## Part I: Diagnosis

When was the last time that you read an article or saw a story on the news about the long-term promising outlook of the American economy or the tremendous efficiency of the United States government? Have you ever seen such a story? I suspect that the answer to the first question was “a long time ago,” and the answer to the second was “I don’t think so.”

Clearly, the United States of today is riddled with problems. These problems come in a variety of forms and degrees, yet all of them can be classified into two broad categories. On one hand are governmental/economic problems, and on the other are moral problems. In this diagnosis of America’s ills, I will first highlight several of the governmental/economic woes. Then I will present a sample of America’s moral problems.

First of all, let us consider the United States’ Gross Domestic Product.

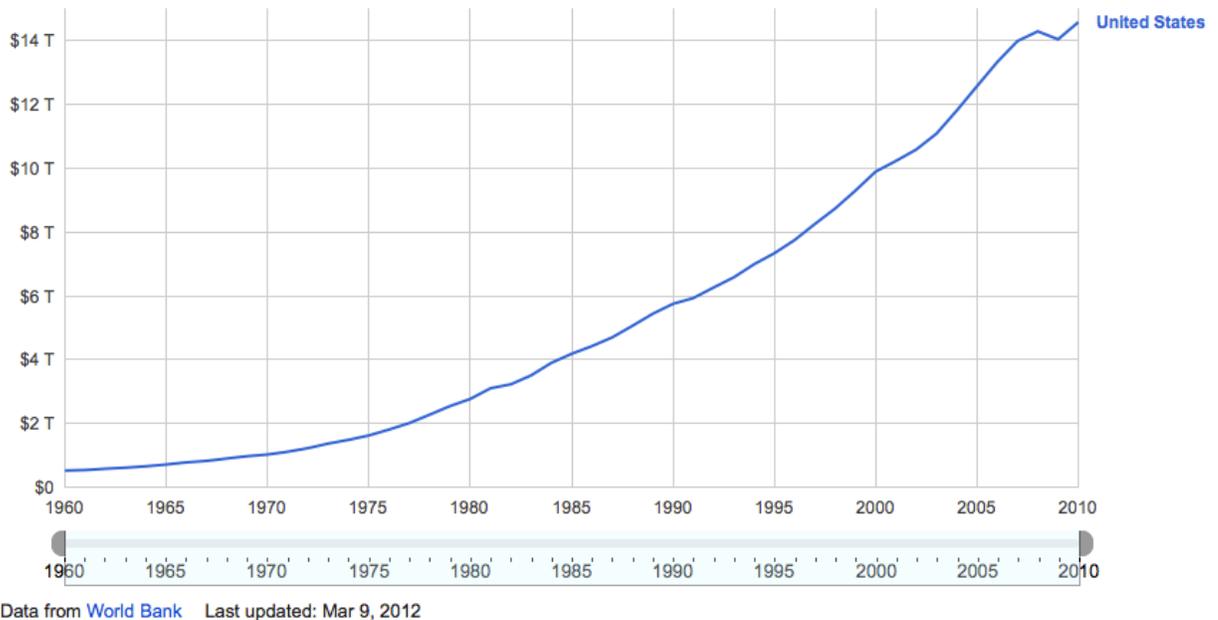
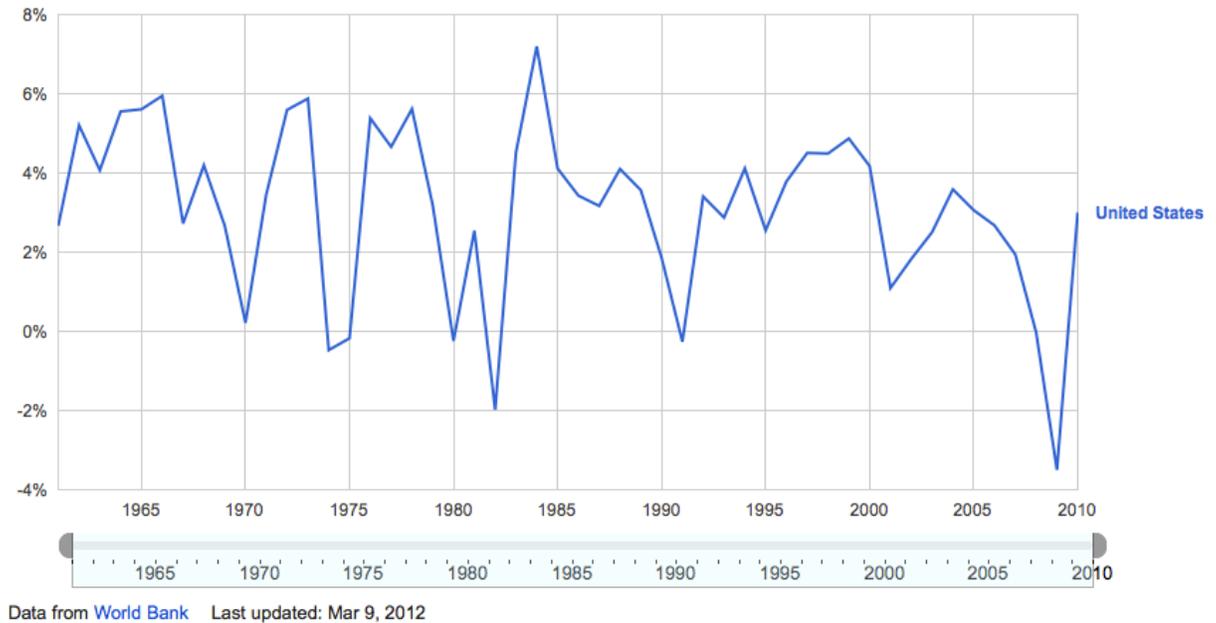


Figure 1: GDP

This chart constructed by data from the World Bank shows the development of the United States’ GDP from 1960 to 2010. With the exception of the 2008 financial crisis, the trend is unmistakably one of growth. Based on this information alone the United States’ economy would

appear to be healthy. But consider this second chart, which shows the rate of growth of America's GDP as a percentage. In this graph below, the percentage change of real GDP is compared to the previous year. Furthermore, the data are adjusted for inflation.

Figure 2:  
Percent Growth  
of GDP



This second graphic demonstrates that America's GDP is not an invincible juggernaut ever climbing upwards, and that at multiple times the total amount of goods and services produced in America actually decreased.

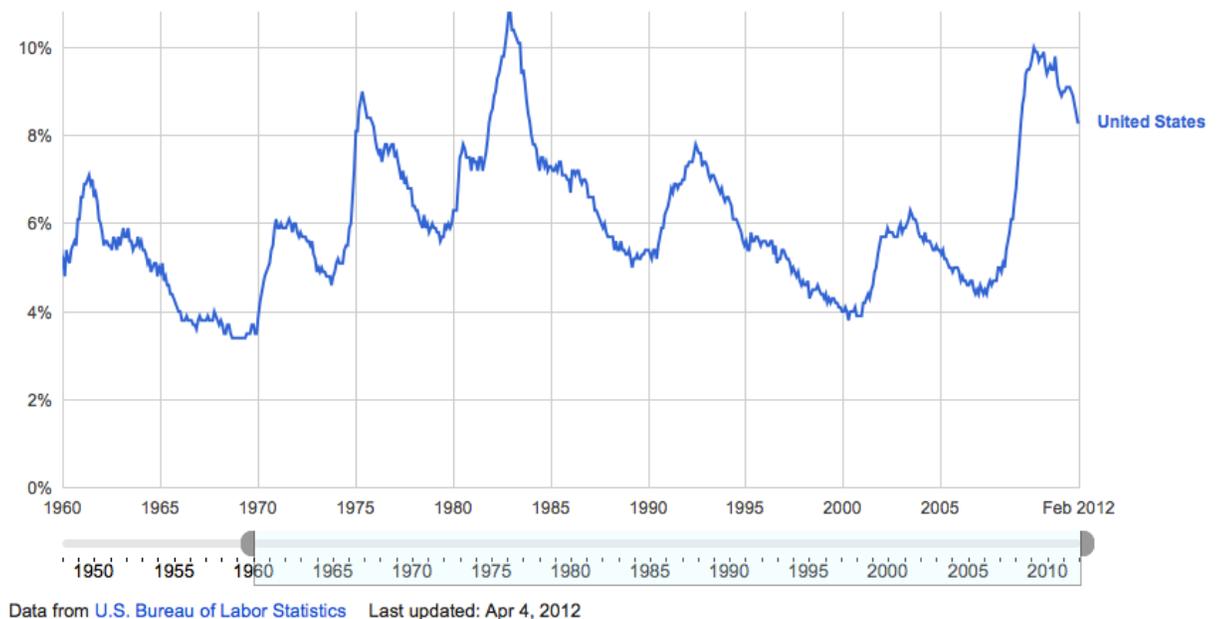
The message that I wish to convey by presenting figures 1 and 2 is that America's economic growth is not impervious to struggle. Take for example the 2008 financial crisis, which led to four straight quarters of negative GDP growth. This crisis indicated that recessions are not a thing of the past, but rather an extant reality.

So far I have put forth a view of America's economy from a supply-side perspective. In other words, measuring America's economy in terms of GDP and GDP percentage growth emphasize the status of producers and companies. By looking only at these factors, one would be inclined to think that America is generally prosperous, which in many ways it is. However,

levels of prosperity vary greatly among Americans. At this point, I turn to the economic state of workers.

When considering the wellbeing of workers, one must consider how many persons are actually working. Figure 3 shows the U.S.A.'s unemployment rate as a percentage of the population in the labor force. Persons not counted as being in the labor force include both the population that is confined to prison and what the Bureau of Labor Statistics calls discouraged workers. Discouraged workers are individuals who have stopped looking for work because they are too old, too young, too undertrained, or believe no work is available in their field (BLS).

Figure 3:  
Unemployment



The omission of the prison population and discouraged workers from the unemployment rate is significant, for if these groups were added to the figure unemployment would appear to increase. Indeed, the United States' high prison population is a primary reason why our unemployment rate is artificially low. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in 2004 the United States imprisoned 719.1 out of 100,000 people. Compare the American rate to a

European rate, like Spain where in 2004 only 139.7 people out of 100,000 were imprisoned. With such a disparity in prison population, the fact that Spanish unemployment soared to 23.6% in 2012 (Pylas) while the United States' rate remained under 10% in the same year makes a lot of sense.

Not only is the unemployment level indicative of the working class's struggle, but so too is the inequality of income in America. The periodical *The Economist* constructed the following graph with data from the Congressional Budget Office. Two things are of special import in figure 4. First, the data shows after-tax income. This means that even with the United States' progressive tax code, the wealthiest Americans still receive far more than the rest of the population. Secondly, as *The Economist* article explains, “[t]he biggest component of the increase in after-tax income for the top one percent is ‘business income’ as opposed to income from labour or investments (*The Economist*).” In other words, rich Americans are not investing their profits in enterprises that would benefit workers. Indeed, wages are increasing at an abys-

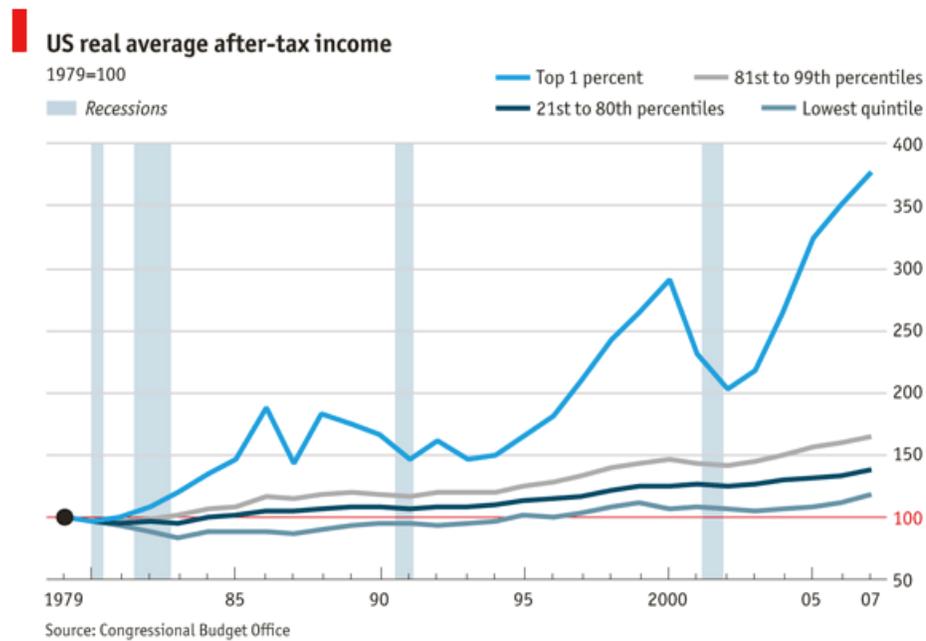


Figure 4:  
Income  
Inequality

mal pace, barely keeping ahead of cost of living expenses or even falling behind them. In fact, from July 2010 to July 2011, the Consumer Price Index was 3.6%, whereas companies on average planned to increase wages only 2.8% (Coombes). With the CPI outpacing wage growth, workers will have even less real income.

The American education system is also far from ideal. One problem with the education system is that too few Americans receive anything beyond a basic education. Nearly 25% of Americans do not graduate high school (Muskal). Clearly the number of Americans receiving the education necessary to strengthen the economy is insufficient. In fact, if only 10% of American children failed to graduate from high school, the GDP would have grown by \$6.6 billion (Muskal). Not only are too few American children receiving education, but those who do consistently perform more poorly than their peers from foreign countries. According to a report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, American fifteen-year-olds ranked “14th out of 34 OECD countries for reading skills, 17th for science and a below-average 25th for mathematics (Huffington Post).” This news is beyond discouraging; it is frightening. How can America expect to excel in the global market with a mere averagely educated populace?

The anemic performance of American students needs to drastically change in order to fix the next problem, namely infrastructure. Consider the following figures. First, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers, from 1980-2005 automobile vehicle miles traveled, or VMT, increased 94% and truck VMT increased 105% (ASCE). However, highway lane-miles grew by only 3.5% (ASCE). This discrepancy means more congestion on American roadways, which in turn means wasted time and fuel. This waste should not be underestimated. Rather, one must appreciate the significance of the fact that “Americans spend 4.2 billion hours a year

stuck in traffic at a cost of \$78.2 billion a year in wasted time and fuel costs--\$710 per motorist (ASCE).” Furthermore, according to the Department of Transportation, 12.1% of the bridges in America are structurally deficient, and 14.8% are functionally obsolete (ASCE). Regarding energy, demand for electricity increased by about 25% since 1990 while construction of transmission facilities decreased nearly 30% (ASCE). As a result, blackouts and power failures are more frequent. Such power failures subtract an estimated 25 billion to 180 billion dollars from the United States’ GDP (ASCE).

Perhaps the gravest problem in the United States (pun intended) is the healthcare industry. The problems of American healthcare are well summarized in the documentary film *Escape Fire: The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare* directed and produced by Matthew Heineman. The documentary describes how in the United States, we do not have a healthcare system so much as we have an illness and injury treatment system. In other words, there is little to no emphasis on preventative medicine and lifestyle changes in American healthcare, yet nearly 75% of all healthcare expenditure in the USA goes to treating preventable diseases (Heineman). While the lack of preventative care may seem surprising, the fact that Americans pay \$300 billion annually on pharmaceutical drugs alone, not to mention surgeries and scans, shows why the broken system we have has endured (Heineman). Basically, we have a for-profit system in the United States, and as a result private insurance companies do what they can to maximize profit, not the health of their subscribers.

Thus far I have endeavored to indicate the United States’ public policy and economic woes. Now I must transition to address several of our nation’s moral woes.

First I will begin by addressing crime in the United States. The table below, compiled by disastercenter.org with data from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports, shows the crime rate in

the United States from 1960 to 1965, and then jumps to the rate in 2010. The trend in all categories is one of increase.

**Figure 5:  
Crime**

| Year | Population  | Total      | Violent   | Property  | Murder | Forcible Rape | Robbery | Aggravated assault | Burglary  | Larceny-Theft | Vehicle Theft |
|------|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|--------|---------------|---------|--------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| 1960 | 179,323,175 | 3,384,200  | 288,460   | 3,095,700 | 9,110  | 17,190        | 107,840 | 154,320            | 912,100   | 1,855,400     | 328,200       |
| 1961 | 182,992,000 | 3,488,000  | 289,390   | 3,198,600 | 8,740  | 17,220        | 106,670 | 156,760            | 949,600   | 1,913,000     | 336,000       |
| 1962 | 185,771,000 | 3,752,200  | 301,510   | 3,450,700 | 8,530  | 17,550        | 110,860 | 164,570            | 994,300   | 2,089,600     | 366,800       |
| 1963 | 188,483,000 | 4,109,500  | 316,970   | 3,792,500 | 8,640  | 17,650        | 116,470 | 174,210            | 1,086,400 | 2,297,800     | 408,300       |
| 1964 | 191,141,000 | 4,564,600  | 364,220   | 4,200,400 | 9,360  | 21,420        | 130,390 | 203,050            | 1,213,200 | 2,514,400     | 472,800       |
| 1965 | 193,526,000 | 4,739,400  | 387,390   | 4,352,000 | 9,960  | 23,410        | 138,690 | 215,330            | 1,282,500 | 2,572,600     | 496,900       |
| 2010 | 308,745,538 | 10,329,135 | 1,246,248 | 9,082,887 | 14,748 | 84,767        | 367,832 | 778,901            | 2,159,878 | 6,185,867     | 737,142       |

The astute observer will notice that crime increased as the United States' population increased, and may thus be tempted to claim that crime has not gotten worse over the years, but rather has really stayed more or less the same, at least in terms of number of crimes per person. The following table, however, also compiled using FBI reports, shows that with a negligible decrease in the murder rate, the crime index per 100,000 people has in fact increased in the United States over the past fifty or so years.

**United States Crime Index Rates Per 100,000 Inhabitants**

**Figure 6:  
Crime  
Index**

| Year | Population  | Total   | Violent | Property | Murder | Forcible Rape | Robbery | Aggravated assault | Burglary | Larceny-Theft | Vehicle Theft |
|------|-------------|---------|---------|----------|--------|---------------|---------|--------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|
| 1960 | 179,323,175 | 1,887.2 | 160.9   | 1,726.3  | 5.1    | 9.6           | 60.1    | 86.1               | 508.6    | 1,034.7       | 183.0         |
| 1961 | 182,992,000 | 1,906.1 | 158.1   | 1,747.9  | 4.8    | 9.4           | 58.3    | 85.7               | 518.9    | 1,045.4       | 183.6         |
| 1962 | 185,771,000 | 2,019.8 | 162.3   | 1,857.5  | 4.6    | 9.4           | 59.7    | 88.6               | 535.2    | 1,124.8       | 197.4         |
| 1963 | 188,483,000 | 2,180.3 | 168.2   | 2,012.1  | 4.6    | 9.4           | 61.8    | 92.4               | 576.4    | 1,219.1       | 216.6         |
| 1964 | 191,141,000 | 2,388.1 | 190.6   | 2,197.5  | 4.9    | 11.2          | 68.2    | 106.2              | 634.7    | 1,315.5       | 247.4         |
| 1965 | 193,526,000 | 2,449.0 | 200.2   | 2,248.8  | 5.1    | 12.1          | 71.7    | 111.3              | 662.7    | 1,329.3       | 256.8         |
| 2010 | 308,745,538 | 3,345.5 | 403.6   | 2,941.9  | 4.8    | 27.5          | 119.1   | 252.3              | 699.6    | 2,003.5       | 238.8         |

These disturbing data irrefutably demonstrate that people in the United States have serious ethical shortcomings. Yet crime is not the only indication of a morally impoverished society. In fact, crime in many ways is merely a symptom of the economic woes mentioned above as well as the familial issues mentioned below.

Families are the ultimate foundation of a strong society. The more united and strong a family is, the more united and strong a nation will be. In the United States, however, family bonds are rapidly deteriorating. Though the qualitative effects of weak family bonds cannot

easily be measured, the divorce rate can. According to the Center for Disease Control, there are 6.8 marriages in the United States per 1,000 people. Frighteningly, 3.4 out of the 6.8 marriages end in divorce. That means that a marriage has a 50% chance of ending in divorce. All these divorces have consequences on human lives, and separated husbands and wives are not the only ones to suffer. The children are the ones who suffer most.

Clearly, the United States has plenty of problems to fix. Now, as we look with hope and anxiety to the future, we can also look to the past for solutions.

## **Part II: Prescription**

The diagnosis for the United States is grim. Yet our beloved nation is not mortally ill. As remedies to our myriad maladies, we can look to the past for answers. Particularly, certain practices and beliefs from ancient Greece and Rome could be adopted as solutions to our various problems. Admittedly, some practices are more likely to be adopted than others, and some will almost certainly never be accepted in the United States. However, if the policies I suggest were to be implemented, Steven Tozer's framework describes how these policies could filter into American life and eventually become part of daily life.

Tozer's framework demonstrates the reciprocal effects of education, political economy, and cultural ideology on one another. Accordingly, when there is a shift of paradigm in one of these three domains, the other two will reflect that paradigmatic change (Tozer, 2). Being an educator, Tozer makes the case that paradigm shifts are best ushered in through education (Tozer, 10). For when schools inculcate children with new ideas, these children can act on these ideas as they grow (Tozer, 10). Eventually, the children will reach adulthood, and the lessons they learned in school will manifest themselves in a new cultural ideology (Tozer, 10). The new cultural ideology can then reify itself in changes in political economy, some of which will be

enacted in schools (Tozer, 10). Thus the cycle reinforces itself in a process of social reproduction.

Baring this framework in mind, let me begin with proposed reforms to American education. As stated in the prescription portion, American students are struggling in academics compared to their peers in other nations. Obviously, this needs to change. I propose several reforms: lengthened school years, increased teacher base salary with merit based bonus pay, and separation of sports from most schools. However, the most drastic reform I propose is a change in the structure of American education. Currently, most students in America begin their education in kindergarten at an age of five years and continue through the twelfth grade when they graduate from high school at the age of eighteen. During these years, the students receive more or less the same instruction, regardless of what a child's strengths or weaknesses may be. And while a certain amount of education is necessary, I contend that schools should be more geared to addressing individual student's needs and abilities.

The Roman education system serves as one inspiration for my theorized utopian education system. In Roman education, there were three levels of education (Shelton, 103). At the lowest level was the *litterator*, who provided basic instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic (Shelton, 103). At the next level was the *grammaticus*, who refined his pupil's language skills and instructed them in Greek (Shelton, 103). Finally, the highest level to which only a few Romans reached was the *rhetor*, who prepared children for careers in oratory, law, and politics (Shelton, 103). The great merit of this system was that children continued in education only so far as their life and career goals required. Students who did not advance to receive instruction from a *grammaticus* or *rhetor* would continue their education in some sort of vocational training, thereby allowing greater attention and resources to be devoted to those

students who did continue on in formal schooling. Obviously, this system is not perfect, especially as it reeks of elitism. Undoubtedly the inability to pay for higher education prevented many pupils from advancing so far as they might have wished. Furthermore, the breadth of the Roman curriculum was far narrower than a modern American curriculum needs to be. Nevertheless, the Roman model can be adapted.

My proposal is as follows. All children in America qualify for free public education from kindergarten to the eighth grade. Furthermore, average school days would be lengthened by an hour and school years would be lengthened by four weeks. Thus a K-8 education could contain nearly as much instruction as a K-10 education does currently. Moreover, after the eighth grade, all students wishing to proceed to public high school would have to take the Higher Education Entrance Exam, or H3E. This exam would cover science, mathematics, history, geography, literature, and grammar. Students who score in the top 75% percent in all subjects would qualify for admittance to a four-year public high school. Students who score in the lowermost 25% would then have several options: pay tuition at a private or public high school, wait a year to retake the exam in the hopes of earning free admission, or enroll in a vocational academy for four years based on their strengths and skills. Those students who do go to high school would continue to receive a general education, but would also begin enrolling in more specialized classes that would prepare them for a college major.

In addition to structural change in America's schools, I also prescribe curricular reform. Specifically, I advocate teaching American children from a young age the Greek idea *arête* and the Roman idea *pietās*. Informing students of these ideas and encouraging them to act accordingly would help straighten America's moral compass. Indeed, as I demonstrated in the diagnosis, America's crime rate and divorce rate are unacceptably high. But these problems are

only symptoms of a greater illness, namely radical individualism. In the next section, I will use a developmental psychologist's classification to demonstrate the ethical superiority of *arête*, and *pietās* over individualism.

To facilitate my analysis of America's moral shortcomings, I will employ Lawrence Kohlberg's theory about the stages of moral development. Kohlberg's model has three levels, and each level is subdivided into two stages (Crain, 118).

The first level is the preconventional morality level (Crain, 119). In the first stage of this level, people make ethical decisions on a punishment avoidance/reward acquisition basis (Crain, 119). In essence, what is right and wrong is determined by the consequences experienced by the actor. Then, in the second phase, individualism and exchange are the metrics by which a decision's morality is measured. That is to say, at this stage of development, people recognize that their actions influence others, and the rightness or wrongness of their actions is measured on a basis of fair exchange. For example, if I pay \$.99 for a McChicken, a McDonald's employee is obligated to give me my McChicken. Under the same logic, if I gouge out the employee's eye, it would be fair for the employee to gouge out my eye.

The second level is the conventional morality level, the first stage of which is the good interpersonal relationships stage (Crain, 120). At this stage, people "see morality as more than simple deals. They believe that people should live up to the expectations of the family and community and behave in 'good' ways. Good behavior means having good motives and interpersonal feelings such as love, empathy, trust, and concern for others (Crain, 120)." The gap between this stage and stage two of level one is immense, and requires a greater amount of nuanced thinking. For at this stage, people first begin to look at not only observable actions, but at invisible motives as well. The second stage of the conventional morality level is the stage in

which people focus on maintaining social order (Crain, 121). The logic behind a person's ethical reasoning at this stage is basically the same as it was at the first stage of conventional morality. The difference is that the person's horizons have broadened; he or she now appreciates the need for ethical action for the good of the entire community, rather than merely the others with whom he or she directly interacts.

Postconventional morality is the third level of ethical development. In this level's first stage, people really begin to step back and look at the world at a distance. When they do so, they discover that "good society is best conceived as a social contract into which people freely enter to work toward the benefit of all (Crain, 121)." The next stage of postconventional morality is the apex of ethical reasoning according to Kohlberg. At this final stage, people make ethical decisions based on universal principles of right and wrong (Crain, 122).

Now I will use Kohlberg's model, which is typically applied to children as they mature, to categorize nations in terms of these nations' moral development on the basis of their respective national virtue or guiding ideology. Obviously a national value will not be the primary value of every member of a given nation's population. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to make certain generalizations.

In the United States for instance, the preeminent ideology is individualism. By "individualism," I mean a belief that a person's status in life is the result of his or her decisions. In other words, environmental factors like the community in which a person is born and other aleatory factors are not responsible, or are at most negligibly responsible, for a person's health, income, and wellbeing. Instead, individuals are rational actors motivated by self-interest whose decisions determine their quality of life. In fact, "American cultural traditions define personality, achievement, and the purpose of human life in way that leave the individual suspended in

glorious, but terrifying, isolation (Bellah, 6).” In short, people receive from society in proportion to what they give in exchange. Indeed, so many Americans see existence in terms of individualism and exchange, and thus fit the definition of Kohlberg’s second stage of preconventional morality.

The Greek notion of *arête* is noticeably superior to American individualism, though it is not entirely antagonistic to individualism. The main difference between the concepts is that while individualism’s end goal is success for the sake of a single person, *arête*’s end goal is success for the sake of goodness itself. “*Arête*” can be translated as “virtue” or “excellence.” Aristotle explains, “every virtue or excellence both brings into good condition the thing of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well.” In terms of human persons, Aristotle goes on to say, “the virtue of man also will be the state of character which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well (29).” Based on Aristotle’s definition of *arête*, the concept meets the criteria for postconventional morality, specifically the stage that emphasizes universal truths.

In addition to *arête*, the Roman idea *pietās* stands at a higher level of the ethical ladder than individualism. *Pietās* is defined by being “devoted loyalty to family, fatherland, and gods, which expressed itself especially in family life, restricted in its loyalties but concerned for all that made it honest and good (Castle, 111).” Such devotion to the common good reflects an appreciation for the social contract, and thus puts *pietās* on the postconventional level.

If America’s schools inculcated children with these ancient virtues, according to Tozer’s framework, Americans would consequently adopt a cultural ideology that emphasized both

personal excellence and dedication to the community's good. Thus, Americans would be more likely to embrace other reforms inspired by the example of people from the past.

For example, in accordance with *arête*, Americans would be more likely to watch their health. By focusing on personal excellence, people would be more likely to exercise and eat properly. At the same time, by focusing on virtue, people would care more about the health of others. Accordingly, America would adopt a universal healthcare system to cover all kinds of treatments, therapies, and procedures. Such a system could exist as an option along with private insurance coverage.

Another example of worthwhile reform ties in with the idea *pietās*. Specifically, Americans would consider adopting a policy mandatory epebic service for full citizenship (the reader will excuse the mixing of a Roman idea with a Greek practice). In ancient Athens, epebic service was the final stage of a young man's education (Castle, 48). Though epebia was not mandatory until after the Athenians' defeat at Chaeronea in 338 B.C. (Castle, 48), the United States need not wait for such a disaster to adopt the practice.

The epebia could well be adapted for modern America. In my utopian vision, Congress would pass a law defining two levels of citizenship: American and federal. American citizenship would entail all the rights and privileges currently associated with American citizenship (Miranda rights, the right to a speedy jury trial, and other rights spelled out in the Constitution, etc.) with the exception of the right to vote or hold political office. Only federal citizens would have these privileges. In order to gain the right to vote and hold public office, Americans would first need to complete a two-year period of epebic service. In the first eighteen months of this service, Americans would have the option to enlist in the military, join the Peace Corps, or perform community service. Then, in the final sixth months Americans would take classes at a

branch of the National Academy, where they would receive instruction in critical thinking, law, and financial literacy. Afterwards, potential federal citizens would need to pass a basic competency test, which could be retaken if necessary, in the aforementioned domains. Finally, after passing the test, Americans would earn federal citizenship having paid nothing for the training because the federal government would cover all costs. Thus all voters and officeholders would understand and appreciate the value of serving the community since they themselves had done so.

Reforming American education and instituting a system of ephebic service would undoubtedly be expensive endeavors. However, according to the tenets of *pietās*, Americans should support a tax increase to pay for such reforms. Similarly, Americans would readily accept a tax increase to pay for programs to help the poor and provide jobs for the unemployed. Again there is ancient precedent for this; the Romans were no strangers to public assistance programs and wealth redistribution.

The agrarian reforms of Tiberius Gracchus, serve as excellent examples of Roman progressivism. The situation of unequal income distribution in America presently, is frighteningly parallel to unequal land distribution in Republican Rome. According to Appian (I, i), Tiberius Gracchus argued in favor of land redistribution by asking, “whether it was not just to divide common property among the commons, . . . and whether one who had a share in the country was not more likely to be devoted to the common interests.” Admittedly, the particulars of the situation in Rome during Gracchus’ time are dissimilar from those now present in America, but the spirit of the argument and the logic is very much the same. Plutarch’s description (viii) of the law is also equally applicable to the modern context. He claimed that “never . . . was a law directed against such injustice and

avarice drafted in milder and gentler terms. For men who should have been punished as lawbreakers . . . were granted compensation for quitting their unlawful acquisitions so that citizens in need of assistance could have them.”

Another Roman practice from which America could benefit is the grain dole. The grain dole was a welfare assistance program. In 122 B.C. Gaius Gracchus proposed legislation to ensure a low grain cost for Roman citizens (Shelton, 132). Later, in 58 B.C., Publius Clodius Pulcher brought forth a law that allowed Roman citizens to get grain for free (Shelton, 133). The American government should follow this precedent, and expand the food stamp program to ensure all Americans who cannot afford to buy enough food receive a subsidy that will enable them to acquire enough food for a nutritious diet.

Public munificence was not unique to the Roman Republic. The practice continued even into the later days of the Roman Empire. A provision of the Theodosian Code, i.e. XI, 27, 2, stated, “whoever is found without income and having grave difficulty in supporting his children, the privy purse shall save him from ruin. . . For to let anyone die of hunger or be provoked thereby to crime is not the Roman way (MacKendrick, 105).” This law is of particular merit because it recognizes that hunger and want are not isolated problems. Instead, when there is great popular need while a small percentage of the population prospers, crime is an inevitable result. As demonstrated in the first part of this project, the degree of income inequality and the rate of crime in the United States have increased together.

But simply handing people money will not solve anything in the long term. Instead, people must have a means of supporting themselves. In other words, people need to have employment. If the private sector cannot offer enough jobs, the public sector should step

in. In my American utopia, anyone needing a job could enlist in a public works program. The administration of the public works program would then assign these people jobs maintaining America's roads and bridges, much as the Roman army maintained Roman roads (Shelton, 254). This program would accomplish two objectives; it would both lower unemployment and improve American infrastructure.

With a greater number of people employed, more people will have disposable income. Thus spending will go up and businesses will increase their profit margins. In other words, both employers and employees will benefit. Similarly, both the private and public sectors will derive benefit from my proposed reforms. Private enterprises will benefit from a more educated work force and a more affluent consumer body, while the government will benefit from increased tax revenue. Moreover, the nation as a whole will benefit from increased civic activism and ethical behavior. In the next portion of this project I present a fictional story to serve as a case example of how life could be in American Utopia.

### **Part III: Case Study**

Outside the November rains fell and the cold wind blew, but inside Akron City Children's Hospital all was warm and dry. That is, all was dry except for the beads of perspiration on James McGuire's forehead. James, a professor of archaeology at Akron University, had been sweating since his wife Anne woke him that morning. He could not remember exactly what she said to him as they rose from bed, but the perspiration began at the utterance of the word "contraction." James sprinted out of bed at that utterance and rushed his wife to the hospital to await the birth of his son.

When James and Anne arrived at the hospital, a team of physicians immediately escorted Anne to the delivery room. James, meanwhile, stood pacing in the hall outside. Minutes passed, then hours. Eventually a doctor came to inform James that there was a complication with the delivery, and that the hospital staff was preparing Anne for a caesarean section. James was about to deliver a spate of questions; he wanted to ask whether his wife was okay, whether the child would survive, when he would be allowed to see his wife and son.

But one question that was not on James' mind was whether his private insurance would cover the caesarean delivery. In fact, James did not even have private insurance. Instead, James was one of millions of working class Americans who had health coverage from the federal government. Like all other Americans, a portion of James' federal income tax went to pay for Federal Healthcare System, or FHS. James had opted to subscribe to the FHS after he completed his ephobic service and became a federal citizen. Though he had contemplated opting for private health insurance because the private insurance companies could often provide healthcare more quickly, James opted for FHS coverage because of the comfort associated with knowing he would not be denied coverage because of a preexisting condition nor have a lifetime cap to his coverage. James was convinced of the wisdom of his decision to choose FHS coverage after he saw how much he would have needed to pay if he had had private insurance after speaking to the hospital secretary, who informed him that many individuals with private insurance were denied coverage.

The delivery of James' and Anne's son was a success, and they named the child Charles. After his birth, Charles received all the vaccinations recommended by the CDC: DPT, chicken pox, Hepatitis among others. Furthermore, Charles received annual check ups

at the city hospital. All of these vaccinations and check ups were covered by the FHS; James and Anne paid nothing for these services aside from what they paid in income tax.

When Charles was four years of age, he began attending Ridgewood Primary School. Two full time teachers conducted Charles' kindergarten class. In this class were nine other students who learned basic math and English from 8:00 until 3:00 for ten months out of the year. Charles and his peers learned the Roman alphabet, to count in Arabic and Roman numerals, and to perform basic tasks like tying their shoes and performing basic computer operations. At this young age, the children are also granted between thirty and sixty minutes a day for play, of which at least half consists of physical activity. Similarly, children also have a designated time for taking a nap. The naps and exercise were key elements in maintaining the youngsters' health.

One day, Charles had to prepare a word to share with his class that began with the letter "k." He searched his young mind for a good word to share. Among the prime contenders were "key" and "king." Then, once Anne successfully brought Charles home from school and James returned from work, James and Anne asked Charles what he was studying in school, as these parents customarily did. The child dutifully replied that he was studying the letter "k," and that he had been assigned to prepare a "k" word for the next day's class. Charles proffered "key" and "king," hoping to gain the approbation of his father and mother. As Charles hoped, both his mother complimented him on his planned solutions. But then they asked Charles to develop other possible answers. The boy struggled at first, for he could think of no other "k" words. James then asked his son, "What is the word for the opposite of letting something go?"

The lad pondered the question for a while and then replied, "Holding on." His father explained that while Charles' answer was not incorrect, there was a better answer, one which was a single word and began with "k." Charles reconsidered and then exclaimed, "Keep!" James smiled with a paternal pride at his son's achievement as he patted the boy on the back. The father then said that "keep" was another option for Charles to consider. The matter was not over yet, though, and James asked his son whether he wanted to impress his teachers. Charles enthusiastically nodded in the affirmative, and asked his father how he could do so.

James answered "Use the word 'kleptomaniac' for your homework."

But Charles replied, "But what does that mean, Dad?" James explained that a kleptomaniac was a person with an obsession to steal. Having been satisfied with his father's explanation as well as with the euphony of the word, Charles presented "kleptomaniac" to his class and teachers, all of whom were appropriately impressed. From that moment on, Charles fostered a love of words and learning.

After his kindergarten experience, young Charles continued through the grades at Ridgewood Primary School until the third grade. Then, at the age of eight, Charles transitioned to Ridgewood Intermediate School. In the third grade, Charles began his study of multiplication and division, and he advanced to reading short stories and simple novellas instead of children's books. He and his peers also began to study Spanish. At this stage in his education, the number of students in his class had grown from ten to just fewer than twenty as the result of students transferring to Ridgewood from private schools. Charles still went to school from 8:00 until 3:00, though he and his peers no longer had a designated naptime. However, physical activity was still very much a part of Charles'

routine as he attended physical education class every day of the week for at least half an hour. One day at this class, Charles was introduced to the game of tennis.

Charles had heard of tennis before from his father James, but had never actually played the sport. Charles did not outshine his peers in class when they first played tennis, but he could not suppress his wish to do so. Therefore, he asked his parents whether he could play the sport as part of an organization. His parents were thrilled at their son's request, for both were tennis enthusiasts to some degree. Therefore, after sitting Charles down to remind him of the commitment necessary to play for a tennis club, James and Anne enrolled the boy to take lessons at the municipal club. Charles did not play for his school team, for his school had no team. Indeed, no schools below the high school level had sports teams of any kind because of schools' focus on academics over athletics. Nevertheless, Charles assiduously applied himself to improving his tennis skills at the municipal club by evening, while applying equal effort to his studies by day.

Charles continued at Ridgewood Intermediate School until the sixth grade. He then proceeded to Ridgewood Junior High, where he remained until the eighth grade. At RJH he continued his study in the core subjects: math, science, reading, writing, and social studies. By this point in his education, Charles curriculum included algebra, geology, astronomy, and 20<sup>th</sup> century literature. Charles' father had not begun studying these subjects until high school, but the increased time Charles had spent at school enabled him and his peers to advance more rapidly.

At the same time, according to federal policy, Charles also studied music, art, industrial technology, computer science, and foreign language. For some of these non-core subjects, namely music, art, and foreign language, Charles was permitted to choose his

course of study. For his music education, he elected to join the school choir. He struggled at first, for he had to make up ground with many of classmates who had studied music independently. After expressing his concern to his choral director, she asked him whether he would like supplementary instruction in basic music theory so he would not need to drop the course. Charles enthusiastically replied in the affirmative. Then and there Charles and his director set up a schedule for after school supplementary instruction. Charles took the schedule home to his parents, who signed their approval once they ensured that the instruction would not conflict with their son's tennis lessons. Charles took the form back to his director, who in turn gave it to the school principal for final approval. The principal approved the schedule without hesitation, and the next week Charles began to learn about staves, clefs, and meters after school with his instructor. Charles paid nothing for this extra instruction, and his teacher received overtime pay from the district.

Music was not the only new thing for Charles to study at this stage of his life. In the sixth grade he was also introduced to new foreign languages. For the first time, Charles could choose which foreign language he wished to study. He reviewed his options: continue studying Spanish, as many of his classmates did, or choose from French, German, Mandarin, Russian, or Latin. Charles felt as though he had to choose only one from a list of exquisite deserts. Charles asked his father for a suggestion. James considered responding directly to the request, but instead asked his son what his goal was for later life.

Charles paused a long time before answering; he had never given serious consideration to what he was going to do later in life. Charles knew that he wanted to help his people and his country. Such a feeling came naturally to him, for from his first year in school to the present, his teachers had stressed the importance of what they called *pietās*.

Yet he also knew that he wanted to be personally excellent and to develop what his teachers called *arête*. Charles shared these thoughts with his father. James replied to his son with a single word: "Latin."

Thus began one of the most influential experiences of Charles' life. He studied Latin with uncanny zeal. Learning the Latin language was an opportunity for Charles to further his passion for words, a passion which he had held since he learned the word "kleptomaniac." Charles and his fellow Latin students began learning the basics of the language in the first year. Charles was stunned by what he learned. When the Latin teacher informed Charles' class that Latin had five main cases, Charles almost fell out of his chair from the surprise. The boy was so accustomed to English's three cases; the concept of a language with five cases was akin to the concept of discovering silicon-based life in his backyard. From sixth to eighth grade, Charles and his fellow Latin students learned the ins and outs of Latin grammar, developed their vocabulary (both English and Latin), and learned about Roman culture.

Yet even amidst the joy he derived from Latin, choir, tennis, and his other general studies, Charles could not forget his upcoming Higher Education Entrance Exam, or H3E. Like all American school children, Charles was required to pass the H3E after completing the eighth grade in order to proceed to high school. Though he felt confident that he would pass; Charles could not suppress all of his anxiety. He shuddered to think of the shame he would bring to his father, a university professor, if he failed to pass the H3E on the first attempt. Charles and the other students in his class who wished to proceed to high school took the test at Ridgewood Junior High on a Friday in late June, a week after they graduated from junior high.

Charles walked in to RJH at 9:30 to register for the test. As he entered he saw his best friend Tyler, who was the son of a deliveryman and a maid. Although the two boys came from radically different backgrounds, although Charles' parents made nearly twice the income of Tyler's, the two boys both received the same quality education at Ridgewood, both had access to the same public services, and both thought they had the necessary education to advance to high school. Charles and Tyler did not speak when they saw each other; their expressions to each other conveyed their feelings better than words. Then at 9:50 they sat down, at 9:55 the tests were distributed and the instructions were read, and finally at 10:00 the test began. For the next three hours, Charles, Tyler, and thousands of fourteen-year-old children across the United States answered questions about mathematics, science, history, geography, literature, and grammar. Even with the incorporated rest periods for the students, Charles and Tyler were more than slightly wearied after the test, and rushed to the tennis courts to blow off some steam.

Then the rally hard part began: waiting for the results. But by August 1, both boys' families received their results in the mail. Charles' scores were phenomenal; he scored in the uppermost five percent in every category. Tyler's scores in mathematics, science were comparable to Charles', and Tyler's literature and grammar scores were sufficient to enter high school. However, his history and geography scores were insufficient, and ergo Tyler was not granted free to Ridgewood High School. His family had no desire to pay for Tyler to go to a private high school. So instead, based on his high scores in math and science, Tyler had the option of enrolling for an apprenticeship in the county mechanical institute, county computer/technology academy, or county earth science academy. Tyler was disappointed that he had not made the cut for high school, yet he was not downtrodden,

and furthermore the prospect of an apprenticeship was alluring. Tyler had always loved cars and planes, and consequently decided to enroll at the county mechanical institute.

Then for the next four years, Tyler and Charles followed different paths, except for their weekly tennis matches. Charles attended Ridgewood High School, where he and all other high school students continued their education in the core subjects. Charles also continued to study the new subjects to which he had been introduced in junior high, but he began to increase his focus on Latin and choir, and thus had to lessen his attention on computer science and the other non-core subjects. Thanks to his supplemental instruction in junior high, Charles was now at parity with his choral peers. But Charles' true passion continued to be Latin. By now the young man had mastered Latin grammar, and had begun reading the works of poets like Vergil and Ovid as well as historians like Livy and Tacitus. In his senior year, Charles began also to study ancient Greek, which he enjoyed greatly. Though he was saddened to learn that Greek lacked an ablative case.

Four years passed rapidly as Charles finished high school and Tyler worked at the county mechanical institute. Charles graduated as valedictorian of Ridgewood High School, and Tyler twice earned an award for being apprentice of the year during his four-year apprenticeship. The summer following the boys' graduations was an exciting and fun time. Both Charles and Tyler took advantage of the months of free time they had after graduation to play tennis and read, but especially to prepare for their ephebic service, for both boys had decided that they wanted to earn federal citizenship.

Accordingly the boys talked with the municipal ephebic service office to discover in what capacity they could complete their ephebic service. Because of his skill with machines, Tyler asked to be enlisted in the army as fire control repairer, and was informed

that a position was available in the Seventh Air Cavalry. Charles tried to join the same unit as an infantryman, but the official informed Charles that based on his high school grades and H3E score, he should not join the infantry. The official recommended that Charles work in the Peace Corps, but Charles insisted that he join the military. Since the official could not persuade Charles to join the Peace Corps or perform community service, he suggested that Charles work in the Air Force as an air traffic controller based on Charles' proficiency with language and his choir experience. Charles agreed. A few short weeks later, when America's school children were returning to class, Tyler and Charles began training.

Charles went to basic training at Lackland Air Force Base along with other eighteen-year-old young men and women from across America. Some trainees were descended from federal citizens; others were descended from traditional American citizens. But at that base the citizenship of one's parents did not matter; all that mattered was one's dedication to their training and their country. Charles was dedicated to both, as his education had encouraged him to be for years. After nine weeks, Charles training was complete, and he entered the USAF as an airman first class. Charles was then billeted at Incirlik AFB in Turkey, where he performed his duties honorably and according to protocol.

Nothing unexpected happened for months. The United States was not actively engaged in hostilities, so Charles' duties consisted primarily of coordinating reconnaissance missions. He certainly did not feel threatened in the security of the base. Then, one night as Charles slept, a klaxon sounded general quarters. Charles dashed to his station. His pulse and his feet rushed. When he reached his station, his commanding officer briefed Charles' unit.

“There’s been a coup in Saudi Arabia. The military has deposed the Saudi royal family and installed General Ibrahim as sultan. Ibrahim claims to be descended from the Ayyubid sultans, and has even taken the title Ibn-Saladin. General Ibrahim has the support of almost the entire Arabian military, who want to unite the region from ‘Riyad to the Dome of the Rock under the rule of the Great Sultan.’ Most of the Saudi royal family has been killed or taken prisoner; a few princes are holding the city of Buraydah. Our mission is to keep the skies clear over Buraydah until royalist army units can move in and evac the royals. Fighter wings . . .”

Charles’ commanding officer continued to explain the specifics of the mission. Charles responded according to his training. He guided pilot after pilot off the runway, pilots who also acted quickly and effectively according to their training. Because of their rapid response, the mission was accomplished. But the mission to Buraydah was the beginning of something bigger.

The conflict that engulfed the Arabian Peninsula for the next months became known as the Arabian Expansion War. The entire region was engulfed in the conflict. Members of the Ibrahim government encouraged Muslims across the region to join with their Great Sultan. A few extremists responded to this call, including some in Turkey. One day, these extremists detonated a bomb at Charles’ base and attempted to seize the materiel inside. The USAF security forces tried to hold off the attackers, but were rapidly losing ground.

Charles was at his post, and sent a distress call asking for army support. Over the sound of gunfire and explosions outside his control tower, he could make out someone saying, “Standby. Blackhawks inbound.” Minutes passed, minutes that seemed like days. But eventually Charles heard the sound of chopper blades mixed with the sweet hum of 20

mm chain guns. The cavalry had arrived! Charles stayed on the radio and directed the helicopters where to direct their fire. As he did, he observed what looked like a movie outside. He also observed a small column of enemy infantry proceeding toward his position.

Charles told the rest of the airmen in the tower to maintain their position. Then he drew his sidearm and proceeded to the lower levels of the control tower. At the bottom of the stairwell he could hear gunshots; American army forces had moved to intercept the enemy. When Charles tried to size up the strength of the support squad below, an enemy combatant saw Charles and opened fire. Charles took cover and returned fire, but his sidearm did not have the rate of fire of his foe's. Furthermore, Charles was running out of ammunition. He checked his clip – one round left. He checked to see how many enemy soldiers remained at the base of the stairs – one enemy left. He took a deep breath, rolled out from behind his cover, took aim and fired. He missed. Then Charles recalled the words of Aeneas in book II of the *Aeneid*, “*moriamur et in media arma ruamus. Una salus victis nullam sperare salute.*”

So he rushed his opponent. He tackled the foe, and even managed to knock away his firearm, but not before a bullet pierced his leg. A wrestling match ensued as fierce as any *pankration* match, except biting was not prohibited in this contest. Charles felt his opponent's teeth sink into his arm. Simultaneously, Charles' foe felt a bullet sink into his cranium. Charles looked up in surprise. He saw an U.S. Army in the uniform of the Seventh Air Cavalry. Then he heard the soldier shout, “Chuck! Chuck!” It was Tyler. Tyler rushed to Charles' side and began treating his friend's wounds, and said, “You crazy classicist! I know Horace said ‘*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori,*’ but you're crazy! Now shut up

and lie still while I treat this wound.” Tyler need not have told Charles to be quiet; Charles had passed out. When he woke, he was in a military hospital in the U.S. Charles summoned a nearby medic to enquire what happened. She informed him that the base had been held, and that Tyler was safe. She also informed him that the war was over. The American led coalition had defeated General Ibrahim and the Saudi monarchy had been reinstated.

After weeks of therapy he was released from the hospital and honorably discharged from the U.S. Air Force. He then returned to Akron to begin the second phase of his ephobic service, having completed eighteen months of service in the USAF. He attended the Akron branch of the National Academy and studied critical thinking, law, and finance. Tyler and hundreds studied there alongside him, and all were anxious and eager in equal measure to take their Federal Citizenship Test, or FCT.

When he was not at the Academy, Charles began applying to colleges. At his father’s request, Charles applied to Akron University. This was only logical considering that Charles would have a sweet deal in the archaeology department there. But Charles was not entirely committed to the field of archaeology. Indeed, he thought he had spent enough time overseas, and all the sites he would wish to explore were on the Eurasian continent. So Charles also applied to Bowling Green State University because of its reputation for having a good education program. He hoped to attend BGSU and earn a license to teach high school Latin.

The months passed, Charles finished his studies at the Academy, and the date of the FCT arrived. Again, Charles and Tyler met to take a test of tremendous importance. Again, Charles passed. But this time, Tyler passed too. The boys were now officially federal citizens. Later in the week, Charles received news that he had been accepted to BGSU, and

also had received a full tuition scholarship. Not long afterward, Tyler learned that he had been offered an officer's commission in the army, which he accepted.

Charles completed his four years of study at BGSU with joy and enthusiasm. He even managed to graduate with an honors degree, due in no small part to the valuable guidance of his esteemed mentors Dr. Mladjovic and Dr. Peekson. Afterward he found a job teaching Latin at his high school alma mater.

He taught for thirty years and then retired. In this span, James and passed away. Charles gave them funeral rites and mourned their passing. Also in this span Charles married and had children, whom he reared in the fashion that James and Anne had reared him. Charles' sense of *pietās* demanded that he rear his children and pass on the traditions of his ancestors and the faith of his forefathers. Then in his retirement, Charles continued to play tennis as well as study classical civilization, world literature, and history; his sense of *arête* demanded nothing less. Finally, at the age of seventy Charles McGuire died.

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