

The official newsletter of  
Fellowship of Reason, Inc.



## The Nature of Evil

By  
Dan Barber  
(Adapted from October 2006 Oratory)

The topic I have chosen for October's Oratory is appropriate for the Halloween season—the nature of evil. The British novelist Joseph Conrad wrote: "The belief in a supernatural source of evil is not necessary; men alone are quite capable of every wickedness."

There are two types of ethical systems, one is emotional based, and the other is reason based. The *normative* school of ethics says that moral rules help to support your real life, that is, if your life is your highest value. I claim that using the term "Evil" has no supportive benefit to anyone's life. So, to examine the concept of evil and its attributes, and to understand how those attributes work, works to serve our lives. The opposite of normative ethics is meta-ethics, which states only what one ought to do, giving no real reasons as to why. This is the fundamental difference between the religious and the rational approach to ethics. The term Evil is left over from a meta-ethical system—revealed ethics from an unknowable, higher authority. Such a system is designed to serve that higher authority, which really just serves the group that invented it in the first place.

We freely use the term Evil, when we feel we have no rational explanation for why something is harmful to our life. It just feels very wrong. We can examine that

feeling making it useful. We can, in effect, take responsibility for the feeling.

Here is my working definition of Evil: "Evil is the attempt to capture control of an individual by gripping onto an unknown value that is held by that individual unconsciously. The individual is unaware of the unknown value's manipulative potential and its actuality."

Let's pull that statement apart: I say, "Evil is an attempt," meaning it doesn't always work. But, it works some of the time because the person receiving the message agrees at some subconscious level. That is what makes this tricky.

How do you *grip an intrinsic value*? Well it has to be an unconscious value and that is what makes it vulnerable. If you are conscious of a value, like say your child, no one could possibly use that child against you with your consent. That is what is happening in the case of an unconscious value. We are giving our consent when something leads us in a direction that might not be in our own best interest. We are allowing the abuse.

For entertainments sake, let's look at the classic story of **Peter Pan** for a clearer demonstration of this principle. What was Peter's highest subconscious intrinsic value? Eternal youth. Does that desire match any known reality? No. Thus, it becomes a constant internal struggle to maintain the deception. How is Peter manipulated because of it? Captain Hook "the evil one" garners his full attention and engages him in a life of

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war. Peter is actually convinced he is fighting a noble battle. Wendy his true love, his passion, the one who represents all the good things in life, gets little or no attention.

What is the nature of this “hook” that has captured Peter’s attention? I claim it is the same nature concerning the concept Evil. Both are unnatural, and are man-made to replace something much more effective for the individual’s life—the *human hand*, the human hand that was lost due to willful disregard for nature’s rule: “Don’t mess with the Crocodile!”

What are nature’s rules? The human being, unlike all other animate creatures, does not have a code of ethics built into his nature, so he must intentionally build himself a code of living, based on reality, a code of ethics. Alternatively, he must automatically default to a Never-Never-Land code that becomes eventually a code of death for him.

Peter was the boy of Wendy’s dreams, not of her reality. She was better connected with reality thus could not stay with him.

The Fellowship of Reason is dedicated to helping build a code of life based upon reality. **We are “The Fellowship of Wendy’s World.”** Growing up and maturing is of great importance here in the **Fellowship of Wendy’s World.** And, in order to do that effectively, we must all examine the biases we each hold that attract us to our relationships, or attract us to fantasies that are not in our best interest as a human adult. Honesty is our best tool to work with, when reality is the territory in which we live. Honesty is a tool that is most effective in dealing with reality. Dishonesty is most effective as a tool of war.

Ayn Rand said that the war is

between the individual and the collective, so let’s examine if that is true here, too? Captain Hook and his crew are banded together by fear. **Playwright Marcus Stern** had this interesting thing to say about the fear theme in Peter Pan: the theme is “reaching out to people that you love or need or want, the fear that is involved in that, and the recalcitrance and reticence that comes from that fear.” He sees almost all the characters—Peter and Wendy, Mr. and Mrs. Darling, Peter and the Lost Boys, even Hook and the pirates—as reaching out tentatively and then pulling back in some fashion. **“They’re both afraid that they’re going to be abandoned and afraid that they’re going to be embraced, and since those are basically the only two possibilities, it becomes a frightening proposition. It’s just like real life.”**

Evil must be the primary weapon used by the Pirates. It is not surprising that we use the same sword against the worst atrocities known to man, all those collectivist’s atrocities we are so familiar with, those “evil” empires.

How do pirates or collectivists, use the concept of evil for their own benefit? Same way the individual does, by playing to the immature peoples fears as a motivational tool, Pirates, Religions, Politicians, Hugo Chavez! It’s frightening when it works on so many adults!

Let’s look back at the relationship between Captain Hook and Peter. A good example of this relationship in action is the status of our current political parties’ behaviors. The Democrats and the Republicans, both with weapons drawn, search for each other’s weaknesses. Both compete for control of the imaginary Never-Never land, in total disregard for its inhabitants and the development of those inhabitants,

### About the name “The Eudaimonist”

A eudaimonist (pronounced “yoo-DIE-mon-ist”) is one who believes that the highest ethical goal is individual happiness and personal well-being. The term is derived from the ancient Greek word eudaimonia, which means, roughly, “well-being.”

### Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the columns appearing in this newsletter are those of the author and not necessarily the views of the organization. The Fellowship of Reason, Inc speaks only through its Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, and the actions taken by the Board of Trustees as a board and recorded in the minutes of the corporation.

**Fellowship of Reason, Inc.****Mission Statement**

The Fellowship of Reason® is dedicated to the personal flourishing of our members through reason.

**Fellowship of Reason, Inc.** is a Georgia nonprofit corporation and a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation

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## FOR Merchandise

The mug you have to have.

FOR coffee. FOR tea. FOR a friend.

Mugs are \$6 each or 2 for \$10.



FOR Polo Shirts and T-shirts are also available. Members Price is \$25 for Polo Shirts and \$15 for T-Shirts.

Prices include domestic shipping, inquire for international shipping.

Contact us at any FOR function (see page 9)

Questions? info@fellowshipofreason.com.



## Notice of Annual Meeting

**Bylaw III, G, 1:** "The members of the corporation shall meet annually on the first Sunday in November following the regular monthly Forum to elect a Board of Trustees. Members as of September 1 (the record date within the meaning of Ga. Code Sec. 14-3-707) preceding the annual meeting shall be entitled to notice of this meeting in writing at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Notice contained in the monthly newsletter mailed in September shall be deemed sufficient notice of the meeting."

Please take notice that the members of the Fellowship of Reason shall meet on **Sunday, November 5, 2006** immediately following FORum at the NWUUC. Among other business, the members will elect a new Board of Trustees. **Nominations** for positions on the Board of Trustees shall be received on Sunday, **October 1, 2006**, immediately following FORum at the NWUUC.

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both intentionally sacrificing the individual and a system to develop the healthy individual, at any cost.

We can whine all we want about the corruptions of the pirates, priests, and politicians. But, in effect, by our acts of complaining, we are in fact enabling the very system we dislike. We are drawing our little swords and proving we are not mature enough to run our own lives effectively, thus needing the collective to do it for us. Thus, the only effective chance we have is to examine the very reasons we are hooked into the fight. What emotional triggers are being played upon? What things within us are in fact manipulating us to act, vote, and support the very things that imprison our nature? **Why do we cut off our hands and replace them with hooks?** How are we kept in an arrested state of development? Why are we virtually helpless to think and act in our own best interest?

These questions are why a group such as ours is uncomfortable for many—there doesn't seem to be a purpose, an external enemy against whom to wage war. Many people want us to be an activist group, drawing swords, setting sail in the direction of the perceived enemy, shooting off cannons, making a lot of noise in the community, which we won't. Why? The enemy is within. The enemy is all the supernatural junk that is still left over in our training, the stuff that still defaults to calling things evil. We are using leftover supernatural concepts to sort out our real every day dilemmas. To recognize when this happens and why it happens is to be set free of the bondage these concepts have on our minds, thus on our lives. It's easy to reject what others say, but it is not easy to reject what our own minds are *trained* to

say. It takes *retraining*. It takes examining words, the words we automatically use to define our reality. Words are the handle that we have on reality, so the words we use are first priority in changing our reality.

One of Theresa's favorite quotes goes like this: **"Thoughts become words, words become actions, actions become habits, habits become character, character becomes your destiny."**

Consider the common slogan; "Money is the root of all Evil." Here is an example of evil being used to steal your individuality, the very value that the sum total of your life has produced. Imagine the bar that could be raised if our leaders said this instead: **"Money is a tool that turns up the volume on your character."**

Ayn Rand also used the term Evil a lot, as she connected it with collectivism. I think she used the word to her detriment. It was based on a very emotional position, a very understandable one, too, if you know her history, but a detrimental one to her message. It was her little sword raised up. The consequences of her little sword still haunt her followers to this day and are probably the main reason she has some cult-like followers in the first place, bonding them through fear of inherent evil that supernaturally exists, like Pirate hunters.

It serves us better to define the human needs that collectivism serves within us, so we can relate with those that demand it and become their ally instead of their sworn enemy. Not to help them achieve their goals, but to help them understand why it harms them, for we are all acting out

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## Meaning of Membership

### Regular membership:

\$35 per year

### Contributing membership:

\$70 per Year

### Lifetime membership:

\$700

### Contact Information

To talk to somebody about Fellowship of Reason call:

Chris at 678-585-0406  
Vera at 404-577-7968  
Martin at 770-471-9800  
Dan at 770-831-3010

In order to enjoy the benefits of the Fellowship of Reason, you need not be a member. All of our activities are free and open to the public. A number of non-members regularly participate with us and are most heartily welcome.

Why then become a member of the Fellowship of Reason?

The Fellowship of Reason exists by virtue of the generosity of its members and friends. People you know contribute money, property, services, and time in order that the value we all enjoy continues to exist. The services by performers at FORum, by executive committee members, by hosts and hostesses, and by planners of events are vital to the existence of FOR. Those volunteer services are, in fact, FOR.

Membership is, simply, a clear statement that you wish the Fellowship of Reason to continue to exist. Membership is not the only way to make this statement. Some non-members are generous contributors of money, property, and services. In fact, we all benefit by the mere attendance of non-members at FOR events.

If you want FOR to continue to exist, won't you clearly say so by becoming a member today?

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of self-preservation ultimately. Some just happen to think the self they are preserving is in the after life. But, they too realize that they need this life first.

I had an interesting conversation with a Devout Christian the other day about this, and after explaining some things, he excitedly agreed that if God created us and gave us the control over our self, so best service to God is to take care of that self. No conflicts here.

Where does this childish fear that creates the need come from? The greatest enemy of the collectivist mindset is the individual's ability to build healthy, happy, win-win relationships. Thus, it behooves those with the collectivist mindset to throw a wrench into the system. We are kept in a state of fear that if we reach out we will get our hands whacked off.

Lastly, I would like to demonstrate how the hook works within us. If I were to personally address each and every one of you individually, and say, "I think you are a good person worthy of a good life." What

is your immediate response in your head? Do you agree? Do you reject? Why? Do you not feel worthy of a good life? If not you, then who does? Is your instant response based in reality? If yes, then do something about it. Go repair what you have left unfinished so you can once again know you are worthy of a good life. If your response isn't based in reality, than examine that response pull it out play with it, and get rid of it. Throw it away. **Beware; your "not-based-in-reality" response is the bait that the Pirates use to get you to board their ship.**

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Dan's closing quotation:

**"Battle not with monsters  
lest ye become a monster  
and if you gaze into the abyss  
the abyss gazes into you."**

**Friedrich Nietzsche**

## Celebratory Announcement

FOR members Leanna (the Mom), Jim (the Dad), Maggie (the Sister), and Mary (the Grandmother) are pleased to announce the birth on Wednesday, September 20, 2006 at 2:04 p.m. of their beloved Sienna Caprice Ainsworth Ampola weighing 7 pounds, one ounce, and measuring 21 inches long.



**FOR's mission is to promote personal flourishing through reason.**



## Events

For detailed info on all upcoming events, visit  
<http://www.fellowshipofreason.com/calendar.htm>

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### FOR Runners: Sunday 8 a.m.

We meet every Sunday morning at 8 a.m., except FORum Sundays, at the Flying Biscuit on McClendon Avenue. Breakfast at Flying Biscuit follows at 9 a.m. Walkers and joggers welcome!

Martin Cowen coordinator: 770-471-9800.

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### Philosophy Club: 1<sup>st</sup>/ 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.

Philosophy tapes are played to a small private group of friends in a private home on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month. Free.

Sally Hull coordinator: 404-257-0454

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### Fiction Book Club: 2nd Tuesday 7:30 p.m.

Members and friends of FOR meet on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at John and Beth's house. For book selections and more information, go to:

[www.fellowshipofreason.com/fiction.htm](http://www.fellowshipofreason.com/fiction.htm)

Beth Holley coordinator: 404-754-7519

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### Non-Fiction Book Club: 2nd Saturday 11 a.m.

Members and friends of FOR meet 11 a.m. on the 2nd Saturday of every month at Chris and Allison's house. For book selections and more information go to:

[www.fellowshipofreason.com/nonfiction.htm](http://www.fellowshipofreason.com/nonfiction.htm)

Allison Byrd coordinator: 404-372-4089

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**FOR Symphony:** Thursday, November 2 in Symphony Hall. This is the second of six concerts (Stage 1) in the 2006-2007 ASO Concert Season.

Martin Cowen coordinator: 770-471-9800

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### Pub Night: 4th Thursday, 8 p.m.

Members and friends of FOR meet on the 4th Thursday of every month at Manuel's Tavern at 8 p.m. for adult beverages and adult conversation. FOR's next pub night is Thursday, November 30, 2006 at 8 p.m.

Scott Carper coordinator: 404-964-6697

*Join us at  
FORum:*

**1st Sunday at 1 p.m.**  
(Meet, Greet at 12:30)

November 5, 2006

## Birthdays

November 2	Mary A.
November 3	John G.
November 12	Randy S.
November 13	Sky S.
November 22	Pat G.

December 9	Bruce H.
December 18	Deryck M.
December 21	Bill G.
December 22	Frank J.
December 25	Marianna L.
December 27	Leanna A.
December 29	Andrew S.
December 30	Mike B.

# Celebratory Announcements

Do yourself a favor and remember a good thing that happened to you this month:

Please, write it down: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now do the membership of FOR, Inc. a favor by relating this fact during FORum next month!

\_\_\_\_\_



**Fellowship of Reason**

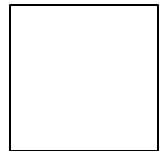
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