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This hermeneutical inquiry is of trust and it addresses the question, “Can we live a day without trust?” The purpose of this inquiry is to deepen our understanding of the notion of trust by situating it within three historical contexts—modern day, the Middle Ages, and Colonial America. The genesis of trust is known to have begun in the Middle Ages due to sweeping economic changes from feudalism to the rise of capitalism. When European colonists arrived in North America they brought with them their concept of trust. Trust was then introduced to the Native American peoples and was used to define the judico-legal relationship with what became the United States government. Again, trust was used for economic prosperity by creating a “special trust relationship” with the indigenous population so that they would sign over their land rights (Newcomb, 2003). Ultimately, trust was used to further the dream of westward expansion and the eventual industrialization of America. Finally, trust is interpreted in the current modern context where it is ubiquitous and has reached a heightened point of emphasis in the role it is believed to serve in certain social institution, primarily schools and businesses. Within each historical period, interpretations are offered for how and why the concept of trust was used and often viewed as being essential to the functioning of daily life. By viewing trust situated in the economic, social and political circumstances of each period of time readers will see how trust has become increasingly necessary along with the rise of capitalism. In essence, trust is and was needed in societies whereby individual economic prosperity became the primary focus of daily life. In this same way, trust is currently

perceived as necessary in our schools. This concept will be explained as another place where perpetuating the values of capitalism is the primary aim. Finally, I explain how due to the existence of capitalism we cannot live a day without trust; however; our personal relationships should not hinge on the expectations one wants fulfilled through trust but rather an ethic of care.

TRUSTING HOMO ECONOMICUS: A HERMENEUTICAL INQUIRY  
INTO THE ORIGIN, APPLICATION, AND  
NECESSITY OF TRUST

by

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Approved by

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I dedicate this book to my family, without whom, this journey would not have been imaginable.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vii
PROLOGUE .....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Challenging Conventional Wisdom .....	3
Trust in the Twenty-First Century: A Visible Concept .....	4
Overview of the Chapters .....	7
The Difficulty of Defining Trust: A Modern Perspective .....	11
Five Common Tenets of Trust .....	12
The Parallel between Trust and Capitalism .....	22
II. HERMENEUTICS AND TRUST .....	26
The Importance of Questions .....	28
Experience and Vantage Point .....	30
The Familiar Made Strange .....	31
Dialogical Conversations .....	34
Intersubjective Meaning .....	35
The Hermeneutic Circle .....	37
Prejudices and Prior Understandings .....	40
Historically-effective Consciousness .....	42
The Hermeneutical Approach: Not an Easy Task .....	48
The Finitude of Knowledge .....	50
What Does this All Mean? .....	52
III. HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION .....	55
Setting the Historical Stage .....	56
The Early Middle Ages .....	58
The Rise of Feudalism .....	64
Progression towards Capitalism .....	75
IV. A SPECIAL TRUST RELATIONSHIP AND NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLES .....	85

A Historical Perspective on the Need of Trust .....	86
The Role of Religion in Legislation .....	90
A Prime Example of Trust Gone Wrong .....	104
View from Today .....	108
Back to the Drawing Board.....	112
V. LOOKING BACK TO LOOK FORWARD .....	114
Lessons Learned.....	115
Something to Believe In .....	121
Strangers and New Behaviors .....	122
Trust as Credit.....	124
Tying it All Together.....	129
Trust in Schools.....	133
Trust, Capitalism, and Schools.....	137
Now What? .....	139
A Misguided Concept.....	141
Care, an Alternative to Trust.....	142
Acknowledging Limitations of my Inquiry .....	146
The Transformation of Understanding Trust .....	147
REFERENCES.....	148
APPENDIX A. ORIGINAL AND FINAL SELF-PORTRAIT DRAWINGS.....	164

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Perspective Drawing .....	36
Figure 2. Vantage Point Drawing .....	44
Figure 3. My Drawing of Picasso's <i>Igor Stravinsky</i> .....	47
Figure 4. Drawing of My Hand .....	49

## PROLOGUE

Like the bird that is unaware of the air through which it flies, or the fish that does not notice the water in which it swims, the web of trust in which we live is so all-encompassing and so deeply entrenched in everything we do that we do not even know it is there until something goes wrong. (Shermer, 2008, p. 199)

In the summer of 2009, I enrolled in a workshop entitled *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* after reading Daniel Pink's (2006) bestseller entitled *A Whole New Mind*. I wanted to see if, like the book claimed, I could change my perception of the world and actually learn to draw using the right side of my brain. The workshop consisted of a one-week class taught in Soho, New York by Brian Bromeissler, a skilled artist and art teacher. The class was not so much concerned with drawing as a profession, nor was it focused on transforming the participants into aspiring artists. Rather, the purpose of the course was to help the participants quiet their internal voices of negative self talk, let go of past constructions and presuppositions, and only draw exactly what they saw. In other words, we had to work at silencing our internal voice, which also meant seeing ourselves and the things we think of as familiar as other or strange. We each had to shut out the years of mental imagery that led us to draw our noses, eyes, and hands with fairly consistent markings, none of which resembled our actual faces. We had to make the familiar strange in that we had to critically examine what in our shared histories and stories caused us to harbor the same feelings about drawing. We also had to think deeply about the processes of understanding that landed us all in the same place—

convinced we're not artists by birth or divine right, and yet hopeful that we could actually produce something that closely resembled the object before us.

On the first day of class, the instructor asked each of us to draw our self-portraits. He gave no detailed instructions other than “draw your face and draw only what you see.” My picture looked a lot like the pictures of the other 11 participants in the room. Each of us drew a big circle for a head, two oval-shaped images for eyes, and the rest of the facial features and hair had a certain sameness in the geometrical lines and patterns that we drew. Then the teacher asked a very intriguing question: “Is that really what you see or what you have been told to see?” This question challenged my understanding of art, my actual vision, and my whole notion of how I see myself and others around me. The simple answer was no—the drawing did not have the same curves, shadows, and three-dimensional shape, but no one could argue that it did possess all of the elements of a face, right? Well, maybe it did lack cheek bones, and perhaps a jaw, but anyone around me could tell what I was going trying to achieve. Then it dawned on me that despite a few variations in age, gender, and a few other superficial details about each other, everyone in the fairly homogenous classroom could tell it was a face because we were taught in similar ways and with fairly consistent constructions about drawing. No one in the class could really challenge or confront the way I drew myself because they had all received the same story about those who are the good “drawers” and bad ones, and things like how to at least get all of the basic features in place. Basically, we all had the same understanding about art and how it is constructed.

Soon I learned how limited and narrow my thinking was: I thought that I would not be challenged or confronted by the other just because I was in a setting that appeared on the surface to be familiar. Though the other students in the class did not necessarily serve as the alternate way of seeing and doing things, the instructor and his methods did. Over the course of the week my understanding of how to draw was challenged to the point that it literally brought tears to my eyes two days in a row. For the first time, I met the “other” in thinking about how to draw and about art. I was challenged with a new language of drawing. I was forced to critically examine where and how I constructed the meanings of what made for good drawing versus bad drawing. I had to confront my assumptions about how I was not suited to be an artist. For the first time, someone read a different script, or at least took the one I read and presented it with a different outcome, and I was really in an in-between space of being able to see what was familiar and strange at the same time. Although this was an uncomfortable place to be, I learned so much about myself and about drawing. Moreover, I learned that the way to gain a better understanding of certain subjects is to challenge oneself to go beyond limits that are familiar. In essence, the challenge is to be able to recognize one’s current understanding, and at the same time remain open to the possibilities that a revision of one’s thinking is always possible. Over the course of the week I stretched my skills, abilities, and thinking until a real transformation occurred. In Chapter II, I will reveal to readers my actual drawings and explain the hermeneutic framework for this dissertation by using my transformative experience in this drawing workshop.

During the experience in New York I began to wonder where trust fit into my life. I began to realize that just as there are certain factors that affect the way we think about and approach tasks such as drawing, there are also certain traditions, values, and beliefs of modern society that affect the ways in which we think about other concepts and constructs. Trust is a subject that has interested me for a number of years, and I began to wonder if I could transform my own thinking, and perhaps the thinking of others, by using the same approach I had when learning to draw. Essentially, I have been interested in the subject of trust and what it embodies because in America there seems to be a lot of attention given to this topic in the press and scholarly literature. As such, I chose to devote my dissertation to gaining a deeper level of understanding about this topic.

Particularly influential in my desire to investigate trust on a more in-depth level was the fact that I had just taken a new job in an advising role for students at a private medical school. In my new role, I felt that if I could get the students to trust me I could reduce their angst, increase their happiness, and even “save” them from anything bad happening in terms of their education. I acknowledge that this seems a bit extreme and perhaps even naïve. However, my beliefs about the positive outcomes that the presence of trust could allow were based on a combination of my own personal beliefs about the potential benefits that increased trust would provide for the aspiring medical doctors and from research for previous assignments I conducted as a student at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

The idea for conducting a hermeneutical inquiry on the concept of trust began through a conversation with my dissertation chair, Dr. Glenn Hudak. I approached him

initially with an idea for what I thought was going to be the beginning of a dissertation that would add to the body of research championing the need for increasing trust in society and societal institutions, especially schools. My original contention was that trust is essential for American society because it would provide assurances and in turn reduce anxiety and uncertainty. In my own naiveté, I believed with enough trust our world could become a friendlier place. Though this may sound a little Pollyannaish I did believe that I would find that trust was something that was absolutely necessary to the functioning of society.

Initially, I felt that the concept of trust had been explored to the point of exhaustion. However, as any professor of philosophy worth their salt would do, my Chair challenged me to delve deeply into the research on the topic, and he gave me several questions to ponder regarding why Americans perceive trust as necessary. As our conversations continued and my level of understanding trust and perceptions related to it increased, we arrived at the guiding question for this dissertation, namely, “Can we live a day without trust?”

All of my prior investigations led me to believe that the presence of trust would serve as a catalyst for and serve as the foundation for increased levels of happiness and success in social institutions, specifically in schools. What had not occurred to me was that the majority of my research and resulting claims came primarily from two fields of study—educational leadership and economics. When I reflected on the fact that my beliefs were formed based on literature and research contained within these two realms, I began to ask myself questions. I wanted to know and understand why trust was such an

integral part of these areas and what the connection was. In other words, I wrote numerous papers without noticing that claims made about the positive effects of increasing trust in schools were similar to those made by business leaders excited about the possible positive results trust could offer in the market. Coming to this realization, I began to wonder what structures or occurrences were responsible for perpetuating the belief that trust is necessary in today's modern American society. I had to know and so my journey began.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

I Know Trust is Good for Business. (Francisconi, 1998, p. 96)

Like so many of our conceptions, constructions, and ideas about the elements that are assumed to be essential to human life in the twenty-first century, trust is a concept that is perceived as necessary to our current situation. This concept was created in human consciousness within a particular history and culture. As part of a specific historical situation trust has served certain purposes and it was used in ways that were relevant and particular to the lives of those who viewed it as necessary. What is significant about trust is that it continues to help us cope with and make sense of our present situation as modern Americans. The majority of the research related to trust claims that it is necessary is because humans do not live in isolation and therefore need to be able to trust one another so that social life can thrive. For example, Graham Greene (1943) espoused, “It is impossible to go through life without trust: that is to be imprisoned in the worst cell of all, oneself” (as cited in Ho & Weigelt, 2005, p. 519). Sentiments such as this help to create the perception that trust is necessary because of the mere fact that humans are social creatures and need to be able to interact with others. Thus, without trust the feeling is that a sense of isolation may be inevitable.

What is even more interesting is that this concept has grown increasingly popular in its use and perceived necessity in today’s modern society. Currently, claims about the

necessity of trust are at an all-time high in research related to several social fields. For instance, Bok (1978) claims that “trust is a social good and when it is destroyed, societies falter and collapse” (as cited in Cook, 2001, p. 22). It is particularly influential in organizational leadership—an area that is dominant in business and in education. Thus, the genesis and continued use demonstrate that trust is a concept that modern man deems necessary and relevant to life.

One may ponder several possible reasons for all of the attention that the concept of trust is currently receiving and even question the hype over the need for trust. Some might assume that business leaders have softened over the last couple of years and are more concerned with the feelings of their employees within the work environment. Others may be of the belief that increases in trust will result in increases in productivity and efficiency and as such makes better business sense. Still some believe that trust is essential to daily life because it is responsible for creating cooperation and mutual respect—two highly valued aspects of modern society. I, too, am one of those interested and questioning people intrigued by the concept of trust. I wonder what it is about trust that causes a society to view it as necessary and capable of producing such positive results. I want to gain a better understanding of how trust reached this honored seat amongst the virtues of American ideology. Therefore, I feel it is time to call into question the concept of trust. In essence, the concept of trust needs to be lifted out of its familiar surroundings and “taken-for-granted” position and instead be made to seem as though it is unfamiliar or strange. To do this requires one to ask questions about the concept of trust that help to build a greater understanding of what it is, what it can and

will do and even where it came from. Another way to question the necessity of trust is to think about the possibility of not having a concept of trust. In essence, a commitment to thoroughly investigating this concept is what is required to expand and hopefully transform one's thinking about trust.

### **Challenging Conventional Wisdom**

Conventional wisdom on the subject of trust tells us things like, “trust is a need that is not subject to debate. We must have it if our relationships are to work at the optimal level” (Marshall, 2000, p. 49). Whether one agrees or disagrees with this sentiment is irrelevant to my pursuit in understanding trust. Instead, what intrigues me about statements such as this is why they are made at all. Thus, I want to gain an understanding of *why* one would believe that trust is necessary. In other words, what makes us feel this way about trust? Is it necessary for everyone to trust or just a select few? Why is trust required and in what settings? Questions such as these and many others make trust a subject of debate. In essence, the purpose of my hermeneutic inquiry is to explain that trust can be used in manipulative, even negative ways when the intended goal is for one group, usually the dominant group or individual, to prosper at the expense of a weaker group or individual. Though not every use of trust is negative, this concept does beget the need for a hermeneutical investigation so that we do not become complacent in our thinking that what is needed for a better society is the existence of more trust. Therefore, I want readers to gain a better understanding of trust through my interpretations of its history and use. These interpretations will serve to explain why trust

is perceived as essential from a modern perspective and help to answer the question that this dissertation seeks to know, “Can we live a day without trust?”

### **Trust in the Twenty-First Century: A Visible Concept**

In order for readers to begin thinking about trust in today’s society I will provide some of the modern conceptions and ways that trust is talked about in the current body of literature and research. In today’s modern American society the concept of trust has been raised in our consciousness to a heightened level where it dominates much of our thought processes about both personal and societal level relationships. As Americans, trust is present all around us in everything from trust funds and trust companies to our national motto, *In God We Trust* (Fisher & Mortada-Sabbah, 2003). The word trust is visible in the iconic symbols of our democracy, for example, it is on our currency and is often found in common reading material such as magazines articles and newspaper advertisements. Television pundits speak about the importance of being able to trust everyone from the President to the local car salesman.

Advertisers do a brilliant job of using trust to instill a perception of security in certain products. For instance, *Baby Magic*, a line of baby care products uses the tag-line, “Trusted by Moms for Generations” to get moms to believe that their products are endorsed by generations of mothers who have used their products and approve of them. Additionally, just because the word trust may not be used in a slogan or tagline, American public works hard to create advertisements that sell products by portraying images of assuredness, calmness, being unshakable and even immune to the uncertainty that is part of daily life. The constant attention that trust receives through American

advertising serves as yet another example of how popular and endearing a notion that is amongst the masses. This term is used in the most serious of circumstances like school and hospital mission statements to even the most mundane instances as when people speak of “trusting” that their car will start each day.

One does not have to look far nor search to find claims that trust is necessary because today this word appears in most every facet in our daily lives from healthcare and business to educational and religious institutions. Researchers in the field of healthcare such as Lee (2009) posit, “Trust is fundamental for effective interpersonal relations and community living. The absence of trust requires continuous anxiety or necessitates reclusiveness” (Lee, 2009, p. 244). From this perspective it seems that trust acts as a stress reducer by helping to make social life bearable. Still others who are devoted to studies related to the role of trust in education believe that, “Trust is important because it serves, paradoxically, as a “glue” and a “lubricant” in organizational life. As a “glue” trust binds organizational participants to one another. Without it, things fall apart. As a lubricant, trust greases the machinery of an organization” (Tschannen-Moran, as cited in Leithwood, Mascal, & Strauss, 2009, p. 186). Again, trust is valued in American social institutions because it is believed to instill a sense of security and cohesiveness. One could argue that across a broad spectrum, trust is viewed as an important concept in modern organizations and is commonly believed to be a necessary ingredient for daily survival.

Though social scientists from most every field profess trust to be necessary the explanations for why vary greatly. Thus, “as an inter- and multidisciplinary topic, it

[trust] is related to many concepts in other disciplines. For example, “from a political point of view it is related to conceptions of authority, power” (Levi 2005; Lumann 1979 as cited in Seimer & Schmidt, 2010, p. 5). Essentially, trust is explained in multiple ways and by a multitude of scholars depending on the area of focus from which they approach the topic. According to Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994), “The most comprehensive definition of trust would be ‘taken-for-grantedness’ (Holzner, 1973; Luhmann, 1988; Zucker, 1986) or the expectation and fulfillment of the natural and moral orders” (p. 131). This makes trust seem as though it exists through our social interactions even when we are unaware of it. Additionally, Cook, Snijders, Buskens, and Cheshire (2009) offer sentiments with similar views on trust and even a few additional assertions about its purpose, such as: “Trust facilitates social interaction. When it exists, it strengthens cooperation, provides the basis for risk-taking, and grants latitude to parties involved” (p. 1). Many social institutions such as schools share these beliefs about trust.

Perhaps many of our current views about the necessity of trust emerge from the feeling that it is a “taken-for-granted” construct and therefore it is part of what makes us human. Thus, we often assume trust to be present in society without question. Some believe that trust is an action because they view it as something one does (Cook, 2001). In this way, trust is perceived to be something that one can earn through actions that others deem as proving one can be trusted. For example, one could keep a secret with which they have been entrusted. Arrow (1974) and Dasgupta (1988) “characterize trust as a public good” (as cited in Cook, 2001, p. 22). Essentially, trust too becomes viewed as a commodity, something to be captured and even quantifiable. For instance, one may

posit that a certain “amount” of trust is required in society. Trust is often associated with words such as reliability, confidence, or assurance (Cook, 2001). Therefore, the idea that trust is necessary is associated with the need to be able to rely on others by being confident in their abilities. Though these types of claims abound in numerous sources and come from an array of fields of study one common theme is evident—trust is viewed as serving a vital role in our current society. Therefore, it is highly visible in research and modern literature.

### **Overview of the Chapters**

In the following chapters I investigate the historical foundations that led to the genesis of trust and provide interpretations for how the concept of trust was created, used and applied in relationships between people and institutions. The purpose of these inquiries is to help readers gain a better understanding of trust by offering a multifaceted view of it both in terms of context and application. To begin this hermeneutic inquiry on the concept of trust I situate trust within the current literature, or in its familiar and modern setting. I start with the current body of research which helps one to form a conceptual understanding of the concept of trust and how modern scholars define it. I explain five tenets of trust that I have found to be common across its use and application throughout history, and by doing so provide a framework for readers to use throughout the subsequent chapters.

By explaining trust as it is viewed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century I hope to provide readers with a common language and familiar foundation to utilize when thinking of trust in the other historical contexts herein. Essentially, I want readers to begin by understanding

how ubiquitous of a concept trust has become in recent years in American common speak and ideology. Moreover, readers should begin to question why this is the case. In other words, the concept of trust will become illuminated in such a way that it is essentially lifted off the page as the subject matter of focus throughout this dissertation. Questioning how and why trust is now perceived as an essential ingredient for the functioning of society will need to remain at the forefront of the readers mind. Other questions will likely form throughout the chapters on the history of the origination of trust and its use in American history. For instance I thought about how life might look different if there were no concept of trust? Additionally, I wondered if society really would not be able to function without trust.

The constant questioning of trust is an essential part of the hermeneutic approach to understanding that I will explain in-depth in Chapter II. Specifically, I will use my experiences from the drawing workshop I described in the prologue to help explain the hermeneutic approach to understanding. Through my process of learning to draw I will explain how a hermeneutic inquiry on trust is conducted and why it is an apropos method for investigating the concept of trust. Hermeneutics is an interpretive approach to understanding that uses the dialogical conversations between the subjective knowledge of the reader and the subject matter at hand, in this instance trust, to help create a shared meaning. The revised understanding one gains by employing the hermeneutic approach is considered an intersubjective way of knowing. Through my textual interpretations the concept of trust and its intended uses will be explained based on what the various authors say about trust within the histories of study. I will help readers understand how the

conversations one has with a text helps to form new interpretations for a particular subject matter. For example, many readers will likely wonder, as I did, why the perception that trust becomes one that is necessary and yet the idea of faith is not.

In addition to explaining the process of the hermeneutic approach, the elements that make this approach to understanding unique will also be discussed in detail. These elements include: examining one's prejudices about the concept of trust and understanding how history presupposes understanding and is always already present. Again, I will make these elements concrete by explaining them through my experiences with learning to draw. Ultimately, readers will come to recognize that the hermeneutic discipline is not intent on making final truth claims about trust because it acknowledges that our knowledge is always finite and therefore subject to on-going revision. Thus, the essential parts that make philosophical hermeneutics a unique method for understanding trust will be explained so that readers will understand why the chapters are based on interpretations of the texts rather than empirical data to reach a conclusion about the necessity of trust.

In Chapter III, the hermeneutic approach will be applied to interpret the texts chosen to explain life in the Middle Ages. The reason for investigating this particular historical period is because this is the era when, according to Desportes (2006), trust was said to have originated. Some of the first known uses of trust were in the thirteenth century. In order to formulate the interpretations for why the genesis of trust occurred during this particular history the focus will center on how the economic and political changes attributed to the social changes that necessitated the need for trust. In particular,

the interpretations will focus on the trends and patterns of this historical and cultural period that caused people to need to trust one another.

Chapter IV will move historically to the arrival of the Europeans into North America. This chapter specifically focuses on interpreting why the construct of trust was chosen to establish a legal relationship between Euro Americans and Native American Peoples. The interpretations in this chapter will come from many of the legal documents that were influential in establishing the special “trust relationship” between Euro Americans and the indigenous peoples of North America. In particular, the Christian Doctrine of Discovery will be investigated and used as one of the main sources from which interpretations for the use of trust between these two groups of people are made. This document is still responsible for legislation related to Native American Peoples. Again, this chapter will provide another view of trust within a particular history and will add to understanding why trust is viewed as a necessity even today.

By combining the textual interpretations from each chapter I will ultimately try to answer the guiding question, can we live a day without trust? In doing so, I will explain in the final chapter how throughout each historical period from the origination until its use in today’s modern society there is a consistent underlying theme that appears to be present when trust is needed. Ultimately, the interpretations will lead readers to understand that the need for trust is related to the need to perpetuate the goals of capitalism. This view of trust as related to economics will be explained by looking at the rising need for trust through the five tenets of trust identified through my research: interest, risks, social capital, and productivity and efficiency. These are elements that

appear throughout the texts from the historical periods. In this way, readers will gain a sense of the hermeneutic circle in action whereby there is an examination of the parts of trust to understand the whole reason for why trust is needed which is again because its parts are necessary. Next I will explain trust as it is viewed in our current modern American society and detail each of the five tenets of trust. Finally, I will end this chapter by explaining the values of capitalism.

### **The Difficulty of Defining Trust: A Modern Perspective**

In order to begin to understand why trust has evolved into a ubiquitous term it currently occupies in the American vernacular, a foundational understanding of trust from a modern perspective needs to be established. Essentially, one needs to understand how American scholars define trust and how they apply the concept in different societal settings. Definitions of trust range from the fulfillment of expectations, obligations and duties to feelings related to “confidence in or reliance on some quality or attribute of a person, thing, or the trust of a statement” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Modern scholars offer different definitions of trust depending on the setting and desired outcomes that they are hopeful the presence of trust will generate. For example, Meyer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) define trust as

the willingness of a party (the trustor) to be vulnerable to the actions of another party, (the trustee) based on the expectation that the trustee will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party. (as cited in Huff & Kelly, 2003, p. 82)

This definition comes from research related to organizational leadership as are many of the modern definitions of trust.

Because trust is an elusive term, it is difficult to reach a universally agreed upon definition. Several leading scholars share the opinion that “trust is not easily defined” (Barber, 1983; Baier, 1986; Gambetta, 1988; Hardin, 1991, 1993, 1996; Mitzal, 1996; Seligman, 1997, 1998; Warren, 1999, as cited in Newton, 2001, p. 202). This lack of an agreed upon definition of trust is most likely because, as Hardin (2002) states, “People regularly say, roughly, “when we say trust, what we mean is X” (p. xviii). However, X can mean different things to different people because it is a variable. Additionally, Hardin (2002) offers “trust is, not surprisingly, a messy, even confused notion” (p. xx). Based on my investigations I would agree that trust is a hard concept to define as well as to make claims about the necessity of its presence. Due to the ambiguity that surrounds deciding the definition of trust leads me to wonder how something that is so undefined is simultaneously viewed as something we cannot live without.

### **Five Common Tenets of Trust**

Though definitions of trust may vary, what can be gleaned are some commonly shared beliefs and ideas that are embodied in the current American perception of trust. Five of the common tenets of trust I will concentrate on throughout this dissertation include: the notion of trust as a form of social control, the promotion and protection of interests, the notion of risks and risk-taking, the idea of trust as social capital, and the use of trust to increase productivity and efficiency. These five themes will serve as lens for interpreting trust in both the past and the present. In this way, these tenets will help readers to view trust from both a modern perspective while at the same time understand it

within another history. Below, I will explain each aspect of trust in detail so that readers can understand how the modern world conceptualizes trust through each.

### **Trust and Social Control**

Of particular interest, is the belief that trust allows for control and order: “The massive interest in trust in recent years seems to be stimulated by the inarguable view that social order is fundamentally dependent on cooperative relationships” (Hardin et al, 2005, p. 1). This commonly shared view is professed by many to be part of the trust relationship. Essentially, trust can be viewed as responsible for facilitating cooperation that helps to add control in social settings. This view of trust adds to the feeling that the presence of trust provides a level of stability and safety. For example, in schools and even prisons, the teachers and guards are greatly outnumbered by the students and inmates, respectively. Therefore, gaining the trust of these populations is often necessary to maintain a sense of security and order. Those who trust others will likely follow the rules or conform to the expectations with greater willingness than those who do not. Therefore, several social theorists “claim that trust is required to produce cooperation on a large-scale in order to make societies function properly” (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 1995, Hardin, 2002, as cited in Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005). Large scale cooperation is also needed in our current democracy.

### **The Role of Interests**

Trust relationships often involve considering the interests of both the truster and trustee and whether they are shared or not. Several researchers from a wide array of fields speak about how trust is used to protect the interests of or at least acknowledge the

interests of the parties involved in the trust relationship. In fact, the need to trust someone is due to the fact that people have certain interests they want to be protected. This need requires an obligation or commitment from another to be committed to helping protect those things which are valuable to another. Baier (1994) espouses, "Trust is the assurance that one can count on the good will of another to act in one's best interest" (as cited in Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 15). According to Hardin (2004), "a minimal core part of a remarkable array of trust relationships is that there is a clear, fairly well defined interest at stake in the continuation of the relationship" (p. 6). The concept of "encapsulated interest," offered by (Hardin, 2004) claims: "I trust you because I think it is in your best interest to take my interest into the relevant matter serious in the following sense: You value the continuation of our relationship, and you therefore have your own interest in taking my interests into account" (p. 6). In other words, the interests of one person or group are encapsulated, or valued in the interest of the other party. This is due to the potential for reciprocal benefits that are contingent upon the continuation of the trusting relationship. Yet, stated another way, Cook, Hardin and Levi (2005) offer, "Trust exists when one party to the relation believes the other party has incentive to act in his or her interest or take his or her interests to heart" (p. 2). Therefore, people often trust others whom they know have similar or shared interests. This helps with the assurance that neither party will break the trust. For instance, mothers often look for childcare providers who they feel are interested in children and who have the best interests of the children at heart. Thus, where one is concerned with protecting that which they value and hold dear, namely, their interests, trust seems to also be part of the equation.

However, if the relationship becomes parasitic between the two parties and essentially only one party is benefiting from the relationship at the expense of the other member then trust can be betrayed and the results can be detrimental to the relationship. In fact, one may question if this is a relationship that is based on trust at all. This is referred to by Hardin et al. (2005) as a “conflict of interest” (p. 5). For example, recent examples such as the Enron scandal show how the interests of top managers may be in conflict with that of the employees. Thus while top managers are self-interested in earning huge salaries employees are interested in keeping their jobs. These jobs are often affected in a negative way such as lay-offs when the self interest of the few is served over the others. Thus,

the complexity and ambiguity in every individual, interaction, and relationship: ‘passions and interests, opposing representations of oneself and others, contradictory but simultaneous needs for membership and separation, and a desire for singularity, for protection and emancipation, for trust and for distance—are interwoven in a thousand ways, and they can give rise to infinite types of betrayal. (Samier & Schmidt, 2010, p. 10)

When one trusts another with their own interests there are no guarantees that what each person values will be shared or preserved by the other party. Therefore, it is important to be cognizant of the fact that when entrusting one’s interest to another the possibility of betrayal exist. This leads to the next element of trust, namely the function it serves with regards to taking and reducing risks.

### **Risk Reduction**

The act or choice to trust another is in itself to take a risk. Risks are often associated with trust because one can think of the choice to trust to be a risk. Likewise,

the greater the amount of trust between two people there is often the perception that this helps to reduce the degree of risks involved in the relationship. In the words of Hume (1978), “‘Tis impossible to separate the chance of good from the risk of ill” (as cited in Hardin et al., 2002, p. 12). In fact, the very notion of trust is based on the assumption that “there must be the possibility of exit, betrayal, or defection by the trusted” (Gambetta, 1988, pp. 218-219). Essentially, trust is not relevant or necessary in fully deterministic settings. For example, when students cheat in class they do so because there is a chance they will not get caught because it is neither predetermined nor inevitable. Instead, there is a possibility that they will get by with it. If it was guaranteed that they would get caught then there would be no risk involved and therefore no reason for trusting in the possibility of a different outcome.

Risks can also include things such as sharing confidential information with someone and asking them to keep it private. In this scenario one is taking a risk because they cannot be guaranteed that the other person will not tell share the information with others. Annette Baier (1985) states, “trusting someone is always a risk given the partial opaqueness to us of the reasoning and motivation of those we trust and with whom we cooperate” (as cited in Cook, 2001, p. 10). Similarly, trying something that is new or even frightening is a risk. This may include activities such as skydiving. The risks one takes in choosing to trust another includes the potential for the loss of something of value, like one’s sense of security, one’s ability to trust others, not to mention, one’s life..

Likewise, trust is thought to reduce risks in social exchanges, thereby assuming that by creating a more trusting society we will increase the amount of assurance that the

goodwill of all involved will prevail (Yamagishi, Cook, & Watabe, 1998). In fact, Shockley-Zalabek, Morreale, and Hackman (2010) posit, “We make decisions to trust based on many factors, including our tolerance for risk” (p. 24). Thus some may not be as trusting of others because they are not willing to risk very much. Therefore, the decision to trust can be calculated against the potential risk involved. Heimer (2001) “sees trust as one way in which actors in social relationships can cope with the uncertainty and vulnerability that pervade relationships” (as cited in Cook, 2001, p. 28).

In today’s society trust and risk seem to go hand in hand because of the view that modern society is one that is full of uncertainty and constantly involves risk-taking. These risks can include putting one’s money in the hands of financial official to participating in a medical trial for a new drug. This feeling of constant risks may also be a large part of why we share the feeling that trust is necessary. O’Neill (2002) states, “Some sociologists have suggested that the crisis of trust is real and new because we now live in a risk society” (p. 15). Because trust is believed to help reduce risks and the fear that is often the result of uncertainty trust can serve as a way for people to feel that they have the next best thing to a guarantee. Farrell (2004) states, “trust invariably involves some degree of uncertainty; one can never fully divine another’s interests, and thus one can never be entirely sure that another will behave in a trustworthy manner, although one may have reasonable expectations” (p. 92). Thus, trust, regardless of the strength of the relationship between parties cannot guarantee that one’s expectations will be fulfilled.

### **Building Social Capital**

Another modernistic view trust as offered by many, such as Coleman (1980), Putnam (1995), Fukuyama (1995), Luhmann (1980), and Arrow (1974) is that it is a form of social capital. In this view, trust is something that can be accumulated or built up. In fact, one of the broadest definitions of social capital is “the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organizations” (Fukuyama, 1995, p. 10). Coleman (1980) asserts that social capital is “enabling” (Hardin, Cook, & Levi, 2002, p. 83). By enabling, Coleman (1980) posits that the ongoing relationships between families, friends and co-workers form the lower-level structures that “enable us as individuals or as corporate actors, to do many things, including cooperate successfully with one another in manifold ways” (Hardin et al., 2002, p. 83).

Social capital is defined by Mencken, Bader and Embry as “the reciprocal networks of good will upon which community and social organizations are based” (2009, p. 35). These networks are viewed as necessary for the sustainability of society because they create an ever-increasing web of trust relationships. In the United States, the accumulation of capital, whether socially or monetarily, is perceived to be advantageous. For example, Luhmann (1980) claims, “trust accumulates as a kind of capital” (p. 64). Thus, for one to increase her or his social capital is a matter of expanding the circle of trusting relationships with others. Networking, a term that is popular in modern society is akin to the accrual of social capital. Thus, one could ask whether part of modern contentions about the necessity of trust stem from the belief that networking is crucial to building one’s relationship with others. Bryk and Schneider (2003) posit: “Like human

capital, social capital is intangible and abstract, and accumulated for productive ends” (p. 13).

### **Increasing Productivity and Efficiency**

While sifting through the current literature on trust I discovered yet another shared belief about why trust is essential today, especially in business and social institutions. Currently, trust is seen a key resource for increasing productivity and efficiency in organizational settings. In today’s society these two concepts are important and are often the greatest motivators in the market place. This newly found attention on trust as it relates to the modern world of business and economics most likely is a result of the recent claims about the relationship between the presence of trust and its positive impact on organizations. The positive impact is measured by the amount of increases in production and the speed at which tasks can be completed. As Kramer (1999) observed, “this interest has been fueled, at least in part, by accumulating evidence that trust has a number of important benefits for organizations and their members” (as cited in Dirks & Ferrin, 2001, p. 450). Still others claim, “Trust contributes to great efficiency when people can have confidence in other people’s words and deeds” (Leithwood, Mascal, & Strauss, 2009, p. 186). What is interesting is that overwhelmingly the literature and research that serves to substantiate these claims is primarily from the business and educational arenas.

This notion is of particular interest to me and leads me to question whether at the root of our perceived need for trust today is the relationship trust has on productivity and efficiency—two very important aspects of a capitalistic society. In other words, is trust

necessary today because it is linked with the goals of achieving success in the market place? For example, currently credit scores are used to determine one's ability to borrow money. A credit score is based on how credible one is. In this sense credible means how likely one is to repay their debts and their credibility is based on their past credit history and other factors that modern America deem as necessary qualifications. In essence, one's credit is also viewed in terms of trust—can the individual be trusted to repay their debts? In this way, trust is replaced by the word credit, yet it is what is being questioned and used for making the final decision about how credible one is. This theme is one that will be explored as I work through the text in the subsequent chapters.

Currently, research on the role of trust in schools also espouses that trust is necessary because of the increases in productivity and efficiency it provides to the educational goals of the schools. In other words, because schools are concerned with efficiency for covering the curriculum and producing high tests scores is this where the need for trust in this setting comes from?

In schools the effectiveness of trust has been measured in numerous ways by many authors, such as “operational success by Beeson and Matthews (1993); productivity by Bruhn (2001); student achievement by Bryk and Schneider (2002); positive climate by Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, and Hoy (2001); and productive communication by Henkin and Dee (2001) . . . to name only a few” (Samier & Schmidt, 2010, p. 14). Schools—like businesses—share the belief that positive climates and productivity are increased as a result of the cultivation of trust. Schools, like businesses, share the belief that cultivation of trust will help with the rate and ease at which organizational goals are met.

The need for trust in organizations exists because, in the words of Marshall (2000), “We get greater speed by trusting the people we work with and by creating workplaces that nurture that trust. We can outstrip any competitor and win any global challenge if we learn how to tap into the potential of our workforce” (p. x). Both of these examples offer a view of trust as that which while in existence has the potential to make great things happen, and fast. For example, Marshall (2000) states trust is “single-handedly the fastest way to increase efficiency and production” (p. 2). Likewise, Covey (2006) offers, “Speed happens when people at work truly trust each other” (p. 3). In today’s fast-paced society a concept that provides for increases in the rate at which things are produced and profits are increased is undoubtedly thought of as essential.

Trust as an economic necessity becomes viewed as one of the essential needs in a capitalistic society. In the words of Adler (2001), professor of management and business at the Marshall school of Business at the University of Southern California, “Groups whose cohesion is based primarily on mutual trust are capable of extraordinary feats” (p. 218). These “extraordinary feats” are most often economic in nature. These claims are made by individuals who operate from a business or economic mindset whereby the effects of trust are determined by bottom-lines and rising sales. Why and how did these perceptions of trust as related to the goals of a capitalistic society begin? Is trust necessary because of the notions of competition, privatization, and self-interest have all increased throughout European and American history? In essence, does the relationship between trust and our current economic orientation towards capitalism provide the answer to the overarching question that this dissertation seeks to answer: “Can we live a

day without trust?” This notion will be investigated throughout the following chapters. Moreover, I wonder if the same is true of trust in schools. For instance, do schools need trust because they too serve to promote capitalistic ends?

Thus, trust often shows up in conversations or situations where the focus is on achieving economic ends. Think for a moment where trust is talked about or used most often—banking, the market, and where money is concerned. For instance, Daly and Cobb (1994) ask, “Is it surprising that institutions that deal in the paper pyramids based on the fallacy of composition should generally try to inspire confidence by giving themselves such names as ‘Security, Fidelity, Prudential, Guaranty, Trust . . . corporations?’” (p. 422). Ultimately, I want readers to be mindful of the fact that the views that trust is necessary in modern American society are influenced by and are even side effects of the capitalistic view of the world. Before beginning the proceeding chapters an explanation of the values of capitalism is needed. This is essential to the overall understanding of trust as an economic necessity because the ensuing chapters will show how the need for trust seemed to increase as capitalism became the economic orientation of Americans.

### **The Parallel between Trust and Capitalism**

Capitalism, as defined by Merriam-Webster (“Capitalism,” 2008), is “an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market.” In a capitalistic society, such as that of the U.S., individual success is favored over the

collective good of all peoples. This dissertation will ultimately contend that from the genesis of trust until its current use in the United States, the rising need for trust has been on the same trajectory as the rising focus on individual success, competition over resources or capitalistic values. For example, the quote below offers one example of how trust and business are related.

The word trust embodies almost everything you can strive for that will help you to succeed. You tell me a human relationship that works without trust, whether it is a marriage or a friendship or a social interaction; in the long run, the same thing is true about business, especially businesses that deal with the public. (Jim Burke, Former Chairman and CEO, Johnson and Johnson, as cited in Covey, 2006, p. 6)

According to Geider (2003), “since the rise of capitalism two centuries ago social philosophers and even some economist have observed the deeply destructive collision and warned of the dangerous implications” (p. 44). Among those dangerous implications is the fact that increasingly most Americans are looking out for themselves with little regard for how it impacts others. It is important to note that not every instance of one looking out for oneself is bad. For instance, in a dangerous situation where one’s personal safety is at risk looking out for oneself is appropriate. However, reckless behavior such as that of Bernard Madoff, who stole millions of dollars from innocent citizens to increase his personal fortune, is an example of the dangerous side of capitalistic thinking. There has been an increase in the use of, importance on, and necessity of trust related to an ever increasing importance on the desire of the majority of Americans to build individual economic success no matter the expenses involved. This is probably due to a sentiment expressed by Greider (2003) that “we take direction and

values from both our social relationships and our place in the economic sphere” (p. 38). Among those values are prizing individual gain over societal or communal gain, competition over resources and the belief that producing more in the most efficient way possible is the goal we should all hope to achieve. Thus, Greider posits: “In the economic sphere efficiency trumps community” (p. 35). Therefore, I posit that the concept of trust has reached a crescendo in the perceived necessity because of the effects of our capitalistic American society.

It is also interesting to note that trust and capitalism originated in the Middle Ages. Was this coincidental or as my interpretation will ultimately ask, is there a relationship between capitalism and trust? Moreover, does the relationship between these two social constructs provide the explanation for why trust is perceived as necessary? Adam Smith, philosopher turned economist, authored *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* in 1759, at which time “modern capitalism was just getting underway” (Levitt & Dubner, 2010). In this work, Smith enlightened readers to his profound interest the effects capitalism seemed to have on human behavior. “Smith was entranced by the sweeping changes wrought by this [capitalism’s] force” (p. 15). Specifically, he noticed that “economic forces were vastly changing the way people thought and behaved in a given situation” (p. 15). Essentially, when capitalism was introduced human behaviors and actions changed. People changed the ways in which they interacted with one another. No longer were people only concerned with the well-being of others, instead the priority became on the accumulation of wealth and the means to protect it. People were viewed with suspicion and the need for one to prove him or herself credible, dependable, and

worthy of trust became important among the masses. By beginning the historical investigation into the origination of trust, which occurred as the rise of capitalism did, readers should notice the parallels and economic relationship between the concept of trust and the need for it. In essence, my conclusion about the necessity of trust will show trust is of increased necessity when man increases his economic inclination. Stated another way, trust becomes essential and something that economic man, namely, *homo economicus* cannot live without.

In the final pages of this dissertation, I leave readers with the responsibility of continuing the conversation that this inquiry hopefully begins, namely constantly revising one's understanding by questioning claims about the necessity of trust. The point is not that we try to look for alternatives to trust by romanticizing our current situation. That does not seem like a practical solution because I do not believe that our capitalistic orientation will disappear in the foreseeable future. However, I do warn readers that when trust is viewed as essential to the success of social institutions, especially our schools, we need to question why it is important. Though not every use of trust is economically-driven, this hermeneutic inquiry will urge us all to use a critical lens when trust is viewed as necessary among school leaders who are more concerned with tests scores and efficiency than the overall well-being of students. In the end, readers are left with an alternative view for building authentic relationships, namely an ethic of care instead of the need for trust and hopefully, like I did through my experiences with drawing a transformed, broadened perspective of trust.

## CHAPTER II

### HERMENEUTICS AND TRUST

Our calling as human beings, then, is to find ourselves in the presence of others: a search which can be carried out in communication with others. (Hudak & Kihn, 2001, p. 12)

As humans, how do we come to understand anything? Bruns (1992) asks, “what is it to make sense of anything, whether a poem, a legal text, a human action, a language, an alien culture, or oneself?” (p. 1). For example, how do we know that a table is a table? Was a flat surface with four legs always known as a table? According to philosophical hermeneutics, an interpretive approach to understanding, a table is known as a “table” because we as linguistic, thinking beings thought of this particular object in language and thus being as a table. Only then did it become a table. In this way, a table became a table through the shared meaning that was created about the object. Therefore, the word table did not exist prior to human understanding and language. This may sound a bit strange, but the point is that, “being that can be understood is language” according to the nineteenth century German philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975, p. 432). Gadamer was best known for this interpretative approach to understanding known as philosophical hermeneutics.

In this chapter, I will explain what it means to understand a particular subject matter through interpretations that are reached in dialogical conversations with the “other.” To make this explanation of philosophical hermeneutics concrete, I will use my

experiences from the “Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain” workshop I wrote about in the prologue to this dissertation. Moreover, I will explain how coming to an understanding about the process of drawing helped me understand the hermeneutic framework and thus apply it to my investigation of trust. I can think of no better way to do this than to invite readers to share in my transformative experience with a fairly common task—drawing. Likewise, the experiences with drawing will help me to elucidate the basic structure of philosophical hermeneutics.

It is important to begin with a basic understanding of where and why the hermeneutic tradition began. “Traditionally, hermeneutics meant the art or technique of interpretation” and it was derived from the Greek word “hermeneuein” which literally means to “translate,” “explicate,” or “interpret” (Grondin, 2003, p. 3). The simplest way to understand hermeneutics is as “a tradition of thinking or of philosophical reflection that tries to clarify the concept of understanding” (Bruns, 1992, p. 1). As such, the issue at hand is to explain how humans understand anything and thus are able to form interpretations about subject matter in the hermeneutic encounter.

This way of making meaning of the events, situations, and facts we encounter recognizes that “every aspect of our access to the world is mediated through language and therefore through interpretation” (Grondin, 2003, p. 16). Thus, our understanding of the world and our entire being is grounded in language because we essentially think in language (Healy, 2005). Nothing presupposes, in other words, comes before, language. Ultimately for Aristotle, man’s ability to “make what is not present manifest through his speaking, so that another person sees it before him” is the true marker of man’s

intelligence over and above other forms of life (Gadamer, 1976, p. 60). Therefore, it is through the medium of language that any object comes into the being that can be understood. In fact, new words, which were created in our consciousness first, come into spoken existence daily, just as some words drop out of existence. In other words, as Zuckert claims, “new words are invented, others are taken over from foreign languages, some drop out” (as cited in Dostal, 2002, p. 206).

In this same way, the concept of trust was formed within human consciousness because of certain circumstances, or one could say that it came into being as a result of the effects of the historical situation. Thus, the concept of trust was brought into being through our language, and it was understood in the language of the history and tradition from which it came. Therefore, “two assumptions of hermeneutics are that humans experience the world through language, and that this language provides both understanding and knowledge” (Byrne, 2001, p. 969).

### **The Importance of Questions**

To explain the hermeneutic approach, one must first understand the priority of questions. In other words, it is essential that readers understand that Gadamer’s notion of hermeneutics emphasizes that the route to understanding “always begins with a question”; thus, the start of this chapter began with a question and the goal of this entire work is to answer a question (Healy, 2005, p. 42). In fact, the hermeneutical is an interrogative approach to understanding that occurs through questioning and interpreting. Therefore, this dissertation is not concerned with the claim that trust is something we

cannot live without; instead, it is focused on addressing the question, “Can we live a day without trust?”

This is the guiding question of this dissertation and it was formulated through conversations with my Chair, Dr. Hudak. In fact, he began by asking me a multitude of questions such as where my beliefs about trust come from and if I felt that trust is essential to life. In other words, he challenged me to expand my horizons of understanding on this subject matter by engaging with me in the hermeneutic method of understanding from the onset. My original assumptions and perceptions about trust were questioned. For instance, I initially approached the subject of trust with assumptions such as: with more trust schools would be better places, meaning safer and more inviting. What I wanted to know was not only *why* I felt that trust was essential, but why today others seem to feel the same way. Through this hermeneutic inquiry I will in essence question the conventional wisdom explained in Chapter I, namely that the necessity of trust is indubitable. Essentially, I want to take the concept of trust and investigate it through three very different historical and cultural lenses—the modern conception, as detailed in Chapter I, the Middle Ages, and the period of the colonization of America to try to interpret why trust is viewed as essential today and moreover to answer the question, “Can we live a day without trust?”

Knowing the importance of questions in hermeneutic inquiries leads me to begin my explanation of drawing and trust by asking, what do these seemingly unrelated topics have to do with one another? This is an important question to begin a hermeneutic inquiry because the answer will help to explain one very unique aspect to this method of

interpretation. Trust and drawing are presumably familiar words and concepts to most modern Americans. In essence, for those of us living in the United States we have likely seen the word trust in print and used the term a time or two. In this same way, I think it is safe to say that we have all drawn a picture or at least been exposed to the art of drawing at some point in our lives. Therefore, one could think, so what? In other words, one may wonder what else there is to understand about trust and/or drawing.

### **Experience and Vantage Point**

In essence, these words and ideas seem fairly mundane and understanding them appears on the surface to be pretty straightforward. On the other hand, one could argue that each of us have likely experienced these two concepts in different ways. For example, for some of us we have probably had positive experiences when trusting others. Yet, others may have endured lots of heartache and disappointment with trust, or the lack thereof, in relationships with others. Likewise, I was a person who was told at a young age that it was unlikely that I would ever become an art major. I could barely draw a stick person. Some readers likely share this experience with me, while others may create masterpieces each time they pick up a pencil. Therefore, even though we may all know that to draw a picture involves paper, pencils, and certain hand movements, neither do we approach the action in the exact same way, nor do we share the same understanding of the process of drawing. Likewise, we do not all share the same understanding of trust.

The point of explaining that not all seemingly familiar concepts are experienced in the same way, as it relates to hermeneutics, is two-fold. First, readers must understand that each of us have a different “vantage point” for seeing or understanding trust and

drawing. The second point is that even though we think we understand drawing and trust, we possess the ability to make this subject seem alien or unfamiliar only if we are open-minded enough to allow for another viewpoint to be shared. From the existential point of view, or our lived experience, we have come to interpret these two concepts in different and sometimes similar ways depending on several factors. For instance, our historical situatedness, traditions, and culture all serve to create our particular vantage point. Gadamer explains the notion of one's vantage point in terms of one's horizon:

Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of "situation" by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence an essential part of the concept of situation is the concept of "horizon." The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. (Gadamer, 1975, as cited in Bernstein, 1983, p. 143)

Therefore, there exists the possibility of understanding these seemingly common concepts in uncommon ways. This leads to my second point: because we do not all share the same understanding, there is room for us to create a revised understanding of two concepts for which most would assume are taken for granted in today's society.

### **The Familiar Made Strange**

Additionally, drawing and trust are two topics that can be made strange or unfamiliar if we are open to the idea that a deeper level of understanding can be reached for both of these concepts. This notion of making the familiar strange is another central feature of the hermeneutic approach to understanding. Readers who want to know more about trust must be committed to the task of engaging in conversations with ourselves, others, or even texts that present these ideas. Davey (2006) reminds us, "The

hermeneutical experience of difference is not just a confrontation with the unfamiliar. It involves the recognition of the familiar having been rendered strange by the unfamiliar” (p. 16). This is essential to the process of understanding because it allows us to take a step back, or become a third set of eyes between our thinking selves, namely to see our conscious at work alongside the others with whom we are engaged. Hudak and Kihn (2001) state, “this separation from the world is an aggressive moment of pulling away from the undifferentiated contents of our experiences in order to make sense of them” (p. 11).

For example, when I began the drawing workshop the instructor told the class that drawing is not only about what you see, it is also about what you do not see. This sounded foreign and unfamiliar to me. In fact, I began to engage in a dialogical conversation, perhaps the most fundamental part of hermeneutics, with myself. I asked what it could mean for drawing to be about what one does not see. I questioned how, for all of these years I never knew this, and why I had not heard it presented in this way. Did I have art teachers who did not know this either?

Though I did not realize it at the time, these questions served a crucial role in my journey toward a revised understanding of a task about which I thought I knew all there was to know. I did have some understanding about drawing, though not a lot. Here “it is vitally important to recognize that the hermeneutical phenomenon encompasses both the alien that we strive to understand and the familiar world that we already understand” (Linge, 2004, p. xii). The instructor explained that what we do not see when we are

focused on a particular object to draw is all of the elements that make the object appear complete.

For example, when asked to draw a bowl of fruit, I would start to draw the bananas, apples, and eventually the bowl itself. However, what I never thought of as essential to the totality of the picture were the other objects or space around the main object. This is what is referred to as “negative space.” This is the space surrounding an object which gives it dimension, shape, and in essence, illuminates it as the focus of the entire piece. Additionally, vital to the totality of a piece of art work are features such as light and shadow, proportion, and a plethora of other artistic elements that make drawings appear to be three-dimensional and lifelike. Thus, in just the first few hours of the first day, I was beginning to experience drawing as never before. Suddenly, this familiar task was not so familiar.

Similarly, the concept of trust can be made strange, even though for many modern Americans it is a familiar concept. The process of making the familiar strange as it relates to trust is to see trust within the various historical contexts that I present in subsequent chapters. For instance, Chapter III will present a view of life within a particular history before the concept of trust was used in language. This idea in and of itself may seem strange to modern Americans for whom trust is usually an assumed or taken-for-granted concept. Therefore, the questions that will begin the conversation for bringing a revised understanding to the concept of trust include: “Where did the concept of trust originate?”; “Out of what historical circumstance and events did the concept of trust come into being?”; “More importantly, why did trust become necessary?”; and

finally, one may even ask, “How can trust be anything other than necessary?” These questions help in the process of re-orienting our thinking about the concept of trust by making it the subject matter about which we hope to know more.

### **Dialogical Conversations**

We are intentional agents who create ourselves and our environments in continuous communicative interaction with others. (Anderson, 1997, p. 109)

The goal of hermeneutics is understanding that emerges from authentic conversations whereby the words or concepts that are to be understood are discussed in a dialogical manner. Put another way, a conversation is a two-way process in which language comes alive as participants engage in an authentic exchange of perspectives to achieve some purpose with others and themselves (Gadamer, 1975). Dialogical conversations are not one-way conversations. In fact, dialogue requires that the participants involved make room for one another’s “creativity and consciousness” (Braten, 1984, as cited in Anderson, 1997, p. 114). Rather, the dialogue that helps a shared meaning to emerge assumes that each participant is committed to learning about and trying to understand the other by negotiating meaning through the use of language (Anderson, 1997).

The objects that are used to bring a revised understanding of a particular subject matter for which one desires to know more about can be works of art, texts, and even people. What is important to realize is that each participant serves a crucial role in the event of understanding. In this way, the one who seeks to know more about a particular

object helps to concretize the other, either art, texts, or human beings by performing the action which the object intends.

### **Intersubjective Meaning**

The conversation between the texts and the object about a particular subject matter, which in this case is trust, serve to create a shared meaning, or an intersubjective knowledge about trust. The notion of intersubjectivity is also an essential element to interpretive ways of knowing, or hermeneutics. The idea of coming to a shared meaning or actually creating new meanings involves active engagement and participation between two subjects. Each participant brings her or his own understandings, biases, assumptions, and perspectives about a given object to the conversation. The active engagement takes place through dialogical conversations. Thus, shared meaning is achieved through “the coordinated action of continually responding to and interacting with, of exchanging and discussing ideas, opinions, biases, memories, observations, feelings, emotions and so forth” (Anderson, 1997, p. 112).

In the drawing workshop, for example, the instructor and I were occupied in a continual back and forth type of engagement whereby he would present a technique or ask us to draw a certain line and I would question either how to do the task or why it needed to be done in a certain manner. For instance, early in the class we were asked to draw lines that represented the angle at which we saw certain objects such as a dresser located down a hallway or a chair across from where we were sitting in the classroom. I felt myself wanting to draw straight lines that made the dresser into a box and four straight legs with a rectangle on top for a chair. These ways of doing things were

revealed my biases about how certain objects should be drawn and for me the angles did not matter. However, the instructor questioned my way of approaching this task by asking me, from where I sat in the room, if all of the lines I saw were completely horizontal, in other words flat, or did some of them appear to be at an angle. I found myself wondering once again what this could mean, how were these objects which are composed of right angles and simple lines be so complex. I never considered that when drawing not everything that is visible is located on the same angle. In the end, these objects were definitely at an angle. What I came to understand through this engagement or dialogue was a revised meaning about the angles of lines in relation to the overall representation of a room (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1. *Perspective Drawing***

In these conversations the participation of the interpreter, the other, and the subject matter are equally important to the collective and revised meaning that will hopefully emerge. Understanding the meaning of a text will not be formed as a result of just the interpreter or just the object. Instead, “the meaning of the text is a shared language, shared in the sense that it is no person’s possession but rather a common view of the subject matter” (Warnke, 1987, p. 48).

By engaging in conversations with the texts, this hermeneutic inquiry attempts to reach an “understanding as agreement” (Dostal, 2002, p. 39). By agreement, this means that in order for real transformation in understanding to occur, the interaction between the texts and the participant must be engaging and productive activity. The goal of the productive activity is about “reaching an understanding through discussion, of coming to an understanding in a verbal exchange” (Healy, 2005, p. 48). However, it is also important to realize that agreement does not mean consensus, or “that all parties agree to endorse the merits of one party at the expense of another” (Healy, 2005, p. 48). In this way, Gadamer insists that for transformation to occur conversations have to be authentic. In other words, one needs to have a real interest in the subject matter and thus engage in conversations about the subject matter in a trusting manner that encourages questions and answers to be ongoing, nontrivial, non-competitive, and ultimately that leads to deeper levels of understanding.

### **The Hermeneutic Circle**

Another important aspect of these hermeneutic encounters is the acknowledgement that the shared meaning that emerges in the dialogical conversations

can only be understood within a particular historical situation and in a linguistic tradition. In other words, for one to fully understand the interpretation or shared meaning, one must be engaged in “the hermeneutic circle” of meaning. In this way, meaning is co-determined through engagement between the texts and their readers, both of which are part of certain histories and understand words and concepts within those histories. In this way, meaning is co-determined by the interaction between the texts and its reader. The circle, not in terms of a geometrical shape, but instead of an ongoing reciprocity of the parts and whole of an object, requires the constant awareness of one’s own historical situatedness and its effect on the meaning of texts and what the texts as a whole is trying to present that is new and even strange. Through dialogical conversations about the subject matter at hand, the goal is to make familiar the strange parts of the object so that deeper levels of understanding can occur about the whole object.

What keeps the process circular is that there is no ending point or final end to knowledge. Just as important as the interplay between the parts and the whole of a text is the way in which our reading adds to its effective history, thereby contributing to the complexity and depth of its meaning (Ramberg & Gjesdal, 2005). Thus, for this hermeneutic of trust, readers will be provided with an understanding of trust that is based on my interpretation of texts. My own historical view will affect the way that I interpret the meaning of the texts and thus will ultimately affect the judgement I will provide about the essential nature of trust.

In understanding drawing, I as one participant brought my subjective knowledge to the experience of drawing, the subject matter I want to know more about. The “other”

for whom I engaged in the dialogical conversation with was in this case, the art instructor. I questioned the process of drawing as he presented his subjective knowledge about drawing and as a result a shared or intersubjective meaning emerged out of our conversation. Similarly, “the meaning of the text is a shared language, shared in the sense that it is no person’s possession but rather a common view of the subject matter” (Warnke, 1987, p. 48). Therefore, the meaning that was created about drawing was the result of our engagement about this particular subject matter for which we shared an interest and desired to understand at deeper levels.

Likewise, in the following chapters of this dissertation, I will present to readers a new way for thinking about the concept of trust. Again, I will situate trust within the historical contexts which were previously stated and in doing so, I will explain my own interpretations about the genesis of trust, how and why it became necessary, and more importantly, try to answer the overarching question: “Can we live a day without trust?” Thus, my interpretations will be the intersubjective meaning which was shaped through the dialogical conversations with the texts selected to conduct this hermeneutic investigation. In this way, readers will be presented with the ways in which I interpreted the texts which will serve to reorient the readers thinking about the concept of trust. Hence, for readers to be transformed by the experience the way that I was requires that they engage with my words and explanations to see if a deeper understanding of the concept of trust is possible.

### **Prejudices and Prior Understandings**

When thinking of drawing, we each have our own prior understandings about this action before we even “get to the drawing board.” In hermeneutics, these presuppositions are fundamental to the experience and are inescapable, meaning we cannot just remove them at will. In essence, they are us. As an example, the first day of class we were asked to draw a self-portrait. We were provided with mirrors so that we could look at ourselves to aid us in the project. The instructor gave us only one instruction: draw only what you “see.” This sounded simple enough and again, my questions began. For instance, I wondered, was this a trick, meaning how we could do anything different? Would anyone draw something metaphorical? As I began the project I was nervous that my portrait would look silly compared to the other eleven drawings. However, I had to begin and so I created a self-portrait. Because of my prior understandings about drawing I started with a big circle for a head, two oval shaped eyes, and my best attempt at a nose and lips (by far the hardest facial features for me to reproduce on paper). I drew some straight lines for hair and the rest of the parts that are in the picture. Thankfully, I was not alone in my rendition. All but one classmate, an artist by trade, produced similar results. Next, the instructor posted all of the portraits and he began to assess our work. What he said was pivotal in my understanding of the entire process of drawing (refer to Original Self-Portrait Drawing in the Appendix).

The instructor told us all that the portraits we drew looked nothing like us. He said this is because none of us drew what we actually saw; we drew what we had previously been taught to see. What could this mean? He explained that he could just as

easily have written the word “eyes” on the page because we had obviously all been taught in much the same ways, namely that two oval shapes placed about an inch and a half below the top of our circles for heads were eyes. I had never thought like this before. Again, I began to question how I had gotten by with this way of drawing for years. How was I unable to understand that I was drawing, not by sight, but instead my pre-understandings about certain subject matters? From this first exercise a transformation in my thinking began.

This example leads me to ask, what are some of the prejudices that modern Americans might share about the concept of trust? In other words, what are the things we cannot see about trust? What have we been taught to see, or understand about trust thus far? As was explained in Chapter I, in today’s modern society, trust is thought of as necessary because it serves as a form of assurance in uncertain times and situations. Additionally, the word trust is often used when we think about protecting our interests, financially and in other ways. The word trust is used when one speaks about trusting their child’s teacher, and for some, the concept of trust is enacted in mundane situations such as “I trust that other drivers will stop at stop signs.”

No matter how we think about trust, individually or collectively, inevitably that we each approach this subject with a set of prejudices that affect our thinking. In this way, these prejudices will have an effect on the other which we engage within the hermeneutic experience. Moreover, our prejudices are composed of a combination of our history and culture. In this way, our history, which is also our vantage point for understanding subject matter contained within it, is inescapable and always already

present for each of us. Warnke (1987) states, “all knowledge of the natural or social world, of ethical demands, aesthetic value or the requirements of political action is grounded in a traditional orientation” (p. 168). Therefore, anything we experience or encounter is already placed within some context, thereby allowing us to connect it with some other situation or event, which also means that we can interpret it. We are always already effected by our history and can only think in terms of it. Therefore, trying to rid ourselves of who we are and where we come from, both historically and culturally, is not possible.

The maximal detachment and self-consciousness which are the goals of scientific enquiry and method are unrealizable ambitions, because the limitations of one’s own historical position always vitiate these claims: historical being always precedes consciousness. (Wisnheimer, 1985, p. 686)

### **Historically-effective Consciousness**

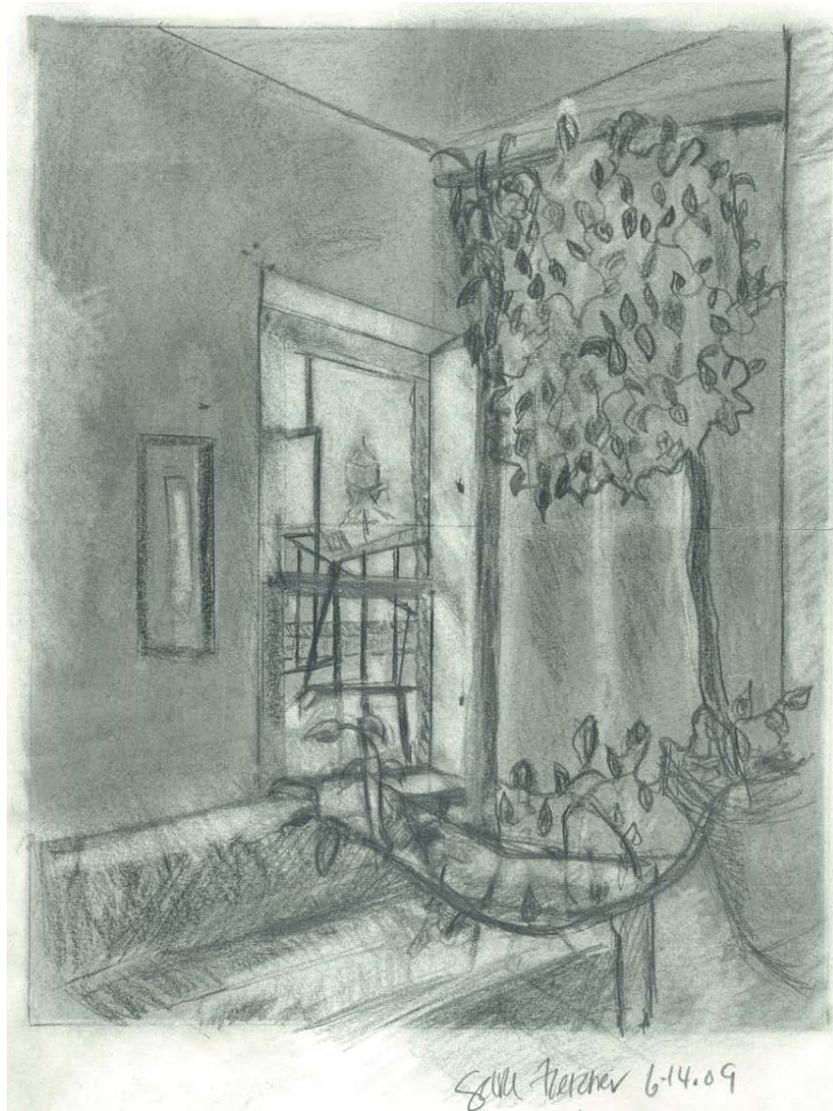
Thus, for modern Americans we understand trust within a framework of tradition that values trust as part of our day to day interactions. Our tradition is informed by visible images like those mentioned in Chapter I such as the inscription on our currency, *In God We Trust*, trust funds, and federal trust responsibilities. Additionally, some of our common narratives, such as the story about George Washington, our first president, who as legend tells us in a moment of mischief, cut down a cherry tree. When confronted about his naughty behavior he stated, “I cannot tell a lie.” These images and stories have an effect on the way we understand trust and as such help us to interpret the concept of trust in various situations. In hermeneutics this idea has been coined, “historically-effective consciousness.” One’s history always provides a past and present way of

interpreting the world. It also shapes our thinking about the future or what will happen next. Accordingly, Gadamer spoke of our traditions and their horizons as those things which “silently shape our expectancies of texts and their subjects matters” (Davey, as cited in Moran, 2008, p. 717). In this way, each person’s history is limited or finite because each history has a horizon for which there is a starting point which continues until it reaches our current position. Thus, we think in the language of our particular history.

Figure 2 serves as an example for how one’s vantage point informs one’s understanding. This particular drawing represents my vantage point when looking out the window at the New York City landscape. What readers may not recognize by looking at this picture is that my major prejudice in this picture can be seen in the tree. The tree in the room did not have this many leaves, nor did it really look exactly like this. However, I was more comfortable drawing the tree than anything else. Additionally, the idea of proportions and calculating the size of objects in a picture to give the finished product a sense of depth and dimension was beyond my current horizon of understanding. As such, I was afraid to attempt the piece and found that it was a real internal struggle to fuse my horizon with the other which in this case was a technique in drawing for which I could not grasp. The hermeneutic encounter is said to be difficult.

As such, history had an effect on my experience with drawing. For example, I understand drawing in terms of “art teacher,” “number two pencil,” and “lines on a page.” I am a product of the seventies until the present. On the one hand, in my personal history, there are those who think of art as anything one makes of it and as

unique in its own way; at the same time, there are those who claim that there people who are artists and those who are not. I think of drawing as a task that is not limited in terms of who can try it, meaning that one's gender or ethnic group is not excluded from trying to draw. These are all effects of my history. In essence, we all have histories that have an effect on our understanding of trust.



**Figure 2. *Vantage Point Drawing***

For example, in today's modern society transparency and trust are often thought of as synonymous, or at least related (O'Neill, 2002). Thus, trust is situated in modern history where we have witnessed corporate scandals, the fall of the World Trade Center, and more positive events like the fall of the Berlin wall. These events and countless others are responsible for shaping our view of trust, individually and collectively, though this dissertation is concerned with the societal view of trust. For example, during George W. Bush's term in office it was commonly thought by many Americans that he was not forthcoming with information and always trying to distort the truth. Thus, he was not perceived by many as trustworthy or transparent. Still others may have an entirely different view of trust because "trust is not one thing but many" (Solomon & Flores, 2001, p. 20). Ultimately, one's history will always determine how one understands or makes sense of the concept of trust. This is because "a really historical thought must also think its own history" (Warnke, 1987, p. 69).

Because our history always affects our consciousness, we must be aware of this so that when trying to understand the other we are able create a temporal distance between ourselves and the other. In fact, the important thing according to Gadamer (1975) "is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text may present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings" (p. 238). By creating a distance, we are able to see where our horizon of understanding, the cultural and historical horizon ends, and where that of the other, trust or drawing, begins. When taking a conscious step back, we are able to temporarily put our history in front of us so that we can see it alongside the history of the other. Accordingly, Linge (2004) claims

that it is “the knower’s boundness to his present horizons and the temporal gulf separating him from his object [to be] that is the productive ground of all understanding” (p. xiv). This being with or alongside the other creates what is referred to, hermeneutically speaking, as a fusion of horizons.

When one lifeworld is able to meet with another lifeworld to see the subject matter of investigation, situated within a particular history, revised understanding can be made and the transformative experience can continue to evolve. By a shared understanding,

both persons involved in a dialogue occupy a different lifeworld but in order to communicate and understand each other must participate in the other by withdrawing from their own individual present horizons to form new horizons that genuinely include the other. (Taneja, as cited in Sherma & Sharma, 2008, p. 211)

This fusion of horizons is essential to the dialogical process of understanding. In this way, understanding is formed along with the other instead of by one trying to become the other. For example, a reader of a text does not try to become the author to form an understanding of what they author is saying. Rather, the reader tries to understand what the text is trying to present. Another way to understand this being alongside is that hermeneutics does not want us to “walk a mile in another’s shoes”; instead, it wants us to walk a mile *beside* the other.

Until enrolling in the drawing workshop and actively engaging in the process of drawing, I did not know that there was actually more than one way to create a work of art. For example, who would have thought of drawing Picasso upside down to achieve a

virtual replica of his famous work, *Igor Stravinsky*? This was exactly the task I was asked to do on the initial day of class. I could not believe my ears. This approach ran counter to everything I ever knew about drawing. Could this be too radical? How would I create anything even close to a Picasso? Was drawing something upside down something new age? In essence, this was a struggle for me to understand and thus another revealing moment which only served to further my understanding of drawing. Refer to Figure 3 to see what came of this experience. Though not perfect, needless to say, I was impressed with myself!



**Figure 3. My Drawing of Picasso's Igor Stravinsky**

### **The Hermeneutic Approach: Not an Easy Task**

The hermeneutic framework provides a way for approaching any subject matter for which one wants to understand more in-depth. What is important to realize about this interpretive approach is that it is difficult and often uncomfortable because it challenges one to consider that there are infinite interpretations for the subject matters and concepts that exist in our lives. “Philosophical hermeneutics is intensely interested in such experiences of difficulty” (Davey, 2006, p. 51). Knowing this forces one to question whether or not there is a “floor” or a final, completely verifiable set of knowledge in the world. According to the hermeneutic approach, the floor is that which we define as the floor, and it is temporary because it is only the floor for the current situation. Additionally, it is difficult to realize that there is no final source of knowledge that is able to provide final answers to the questions we have in life. Learning and understanding is an ongoing, infinite process by which we are the creators of meaning.

While in the drawing classes, I also experienced a tremendous amount of difficulty when trying to understand the process of drawing. In many ways, I was looking for “the floor.” Essentially, I was looking for that one technique that I could adopt for drawing that would result in perfect pictures. However, this very line of thinking goes against the hermeneutic approach because there is no set of knowledge beyond human understanding. However, at the time I wanted a solution to the problems I was experiencing in interpreting the process of drawing. This experience actually left me in tears two days in a row because I could not understand some of the ways to achieve the results I wanted to see on paper. In essence, I was struggling to overcome my

preconceived notions and fears and what I did not accept at first was that these are part of what make me who I am and the drawer that I am.

As an illustration, Figure 4 is a drawing of my hand. When I first began this assignment I assumed this would be one of the easier ones to complete because it was my hand and I had been with it for years. However, what I did not realize is that though I may have looked at my hands a thousand times, making it appear real on paper was not an easy task. Moreover, there was not a prescriptive way of making my hand look like it does in real life. I had to struggle to become fully engaged with the details, lines, wrinkles, shapes of the fingers, and everything that gives a hand its form in order to create the work of art. In other words, I had to interpret my hand based on the combination of what I saw and what I learned from the class instead of looking for a photocopy, an exact replica to be the end result.



**Figure 4. *Drawing of My Hand***

Only when I let go of looking for “the floor” did I realize that all concepts, even the one of drawing my hand, are interpretations. In the end I was pleased to see my results, however, with the understanding that this is my representation of my hand and it is always subject to revision.

The same difficulty applies to trying to gain a better understanding of trust. This concept, like all others, is constantly subject to interpretation and reinterpretation. Thus, a final answer does not exist to the question this dissertation hopes to answer about whether we can live a day without trust. Instead, the best that can be achieved through my interpretations is a deeper level of understanding of this concept based on my shared understanding between the text and myself as the interpreter. Even then, this dissertation is limited by the history and tradition in which it was written.

### **The Finitude of Knowledge**

Thus, all human knowing is finite. By finite, it is limited in terms of its horizons of understanding because it is always already a product of its culture and the history that affects one’s consciousness. This entire notion is most likely strange to us modern Americans, who have been taught that knowledge must be testable and repeatable for it to be true. Additionally, this implies that knowledge is something which can be obtained and moreover that it is permanent, not subject to revision and outside of us. However, because meaning is created out of a shared experience about an object, it is never final. Additionally, it is always understood through a shared language and in a particular history. Thus, the history and connections of one group of people about drawing or trust will always affect the shared meaning that is made.

### **Non-transferable Knowledge**

As such, hermeneutics does not view knowledge as something that is transportable like a pail of water. Unlike the empiricists, this view of knowledge does not assume that there is a “body of knowledge,” an actual set of principles and truths for which we can eventually learn all that there is to know. Again, this is because meaning is made through conversations and it is particular to the community where a shared language exists. Hermeneutics is not intent on making final truth claims about trust because it acknowledges that our knowledge is always finite and therefore subject to ongoing revision. According to Wachterhauser (1994), “there are no ‘value-free’ or ‘conceptually-neutral’ facts to which our ‘interpretations’ might simply ‘correspond’” (p. 53).

In other words, the human conception of the world and the understandings we have about it are not justified independently of ourselves or outside of ourselves such as from an objective view of reality. In fact, the important thing according to Gadamer (1975) “is to be aware of one’s own bias, so that the text may present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one’s own fore-meanings” (p. 238). In trying to gain a better understanding of trust, one must acknowledge their current understanding of the subject and how these understandings were formed.

Hermeneutics rejects this view of knowledge and instead exhorts that knowledge is created through our language, which is being. Thus, there can be no subject matter that does not already exist in language. This view of the world dispels the myth that there are final answers that exist which will never change. Thus, “we never assess the beauty of a

painting or worth of an action in light of a suprahistorical standard of rationality but we are always indebted to the various aesthetic, scientific and ethical-political traditions to which we belong” (Warnke, 1987, p. 169). Therefore, approaching the concept of trust through the hermeneutic framework means that no one can ever know all there is to know about trust. In fact, “by calling all human knowing finite, Gadamer is pointing out that no one knows everything nor could anyone ever hope to know everything” (Dostal, 2002, p. 56). Thus, one’s understanding of trust is always subject to revision.

Within each historical situation and culture in which the concept of trust is still used and therefore has purpose or meaning, trust may be understood differently. “The influence of the past obtains in our aesthetic understanding, in our social and psychological self understanding and in all forms of scientific understanding” (Warnke, 1987, p. 3). Thus, in the following chapters, I will investigate texts which will illuminate the concept of trust against a history which is different from the one in which I live and understand. In this way, the interpretations offered in this dissertation are not final truths, and are instead subject to revision. The concern with the finitude or limits of human knowledge here is rather to understand that humans cannot know all of the “conditions of human knowledge” that will be presented in life. These conditions include things like language and history which are themselves constantly changing.

### **What Does this All Mean?**

According to hermeneutics, “the real goal of all conversations and dialogical encounters is a deeper understanding of the other and ourselves” (Taneja, as cited in Sherma & Sharma, 2008, p. 211). Thus, in the subsequent chapters, readers will see how

the hermeneutic approach is used to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of trust. Several questions are asked throughout the chapters so that an intersubjective meaning is created through the interpretations made within each chapter, or historical period. As such, the limits of my horizon of understanding are fused with the other historical life worlds which were chosen to gain a deeper understanding of trust. In the end, I will provide readers with my best truth claim concerning why trust is necessary and is essentially a concept without which we cannot live a day. However, it will be important to realize that my vantage point may be different from another reader who could read the same texts selected for this inquiry, because hermeneutics acknowledges that each reader of a text is a different interpreter. In this same way, if I conducted this interpretation for second time with these exact same materials, I would likely arrive at a revised understanding because I would already be influenced by the first reading which would become a part of my historically-effective consciousness. Herein, readers will experience a hermeneutic of trust.

In essence, foreshadowing what is possible when one remains open to and is committed to seeing new possibilities, I will return once more to my experience with the drawing classes. On the very last day of the workshop our final assignment was the same as the first day—to draw a self-portrait. The task was the same, my tools—pencils and paper—were the same, however; my understanding of drawing was different. I now had a revised understanding of the process and it helped me to view my facial features in a new way. I was able to view some of my former biases that affected the way I drew myself initially and yet juxtapose those against my new way of understanding. In this

way, I was fusing the horizons to form a new horizon of understanding for myself. In the end, I created the portrait in figure (see Final Self-Portrait Drawing in the Appendix).

This shows that I was transformed by my experience and hope that my readers will be transformed in their thinking about the concept of trust.

### CHAPTER III

#### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

Mercantile genius consists principally in knowing whom to trust and with whom to deal. (Lord Justice Bowen, 1883)

In the previous chapter the hermeneutic framework was explained in detail. Now, it is time to apply this approach of interpretative inquiry to understand the notion of trust situated within the historical context in which it was thought to have originated, namely the Middle Ages (Desportes, 2006). Herein, I attempt to provide an explanation for the genesis of trust by investigating the sweeping socioeconomic changes that occurred from the fifth through the seventeenth centuries. Because this is a hermeneutic inquiry this chapter seeks to understand these two questions: what were the economic circumstances that caused the emergence of the concept of trust and what purposes did trust serve in the daily lives of the medieval Europeans? Ultimately, I will explain that it was the changes in the medieval economy, from the simplistic farms whereby peasants did not earn a living to the rise of capitalism and the resulting market influenced way of life beget the need for the notion of trust in the daily lives of Europeans<sup>1</sup> in the Middle Ages.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “European” will be used throughout this dissertation to refer to the mentality that the people who lived on the continent of Europe shared more so than specific ethnic identities. Smith (1998) offers a theoretical basis for my use of the term “European” in a generalized manner. His claim is “that ‘Europeanness’ is born partly of a shared Indo-European barbarian cultural heritage for Celt, German, and Slav alike, and partly of the legacy of the empire passed on from ancient Rome, the Carolingians, and Byzantium. It is that shared barbarian culture, married to an imperial past from a classical age—a past aped and reinvented by countless medieval rulers—which has impressed itself upon the European psyche

In essence, this chapter will make the claim that it was the progression from the non-materialistic, sedentary, rural lifestyle characteristic of the agricultural peasant farmers, to increases in urbanization, the rise of proletarianization, and eventually the rise of capitalism, which resulted in competition over resources, that may have served as catalysts for the first known uses of the concept of trust (Roberts, 1990). Thus, the reader will learn it was primarily economic demands that led people to migrate from the close-knit rural communities where kinship norms kept members of the group in harmony. In the late Middle Ages, as the Europeans dispersed more and more to urban settings to find work and make money, they came into contact with others, commonly referred to as strangers. Now that responsibilities were extended to others who were outside of the familial group, relationships began to broaden to include people who were not bound to each other out of blood ties, group loyalty, or the necessity of survival. Along with these newly-formed relationships came the notion of risk associated with relying on or confiding in others to fulfill an obligation. Additionally, the need to establish credibility of oneself and others, and the consideration of the interests of the people involved in the relationship were now part of the equation. Ultimately, these newly-established relationships seemed to lead to a concept that embodies all of these ideals, namely the genesis of trust.

### **Setting the Historical Stage**

To some, the term “Middle Ages” is very fitting because this period of time, marking the end of Late Antiquity to the beginning of Modernity, was definitely a middle

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and continues to inspire the inhabitants of this continent to regard themselves in spite of all their differences—as being in some real sense, Europeans” (Smith, 1998, p. xvii).

ground in which most of Western Europe was searching for order and stability.

However, as Newman (2001) warns us,

The term Middle Ages is actually a derogatory term. Historians long after the Middle Ages stuck this epoch of history with the label because they viewed these centuries as a filler, a time in the middle between the great ages of classical Greco-Roman civilization and the Renaissance. (p. 2)

Although the Middle Ages have been criticized because of its perceived “stagnancy,” it is important to note that it was during this historical period that the creation of universities transpired, the Magna Carta was composed, some of the greatest literary works such as the epic of *Beowulf* were written. The growth of towns and trade emerged eventually led to capitalism.

Whatever one deems as the appropriate naming of this period of time, one of the common themes that the reader will notice as being very prominent about life during the Middle Ages is how much life changed for the Europeans between the years of 476 B.C. to around 1500. Essentially, life for the people of the Middle Ages went through a vast and rapid transformation from small, close-knit communities that were more like a tribe of people with the bonds of the family and close neighbors being the norm to feudalism and eventually a market economy that would shape capitalism throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Haskins (1929) writes, “Localism was writ large across the Europe of the early Middle Ages, the localism at first of the tribe and the estate, later shaping itself into those feudal and manorial units upon which medieval society rested” (p. 93).

### **The Early Middle Ages**

Following the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476, “Europe saw a dramatic development of independent kingdoms. The ideology which underpinned these kingdoms was constructed from a mixture of native traditions and systems of knowledge from the Mediterranean world acquired through Christianity” (Driscoll, 1998, p. 142). This period, classified as the early Middle Ages, extended from approximately 500 to the year 1050. Historically, during this period there were basically two main classes of people—the nobility and the agricultural peasants. “The lower classes of people, the peasant class of this period, were the emancipated slaves from the days of late antiquity” (Driscoll, 1998, p. 142). In essence, after the Roman Empire collapsed “the great landowner of the late Roman and Merovingian periods found it to his advantage to emancipate slaves and settle them on his estate as dependent cultivators” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 208).

In this way, the peasant class was not totally free but actually became slave of a different kind. Because these people were newly emancipated and as such were without any real property or wealth, they became slaves to the lands owned by the lords and kings, depending on them for their survival. Essentially, these former slaves became known as “free-dependents”; an oxymoronic term by today’s standards. In fact,

in the evolution of the community toward manorialism the most important development . . . was the depression of freemen to the status of dependent peasants, tied to the soil and subject to the authority of a local lord who protected them in return for their economic support. (Hoyt, 1966, p. 209)

Even those few people who were free prior to the start of the early Middle Ages were often forced to turn their land over to the wealthy landowners as manors were becoming the new norm. Therefore, these free peasants became legal and economic dependents of the great landowners as well. Thaxton (1977) claims that “given their subordinate vision of the world, the peasants are by and large powerless dependents” (p. 186). As such, they inhabited tracts of land that were owned by a local lord and worked it in order to have a place to live. They cultivated the land and practiced animal husbandry for survival and to produce food for the land owners. The only real form of wealth during these early medieval years was in the form of land ownership. Typically those considered noble and powerful were a class of citizens who were able to “own” anything, including land and lives of their dependents.

Property ownership by only the upper echelon was not the only defining characteristic of the beginning of the Middle Ages. “Early medieval society was predominantly military and agrarian. Raising crops and domestic animals and fighting were the main occupations during this time” (Hastings, 1981, p. 38). Thus, the majority of the peasant class consisted of farmers who produced crops for subsistence and for the members of the upper class. During the early Middle Ages the majority of people lived throughout the European countryside in small tribes which were held together by bonds of kinship and familial ties. Life among the peasants was homogenous in the sense that everyone in this class shared the same resources, occupied an identical social status, and was dependent on the sharing of land and resources for survival. In the early Middle Ages these “primitive people were organized according to blood ties—the family and the

kindred” (Cantor, 1993, p. 94). Thus, this class of people was held together by the respect and loyalty associated with being a part of a family. Chayanov (as cited in Roberts, 1990) describes

the peasant farm as being primarily oriented to secure the subsistence needs of its members. Decisions over crops or the amount of land to farm are determined by the number of mouths to feed and by the available number of household workers. The peasant, from this perspective, seeks not to maximize income or profit, but to ensure that all family members are adequately fed and employed. (p. 356)

The prospect of material gain for selfish reasons was not a common aspiration among the peasant class. Instead, the peasants banded together to help each other with the essentials needed for subsistence and survival. For instance,

no single peasant was wealthy enough to own a whole plow team of eight oxen, and few peasants owned plows, but by combining their oxen and plows the villagers could cultivate large fields jointly with greater efficiency than they could farm small plots with their individual resources. (Hoyt, 1966, p. 204)

From these examples, one surmises that this class of people seemed to understand the importance of sharing resources. Thus, for the majority of citizens, life during the early Middle Ages was one where shared communal values and beliefs were the bonds that held society together.

The agrarian calendar dictated the rhythm of work and rest instead of economic demands. Thus, the need for a concept of trust was probably not on the minds of the medieval people who occupied and worked on the lands owned by lords because everyone held the same social status, worked the same jobs, and vied for survival. For this lowest class of people, life was predetermined by their status, as they did not have the

same power and material leverage as that of the nobility. The purpose of work was not for economic gain or for the hopes of climbing the social ladder because unless someone was born into the upper echelon of medieval society there were few, if any, hopes of upward social mobility.

Despite some improvements that rarely occurred in peasant status and periodic peasant economic gains, the lords managed to deprive agricultural workers of most of the surplus they created. In fact, because the peasants were practically destined to endure this meager level throughout life, their internal bonds likely had to remain strong because outside of their socioeconomic group it was obvious they were not equals. Therefore, within the peasant group the need for bonds of trust or those relationships which require a more formal sort of identity were virtually non-existent during this early period of the Middle Ages.

Life for peasants was hard due to the fact that the vast majority of people had to cloister together and essentially work to keep each other alive. In these tight-knit groups, cooperation and the notion of being able to rely on your neighbor were crucial. The collaborative effort, the concept of caring for one another instead of material wealth, and the respect and reciprocity that is found in close-knit groups, was the social order of the peasant class during the early Middle Ages. Kohn (2008) espouses, “familiarity permitted the application of a moral code based on reciprocity” (p. 34). In this period of time people grew up with and shared a daily life with one another. The bonds established in this type of society were strong without the need of formally labeling the ties because people treated one another as family.

Additionally, peasants began to be used more frequently in the early Middle Ages as part of the military when the need for protecting lands arose because they provided free labor. This group of people, referred to as the “free fighting men” of this time period were frequently called together to protect the village from raids by Vikings and other barbarians from the Scandinavian islands. The raids during this time “were annual and unpredictable as to locality” (Hastings, 1981, p. 37). From these early days of frequent fighting and the needed protection by local leaders, the dukes and counts, we find the earliest signs of feudalism due to the loyalty reciprocated by the free-dependent peoples who provided the service of guarding the local leader in exchange for the use of their lands. For the first time we find the occurrence of the intermingling of personal relationships and government where hereditary power becomes assumed, allegiances are ignored, and possessions that are personal and inheritable are given in exchange for the protection of the people.

Early in the medieval period the worries that are often associated with the economics of material wealth such as competition, were irrelevant to the peasants because they essentially had nothing, not even their own personal freedom. In fact, “the essence of the manor is the subordination of the peasantry to the lord of the manor” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 208). Thus, some of the common associations with the concept of trust, like the notion of the risk of losing something or the probability of someone not having one’s best “interest” at heart did not really apply in the early Middle Ages. Kohn (2008) states, “Trust does not arise when tradition dictates each person’s place and how they shall conduct themselves in it” (p. 5). Peasants’ lives were determined for them and they

were controlled by the desires of the dominant group. Thus, “there is no need to broach the subject of trust with people or things that we can utterly control” (Solomon & Flores, 2001, p. 45). In essence, trust was not necessary because there were no choices to be made.

What will become increasingly apparent to the reader is that during the days of feudalism, the majority of people lived a life dictated by powerful lords and kings. Ultimately, for the peasant class, ownership to their life, very few luxuries of any kind, including power or possessions, was simply not allowed. Therefore, a concept of trust may not have been necessary or relevant because there was very little, if any, risk of the loss of personal possessions, power, or ill will from members of the group. In fact, the main risks came from the forces of nature which threatened the production of crops or animals that were hard to sustain. Roberts (1990) posits, “ensuring their survival from one year to the next means that peasants must be conservative in their farming practices, sowing those crops or rearing those animals that minimize risks rather than maximize gain” (p. 357). Essentially, the risk of loss, especially material loss, was virtually non-existent as this group of Europeans did not have any possession to lose. The greatest losses were shared within the group because these were usually the loss of crops or people due to harsh winters and the resulting famine.

Another term that is often associated with the concept of trust is interest, as in you trust someone because you think they will have your best interest at heart. The interest of the peasants was collective because it was that of maintaining the survival of the group through subsistence farming. Therefore, the only people who shared that interest were

the ones who were doing the things that were necessary for survival. Thus, the interests of the peasant class did not matter to the Kings and members of the nobility who controlled the land and resources.

### **The Rise of Feudalism**

With the formation of a feudalistic society many changes occurred in the lives of the Europeans. Leading these changes were increases in economic influences and legal matters. Most Europeans of the 11th and 12th centuries had hopes of finding a sense of order, especially as it pertained to matters of law and governance. Hastings (1981) offers, “What we call feudalism was a method of maintaining some sort of security and order in a society in which centralized government had become weak” (p. 59). Feudalism provided a way to control more manageable territories of land and as such provide more direct oversight of the people. “At the same time that the king’s power is extended into the local district there is taking place a reorganization and departmentalization of the administration of the central government” (Artz, 1980, p. 225). Shifts in power from that of a centralized government and local lords overseeing villages to an even more formal manorial type of arrangement added to the need for more of a working class arrangement whereby estate management was important.

New relationships were being formed from the top down, meaning changes between different classes of people, namely the peasants and the nobility. The reorganization in government contributed to a concept of establishing work for the peasants instead of the free-dependent structure that existed in the early Middle Ages. This contributed to numerous changes in the lives of the lower class of citizens as it

opened the door for the possibility of land ownership and thus upward social and economic mobility. These changes also set in motion an entirely new way of relating to one another. Now the lower and upper classes had more direct involvement and new roles other than the landlord and servant.

Additionally, it was during this time that the establishment of the manorial courts was introduced. Each lord of a manor had his own court. Hoyt (1966) claims that “the manorial court was the heart and core of every manor” (p. 209). Thus, the settling of disputes between peasants and disagreements with the laws of the manor was now handled outside of the kinship groups. Again, this led to an increase in intermingling between the peasants and nobility. “Except for free tenants, none of the peasants . . . had any legal rights against the lord of the manor” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 211). This was important because it was yet another motivator for the peasants to try to become free tenants and this meant they had to start to live more for themselves than to help their neighbor.

A key characteristic of feudalistic society was greater interest in power relations for all classes of individuals, especially economic and political power, which led to major changes in the way people interacted with one another. The roles and responsibilities associated with kinship or tribal orders were beginning to witness some dramatic changes. Jones (1999) asserts, “European societies in the Middle Ages witnessed a major institutional change when they moved from being primarily organized around concepts of kinship to being ordered around the power exercised by a king over a defined area of territorial jurisdiction” (p. 65). Suddenly, how much one could produce agriculturally

mattered. Geographically, simple villages were no longer an appropriate description for the densely populated lands occupied by the lower social classes.

Instead, people were now part of an increasingly intricate system of courts and economic norms on manorial estates. “Study of medieval documents suggests that payment, whether in cash or in kind, was the main interest of the landlord; preservation of his subsistence and, if possible his surplus the main interest of the peasant” (Hastings, 1981, p. 43). In other words, the peasants seemed to become aware that they were an integral part of the workings of the manors and therefore, the loyalty and devotion they used to reserve for only members of the kinship and familial group changed. Instead, due to the potential financial benefits, the primary responsibilities and duties were aligned with the landlords. In essence, keeping the landlord stocked with the fruits of their labor meant more than just keeping the family fed.

A noticeable social stratification was created among the peasant class. This became known as the feudal hierarchy. These classifications were economically determined by the amount of the tenement or land a peasant owned and their status of freedom. For instance, some slaves still occupied the manorial lands and these un-free people were now given the duty of constant labor and time being strictly devoted the lord's *demesne*. The *demesne* was the land that was preserved strictly for the owner of the manor. The hierarchy consisted of the slaves, who were the lowest class of citizens and as such they owned nothing and had no rights other than to work continuously in exchange for their basic survival. Next, there were the cottars and cottagers who occupied a slightly higher class than the slaves. This group of peasants did not own any

of the land surrounding the manor but they were able to claim their own huts and gardens in return for their work on the demesne. A third level of people was considered half-villeins because they essentially owned half of the usual tenement of full villeins, the group who owned a full tenement of the land surrounding the manor house. With each rung of this economic hierarchy came varying privileges, like being able to wage a complaint against a lord in the event of blasphemy or exploitation.

As the early Middle Ages drew to a close and subsistence farming gave way to a more sophisticated agricultural economy, dramatic changes occurred within the lives of the peasants. For instance, “the economic revival after the middle of the eleventh century increased the importance of money, as compared with land, as a source of wealth” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 439). Daily work became more efficient due to new resources that were introduced. For instance, within the peasants’ village, the introduction of the use of horses instead of oxen and the use of the plow promoted more efficient ways of cultivating the land which led to increased productivity of crops and food supply. One outcome that resulted from the increase in agricultural methods was population growth. “Whereas early medieval Europe had been pitifully short of manpower, by the late eleventh century some areas seem to have had an excess of people in relation to available land” (Cantor, 1993, p. 475). The overabundance in the population could lead one to speculate about some early signs of competition over resources.

Another consequence of increased agricultural production was the ability for peasants to sell or trade their excesses in meat and produce with others. For example, Hoyt (1966) offers, “The revival of trade led to a rising standard of living which in turn

led to greater consumer demands from the nobility” (p. 439). Peasants began to earn a living in exchange for a something of value, be it land or money, which ultimately led to their freedom. “The peasant, fast moving out of his servile status, was becoming either a rent-paying fee tenant or a small landowner himself” (Cantor, 1993, p. 475). Thus, in this period of time the influences of economic power, especially the potential to own a piece of land, became increasingly important. Additionally, working to earn a living and increase one’s social status started to factor into the daily lives of the agricultural peasant family. Taxation became part of the manors as well. “The peasants, again, according to the personal status or according to the various sizes of their tenements, owed to the lord certain services or repayments” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 211). Additionally, he was expected to perform “boon work” which was akin to modern day notions of the busy season when the villager was expected to concentrate all of his efforts on the harvest of the *demesne*. Thus, life for peasants was no longer immune to the influences of money and economics. Considerations other than the immediate needs of the family for survival were presented, and with the promise of a better future, the medieval man began to enter the economic realm whereby the rules and actors would greatly change as compared to kinship rules and rights.

With the introduction of this system of exchange and the resulting changes in the dynamic of the peasant class structure, the genesis of trust may have slowly evolved. My interpretation is based on a few key themes that were found in the changes that occurred throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries. First, the familiar workings of the kinship structure were interrupted and even overturned due to the possibility of economic gain.

For the first time, there existed the notion of working not for survival but for someone else. This meant that one had to decide who their loyalty was pledged to—family or lord. Peasants were now motivated by tangible rewards and the possibility of increasing their status and power.

No longer were peasants able to avoid the people in power, the Kings and Lords, in order to keep their lives separate. The possibility of escaping one's current lot in life was made a reality by allowing the lower class members of society an opportunity to earn a living in return for their loyalty to the more powerful or dominant figures. During this period of the Middle Ages ordinary men could be selected as a villein and in turn be afforded increases in material wealth and social status. One's promised word and the actions associated with showing devotion or loyalty to another human being served as the method by which to increase one's social and economic status. In this case, Kings and Lords trusted their vassals to protect them. Likewise, the vassals placed their trust in the members of the nobility to pay them for their work.

Unlike the days of the Roman Empire, people of both classes were becoming aware of the agency that is associated with a system of exchanges in goods and power. Essentially, citizens of both classes began to realize that a sense of order needed to be maintained to ensure that the day to day functions of manor would continue as it always had. These include some of the earliest definitions associated with the concept of trust. The word trust was said to have been first used around the middle of the thirteenth century, and when one takes into account the fact that sweeping economic, political, and

social changes that were prevalent many interpretations can be made as to why the genesis of trust occurred in alignment this particular period of the Middle Ages.

One interpretation is that due to the fact that the idyllic peasant farmer no longer was driven by the needs of survival, and instead his new motivator was the potential for economic gain, perhaps this new relationship, namely the one between the lord as a boss and the peasant as an employee, or even one of “patron to client” initiated the genesis of trust (Thaxton, 1977, p. 185). According to Kohn (2008), “trust must inhere in relationships between agents who are significantly unequal in power, resources or autonomy” (p. 2). Thus, because the peasants are always considered the weaker party in relationships with the lords or vassals, the concept of trust may have been necessary to ensure the dominant group’s interest would be maintained by the weaker party. For instance, the work of the peasant was now profitable and could result in the ability to purchase land which ultimately meant freedom. Trust is usually tied to things which are very valuable to someone and one’s freedom is perhaps of the greatest value. Therefore, the site of “the petty lord or country gentleman, smelling of the barn and fields, and the ambitious peasant, squeezing every possible ounce of profit from his land, were central figures in European rural society” (Cantor, 1993, p. 476).

Along with the potential for gain also came the risk of loss. Essentially, a concept that was virtually nonexistent among the lower classes in medieval society, namely the risk of losing something valuable, was now a large part of their daily lives.

Another possible interpretation has to do with the fact that social relationships were being extended outside of the familiar boundaries of the kin group as the population

itself expanded. Whereas the bonds of kinship had been the strongest, they were now beginning to be replaced with the bond between lord and man, and thus a bond in which blood ties were sometimes not enough. For instance, Cantor (1993) allows, “Thus, during this period the importance of kinship decreased and the use of the bond of allegiance, or loyalty, greatly increased” (p. 94). Land and money was at stake and with the promise of earning these possessions, so were power, honor, and loyalty. Perhaps the concept of trust was needed to replace these former kinship bonds. These new relationships carried with them a tremendous amount of responsibility and devotion to the lord of the manor. Likewise, the manorial lord had to instill a sense of assurance and gain the trust of the villagers whom he oversaw. One could question whether relationships like these led to the creation of the idea of trust as loyalty.

Along with the need to please the landlord in return for financial gain, the bonds established within the kinship group also changed. Peasants who wished to move beyond their current status had to consider the needs of the landlord, thereby changing the dynamics of the relationships between familial ties to those of a more businesslike structure. In this way, peasants began to turn “away from the needs of the old village world as they took up the values of commerce and civilization, default on their traditional services to their clientele in the village-peasant masses” (Thaxton, 1977, p. 186). The days of simply working to meet the needs of the family for basic survival were replaced by working for someone outside of the kinship group, thereby causing a shift in the way the peasants were motivated. Now ordinary men, former peasants could work their way

into positions of power, authority, and even wealth if they could prove that they were individuals who could perhaps be “trusted.”

For example, vassals, through a formalized process called “homage” could pledge their loyalty to a lord and in return gain the respect and protection from barbarian threats and attacks. Thus, the lord who oversaw the lands of the manor was usually a former vassal himself and above him was his feudal lord, namely a king, duke, or count. Because the vassal was a permanent resident onsite at the manor, “manorial administration and enforcement of the lord’s complex and diverse rights were ordinarily entrusted to an official representing the lord” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 213). The vassal who occupied this role was eventually given the title of “bailiff or steward” and was allowed to choose his own assistant from the peasant class to help maintain control and order within the village. Thus, “the medieval manor continued to be, as it had begun, a balance between the proprietary and jurisdictional rights of the lord and the customs of the village community” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 213). The provost or reeve, as the bailiff’s assistant was called, had the duty of settling disputes among the peasants, ensuring that they performed the duties and obligations required by the lord and all the while they had to be efficient and amicable.

Additionally, the chosen vassal would be given a fief, a gift from his lord that showed his gratitude for the vassal’s promised loyalty and dedication. In many cases the fief could be left for inheritance to the vassal’s family. This promoted a new concept of the exchange of goods and services for promises of devotion and protection. It also led to the creation of primogeniture, and eventually even generational wealth. With the

potential for a peasant to join the nobility, the idea of the common man was no longer widespread and the common bond was not immune to this change either. Issues of loyalty and the idea of being paid for the continued proof of it, especially with the use of actual money versus bartered goods, were now a part of the social equation.

Increasingly, people began to adopt more individualistic attitudes where they took care of themselves first and then looked out for others.

Vassals had to earn and keep the trust of the King who selected him to this high state of authority. The vassal chosen to oversee the manorial estate was chosen based on certain criteria, be it social status, work ethic, competence, and more than likely that he could be trusted. This type of relationship entailed a vested interest in this person and their decisions. In modern terms, one might agree that as Russell Hardin (2004) Proposes in his 'encapsulated interest' model of trust, we must believe that another's interest encompasses ours p. 10). In other words, the manorial lord needed to know, or be assured, that this chosen person would not let him down and would have his best interest at heart, and that the chosen person also wanted the lord to be honored and protected as well. In this way, the chosen vassal's interest also "encapsulated" the lords.

Another phenomenon arose from the relationship between the nobility and the peasant class—the need for cooperation. This became increasingly important as relationships became defined more by the boundaries of a territory than by the bonds between people. Jones (1999) asserts, "The so-called feudal state of the Middle Ages was an institution that represented a limited territorialization of power, wherein a king's ability to govern and rule his kingdom depended to a large extent on the cooperation of

his vassals” (as cited in Elias, 1982, pp. 16-17). This meant that Kings had to choose men whom he was confident would oversee and manage the estate to his standards. Thereby, he took a risk on the person he chose, and if the vassal he chose proved disloyal or let the lord down, it was considered an act of betrayal and was punishable in some cases by death. These new relationships involved more emotions on the part of the lord and the vassal. Baier (1986) reminds us that when trust is broken betrayal is the emotion that is usually felt instead of disappointment. Therefore, one could interpret these events to mean that people began to use a concept of trust because they had a lot to lose if these relationships fell apart.

Thus Jones (1999) espouses,

With only a rudimentary administrative structure available to govern their kingdom, the rulers of medieval states were dependent upon the personal relationships that existed between a king and his vassals in order to exert any jurisdiction over the vast majority of their territories. In effect, such control was largely derived from the social bond between two individuals rather than being based upon an objective and absolute ordering of space and territory. (p. 66)

The need for trust became increasingly evident in this type of scenario whereby there was a new relationship and a defined role for each person, namely lord and man, instead of pure familial ties to bind people to one another. The scenario became more structured to the current model of “A trusts B to do x” (Kohn, 2008, p. 8). Therefore, one could ascertain that, “Trust is the expectation of or within two or more entities (persons, organizations) that regular day-to-day behavior will be honest, cooperative, and predictable based on shared norms” (Neace, 1999, pp. 150-51). Thus, there are defined roles, expectations associated with those roles and the risks inherent in those roles.

People's lives and well-being were at stake and the emotional ties were dramatically increased. Blood ties were no longer the social glue. Something different was required. Perhaps these differences are found in the bonds of trust.

### **Progression towards Capitalism**

From the middle of the thirteenth century until the end of the Middle Ages Europeans faced another major lifestyle change, one that reshaped the interactions between men. In essence, it was during the late Middle Ages that Europeans became enthralled in the market economy and one's status became linked to how credible one could prove to be.

For the peasant class a sense of agency and economic gain became increasingly prevalent during the shift from feudalism, which defined the early Middle Ages, to a more capitalistic and hierarchical society of the later, or high medieval period. This was due to the fact that people had interest beyond mere survival and they were finally able to earn a living by working or engaging in commerce and trade. Thus, Europeans of the late Middle Ages realized that they actually possessed some power in the economic realm, especially as towns became established and merchants served a crucial role in their sustainability. Men of the later Middle Ages discovered that if they wanted to move beyond their current positions in life and experience upward social mobility, they had no choice but to actively participate in activities that would create wealth, and these economic endeavors seemed to require trust. In other words, to trust someone became a common practice between craftsmen and eventually merchants, especially as the relationships extended to include them as creditors and debtors. The presence of the

concept of trust emerged and became part of the lived experience and spoken language, especially in the economic sector of society.

The economic changes that affected the peasant class were also present in the lives of the nobles. Thus, “although they continued to be the predominant social class, the feudal nobles in most of Europe declined in power and influence during the thirteenth century” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 436). In large part this was due to decreases in large scale wars and fighting. Therefore, the vassals and feudal lords were no longer needed and now mercenary troops were hired and paid for their services. Thus, “the old personal relationships and the jurisdictional powers of lords over vassals were giving way to new and impersonal relationships which were proprietary and economic” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 441). No longer were the kings tied by feudal custom to their lords:

When military service grew less important as the preeminent obligation of vassalage, the bonds uniting lord and vassal were less intimate and personal, in contrast with older days when the trust between lord and vassal had been nurtured by service together in the field. (Hoyt, 1966, p. 436)

Therefore, the notion of pledging one’s loyalty to a lord in return for power or land was no longer what defined the relationships between the peasant class and the nobility.

During this time the desire for cash income was prized over the fiefs that symbolized feudalistic society. Hence, “Under the forms of feudal tenure, a new relationship had emerged—an impersonal cash nexus had become more important than the older and personal binding ties of homage” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 440). Perhaps a concept of trust became necessary as the idea of homage and fealty were replaced. More than

honor and valor, now there was cash and the idea of building up savings and for some, fortunes.

Historically, between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries there was a shift in ideology from “confidence in change for the better to caution against change for the worse” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 590). This paradigm shift was the result of several factors. First, the late Middle Ages experienced a decline in population growth for the first time. One major contributor was the Black Death, a disease that plagued a large number of Europeans and resulted in a major disruption in their normal existence. Additionally, as manorial estates gave way to the rise of towns where trade and exchanges of cash could take place, the demand for agricultural production began to decline. These changes meant that the nobility whose “economic position . . . was based on control of the land . . . were now, caught between lower prices for what was sold and steady or higher prices for what was bought” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 590). The only real income being generated from the land was the rent that tenants had to pay or from the peasant labor that served to keep the manor in working order. Therefore, as opportunities to work for wages arose in towns, more and more the free peasants deserted the manors in search of a life that was less dependent on a manorial lord and thus allowed for more personal freedom.

As the peasant class began to desert the manors and feudalism was quickly declining, the nobility began to do things to try to gain control over the peasant class again. This included everything from not allowing for cash payments for services on the land owned by the lords to charging fees for the use of equipment to fulfill duties like “appurtenances” such as ovens and mills. Even the peasants who deserted the manors to

work in towns experienced tightened governmental control and regulations. For instance, many artists could not become a part of the craft guild during the fourteenth century due to the need to eliminate further competition and to reduce the overproduction of goods that existed. Wages were cut dramatically and the peasants and workers did not possess any legal rights to change their condition.

Thus, in 1381, after too much discontent with the status quo, the peasants revolted in what was termed “The Peasants’ Revolt.” Peasants were determined to change the way arbitrary rules could be applied to them for economic exploitation. They aimed their attacks on the dominant class and were determined to have some rights and a more secure form of governance. Hoyt (1966) states, “Most of the movements were also strongly anticlerical, because the Church was the greatest landlord, the most powerful single vested interest in maintaining the economic and social status quo” (p. 594).

Unfortunately for the peasants, the positive changes which were a result of these uprisings did not appear until the mid-fifteenth century.

The sweeping economic, political, and social changes that took place during the high to late Middle Ages all affected the way medieval people interacted with one another. Relationships changed dramatically during this period of time because of factors such as the introduction of a money system, the decline of feudalism, and the shift towards manufacturing goods instead of bartering. People began to move further and further away from their familiar villages to seek wage work in town. “Proletarianization, it can be argued, is the most significant process in the making of the contemporary world: It is at the heart of modern class formation; it is associated with fundamental changes in

demographic processes and with restructuring of family relationships” (Roberts, 1990, p. 354). In essence, the family dynamic included living among strangers who had likewise moved to areas where the hopes of prosperity were located.

Working outside of the home began to dictate much of the family life that had been so important during medieval times to the lower classes of people. For instance, as the later Middle Ages progressed,

the norm was close to the modern nuclear, rather than the extended family: the husband, the wife (often the second or third wife in a series due to high mortality rates in childbirth); children, perhaps one aging parent; perhaps one unmarried sibling; and from zero to four or so servants depending on economic circumstances. (Cantor, 1993, p. 478)

The introduction of a cash society and the resulting changes in relationships to less intimate adds credence to the interpretation of a concept of trust finding its inception during this time of economic and societal redefinition. People were not able to depend on just their families and kinship ties to meet all of their needs. Europeans of this changing medieval society were now forced to further extend their interactions with other people, namely strangers. This was especially true with the introduction of the medieval fair. Loyalty, honor, and military service were no longer the links or exchanges between people. Instead, money was the driving force and it was now used in exchange for goods and services.

Thus, economic and proprietary relationships took the place of close, personal relationships. In fact, as the towns advanced further into an industrialized society the introduction of free private enterprise caused the craftsmen of the day to turn on one

another in hopes of gaining an economic advantage over others. Competition became a new reality as people who were either business savvy or underhanded could increase their profits with different techniques and skills. Hoyt (1966) offers, “In the small and relatively stable local market the rapid rise of one member’s trade could be achieved only at the expense of another members” (p. 443). Did the beginning of the notion of free enterprise lead to the possibility of distrust, thus begetting a need for trust?

Perhaps the most compelling interpretation for the origination of a concept of trust was found in another major economic change that slowly began in thirteenth century, but was more fully actualized in the late fifteenth century and beyond. This was the introduction of the credit system. Ultimately, the idea began because, “rather than take the risks of carrying with them the huge sums of money necessary to purchase goods, merchants preferred to take the smaller risk of trusting each other” (Hoyt, 1966, p. 445). Currency during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was still in the form of gold and silver coins, thus making it heavy and cumbersome to carry. Additionally, it was not mass produced and often tangible coins were not available while material goods or something altogether different—credit—was available.

Credit was a new idea that was based on the concept of trust. In this way, the more credibility or believability one could profess to have the more one could use their credit to finance goods and services from others. The word trust is, according to some sources like Merriam-Webster, synonymous with the word credit, as in “reliance on future payment for property” (“Trust,” 2008). Thus, trust can be interpreted to be tied to economics and the idea of increasing economic efficiency for those parties who are

willing to take the risks inherent in trust. Money began to be exchanged at infrequent intervals instead of all situations being cash and carry.

As the practice of trust became fully accepted, medieval merchants became defined by roles of creditor and debtor where the sustainability of the relationship was based on one fulfilling one's promise by paying one's debts. As long as the debtor paid his dues and honored his promises the concept of trust was maintained. Additionally, from an etymological standpoint, trust in the sense of fiduciary responsibilities was first documented around the year 1630, along with the rise of capitalism. Here we find that the earliest definition of trust was actually synonymous with credit and credit networks. Some of the effects of the credit networks are as follows:

As credit networks became more complicated, and more obligations broken, it became important before entering into a contract to be able to make judgments about other people's honesty. The more reliable both parties in an agreement were in paying debts, delivering goods or in performing services, the more secure chains of credit became, and the greater the chance of general profit, future material security and general ease of life for all entangled in them. The result of this was that credit in social terms—the reputation for fair and honest dealing of a household and its members—became the currency of lending and borrowing. Credit . . . referred to the amount of trust in society, and as such consisted of a system of judgments about trustworthiness; and the trustworthiness of neighbors came to be stressed as the paramount communal virtue, just as trust in God was stressed as the central religious duty. Since, by the late sixteenth century, most households relied on the market for the bulk of their income, the establishment of trustworthiness became the most crucial factor needed to generate and maintain wealth. (Tilly, 2004, p. 5)

Another association with trust is that of taking risks. The notion of risks became extremely important as the ideas of economic life began to dominate the actions and attitudes of the Middle Ages man. For instance, the teachings of Christianity such as a

just price for goods and services were giving way to merchants charging as much as they could for the risks associated with allowing goods to be purchased on credit. Hoyt (1966) offers,

Merchants who stood ready to suffer occasional losses of large sums, in order to transact their farflung business, felt justified in rejecting the formula of the just price. They not only increased the price to cover their risks, but since risk are difficult to calculate, they erred on the side of raising the price as high as the market would bear—just in case their next transaction were a total loss through piracy or shipwreck. (p. 447)

Again, it seems as though once money and the idea of financial prosperity emerged, people began to live by the idea of trust because they either wanted to use it positively to establish credit for themselves, again for economic gain, or they wanted to use trust as a way to legitimize underhanded business practices, such as inflating prices on goods to reduce risks and basically ensure one would not defect, or break the bonds of trust.

This chapter has explained life in the Middle Ages to interpret the genesis of the concept of trust. This concept seemed to have slowly evolved throughout this historical period, and did so in accordance with changes in the economic structure. When the bonds of kinship and family were sufficient for the simple agricultural peasant, the concept of trust, meaning the establishing of credibility and credit, was not relevant or necessary. In fact, many of the associations with trust were irrelevant during this time. For instance, the notion of taking risks and the idea of protecting one's interest did not seem to apply because life was determined by one's class since their birth. However, the concept of trust quickly came to the forefront of people's minds almost in tandem with

the increasing influences of money and power that were present during the latter part of the Middle Ages.

The interpretations offered throughout this chapter were based on the historical vignettes selected because they seem to illuminate the subject of trust against a backdrop of a society which underwent major economic changes. Due to these economic changes the genesis of trust appears to be the result of the pursuit of individual prosperity. As an example, the notion of one's trust became synonymous with one's credit. To break the bonds of trust was to discredit someone.

Therefore, when trying to find an answer to the question, "Can we live a day without trust" and further understand why in today's postmodern American society trust is viewed as a necessity, a look back in time revealed that there was a relationship between the economic needs and desires and the need for trust. Thus, the answer to this perceived necessity of trust, according to the genesis, would reveal that trust may be necessary where exchanges of money and the establishment of credit are needed. However, if this is the case and Americans often espouse that trust is necessary in personal relationships as well as in schools and other institutions, then what does that reveal or say about these relationships or the outcomes expected from them? Is there an economic overtone to all of our interactions as humans living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Essentially, what is it about trust that causes Americans such as Tschannen-Moran (2004) to make claims such as without trust, things fall apart. In other words, what are the "things" we are worried will fall apart without trust?

At this point, one is left to question whether this economic genesis of trust is the reason modern Americans, who also live in a capitalistic society, view trust as necessary. I believe there may still be more to the explanation for the necessity of trust other than for capitalistic and economic pursuits therefore; in the following chapter trust will be interpreted from another angle. In Chapter IV I will shift the context from medieval Europe to colonial America where the concept of trust will be situated in the American judicial system. From this vantage point, I will try to offer a deeper understanding of trust based on the “trust” relationships created between the American Indians and the Euro Americans. In this way, I am still committed to finding a plausible explanation for why the concept of trust is viewed as necessary and to get closer to an answer to the question, “Can we live a day without trust.”

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **A SPECIAL TRUST RELATIONSHIP AND NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLES**

While Indians spoke of mother Earth, non-Indians sought mother lodes.  
(Johansen, 1999, p. xv)

In this chapter the focus will shift contextually from the changing economics of the Middle Ages to the creation of the judicial and legal relationship between European settlers and Native American peoples in colonial America that was grounded in the European notion of trust. As the previous chapter explained, trust originated within European history and tradition. Therefore, when the Europeans encountered the Native American Peoples in what would eventually be labeled North America they brought along with them their particular concept of trust. This chapter's purpose is to elucidate how the notion of trust was used during the formation of this legalistic relationship. I will explain to the reader how the European concept of trust, as that which was portrayed to be from the authority of the Christian God for the prosperity of Christian peoples, was used in an attempt to form a "relationship" with Native American peoples. This resulted in the creation of Native American dependency on the United States government and served as a way to manipulate the indigenous peoples out of their lands, customs, and even their identity for the benefit of economic prosperity of the dominant white culture.

Ultimately, trust was found throughout the legal doctrines and legislation related to Native Americans. The special "trust relationship" was meant to dictate how Native

American peoples were to act and interact with the white man, namely as inferior dependents. The term “trust” was used numerous times when defining federal Indian policy and the unique relationship between the United States government and the indigenous peoples. For instance, Wilkins and Lomawaima (2001) state, “A number of terms are used to describe the relationship between the governments of tribes and the United States: trust, trust doctrine, trust duty, trust relationship, trust responsibility, trust obligation, trust analogy, ward-guardian, and beneficiary trustee” (p. 65). This chapter will try to help explain how and why trust became the chosen term and thus was ubiquitous when it came to matters concerning Native American peoples.

### **A Historical Perspective on the Need for Trust**

When the Europeans invaded North America they were delighted to find that the land itself was not totally unlike that of Europe because they were there to “subdue the newfound land and its inhabitants, and to turn them into European profit” (Axtell, 1981, p. 41). In fact, the settlers quickly realized that with their knowledge of capitalism combined with effective methods of Western technology for cultivating land, they could soon establish a place all their own.

However, what the Europeans were not expecting to find were the Native American peoples whose cultures were diverse, complex, and even considered strange to them. In fact, according to Deloria (1973), everything from the construct of time as nonlinear to beliefs about respecting nature was different than that of the Europeans. The diversity of the Native American peoples posed a serious threat to the European invaders

because they had the goal of creating an economic empire whereby all members would conform to their ways of life and in essence align themselves with the goal of prosperity.

However, some of the first Europeans did realize that the indigenous peoples were accustomed to exchanges of property in the form of bartering and trading. Yet as more European colonists invaded America they had no interest in this type of simplistic exchange and were determined to annihilate the native peoples. “To these colonists . . . the native possessors of the soil stood as living impediments to agricultural ‘civilization,’ little different from stony mountains, unfordable rivers, and implacable swamps” (Axtell, 1981, p. 42). As such, Europeans quickly realized the only way they could ensure that the native peoples would conform to their plan was to rely on the Christian missionaries to convert them to Christianity. Axtell (1981) states, “To convert the Indians of America was to replace their native characters with European personae, to transmogrify their behavior by substituting predictable European modes of thinking and feeling for unpredictable native modes” (pp. 42-43). Europeans tried to convert Native peoples to Christianity and believed educating them would prove better for society in general by ridding the Native American peoples of their cultural behaviors. However, neither of the attempts proved successful. Eventually, conquest through wars and violence and the eventual relocation—or more accurately, exile—to small reservations was the only way the Europeans could enforce the control they desired.

Thus, “to men accustomed to kings and queens, administrative bureaucracies, standing armies, police, courts and all the punitive technology of justice known to ‘civilized’ states, the Indians seemed to suffer from unbenign neglect” (Axtell, 1981, p.

46). Europeans thought of Native Americans as inferior, subhuman, and in need of “saving.” As time progressed from the European invasion of America through the creation of an established United States’ government, interactions with Native American peoples were increasingly difficult and often resulted in wars. The colonists operated from what they knew in Europe, and as such, they felt they needed to formalize, through establishing legal doctrines, their rights to own specified regions of land. The settlers knew how to establish a centralized government through their experience of living under the monarchs of Europe. For the colonists, an actual exchange of power, land, and rights could only occur through formal legislative processes whereby contracts and treaties were composed and signed, thus “treaty making with Indians was a practice that the Europeans were accustomed to” (Prucha, 1994, p. 16).

The need for trust seemed to have originated—at least in relations between Native and European peoples—out of a desire by the dominant group to maintain economic and social control. The concept of trust was part of the European vocabulary and as such, it was a foreign concept to Native American peoples, as was the idea of treaty-making and all of the contractual ways that the Europeans tried to gain control of the lands of Native American peoples “without alarming the natives” (Deloria & Lytle, 1983, p. 3). The concept of trust actually seems apropos considering that trust originally emerged out of economic necessity and the need to ensure, almost contractually, that economic duties would be fulfilled. Thus, when the colonists “discovered” America, they were interested in the most expedient ways to accumulate land and in turn use it to amass wealth.

Establishing trust with the “other” nearly made the taking of land and other resources a guaranteed success for the Europeans.

This trust relationship began in the seventeenth century as one in which the first European colonists were able to gain a foothold in what would become America by making treaties with the indigenous people. Compared to what was to come with the formation of federal laws and policies, treaty-making seemed to be a nonthreatening way for the two groups of people to live somewhat peacefully. However, as time progressed and the number of European settlers grew, there began to be a more established government by which the colonists wanted all peoples in the country to abide. In 1776, the colonies that were established by the Europeans became the United States of America, and treaty-making and agreements were made between Americans and Native American peoples.

The United States entered into its first treaty in 1778 with the Indians of the Delaware tribe (Deloria & Lytle, 1983). In fact, over the next hundred years over 600 treaties were made with various tribes. However, what is crucial to point out is that even though one goal of treaty-making was to encourage peaceful relations with Native Americans; the more important goal was, “they were also a means of securing an orderly transfer of landownership from the tribes to the United States” (Deloria & Lytle, 1983, p. 4).

Establishment of a relationship based on trust whereby the Native Americans would need to depend on the Euro Americans seemed to be the most beneficial scenario for the dominant culture, namely the whites. The concept of trust, which is an Anglo

social construction, seemed to provide the necessary language to justify the actions of the Europeans of covertly coercing Native American peoples out of their land, resources, and cultural identity. Trust was not a foreign concept to the settlers because, as we found in Chapter III, the medieval concept of trust originated out of the experiences of the early Europeans or more accurately, life that embraced the earliest ideals of capitalism including a market economy where trust was an essential part of the construct.

Thus, trust served as an unspoken contract to assist in solidifying exchanges of goods, services, and money. Americans needed a justification for moving away from the simple treaty-making that began the relation with the indigenous peoples. Thus, in 1823, the Supreme Court decided that no better legitimacy could be found than in the authority of their Christian God. As will be explained in the following section, the role of religion was paramount in gaining the trust of Native American peoples.

### **The Role of Religion in Legislation**

An explanation of the trust relationship between the United States government and Native American peoples cannot occur without first discussing the fundamental role that religion, specifically western Christian ideology, played in the development of almost all policies, laws, and treaties related to the indigenous peoples of this nation. The concept of “discovery” and the religiosity it implies for the idea of a “trust relationship” will remain a common theme throughout this chapter because it was and remains to be a key component in the establishment of the idea of “trust” between indigenous peoples and the United States government. In fact, Wilkins and Lomawaima (2001) state, “the notion of trust began in the discovery era—it is no recent ‘invention’ as Prucha claims—

but it has been shaped to fit different eras of Indian policy” (p. 69). Christian ideals were used to dictate everything from the ways in which “civilized” people were to conduct themselves, to economic issues like the buying and selling of land between Native peoples and whites. “One issue that has fascinated anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and scientists is the relation between religion, the material progress of a society, and the range of human choice” (Ekelund, Herbert, Tollison, Anderson, & Davidson, 1996, p. 3). This was the case with Native American peoples and Euro Americans where trust was the chosen concept, albeit under a religious guise, used as the link to bind these two groups together to perpetuate the economic desires of the European colonists.

Since their arrival in North America, European colonists tried to use the authority of God, or “the contention of Christians that their God is specifically working in the events of mankind,” to legitimate his treatment of “others,” especially Native American peoples (Deloria, 1973, p. 131). This was done to make it seem as though to trust in the Christian was to fulfill the Will of God. Because the Europeans operated out of the framework of “Christian European international law [which] regarded a Christian nation’s territorial possessions as sacrosanct,” they created legislation based upon these ideals and in them defined rights to property ownership and rights for all peoples living in the United States (Newcomb, 1993, p. 303). For example, Europeans believed their Christian duty was to “imitate their God” thus, “bring order to chaos,” which is what they felt existed when they “found” America (Pearce, 1988, p. 3). Therefore, Europeans

worked to create a system of government that reflected their Christian beliefs and one that required others to adopt them or face serious consequences.

Furthermore, Europeans had a way of interpreting biblical text that served their interests and even legitimized their actions, while oppressing others. For instance, “In Pslams 2:8, Yaweh (the Lord of the Old Testament) tells his chosen people (through King David) I shall give to the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (as cited in Newcomb, 1993, p. 311). This distinction between “Christian/heathen” formed the basis for the vast majority of legislation and federal policy regarding Native American peoples. The examples and court cases examined throughout this chapter will show how the dominance of Western Christian religion directly shaped legal and judicial matters pertaining to the indigenous peoples of this country. It is important to clarify that “the Christianity envisioned was not a disembodied spiritual construct but a distinct cultural product of Western Europe” (Axtell, 1981, p. 42).

The most profound document for defining legal relations between the United States and Native American peoples was the Doctrine of Christian Discovery. The Doctrine of Christian Discovery dates back to the fifteenth century and began in papal documents between the Pope of the Catholic Church and the Kings of Spain and Portugal. The first of these was the *Romanus Pontifex*, issued by Pope Nicholas V to King Alfonso V of Portugal, which declared war against all non-Christian peoples throughout the world, “and specifically sanctioning and promoting the conquest, colonization, and exploitation of non-Christian nations and their territories” (Newcomb,

1992, p. 18). The goal of Christendom was to “capture, vanquish, and subdue the saracens, pagans, and other enemies of Christ,” to “put them into perpetual slavery,” and “to take all their possessions and property” (Davenport, as cited in Newcomb, 1992, p. 18).

Then, Christopher Columbus began to make his “discoveries” and conquests at the request of the monarchs of Spain and another papal document was issued under Pope Alexander VI, the *Inter Cetera*. This text stated the Pope’s desire that the “discovered” people be “subjugated and brought to the faith itself” (Davenport, 1917, p. 61). Therefore, when Columbus “discovered” America the acts of genocide and harm inflicted upon the natives he encountered were sanctioned by the Catholic Church. Thus, “these papal documents were frequently used by Christian European conquerors in the Americas to justify an incredibly brutal system of colonization - which dehumanized the indigenous people by regarding their territories as being inhabited only by brute animals” (Story, 1833, as cited in Newcomb, 1992, p. 18).

Newcomb (1992) states,

the Christian “Law of Nations” asserted that Christian nations had a divine right, based on the Bible, to claim absolute title to and ultimate authority over any newly “discovered” non-Christian inhabitants and their lands. Over the next several centuries, these beliefs gave rise to the Doctrine of Discovery used by Spain, Portugal, England, France, and Holland—all Christian nations. (p. 18)

Therefore, by Divine Right, only Christians, or God’s chosen people, could “discover” a land and claim it as “discovered.” For instance, within a few years after the Europeans arrived in America they claimed that the land they settled was theirs due to the

fact they “discovered” it. Although Native American peoples may have inhabited the land first, according to the laws of discovery they could not lay claim to it because they were not Christians. The principle of discovery eventually worked its way into and defined legislation relating to American Indians.

In fact, “in 1823, the Christian Doctrine of Discovery was quietly adopted into U.S. law by the Supreme Court in the celebrated case, *Johnson v. McIntosh*” (8 *Wheat.*, 543, as cited in Newcomb, 1992). In “what has long been heralded as one of the first federal Indian law cases to define the nature of land title for American Indians,” Chief Justice John Marshall wrote the reasoning behind the Supreme Court’s decision based on the principles of the Christian Doctrine of Discovery (Newcomb, 1993, p. 304). In the *Johnson* ruling Marshall, writing for a unanimous court, observed that

Christian European nations had assumed “ultimate dominion” over the lands of America during the Age of Discovery, and that—upon “discovery”—the Indians had lost “their rights to complete sovereignty, as independent nations,” and only retained a right of “occupancy” in their lands. In other words, Indians nations were subject to the ultimate authority of the first nation of Christendom to claim possession of a given region of Indian lands. (*Johnson v. McIntosh*)

In other words, Marshall utilized the Doctrine of Christian Discovery over 300 years after it was written to legitimate the United States Supreme Court’s decision to take lands from Native American peoples. This does not sound like the building of a trusting relationship. “Marshall simply left a legacy of those conceptual principles the Court would need in order to keep the rights of the republic paramount to those of subordinate Indian peoples” (Newcomb, 1993, p. 331). By doing so, he set into motion a hundred years of oppressive legislation which was and is still used to perpetuate white, Christian

dominance over the indigenous peoples of North America. The ensuing battles, both on the field and on paper, were inevitable.

Marshall also realized that there were too many religious references to be legally permitted by the United States government; therefore,

when Marshall first defined the principle of ‘discovery,’ he used language phrased in such a way that it drew attention away from its religious bias, stating that discovery gave title to the government, by whose subject, or by whose authority, the discovery was made, against all other European governments. (Newcomb, 1992, p. 19)

However, when referring to the legal precedent used in 1823 case, Justice Marshall made a specific reference to the fifteenth century Cabot Charter which claimed its mission was to “seek out, discover and find whatsoever isles, countries, and regions of the heathens and infidels which before this time have been unknown to all Christian peoples” (Arnold, 2010, p. 4). Thus, Marshall was keenly aware that in order for the Doctrine of Discovery to have a lasting stay legally, the term “Christian” would have to be changed to European. Changes like this allowed for ideas to be accepted such as, “the distinction was drawn between lands already occupied by Europeans and lands not so occupied, thus those who were Christians and those who were non-Christians” (Newcomb, 1993, p. 307).

Not only did the role of religion and the Doctrine of Discovery have a major impact on the creation of the unique trust relationship between Native American peoples and the United States government, economic pressures and the recognition of major cultural differences in the way money, power, resources, and land were viewed to have

had an enormous effect. For example, unlike the Native Americans who did not view land as a money-making commodity, the Europeans were determined to gain control of the land and people. In fact, Limerick (1987) posits, “All the cultural understanding and tolerance in the world would not have changed the crucial fact that Indians possessed the land and that Euro-Americans wanted it” (p. 190). Native Americans were not accustomed to the ideas of treaties and land tenure as were their European counterparts, creating an unfair dichotomy.

In fact, in the Marshall ruling, the language was changed to exclude the references to Christianity and instead substituted governmental verbiage; however,

the Indians were unaware of the complexity of Marshall’s revision and since there was no international forum in which such a claim could be challenged had the Indians known and objected, Marshall’s definition in effect traded a vested property right for a recognized political right of quasi sovereignty for the tribes. (Deloria & Lytle, 1983, p. 4)

In fact, the idea of amassing vast amounts of land for the sole purpose of economic development was a completely foreign concept to Native Americans who used the land they needed for survival and often viewed it as sacred.

Deloria (1973) posits, “American Indians hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind” (p. 75). For instance, a Crow Chief named Curly explained his feelings about his native land when he was asked to give up more land during a land cession. When he rejected the government offer he stated:

The soil you see is not ordinary soil—it is the dust of the blood, the flesh and the bones of our ancestors. We fought and bled and died to keep other Indians from taking it, and we fought and bled and died helping the Whites. You will have to dig down through the surface before you can find nature's earth, as the upper portion is Crow. The land as it is, is my blood and my dead; it is consecrated; and I do not want to give up any portion of it. (Deloria, 1973, pp. 166-167)

Native American peoples such as the Crow did not view land as merely a commodity or a means to an end. Land was special and it meant more than money because it represented lives and experiences of a shared people. This ideal definitely ran counter to the mindset of the colonists who looked at land as a necessary means to prosper economically.

Moreover, a complex legal structure was not viewed as a necessity among the Native Americans, as most of their disputes were handled by established kinship norms and expectations of the tribe. The tribal norms were such that the group as a whole united to live harmoniously and no one was thought to be more valuable than another. All members of the group were essential to the survival of the entire tribe. The quote below from Miller's (1998) *The American Indian Perspective* provides a Native American perspective on tribal life:

the ultimate aim of Dakota life, stripped of accessories, was quite simple: One must obey kinship rules; one must be a good relative. . . . Without that aim and the constant struggle to attain it, the people would no longer be Dakotas in truth. They would no longer be even human. To be a good Dakota, then was to be humanized, civilized. And to be civilized was to keep the rules imposed by kinship for achieving civility, good manners, and a sense of responsibility toward every individual dealt with. Thus only was it possible to live communally with success; that is to say, with a minimum of friction and a maximum of good will. (p. 50)

Deloria and Lytle (1983) explain that “Indian judicial systems call upon a special blending of the past and the present in order to solve intratribal disputes” (p. 1). Native Americans did not need a standard of written law or a defined religious code to govern and dictate their behavior. However, for their European counterparts, this way of life was unacceptable and appeared disorderly. In fact, the colonists felt “so subtle and covert were the workings of Indian justice that they [the colonists] were astonished to find that such societies can remain united” (Axtell, 1981, p. 47).

One way that the Europeans were able to keep Native American peoples at a disadvantage was to constantly use language and concepts that were foreign to them thereby disallowing a true understanding of what was transpiring in regards to legislation to be attainable by the Native American peoples. Smith (2009) espouses, “From the beginning of this history the specialized vocabulary created by Europeans for ‘Indians’ ensured their status as strange and primitive” (p. 17). There are several examples of the naming of objects and people to make them sound different or “other.” For instance, Europeans are responsible for assigning labels such as chief, medicine men, and even tribe whereas these things were not labeled by Native American peoples (Smith, 2009). None of these were words that Native American peoples used to refer to themselves; moreover, “language became and remains a tool by which we are made ‘Other’” (Smith, 2009, p. 17).

Thus, it is not surprising that the concept of “trust,” which was a label given by white men to a special relationship between two parties, proliferated in legal matters between the United States government and the Native Americans. Did Native American

peoples understand what trust meant or what it was supposed to achieve? Perhaps the ambiguity surrounding the concept of trust was the reason the colonists chose it. By not having a clear understanding or definition of the concept the government was not legally bound to fulfill any duty. In fact, many commentators who have weighed in on the idea of the trust responsibility of the United States feel it “is only a moral obligation—not a legal one—on the part of the federal government” (Wilkins & Lomawaima, 2001, p. 67). Setting things up this way essentially means that the United States government had only the pressure of their moral and ethical duty to serve the tribal interests; therefore, they are in essence “off the legal hook.” In fact, According to Krauss (1983), “Trust is a metaphor for federal control of Indian affairs without signifying any enforceable rights of the tribal ‘beneficiaries’” (as cited in Wilkins & Lomawaima, 2001, p. 70).

One interpretation for the use of the idea of a unique “trust relationship” was due to the fact that the white settlers did not know how to classify or deal with the Native American peoples. In fact, in 1831 Chief Justice John Marshall characterized the federal-Indian relationship as “perhaps unlike that of any other two people in existence and marked by peculiar and cardinal distinctions which exist nowhere else” (Chambers, 1975, p. 1213). It is interesting to note that the special “trust relationship” and even the choice of the term “trust” are reserved for matters concerning Native American peoples. Essentially, the United States government refused to recognize the tribes as separate nations or their lands as “foreign states.” The reason for the careful attention given to proper nomenclature assigned to the tribes was due to its economic ramifications. For instance, the first Supreme Court case in which Native American peoples tried claim

immunity from the United States government and “enjoin enforcement of the state statutes” was in 1831 in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* and it was met with resistance due to economics (Chambers, 1975, p. 1213). In the ruling handed down by Chief Justice Marshall he stated that he

agreed with the Cherokees’ contention that they were a “state” in the sense of being “a distinct political society . . . capable of managing its own affairs and governing itself,” but he held that the Indians were not “foreign” their lands compose a part of the United States and they are within the jurisdictional limits with respect to commercial regulations imposed by Congress. (Chambers, 1975, p. 1213)

This ruling was pivotal in determining the classification that Native American peoples would be subject to for a very long time and one that would help to establish the entire notion of a “trust relationship.” Essentially, Marshall’s ruling established that Native American tribes were to be labeled as “domestic dependent nations . . . in a state of pupillage” (Chambers, 1975, p. 1213).

In the same way that the classification of Native American peoples as a separate and distinct political entity was “unique,” the idea of a “trust relationship” shared the same sort of peculiarity. The concept of trust became a sort of “special legal category” whereby the United States government had a duty to protect Indian people. Newcomb (2008) summarizes it in this way, “According to this relationship, the United States is characterized as the ‘guardian’ of the Indians, who are said to be the ‘wards’ of the federal government” (p. xxvii). Thus, the notion that Native American peoples were dependent on the federal government in the way that a ward needs a guardian was demeaning and paternalistic.

Moreover, in 1889 some of the most suppressive measures imaginable were being carried out against Native American peoples. For example, “through the Rules of Indian Courts instigated by Commissioner Thomas J. Morgan, nominal head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs,” sentiments such as this were written into an annual report:

The Indians must conform to “the white man’s ways,” peaceably if they will, forcibly if they must . . . The tribal relations should be broken up, socialism destroyed, and the family and the autonomy of the individual substituted. The allotments of land in severairy, the establishment of local courts and police, the development of a personal sense of independence and the universal adoption of the English language are the means to this end. (Lee, 1997, p. 38)

This leads to another interpretation of the use of the concept of trust instead of another type of relationship. Thus, the trust relationship appears to be a predominantly white, European concept whereby the dominant group forces on a weaker group its ideals. Europeans were convinced that they were the epitome of civilized man. For instance, “from the European perspective, the Indians were deficient in three essential qualities: Order, Industry, and Manners. This meant in essence that they were non-Europeans, the polar opposite of what they should be and should want to be” (Axtell, 1981, p. 46). Thus, they used their westernized, white, Christian concept of trust to create a relationship whereby Native American peoples were made dependent upon them. Trust was used as a way to get the “other” to depend on or rely on the white man, or one could say, trust in him.

This was also based on the presumptuous grounds that the less dominant group needs or desires a form of protection or guardianship from the dominant group.

However, a look back to the arrival of the first Europeans will reveal a different story.

For instance, the first colonists were greatly outnumbered by the Native peoples and they did not need protection. Native American peoples thrived due to their knowledge of the land, the crops they could grow, and because they knew where to hunt and fish.

However, as the colonists spread diseases, brought over more sophisticated weaponry, and used oppressive measures to take away the land and cultural strength of the indigenous peoples, they did create a need for protection. For instance, in 1831 Justice Marshall wrote about the trust relationship positing,

In the exercise of the war and treaty powers, the United States overcame the Indians and took possession of their lands, sometimes by force, leaving them an uneducated, helpless and dependent people, needing protection against the selfishness of others and their own improvidence. Of necessity, the United States assumed the duty of furnishing that protection, and with it the authority to do all that was require to perform that obligation and to prepare the Indians to take their place as independent, qualified members of the modern politic. (*Board of County Commissioners v. Seber*, 318 U.S. 705, 715 (1943), as cited in Meyer, 2002, p. 8)

Thus, Native American peoples were left with no choice but to “trust” the United States government, as they were stripped of their rich cultural customs and a lifestyle that was successful for several hundreds of years. The concept of trust was forced upon the indigenous peoples as a way to ensure control and in particular, economic control.

Consider this question, posed by Newcomb (2008) in regards to all of the laws, treaties, and rules that were basically forced upon the Native American peoples: “On what basis are originally free and independent Indian nations presumed to be subject to the thought processes, legal or otherwise, and behavioral patterns of non-Indians?” (p. xvii). In other words, how and why was it that the Native Americans had to endure and live by the

ideologies of a group of people who arrived in a land where a group of people were functioning without the help or harm of others?

Instead of being a way to create an amicable relationship where both groups could live harmoniously and be free to practice the customs and rituals of their own culture, it appears that trust was actually used as a form of manipulation out of the lands, rights, and eventually identity of Native American peoples. Ultimately, “the Invasion of North America by European explorers, settlers, and missionaries almost led to the total extinction of Native American people along with their customs and beliefs” (Gill, 2002, p. 157).

This does not sound like the kind of relationship where trusting the other party actually helps or encourages a better quality of life, particularly for the Native Americans. In fact, constant turmoil and near genocide of the Native American were the results of the creation of the legislative and judicial arms of the United States government. Between the time the colonists arrived to the mid nineteenth century, a plethora of laws, doctrines, and especially trust agreements were created that would shape and forever define the relationship between the Europeans and Native Americans.

Wilkins (2008) states,

In virtually every respect imaginable—economic, political, cultural, sociological, psychological, geographical, and technological—the years from the creation of the United States through the Harding administration brought massive upheaval and transformation for native nations. Everywhere, U.S. Indian law (federal and state)—by which I mean the law that defines and regulates the nation’s political and legal relationship to indigenous nations—aided and abetted the upheaval. (p. 204)

Thus, the concept of trust for Native Americans was a kind of ambiguous legal term used to define a sort of reciprocal relationship, albeit with an uneven distribution of power, whereby they would trust the United States government to hold their lands “in trust” so that they could occupy them and in exchange have the protection of the government. Yet, the truth of the matter was that the trust they placed in the government did not bode well for them as a nation. It only served to remove their power and erode their close-knit social structure—they were betrayed. Gill (2002) reminds us, “The U.S. government repeatedly broke every treaty it had signed and continuously sought to destroy the native peoples” (p. 159).

### **A Prime Example of Trust Gone Wrong**

An important place in history to critically examine the use of trust is what became known as “The Great Sheep Reductions” that “the federal government imposed upon the Navajo between 1933 and 1946” (Flanders, 1998, p. 427). This is a very revealing piece of American history that should be critically examined, because the role of trust and trusteeship lead to devastation in this case. The Navajo occupied most of what is now New Mexico and Arizona. For the Navajo, life was about taking care of one another and equality. As Flanders (1998) describes, “Though the Navajo sold the wool from their sheep, their economy was subsistence agriculture, not commercial. As such, they did not attempt to maximize profit, but to reduce risk” (p. 434).

The Federal government, as trustee of the Navajo lands, decided in 1863 that the Navajo “nation” needed to be moved and contained in a small region in southern New Mexico to make room for cattlemen and non-native western expansion. To do so, the

government wiped out the majority of the sheep that were given to the Navajo by the Spanish in the seventeenth century. Additionally, the United States government was intent on “Americanizing” the Navajo who resisted assimilation. This eventually resulted in the forced move to a small reservation in New Mexico which crippled the Navajo nation socially and economically. In 1868 after what the Navajo called “The Long Walk” they settled in an inhospitable area where they were plagued by non-potable waters, the outbreak of diseases, and the lack of natural resources needed for subsistence. The United States government capitulated after three years of Navajo suffering, allowing them to return to their original land.

The United States government continued to manipulate and interfere with the Navajo people as they struggled to reclaim their traditional way of life. In an attempt to redeem the losses suffered during the New Mexican exile, the government decided to “help” the Navajo by replenishing their flock of sheep and goats. For instance, “to ensure their survival, the government issued 14,000 sheep and 1,000 goats in 1869 and 10,000 more sheep a year later” (Underhill, 1967, as cited in Flanders, 1998, p. 434). This proved to be too much for the land to handle, because in a period of less than 65 years the number of sheep exceeded one million. With such a significant increase in livestock and a tremendous increase in the human population, the Navajo were essentially over capacity for the land they had been allowed to use. Overgrazing and erosion became a huge issue for the Navajo. By examining this in modern times, it seems that someone who serves the role of a trustee for another group’s interest would act in the best interest of that group and not through self-serving policies the way that the United States

government acted with regard to the Navajo. Surely someone entrusted to care for a group's interest would not breach that trust.

This example continues to explain the ways in which the guardian-ward relationship, established in the name of trust, continued to oppress and dominate the Navajo. Throughout the remainder of this example, it should become evident that the Navajo were cornered into a submissive position in which total dependency upon the United States government was their only option. Once the Navajo returned to their native lands they struggled with overuse of the land due to the large "gift" of livestock and the resulting increase in the population. Additionally, a very important dam was being constructed on land that adjoined theirs, later known as the Hoover Dam. Several times the Navajo pleaded to have their land allotment expanded, but surrounding cattlemen vehemently discouraged this option. In the end, the U.S. Soil and Conservation Service decided that too much silt was coming from the Navajo reservation and could be threatening to the new dam. The dam was important as it was considered necessary to the regional economy. Therefore, this only left one other option and "the other possible solution existed only because the Federal government was the trustee for all Native Americans: force the Navajo to reduce the number of sheep and goats" (Flanders, 1998, p. 435).

In the name of trust, force was able to be used to constantly pull the strings of manipulation over the Navajo people. Moreover, reducing the Navajo people to an object of manipulation instead of respecting them as a group of people whose traditions and culture were important allowed for the continued victimization of the Navajo. Surely

something went terribly wrong along the way for trust to allow for the option of forced extermination to be inflicted on these people. For instance, “coercion was used to enforce an equal reduction in all herds. This affected the poor most of all because their herds were smaller and they were more dependent upon goats” (Flanders, 1998, p. 436). Essentially, not only was trust used to force reduction of the livestock, it even allowed for coercion that directly impacted the poor.

The language of force and coercion in the name of trust is dangerous, and perhaps even sounds distrustful. What is even more perplexing about the sheep reductions is that the Federal government claimed it was doing the Navajo a favor of sorts by buying the “reduced” sheep and giving them cash money in exchange for the livestock. “However, the Navajo did receive compensation for the animals taken. The compensation may or may not have been at ‘fair market value.’ In any case, the people were left with cash that, unlike sheep and goats, did not regenerate itself” (Flanders, 2008, p. 437). Again, whose best interests were being served and moreover, did the United States government ever consider what the interests of the Navajo were? Ultimately, the government as trustee of the Navajo people did not consider the repercussions of such a large animal population on limited land. Through lack of thought and conviction that the natives would thrive through additional resources, the United States government rendered the Navajo completely at its mercy. Instead, the trust that was built between the Navajo and the government was used to assimilate this tribe of people into the Euro-American way. Therefore, one could ask, could the Navajo live a day without trust? It seems that the answer would be that before the arrival of the colonists it was probable that they did.

However, after they encountered the colonists it seems that trust was necessary for this group of people as well because of the fear of betrayal and thus the needed protection due to one man wanting to serve his personal needs at the expense of another.

Though unfathomable to the colonists, Native Americans did not care about money, the accumulation of wealth, or controlling the lives of others. Perhaps, left to their own devices and resources, Native Americans may have fared better alone than with the “trusting” influence of the colonists. In fact, Alexander (1987) writes about the legal category of trust, stating it is “based on a conception of duty that is rooted in individualism” (p. 304), another belief that is not shared by Native American peoples.

### **View from Today**

Some of the most foundational documents of our time, including the United States Constitution, were established during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which continue to define the legal relationship between Native Americans and the United States government. For instance, the Constitution still serves as the basis for determining the justice, or lack thereof, in cases defining the rights of Native Americans.

The Supreme Court has held that the Constitution gives Congress plenary authority to

limit, modify or eliminate the powers of . . . [Native American] self-government; it gives Congress plenary power to determine whether a “tribe” does or does not exist and whether a Native American is or is not a member of it; and it gives Congress plenary authority to manage and control all Native American aboriginal lands—even to terminate their rights to that land. (as cited in Newcomb, 1992, p. 344)

The “trust relationship” that was established during the 1700-1800s, whereby Native American peoples were deemed wards of the United States, continues to exist after hundreds of years. It is also interesting to note that originally “Indian affairs were made the responsibility of the War Department (and later the Department of the Interior) rather than the state department” (Prucha, 1994, pp. 14-15). This change occurred because the federal government wanted to control all of the rights to trade and the sale of Indian lands and not allow the states to interfere. In fact, “into the twentieth century, the pattern of contact was for the Euro-Americans to take land, sometimes through purchase, sometimes through conquest, but often through legislation, legal judgments and administrative action” (Flanders, 1998, p. 426).

Still today, there are only three references to Native Americans in the U. S. Constitution, Article I and the 14th amendment (Meyer, 2002). In fact, the current responsibility of the United States government to Native American peoples is written as “The Federal Indian Trust Responsibility is a legal obligation under which the United States *has charged itself with moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust toward American Indian tribes*” (*Seminole Nation v. United States, 1942; Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, 1831*). This federal obligation, which is part of the Trust Doctrine, is one of the most important principles in federal American Indian law and has been at the center of numerous Supreme Court cases. In fact,

Late-twentieth-century Native America presents the same conflicts as the late eighteenth century: land and water rights, hunting and fishing, religious freedom, criminal and civil jurisdiction. In fact, these conflicts are typical of relations between indigenous peoples and colonizers on the American continent as a whole beginning more than five centuries ago. (d’Errico, 1999, p. 7)

What is more, out of the concept of trust that was inflicted upon Native American peoples emerged some powerful modern day statistics. For example, “though it claims to be a defender of human rights around the world, the United States is among the worst offenders of Native peoples’ rights” (Taliman, 2010, para. 3). Furthermore, “during the Bush regime . . . the U.S. was voted off the U.N. Human Rights Council, and later was one of only four countries to oppose the adoption of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (Taliman, 2010, para. 5).

From my investigations into the legal relationship established through “trust” between the United States Government and Native American peoples, it appears that the trust was once again used to ensure that economic prosperity would occur. In essence, the EuroAmericans needed the Native Americans to trust them to ensure they could acquire their lands in the most efficient way possible. Of course, land was the most valued form of capital. The trust relationship between the United States government and Native American peoples revealed yet another example of trust being used to perpetuate the goals of capitalism.

Though this historical period is obviously very different from Europe in the Middle Ages, interestingly seeing how the concept of trust that started in Europe still found utility, namely economic utility, in the United States hundreds of years after its origination. In fact, after gaining a better understanding of the impact of trust in the American judico-legal systems with regards to the treatment of Native Americans, I am even more perplexed when considering the overriding question this dissertation seeks to answer, “Can we live a day without trust?” In fact, because it was revealed that a lot of

harm can result from the misuse or abuse of another's trust, it is hard to believe that trust is a concept that remains viewed as essential, especially in schools. However, when considering the fact that again in this example, trust was used to envelope Native American peoples into the Euro American system of capitalism, even at the expense of another cultural groups' identity, I am reminded of scenario remains intact today. For example, illegal immigrants are often not reported to the Office of Immigration as illegal citizens because they are paid cheap wages for manual labor. In cases such as this, trust is needed so that the boss or the one who hires the immigrants can be productive and efficient while at the same time paying an employee far less than his American counterparts. The employee is also in need of trust so that he or she does not get reported to the immigration officials. Though I do not agree with using trust to get what one wants, I am better able to understand how this concept and the feeling that it is something we cannot live without ever-present in our current market-dominated society.

Knowing that trust has a dangerous side makes me think that caution is needed when claims are made in top education journals about how necessary it is. What is the goal of trust in schools or in our society knowing the historical and legal interpretations of this word and concept? Because trust was used to assimilate the Native Americans into a fictitious "right way" to live with the sole aim being to civilize this group of people into a system of capitalism and Christianity, I am curious as to why researchers and scholars profess trust to be necessary for school reform. However, it may be plausible that the reason that trust is viewed as necessary in our schools is due to the fact that they are places for perpetuating our system of capitalism. For instance, trust is often thought

to be essential in helping to reduce risk in situations of change or unease. Even Bryk and Schneider (2003) state that “trust reduces the sense of risks associated with change” (p. 43). This same line of thinking did not apply to the Native Americans because with every change they experienced, trust was actually used as a way to manipulate and reduce their identity as a distinct cultural group.

### **Back to the Drawing Board**

It was at this point that I found myself back in conversation with my dissertation chair, only this time with a very dismal view of trust, the concept that I originally thought would not only save the public schools in America but was actually necessary in most every facet of daily life for reasons other than promoting market values. Once again, he challenged me with questions like, “If trust can be used to oppress, how is it also perceived by some as essential?” Additionally, he reminded me of my original contention and perception of trust and again asked, “What purpose does it serve in societies and in particular, in schools? Is trust really what we need or is there an alternative that may in fact be more accurate to what we aspire to build relationships with in schools and education?”

As I ponder over these questions and other I will look back at what I originally thought about trust and why I thought of it as necessary. I originally thought trust served a positive role in society whereby the ultimate aim for having trust was to build harmonious relationships, not for protection from one another due to the dog-eat-dog nature of our current capitalistic situation. In trusting relationships I thought the goal would be that one person or group of people could rely on another because the bonds of

trust would provide assurance that each group's interests would be honored for what they were and not what others wanted them to be. This may be the case in some relationships; however, I now question whether or not I would characterize those as "trusting" relationships. I did not realize that historically, trust was more of a one way street where the powerful or dominant person could control and manipulate others of less power.

This idea of trust being used for social control and a way to ensure conformity of a group of people, usually the less powerful, causes me to question the perception that it is necessary and even further to wonder what a day without trust would look like. What if there were no trust—what would that mean? McLeod (2006) offers the opinion that "trust [can be] both important and dangerous" (p. 1).

In the final chapter, I put together my interpretations of trust that have been made throughout the previous chapters. In essence, I explain to readers why the relationship between trust and economics is the reason that trust was and still is necessary among citizens in the current American capitalistic situation.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **LOOKING BACK TO LOOK FORWARD**

The interpretations of trust formed by investigations made in the previous chapters leads to a revised understanding and even a transformation of the current view of trust as that which is essential to life in today's modern, capitalistic society. This was a common theme that emerged throughout the textual interpretations and leads to the conclusion that there is a relationship between trust and economic prosperity explaining why we cannot live a day without trust. Understanding why trust was and still is perceived as necessary in our daily lives is likely new concept to most readers.

Essentially, as economic changes lent themselves increasingly towards the economic system of capitalism, the concept of trust began to serve a crucial and essential role. For example, inquiries into the genesis and historical uses of trust lead me to interpret the necessity of trust in America to be based on economic utility as opposed to other social or moral goals such as reducing selfishness or manipulative actions. Therefore, the absence of the necessity to understand the concept of trust meant that some of the key features often associated with trust—namely the valuing of self-interests, taking risks, the need for a network of friends as in social capital, and the ideas of productivity and efficiency—emerged as the economic orientation to a capitalistic view of the world became the new norm.

From Europe in the Middle Ages, when the first glimpses of capitalism and a concept of trust became apparent through the arrival of the colonists in North America, who were determined to establish a country based on individual freedoms, there appeared to be a parallel rise in the necessity of the concept of trust. Again, this simultaneous need for the concept of trust seems to be related to the rising values of capitalism. In order to show how this conclusion was reached, readers will be provided with interpretations through the five tenets of trust explaining why trust became essential with the increasing desire for individual wealth. These explanations require a critical analysis of the ideals and themes that were common throughout the historical periods investigated herein. Readers should notice a familiar pattern between the modern conceptions of trust presented in Chapter I and the historical interpretations made in Chapters II and III. In the following section I will provide a plausible explanation for why the role of capitalism and its tenets are responsible for the current American belief that we cannot live a day without trust.

### **Lessons Learned**

#### **Interests**

In medieval history through modern day, the concept of trust seemed to become increasingly necessary as individuals increased their personal interests in material possessions, personal wealth, and even social and economic status. In fact, Chapters II and III revealed that prior to the existence of a concept of trust the majority of Europeans of the early Middle Ages and the indigenous peoples of America functioned and thrived without relying on trust to bind people together in cooperative relationships. These small

communal societies appeared to be operating by keeping their ties within familiar circles and often relied on kinship norms to ensure their sustainability. Prior to the existence of trust, the collective interests of tribal communities focused on meeting the needs of the family and in-group members. Work was done for the production and consumption of food and items that were needed for survival, not for the accumulation of money. Thus, members of these types of close-knit communal groups contributed to the collective well-being of the group. Self-interest did not seem to be the motivating force for working.

However, with the introduction of a capitalist economy, whereby working for profits and wages became the new norm, a concept of trust was needed. Individuals were able to earn money based on their occupation and productivity. As Smith (1776) reminds us,

the coordination of individual courses of action oriented toward self-interest becomes [became] an emergent property at the societal level: It is [was] not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. (as cited in Peil & Staveren, 2009, p. 224)

As such, some individuals could earn more than others and some relationships were more beneficial than others because of the greater return that they could offer. As Bishop (2000) states, “In capitalism, possibly the most important exchange which requires trust is the exchange of labour for wages or salaries” (p. 233). As societies became increasingly affected by the mindset of the market, which “assumes that all individuals pursue their own rational self-interest in economic transactions” (p. 20), the reliance on a concept of trust increasingly came to be part of the situation.

In Chapter III, for instance, the genesis of trust began as economic needs overshadowed and finally replaced the needs of mere survival for the majority of Europeans. In other words, peoples' interests expanded beyond basic needs to an interest in economic prosperity. Thus, the interests of people were no longer collective or shared, but became increasingly individualistic as economic opportunities became available to some. Additionally, trust seemed to be necessary when one wanted to protect their personal interests. As serfs and nobles alike realized that they could engage in economic systems by exchanging goods and services, thereby changing their lifestyle beyond that of subsistence living through the establishment of a system of credit and privatization, a concept of trust became a necessary part of social life.

Essentially, through building trusting relationships whereby individuals were able to prove they were credible, even commoners could accumulate small surpluses of money and goods. This increased the desire for individuals to engage in the new system of private ownership particularly with regards to acquiring land. This meant that even the most common citizens had new "interests" which included capital resources and material and monetary possessions.

**Conflict of interests.** Alternatively, in Chapter IV, the use of trust in legal matters pertaining to Native American peoples meant that their interests were comprised and even extorted. Underlying most of the newly-created legislation that was said to uphold the special "trust relationship" between the United States government and Native American peoples, it was actually the need to protect the economic interests, namely the land and other resources or capital, of the European settlers that was the driving force for

establishing many of the policies and laws. Here we see the scenario of the “conflict of interests” that was explained in the first chapter. Namely, Native American peoples were manipulated out of their interests in the name of trust.

For Native American Peoples, their primary interests included keeping the land sacred and only using what was necessary for subsistence farming, or survival. Native American peoples were not interested in dividing and selling land in order to make money or for the creation of an industrialized way of life. The newly created legislation by the United States government was written with the intent of protecting the interests of the European Americans which meant ignoring the values of the “other,” namely Native American peoples.

There were numerous examples of this type of legislation where the interests of one group was compromised or ignored to promote and protect the interests of another. For example, “The Dawes Act of 1887 was designed to free up any remaining desirable lands for white settlement” (Francisconi, 1998 p. 5). More recently, the Commerce Clause of 1831 contained legislation which was created for the explicit purpose of controlling the sale of indigenous people’s lands. In fact, Native American peoples were told their lands were being held in “trust” by their protector and guardian—the United States government. Again, the concept of trust was prevalent in conjunction with economic utility, which in this instance the concern was on economic interests. It was under the guise of trust law that Native American peoples were forced to surrender their lands and water sources such as lakes and rivers for the interests of the “common good.”

**Interests in “proper conduct.”** Another example of the difference in interests between Native American and Euro American peoples was seen in the way each group viewed the proper way to live and conduct themselves. Essentially, Native American peoples were most interested in protecting their unique customs and tribal traditions. This included their religious and spiritual practices and the way they celebrated, grieved and lived each day. The European settlers were most interested in converting the “heathens” into civilized, which meant Christian men and women who would need to conform to their perception of the ideal man. This was the goal because European American people felt that this was in the best “interest” of society. More importantly, the European Americans felt that the conversion of the Native American peoples was in accordance with the Will or interest of their Christian God. In this way, the White man, or the European Americans felt they knew what was in the best interests of the Native American peoples. This presumptuous behavior resulted in the creation of the “guardian-ward” dichotomy that was explained in detail in Chapter IV. Additionally, this was exactly the problem that was explained in detail concerning the Navajo Sheep Reduction. Assuming to know one’s interests better than the other person or persons can result in less than desirable outcomes.

Thus, although the use of the concept of trust differed in each historical context, there continued to exist a common theme—the relationship between trust and the protection and promotion of at least one party’s interests are at stake in trusting relationships. Essentially, before notions of individual wealth and the accumulation of capital became a motivating force, the concept of trust was not viewed as necessary to the

sustainability and functioning of communities because interests were not based on one's individual desires, but rather collective needs. Perhaps this is because as Bishop (2000) states, "all transactions in a free market economy depend on trust" (p. 20).

### **Risk**

Along with the new concept of individual interests and even conflicts of interests also came a notion of risks. Again, trust is needed when one has something they risk losing. Even terms like transactions, benefits, and interests seemed to be associated with the market economy, as opposed to the concepts involved in tribal and village life, such as harmony. People in these collectivistic cultural groups did not view resources as individually-owned commodities; therefore, they had little or no risk of losing anything because in essence they did not own things. In fact, for the slaves of medieval Europe, the idea of ownership did not even apply to their lives. Westen (1985) offers, "Preindustrial societies . . . are characterized by an emphasis on the value and authority of the group" (p. 245). This was seen in Europe before the rise of capitalism, for the majority of Europeans individual ownership was not allowed under the laws of feudalism.

The King was the only one who had any real ownership (Rand, Branden, Greenspan, & Hessen, 1966). However, as social systems began to become more economically driven, people began to act more as individuals who could become "owners" instead of group members who were "providers." This was made evident in Chapter III when farmers realized that they could increase their production in agricultural goods and sell the excess for profits; instead of concerning themselves with merely

feeding the community, their interests shifted and became centered on the production of goods for money. Now the interest associated with agriculture was not only the fear of starvation, but moreover, the fear of losing profits. With the notion of becoming individual owners also came the notion of the risks of losing something.

### **Something to Believe In**

With this idea of needing to rely on others to fulfill certain obligations also came the risks of betrayal because of the risks associated with trusting others. Therefore, a concept that added to the feeling of security and protection from the betrayal of others became a necessity. Francisconi (1998) states, “Property relations are social relations, and as such have socially defined rights” (p. 101). Trust can be viewed as a social construct that helps to protect socially defined rights which often involve “property” no matter if it is tangible, emotional, or intellectual in nature. Thus, with economic freedom came a concept of trust as a way to ensure more of a contractual agreement acknowledging individual rights to property ownership. In this way, trust helped reassure people that their individual rights and interests would be protected even if this is only in theory. Rand et al. (1966) define capitalism as “a social system based on the recognition of individual rights, in which all property is privately owned” (p. 8). In other words, people began to believe in the capitalistic notions of private property ownership and individual rights which beget a concept that would help to guard against risks to these new things. Trust became a way to conceptualize relationships between two parties who wanted to ensure that individual interests would be protected and that expectations would be fulfilled.

### **Strangers and New Behaviors**

A stranger is someone that you don't know. Most strangers will not try to harm you, but some strangers are dangerous, even if they dress nice or look friendly. Never take rides, candy, gifts or money from strangers. It is okay to say "NO THANK YOU." (Mesa Police Department, n.d., p. 2)

Another form of risks that further necessitated the need for a concept of trust was the introduction of new or "strange" people. Chapter III explained how in the latter part of the Middle Ages there was a transformation from a feudalistic society to a capitalistic one. Along with the change in political ideology, people were freer to move outside of their villages and small communities leading to a different dynamic in the village structure. The integration of increasing numbers of people occurred as the medieval peasants and small scale farmers left the remote villages to which they were accustomed in order to find work in bigger towns. The intermingling of more people was another product of the expansion of the market because people began to spread out geographically to find work and make money. Often the purpose of the migration was to create a "better" life for themselves and their families. In effect, geographical expansion, fueled by the spread of the rising interest in capitalism, helped to perpetuate the concept of trust. Again, this was because establishing trust between parties helped to create larger circles of exchange of goods and services by reducing the fear of betrayal.

In the incidences pertaining to Native American peoples, the introduction of "strangers," meaning the European settlers, was necessarily of interest to the Native American peoples. In other words, they did not actively seek out strangers for the purpose of economic prosperity. Instead, unfamiliar others, namely the Europeans, were

introduced to the Native American peoples because of their pursuit of the lands occupied by the indigenous peoples. The concept of trust became increasingly prevalent as the bonds of the family and close kin were expanded to include strangers and “others.” These new types of relationships were not defined by the familiar bonds of kinship and in-group norms, which had long defined the primary arrangement.

Essentially, people began to form relationships with others outside of their immediate circle of family and friends, some of whom had similar interest and others who shared differing values and belief systems. Establishing trust with others helped by making others seem more familiar. “To trust or distrust others is to have some presumption of knowledge about them” (Braithwaite & Levi, 1998, p. 11). Perhaps this is where trust as a form of social intelligence originated. Trust has been defined by several leading scholars, among them Yamagishi, as a form of social intelligence, or “a kind of intelligence that allows individuals to assess the degree of risk they may face in social situations when confronted with the possibility of interacting with strangers who might be the path to new and beneficial outcomes” (Cook, 2001, p. xiii).

This phenomenon changed the way people related to one another. Ultimately, “strangers” were treated differently from family or kin relatives because these interactions involved calculating the risks to oneself and one’s property that is involved in the decision to trust others. With the notion of strangers also came an element of fear and uncertainty, because no longer were relationships solidified solely from the bonds of love and family. Therefore, one could not automatically assume another was worthy of

their trust. Instead, building trust required that people prove the worth of another's trust by fulfilling certain obligations and expectations.

Neither group of peoples could take for granted or assume that strangers would know—much less honor—their particular interests. What was needed was a set of rules or norms for interacting with one another and trust seemed to be a part of those norms. In fact, as Chapter IV revealed, trust became more formalized by being written into doctrines and laws that served to regulate the relationship between the European Americans and Native American peoples. In fact, gaining the trust of another, even if through manipulation as was the case in Chapter IV, helped maintain social control and thereby ensure economic prosperity.

### **Trust as Credit**

In Chapter III, even though trust was not viewed as manipulation, the new dichotomy between creditors and debtors required a standard for successful business transactions. In essence, by establishing a concept of trust, where one had to prove that they were credible, honest, and dependable, people were able to sell goods on the trust that the other would repay their debts, especially as money was often hard to come by during this historical period. Additionally, the only form of money at the time was coinage, which was often too heavy for merchants to carry from town to town; therefore, one merchant would often have to rely on another's trust to wait until money was available. Consider that trust did and continues to aid in the continued reliance on a market-driven mentality where to trust means to be credible, meaning worthy of credit. Today, sociologists such as Moulton (2007) posit that “credit is a ubiquitous resource we

rely on for daily economic activity” (p. 301). When one considers that trust became synonymous with credit in the fifteenth century during the late Middle Ages—when there was increasing attention to the creation of towns, merchants, and money—it is plausible that trust would retain its relationship with economics, especially considering its European origins, which later evolved into an American heritage.

Globalization and the continual influence of capitalism produced a similar trend in modern America. Thus, the notion of one’s geographic location being determined by the demands of the market still exists today and may serve as a means to perpetuate the notion that trust is necessary. When “others” who are perceived as outside of the group are introduced into the close-knit families and communities due to changing economic demands, trust appears to be necessary because of the risks inherent when meeting someone outside of one’s familial or close-knit circle. Moving towards trust can often be slow and painful.

Today, as we move toward a more globalized view of the world, and as advancements in technology continue to allow people to be connected from every corner of the world, we are constantly encountering an increased number of strangers. As witnessed in the medieval ages, the need for jobs still dictates the need for people to be transient, and there continues to be a broader range of people encountering one another. Lerner (1996) offers that due to demands of the market, “high mobility [is] required of Americans who must move to find new employment opportunities” (p. 128). This in turn means that people meet others with whom they may not feel comfortable because they are not familiar with the values and intentions of the other party; thus, they may need to

rely on the concept of trust to help with the situation. Inherent in these encounters are the notions of risk-taking and the protection of one's interest—two key features that trust is supposed to help alleviate. The more capitalistic our thinking has become, the more reserved and judgmental modern society has become. In essence, we have begun to relate to others based on how much trust we have in them. Essentially, this means that trust may be necessary to assuage the greater degree of uncertainty—and perhaps even fear—of being betrayed or let down that comes along with the introduction of unfamiliar people. Additionally, people feel more vulnerable to strangers, whereas with family or kin relatives the same degree of uncertainty is not a factor.

### **Social Capital**

Along with the notion of capital and personal property also came the idea that people needed trust to create larger webs of relationships in order to grow economically. Though the term “social capital” is a modern term, the underlying ideas such as cooperation and achieving common goals can be applied to the periods of the middle ages and beyond. In essence, as the market mentality began to prevail one needed to start to form relationships that were beneficial. Often, the benefits that were sought after were increases in personal property and prosperity. Additionally, although the turn towards a capitalistic mindset fueled the trend for more individualistic thinking, it also showed that people with common interests needed to join together through trusting relationships to accomplish shared goals. Therefore, the idea of cooperation became increasingly important. In Chapter III, for instance, cooperation between large groups of people was needed to establish towns and places of exchange. The common purpose became the

establishment of commonly acceptable trading practices and even the goal of creating laws to protect merchants.

In Chapter IV, a different motive for increasing social was explained. Though manipulation seemed to be part of the motivation, European Americans saw the importance of gaining the trust of the Native Americans in order to achieve their dream of colonization and westward expansion. The social capital that resulted provided them with a less dangerous way of interacting with Native American peoples. In this way, the Native American peoples came to be viewed as a commodity—a web of necessary relationships to achieve the goal of having more and more tribes who were converted to the ways of the Europeans.

### **Social Control**

From instances and examples of trust being used in the Middle Ages between peasants and their lords to the use of trust when towns were formed, a system of social control was established that created “rules” for how others should interact by illustrating what it meant to trust someone. By gaining the trust of the peasants who occupied and worked on the manors, the lords were able to keep things running even when conflicts arose. He could trust his villein to step in and restore the peace. Likewise, in gaining the trust of his “employees,” whereby payment was given in return for work, lords could maintain control of his occupants due the fact that they relied on him for money.

In the historical examples of the interactions between Native American peoples and European Americans the trust that was formed was such that it allowed the European Americans to control the land, resources, and even the lives of the indigenous peoples of

the United States. In this scenario, trust created a form of dependency and this acted as way by which European Americans were able to control the lives of the Native American peoples. Essentially, Native Americans, by being forced into the special trust relationship, became like children to be tamed and trained. European Americans forced Native American peoples to attend schools and churches so that they could learn how to act and become civilized. In essence, for Native Americans, trust was synonymous with control because the United States Government began to control almost every aspect of their lives. What is ironic from the modern perspective is that, as Deloria (1997) states, “practitioners of the traditional religions are not seeking converts and have no goal of gaining control of the police powers of the state to force people to say their prayers” (p. 14). Perhaps the concept of trust is perceived as necessary by those who are most interested in maintaining the status quo; therefore, controlling the lives of others seems necessary. In order to gain control quickly—or as we will see next, most “efficiently”—requires gaining the trust of others.

### **Productivity and Efficiency**

Throughout history, the concept of trust has been linked to forming relationships that make it easier for tasks to be accomplished, often with greater speed. The flow of money that began with capitalism is a prime example of this. In this scenario trust between merchants and patrons was beneficial due to decreasing the wait time for goods and services to be exchanged because of the establishment of credit. In essence, one could trust another to pay back her or his debts, therefore allowing the purchase or sell to transpire without money in hand. Therefore, time was not lost in the process.

Additionally, the trust that was created between the European Americans and Native Americans made the takeover of the lands of the Native Americans very easy. Native Americans were quick to enter into treaties because they trusted the United States government to uphold the trust they thought was part of the agreements.

Thus, Chapters III and IV offer examples of the ways in which creating larger circles of relationships based on trust were essential to continued growth of the goals of economics that were at the forefront of most Europeans and later European Americans. The creation of social capital continues to remain a key element in today's capitalistic culture.

### **Tying it All Together**

Now that an overview of the chapters has been provided showing that a concept of trust has been necessary since the orientation towards a capitalistic economic system began, it is plausible to assume that we cannot live a day without trust. Thus, capitalism served a vital role in promoting trust as necessary for human existence. Capitalism values competition and individualism, and when these factors are present, trust is necessary to prevent people from taking advantage of others. Eisler (2007) offers a way of thinking about the relationship of the historical economic structures with our current economic system, stating: "While shareholders have replaced kings, the modern corporation is basically a money-making machine, with little regard for anything else, including people or nurture" (p. 161). Therefore, when one is trying to better understand trust and why it is so highly valued in American society people, one should consider that underlying this perception are the values of capitalism. As such, we continue to be

immersed in a market mentality where our focus is on material accumulation, competition, production, efficiency, and individualism, and creating trust between one another helps to protect personal interests amidst a sea of economic uncertainty and risks.

In essence, we live in a society of individuals who have to take risks, and who want and need to protect private interests by engaging and cooperating with one another. Additionally, in today's world the goals of the market insist that we produce more with the greatest efficiency possible. Thus, to escape the need for trust would likely involve a complete departure from our current capitalistic mindset. In today's society the mentality and common speak of the market has become the norm for creating relationships between many of our friends and acquaintances. Even as I have come to this realization, I am not making claims as to whether the presence of trust or even its necessity is positive or negative. Instead, it is important for readers to realize and acknowledge that in America capitalism prevails—whether one likes it or not. In essence, my only claim is that trust is necessary as long as we are deemed “homo economicus.” This term was coined in 1844 by John Stuart Mill: “Homo economicus is a model of human agency in which the individual actor maximizes his own well-being given the constraints he faces” (as cited in Peil & Stavaren, 2009, p. 223).

Unlike what I believed when I began this dissertation, namely that trust was essential because its very presence would diminish suspicion and encourage people to live more harmoniously, my understanding of how and why trust now assumes a key position in American idealism is broader and has been revised. Because trust is an elusive term that is hard to concretize, it does not assume just one definition. After

gaining a perspective of the concept of trust among modern scholars, I have arrived at the conclusion that trust has a strong relationship with our modern focus on economics. In essence, as modern thinkers we have assumed a new identity—that of *homo economicus*. It is within this economic arrangement that one cannot live without trust.

Trust can be viewed as helpful in promoting societal cohesiveness; however, if misused, it can also be detrimental. In our current historical context, trust is still necessary due to our increasingly market-oriented mindset. For instance, Lerner (2006) believes that “this way of organizing our society produces selfishness, materialism, and disconnection” (p. 2). Here again, the concept of trust seems to be necessary as the effects of capitalism, such as individualism, can create a “dog-eat-dog” atmosphere, though not all competition is bad. What has to be considered is that being overly competitive to the point of disregarding others’ feelings is too extreme and may work against the creation of trusting relationships.

Thus, it is possible to apply the lessons learned from this historical scenario to our current capitalistic society and make the claim that trust is necessary in modern America. The perceived necessity of its use seems to continuously increase, along with the rising economic demands associated with living in a capitalistic society. By understanding that trust is a concept that is closely linked to the ideals of the market, it is not surprising that this concept is ever present in the twenty-first century, where individuals must constantly live among others who are vying for the same resources, wanting to protect their own interests, and depending on one another to make this happen.

In fact, as Chapter IV revealed, if one group abuses the trust of another group or takes advantage of the other by gaining their trust through manipulative means, the consequences can be devastating. Chapter IV reminds us of the dangerous side of trust where Native American peoples were mistreated in the name of trust. This example showed how trust can be used to legitimate certain actions and even to leverage the interests of particular groups of people. However, one theme—whether one chooses to perceive of it as good or bad, right or wrong—is that when economic utility and prosperity are the structures that dominate the minds of people, trust is needed.

Some modern thinkers may find it strange that while conducting a hermeneutical investigation on the concept of trust I would come to the conclusion that trust is a concept that is viewed as essential in today's modern America society mainly because of its role in economics and in particular, capitalism. However, consider that today, we are constantly subjected to the "bottom-line mentality that judges every activity, every institution, every social practice as rational, productive, or efficient only to the extent that it produces money or power" (Lerner, 2006, p. 2). Therefore, we have social concepts like trust which are essential to capitalistic societies that value individual freedoms and believe in the ownership of private property. In this arrangement, there exist continual risks and uncertainty because of the need to interact with others, while being cautious of who they are.

The virtue of trust has been widely recognized as supportive of markets. Trust replaces the need for contracting and monitoring and fills the gap of imperfect information about what may happen in the future. It also tends to reduce costs under conditions of uncertainty, while enabling collective action as well as positive externalities between workers in organizations and labour markets more

generally, between entrepreneurs in clusters and networks of innovation. (Peil & Staveren, 2009, p. 575)

The conclusion offered is based on the deeper level of understanding gained by investigating trust along a continuum of historical, social, and economic events. Thus, this inquiry shows that there is a plausible explanation for why trust is thought to be necessary in a capitalistic society which values individualism, productivity, and the continued exchange of money. For instance, Covey (2006) alludes to this point, stating: “When trust is high, the dividend you receive is like a performance multiplier, elevating and improving every dimension of your organization and your life” (p. 1). Essentially, my conclusion rests upon the belief that we cannot live a day without trust because America is a society that culturally and politically thinks and acts with a market-driven mindset. Therefore, we need to be able to trust one another; we cannot rid ourselves or our society of the mentality that claims that our human purpose on this earth is to produce more in the most efficient and effective manner possible. In the following section I will apply my findings about trust to the role it occupies in schools.

### **Trust in Schools**

Burgeoning literature on trust positions it as a prized commodity in schools that can be created, harnessed, and cultivated. Research on trust abounds in the literature related to the topics of school reform efforts and organizational leadership (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Likewise, a plethora of research devoted to the study of trust is found on topics concerning education and schooling in the twenty-first century. Thus, several scholars attest to the fact “that trust has increasingly been

investigated in education (Tarter, Bliss and Hoy, 1989; Tarter, Sabo and Hoy, 1995, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 1995)” (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, pp. 112-113). The modern view of trust perceives it as necessary for personal and societal relationships. Though trust is currently used primarily in economic matters, it is also thought to be essential in schools and other social institutions. Does this mean that modern schools and even the entire institution of education are meant to serve capitalistic ends? First, it important to gain an understanding of the role trust assumes in schools before further conclusions and connections can be made. As such, I will describe the ways that trust is conceptualized in today’s schools.

### **Measuring Trust**

In schools, the ideals associated with trust are usually labeled and classified so as to create a rubric of sorts for assessing whether or not one is worthy of another’s trust. The same criteria that are used to judge interpersonal trust are often used when assessing whether a school or institution can be trusted. For instance, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) are proponents of offering knowledge-based criteria for determining the existence of trust in schools with their “five facets of trust [defined as]—benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness” (p. 7). By identifying these indicators of the presence of trust, rating scales and other forms of capturing the ‘amount’ of trust can be used to determine whether or not an organization is trustworthy. Moreover, these “facets” can be used as measurable data to determine whether or not someone or a particular institution embraces the concept of trust. Again, the idea of categorizing trust in terms that can be assigned quantitative and qualitative measurements seems to stem

from a mindset of the market. Boyles (2000) offers: “Schools suffer in translations of these kinds because production and provision are commodified such that the evaluative criteria are restricted to measurement standards that favor business” (p. 120).

Lewis and Weigert (1985) define trust as a willingness to be vulnerable to others, based on the prior belief that those others are trustworthy. Thus, the concept of trust as it relates to schools seems to have its own set of definitions and be based on a set of criteria or standards which encompasses everything from one’s knowledge and credibility to their kindness towards others. This view of trust encompasses a wide range of associated meanings or synonyms for trust, and even goes so far as to assign measurable criteria which can serve as a basis to judge whether or not someone can be trusted.

Overwhelmingly, the current views on trust believe it to be an absolute necessity and completely positive ideal in schools. This positive perception of trust likely exists due to recent statistics that show how effective trust is when present in an organization and how it increases productivity. For instance, Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Tschannen-Moran (2004) insist that data exists that proves schools are more productive and efficient when trust is present. Trust is viewed as necessary in schools for everything from effective communication (Roberts & O’Reilly, 1974) to problem-solving and collective decision making (Hoy & Tarter, 2003; Smylie & Hart, 1999). Still other leading scholars posit that “to be productive and to accomplish organizational goals, schools need cohesive and cooperative relationships. Trust is essential to fostering these relationships (Baier, 1994; Goldring & Rallis, 1993; Louis, Kruse, & Marks, 1996)”

(Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000, p. 550). These views of trust are based on the assumption that more trust will likely ensure more benefits.

### **Entrusting Precious Resources**

Still others believe that trust is essential in schools because of what schools are entrusted with, namely our children, our money, and even our ideals of democracy. Thus, the assumption is that trust is essential in schools because without it we may be at risk of losing or harming some of our most valuable resources. For instance, Baier (1986) posits: “Trust matters because single-handedly we can neither create nor sustain many of the things we care most about” (p. 236). Trust is manifest in situations in which we must rely on the competence of others and their willingness to look after what is precious to us. Because we must allow others to help us care for what we cherish, they are placed in positions in which they can, if they choose, injure what we value (Baier, 1994).

As a society we invest much of what we cherish most in our schools. We send our children to schools, trusting that they will be safe from harm, as well as guided and taught in keeping with our highest hopes for them. Schools are also invested with a significant share of our collective resources in the form of tax dollars, school buildings, and local employment opportunities. They foster and protect our ideals of respect, tolerance, and democracy, as well as the vision of equity in our society (Macedo, 2000). (cited in Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 15)

It is evident why trust has become a pressing issue for schools. Trusting others to protect the people and values we hold dear is a very lofty goal. The concept of trust is an absolute necessity because it is based on the assumption that the leaders in schools will fulfill the expectations we have regarding our “cherished resources.” Thus, we as

humans feel a personal attachment to the people or ideals we entrust to others. Ullmann-Margalit (2004) posits: “Trust is, after all, a personal, not an impersonal, relation” (p. 66). Therefore, the trust that is desired in schools is complex and emotionally charged because of how personal it is. The emotional component often associated with trust is especially important to consider when our children are involved. As Baier (1986) reminds us, “disappointment is the appropriate response when one merely *relied* on someone to do something” (p. 235); however, when trust is broken the response is that of betrayal. In essence, the interpretations of the historical and legal concepts of trust remind us that trust can be dangerous or beneficial depending on the intentions and expectations between the truster and trustee. Meier (2002) warns us that “the complicated nature of trust as it pertains to schooling . . . requires exploring the varied meanings of the word itself and reminding ourselves of its proper contradictions and limitations” (p. 5).

### **Trust, Capitalism, and Schools**

Think for a moment of the parallel uses of trust in historical, legal, and modern examples, and its purpose in today’s society. Trust remains a necessary ingredient in situations where we have interests we want to protect and risks that are taken when entrusting those interests in the hands of school officials. Additionally, schools are institutions that favor productivity and efficiency. The goals of today’s schools seem to be in alignment with the goals of capitalism; perhaps this is the reason trust is such a highly used and seemingly necessary term in modern-day schools. For instance, “closely related to the political goal of creating loyal citizens and also essential to maintaining the country’s status quo, is the economic goal of creating loyal capitalists” (Hinchey, 2008,

p. 10). Therefore, this seems to make my interpretation of trust more plausible because the role that trust plays in schools seems to be in alignment with perpetuating the goals of capitalism. Consider that today students are now often thought of as the “customers” in the schools for whom the educators have a responsibility to ensure they “get” an education. Likewise, “schools are expected not only to extol the merits of capitalism, but also to produce hard workers and energetic consumers” (Hinchey, 2008, p. 10). Again, schools need students to *trust* so that the teachers and administrators know what is best for them as future participants in American society, which essentially means in the market economy. However, Postman (1996) warns us that we [American educators and parents] need to change our views on the “ends” or goals of education or they will become the end of education. Thus, he believes “schooling can be about how to make a life, which is quite different than how to make a living” (p. x). Postman (1996) describes how the promise of economic utility in schools may backfire on us. He offers:

. . . so many people believe it to be the preeminent reason for schooling. It may properly go by the name the god of Economic Utility. As its name suggest, it is a passionless god, cold and severe. But it makes a promise and not a trivial one. Addressing the young, it offers a covenant of sorts with them: If you will pay attention in school, and do your homework, and score well on tests, and behave yourself, you will be rewarded with a well-paying job when you are done. Its driving idea is that the prepare children for competent entry into the economic life of a community. (p. 27)

Similar to the values of capitalism, schools encourage competition and reward the successes of individuals. Messages promoting moderate living are rarely offered in schools today and “more often we convince students that they can make it big in America if they study and do well in schools” (Noddings, 1992, p. 124). Thus, the cycle continues

and students and teachers are encouraged to be the best performers on standardized achievement measures, no matter what it takes. According to Tooby and Cosmides, who coined the phrase “the Banker’s Paradox,” when thinking with the mind of the market we not only view our money lending in terms of risks, we begin to think of “lending” our friendship in terms of “to whom should we extend our friendship?” (Shermer, 2008, p. xv). This is alarming when one considers that this is perhaps how students and others in schools relate to one another. Other market language and mentality has infiltrated our schools as well. Schools, like businesses, are concerned with increasing productivity and efficiency. However, focusing on speed and production mimic the goals associated with a factory, but not those of the educating of students. Again, the need for trust in schools seems to be driven by the goals it wants to achieve, and these are the goals of capitalism.

### **Now What?**

Partially concluding my hermeneutic inquiry I am at a crossroad of deciding what this revised level of understanding of the concept of trust means. In other words, how does one do respond to my interpretation of the modern Americans view trust as that which is essential to the economic prosperity? How does one apply this understanding to the lived experience? One possibility, albeit slightly outlandish, is to make a case for the need to change our current economic system of capitalism and thereby hopefully eliminating the mindset of the market. However, as I acknowledged when I began this inquiry, this is highly unlikely and I do not want my investigation of trust to end by positing that the only way to avoid falling victim to the feeling that we cannot live without trust is to adopt a Pollyannaish view of the world where only love and happiness

abound and money is meaningless. This would not be useful in the situation in which we find ourselves.

Instead, I would like to propose a more attainable action. This is one that hooks and West refer to as engaging in “the act of enlivened and enlightened critical conversations [that] assist in building a mentality of resistance” (Davis, 1992, p. 77). In essence, by applying a critical eye and ear when reading literature or upon hearing statements that claim that more trust is necessary to the survival, sustainability, or success of a project or situation, one is better able to understand the motivation or space from which the claim comes—either economic utility or genuine care and concern. This is not to imply that when trust is claimed to be necessary to the success of a project that it is always negative. However, as in the case of the necessity of trust in schools, I question what the proposed “successes” really are and what purposes they serve.

I wish to leave readers with the practical tasks of using a hermeneutic approach to understanding the role trust assumes in our current capitalistic culture and continue the conversation that was started with my inquiry. For example, it is no secret or offense for people in today’s society to be attentive to their bank accounts and pay their taxes, namely engaging in economic activities. These are nearly unavoidable duties for most Americans. However, what can be transformed through this revised understanding of trust is the process of thinking about every interaction with others in economic terms. For instance, relationships do not have to be based upon risk assessment, fear, calculated moves, and even the possibility of potential benefits. Friends and enemies do not need to be made just because they can be “trusted” to do something or fulfill obligations.

Even while participating in the confines of our current economic structure, it is possible for humans to be sincere, authentic, compassionate, and caring without the fear of betrayal in order to protect and promote their interests. In other words, we can form relationships with others for no other reason than to enjoy their company or the joy they bring to our lives. This shift in thinking is possible if we are able to dichotomize our thinking so that our expectations of transactions are not our expectations but those of others. This is market-driven language which comes from the belief that trust in others is needed because of the obligations they fulfill, the duties they perform, or the desirable outcomes they provide. Authentic friends and family members can do these things in positive ways; however, choosing to interact with others primarily for these reasons seems to promote the idea that trust is a necessary part of all relationships.

### **A Misguided Concept**

Therefore, from my interpretations trust seems to be a misguided concept because it has become entangled in so many facets of our lives and beliefs. On the one hand it is proclaimed to speed the flow of goods and money in the market. Those who can be trusted have to prove that they are worthy of trust and do so based on conditions that vary with individual beliefs about the true nature of trust. Yet, in another arena, like that of the United States government, trust is believed to be cultivated by becoming transparent (O'Neill, 2002). However, when trust is used to manipulate others, as it has been known to do, the dangerous side of trust can be seen.

Throughout my research on trust I have come to realize that as much as we would like to simplify our words and thoughts so that we can all agree on their meanings and

make things seem more universal, language in reality does not work this way. Language goes back to what Gadamer explains as being contingent upon our traditions, horizons, and cultures. It is about the lived experiences of our everyday lives. It is about how we absorb the world on a daily basis and make sense of it. Some may contend that language can only go so far; however, other researchers in the field “recognize that language and actions are closely related because language defines certain actions as legitimate, necessary, and may be even . . . the only ‘realistic’ option for a given situation” (Dunford & Palmer, 1996, p. 97). Thus, the current view that trust is necessary because without it modern American society would falter and collapse seems to be one of those notions that is based on conventional wisdom. What if another “realistic option” does exist? What if there was a different view of trust? Can we survive without trust?

### **Care, an Alternative to Trust**

In thinking about trust as something that is viewed as necessary primarily to ensure economic ends are met, I began to wonder what concept could serve as a less capitalistic way of thinking about our relationships. Realizing that this would require distancing oneself—without totally removing oneself—from the current market mentality, I began pondering the possibility of how different our current view of needing trust may have been if our European ancestors had adopted a notion of *care* instead of one of trust. Would the prevailing mentality that one must look out for themselves first, then others remain the norm? Would money and financial successes be the goals of modern man? Would Native American peoples live on reservations and be subjected to unfair treatment by the United States government? Would schools be as concerned with

productivity and efficiency, or would their priorities shift to reflect an emphasis on care for the well-being of all students, thereby eliminating the need for competition? Are competition and unfairness necessary elements of trust? They certainly are not of caring.

I ask these questions with the intent of providing an alternative perspective to a society where trust is viewed as necessary to life. In essence, because I realize that our current economic system will not likely change in the near future, I would like to offer an alternative way of thinking about others that allows for the grip of economic thinking to be loosened. My proposal is that instead of being focused on the need to cultivate, create, and establish more trust, we should simply focus on *caring* for one another.

According to Noddings (1992), “the desire to be cared for is almost certainly a human characteristic” (p. 17). I cannot say that I found the same to be true of the desire to be trusted, even though one might think it deserves this same sentiment. Perhaps this is because some people do not care if they are trusted or not. In fact, popular culture and the media like to conjure images of fear by making statements such as “trust no one,” and some movies depict building of trust between others as a sign of weakness. For instance, William Shakespeare exhorts us to “love all, but trust few.” Others claim that trust is still not enough to ensure obligations and commitments will be kept. Ronald Reagan is quoted as saying, “Trust, but verify.” Hence, one could say, “I care for you, but I don’t trust you”. Care is not the ubiquitous term or concept that trust currently is. However, it is needed in today’s society almost as much as the air we breathe and the water we drink. If we truly care for one another then we respect differences and value others for who they

are, not what we want or need them to be. Hence, we do not look for ways to use others to maximize our own self-interest or promote personal agendas.

Likewise, neither do we assess the risks involved nor do we view caring for others, no matter how many, as a form of capital. Noddings (1992) claims that “in order for one to respond as a genuine care giver, one does have to empty the soul of its own contents,” because “caring is a way of being in relation, not a specific set of behaviors” (p. 17). Therefore, to care for someone is not a how-to; rather, it is a way of being in relation to others.

The very notion of caring runs counter to the concept of trust because it does not involve calculative measures, determining whether to trust someone by assessing knowledge-based criteria and considering one’s own interest to see if the interest of the other party is similar or misaligned and what that may entail. Adler (2001) offers: “Interests can lead to a calculative form of trust via a sober assessment of the costs and benefits to the other party of exploiting my vulnerability” (p. 217). Again, there are no prerequisites for care to be given or received; only that we are human and we need it. As such, the need to display vulnerability is not a requirement. Care is not a calculated risk.

Additionally, unlike research that uses knowledge-based criteria or standard formulae for the most effective way for building trust, “caring cannot be achieved by formula. It requires address and response; it requires different behaviors from situation to situation and person to person” (Noddings, 1992, p. xi). This may be due to the fact that unlike trust, care is not concerned with productivity, efficiency, or effectiveness in achieving goal, which are essentially the goals of capitalism. To care for someone does

not imply that a business deal will be sealed or that an economic advantage will be seen as a result of the care given. Hankivsky (2004) posits:

The love, admiration, and affection that we may experience as part of our human relations are often completely distinct from our economic transactions. Care is central to these relations, and it is not exclusively motivated by wealth maximization, rather it involves taking the concerns and needs for others as a basis for action. (p. 104)

Therefore, care is not as visible a concept as trust because it is not concerned about the economic benefit one receives when caring for another. Care is more concerned about the other.

Additionally, the power one possesses does not matter when one cares for another. Power is a factor in relationships characterized by trust. Cook et al. (2007) state:

Trust may emerge in relationships characterized by power differences under some conditions, but such trust—if it occurs at all—is fragile for a number of reasons, including the fact that the individuals involved typically have different perceptions of the nature of the relationship based on their relative positions of power. (p. 43)

To care for someone does not require power and in fact does not consider one's position of power as part of the relationship. Instead, if we had more care in our schools and society we may not be able to “produce more” or increase the effective functioning of organizations, but perhaps we could live in harmony knowing that what is valued above all else is the collective wellbeing as humans and not consumers. The ugly truth is, those

who perpetuate the concept of trust have convinced us that the well-being of other is not a valued good.

### **Acknowledging Limitations of my Inquiry**

By far the biggest limitation of this hermeneutic inquiry is that because trust is such a broad term and as such has multiple meanings and variations in the way it is used it was not possible, nor was it the intent within the contents of this work, to discuss trust from every angle and give every definition related to the concept. Instead, I focused on a theme that I found common to the concept of trust throughout the historical periods. For this inquiry I hypothesized that trust is essential to uphold and perpetuate the goals of capitalism. Again, this study could have taken several thousands of directions because trust is such a complex, multifaceted concept. Thus, to study and understand the uses and implications of trust is to study humans and humanness in relation to their situation in history and culture.

Another limiting factor specific to my claim that trust originated out of economic necessity and ultimately remained for that purpose throughout history is based on what I was able to obtain from medieval history based on the *Oxford English Dictionary* and other reliable sources that claim the first known uses of trust were in the thirteenth century. This information cannot be checked for its validity because of the obvious fact that there are no persons from the Middle Ages here to validate these claims. Moreover, much of the history of the Middle Ages was not written down, thus making it nearly impossible to find primary sources from people who lived during that period in history. Therefore, I cannot espouse that I have the final answer for the appropriate situating of

the concept of trust. What it is important for readers to understand is that I was able to arrive at a plausible explanation for the existence of and continued need for trust.

### **The Transformation of Understanding Trust**

Just like when I learned how to draw, I began the process with a set of prejudices that led me to create one-dimensional sketches. I could only see from the vantage point of my lived experiences, which at the time were limited in regards to drawing. Yet, I was committed to expanding my horizon of understanding and my efforts resulted in a real transformation in the ways in which I understood myself and the other, which was drawing. By deepening my understanding of the processes involved with creating works of art I was able to give my drawings dimension and more life-like features. In the same way that I committed to relearning to draw I have had to engage in with the texts that helped me reach a revised understanding of trust. This hermeneutic process proved to be a transformative experience. I now understand trust through my shared experience with the various texts used to create this dissertation.

In similar ways, my once one-dimensional view of trust has been expanded to include seeing it in a whole new light and for purposes other than those I originally thought it was meant to serve. Through my hermeneutic inquiry I now can see how my understanding of trust evolved through my conversations with the text much like the transformation that occurred in my drawings. It was only by revising my understanding that my of trust that I am now able to see it as a concept that is closely related to our capitalistic mindset—something I had never thought of before.

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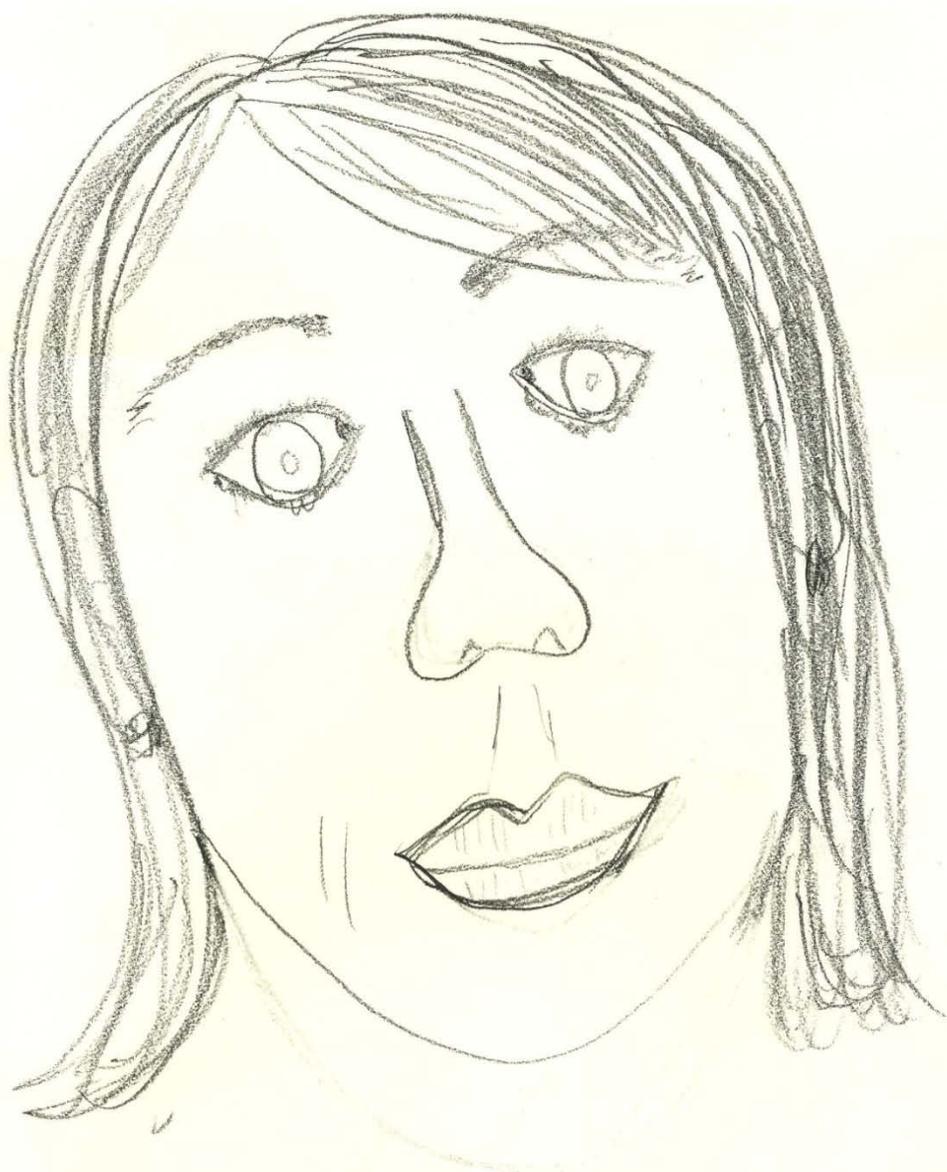
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**APPENDIX A**

**ORIGINAL AND FINAL SELF-PORTRAIT DRAWINGS**

**Original Self-Portrait Drawing**



*Sara Fletcher*  
6.12.09

**Final Self-Portrait Drawing**

