



**The Dichotomy of Africa
June 30, 2017**

So it's Friday, June 30th and we are on a two-day field trip visiting the town of Saint Louis, an island that is northwest of Dakar, the capital of Senegal. Yesterday, we took a field trip around Saint Louis on horse-drawn carriages and our tour guide said something that stuck with me. He mentioned the dichotomy of the ocean. He said, the same ocean that's bringing the fishermen to the city, is the very same ocean that is killing them.

The ocean is killing them because the soil and the environment are being eroded by that same ocean. It is also killing them because there are 27,000 people crammed into a one kilometer area. That's basically less than a mile; in fact, it's 0.62 hundredths of a mile to be exact. But these people will not leave because they are tied to the land. Their ancestors are buried here, so they can't leave.

This started me thinking about the term dichotomy in general. That same dichotomy that our tour guide spoke of brings life and death. For instance, I'm on a lovely beach on the coast of Africa with the Atlantic Ocean as a musical backdrop. The waves are coming in and it is absolutely beautiful--on this side. On this side, you see life, from the little baby sand crabs you see as the waves roll in to the bigger, much faster, sand crabs that you see when the waves roll out.

But then, turn a mere 180 degrees or do an about face, and you get the picture of the pollution and the destruction behind me. You see dead fish, empty sand crab holes, and lifeless jellyfish. It's incredible. Africa is full of dichotomy.