

DISCOURSES ABOUT MARKET CAPITALISM IN THE AGE OF SUBJECTIVE VALUES*

**AN INQUIRY INTO IDEOLOGIES, MORALITIES, AND
GRAMMERS OF EVALUATION**

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Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

Analysts of discourse have long recognized that certain individuals take the “imperatives” of reasoned justification seriously. Such disputants usually do not make explicit the basis of their positions. They stake out and defend their positions on the basis of unarticulated normative criteria. Nevertheless, disputants argue their positions within distinctive cognitive and evaluative frames.¹ The French sociologists Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot have expended much effort delineating these evaluative frames. In their article “Sociology of Critical Capacity”, as well as their book-length studies², Boltanski and Thévenot sketch the contours of these frames. They map what they call orders of justification or “grammars of worth”.³ When debaters exploit particular orders of justification in the course of an argument over the appropriateness of institutional arrangements, they base their judgments on the particular evaluative criteria inscribed within the grammar. These grammars serve an ideological function when individuals struggle discursively over the value of group-specific particular practices and ways of life. Thus, we can speak of ideological grammars of worth when ideologists rely on these grammars in vindicating certain practices as worthy and discrediting other practices as illegitimate or worthless.⁴ In their article Boltanski and Thévenot explore how both expert and lay ideologists operate with these ideological grammars. In their view, both laypersons and experts generally depend on grammars of worth when participating in everyday debates regarding the proper ways of “coping with existing arrangements”.⁵ However, as Boltanski

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

and Thévenot recognize, grammars of worth also play a role in more far-reaching debates about the social order itself. Under certain circumstances disputants will be inclined to scrutinize, criticize, and defend general institutional arrangements rather than specific modes of conduct.

In the following paper, I will examine historical and recent ideological discourses which deal with an economic system that has come to define our very notion of economics - "market capitalism".⁶

Market capitalism, which often remains an abstraction in the hands of its defenders and critics, has been the subject of an enormous variety of ideological discourses, whether legitimating and delegitimizing in character. Nevertheless, all of the recent strains of ideological discourse about market capitalism share certain grammars of worth or "orders of justification". When we probe the thematic and dialectical underpinnings of recent discourses, we discover a profound similarity in their evaluative grammars. We can throw this striking similarity into sharp relief by juxtaposing recent Anglo-American discourses about market capitalism (1973-2001) with discourses about market capitalism from an earlier era (1910-1940).

THE SHIFT IN THE LOCUS OF (DE)LEGITIMATION:

NONMORAL AND MORAL GRAMMARS OF EVALUATION IN DISCOURSES ABOUT MARKET CAPITALISM

During the twenties and thirties, individuals felt free to put into question the legitimacy and worth of these taken-for-granted institutions such as market capitalism. At a time when social, economic, and cultural forces were disrupting entrenched established social and economic institutions, individuals challenged the legitimacy and worth of the reigning economic system.⁷ As the primary

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

institution undergoing "destabilization" , market capitalism became the focal point of ideological contestation.⁸ During these unsettled times the allocative and provisioning system of market capitalism had not yet ripened into its mature state.

In the 1930s, the modernizing process had not yet completely overtaken the institutions of signification⁹ corresponding to market capitalism. For this reason, the legitimating and oppositional discourses concerning market capitalism did not yet participate in a wider order of justification revolving around individual-level values and ends. Neither the defenders nor the opponents of American market capitalism pitched their arguments explicitly in terms of values referencing the individual such as autonomy, self-reliance, liberty, self-fulfillment, or well-being. From the late sixties onwards, however, disputants apprehend market society as an arena in which individuals negotiate their "private life-projects"¹⁰, rather than a venue in which social groups seek to realize principles of collective order. After the transformation of the cultural landscape during the late sixties and early seventies, the detractors and defenders of "free market" capitalism draw freely from the "liberal" idiom of individual self-determination, liberty, autonomy, well-being, and self-fulfillment. At the same time, they shun the earlier idiom of efficiency, equity, and orderliness. It is rare for contemporary ideologists, whether libertarian or progressive, to tie their claims about market capitalism to collective ideals such as progress, social solidarity, productivity, or equity. The values of the individual have supplanted the values of the collective in arguments about the legitimacy and worth of market capitalism. The import of market capitalism lies in its consequences for **individuals'** "agential capacities"¹¹, rather than its consequences for the integrity of the social collective.

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

When we juxtapose post-1968 discourses with earlier discourses, particularly discourses from the twenties and thirties, we cannot help but notice a dramatic shift in the locus of (de)legitimation. This shift concerns the priority granted to individual-level values vis-à-vis collective-values. Post-60s ideological struggles unfolded in an arena very different from the one in which earlier struggles took place. Arguments about the efficiency and productivity of market-based provisioning and economic coordination no longer took center stage. Indeed, apologists for the market system only resorted to claims about the market's efficiency and productivity when formulating strictly economic arguments.¹² For post-1960s exponents of "market fundamentalism"¹³, it is not the economic virtues of the market mechanism which speak loudest in its favor, but its morally beneficial properties. In their ideological doctrines, moral ideals serve as the basis by which to judge the worth and legitimacy of market capitalism. What decides the legitimacy of market exchange is its congruence with cherished **moral ideals** rather than its potential for advancing collective goals.

Likewise, post-60s opponents of unrestrained market capitalism condemn its failings in the name of moral principles. Recent critics of the market system have appealed to explicitly moral values in their critiques of the market system. They point to the market system's incompatibility with deeply rooted human values such as equity and self-determination. As in the nineteenth century, detractors of the market still lament the injustices of economic inequity and deprivation. Like nineteenth century critics such as Carlyle, these critics lament the vulnerability of the individual to the pressures exerted by impersonal "cash-payment nexus".¹⁴ To them, market forces erode the autonomy of human agents,

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

particularly in their capacity as workers. Such critics of the market often resurrect the humanistic Marxian argument that the individual's participation in wage-labor renders him incapable of realizing his potentialities. These critics argue that the system of exchange-relations, generalized throughout society, compels the unpropertied individual to participate in stultifying wage-labor, thereby depriving him of the opportunity to develop his aptitudes and capacities.¹⁵ Thus, in criticizing the market, both sympathizers and detractors turn to values of self-determination, self-actualization, and freedom.

NONMORAL DISCOURSES ABOUT MARKET CAPITALISM: THE WANING OF THE INDUSTRIAL ORDER OF WORTH

In the period between 1914 and 1935, when the capitalist market economy seemed to totter on the "edge of the abyss"¹⁶, proponents of market capitalism labored to articulate its virtues in persuasive ways. At the same time, capitalism's detractors crafted and disseminated innovative new critiques of "the wage-profit system".¹⁷ During this period, both proponents and critics of the existing system could take advantage of at least two distinct grammars of worth in formulating their claims about the legitimacy of market capitalism.¹⁸ When we examine the lay and expert discourses regarding market capitalism, we find an interesting pastiche of evaluative grammars. Ideologists from both sides put into play elements drawn from the industrial grammar, on the one hand, and the emergent market grammar, on the other hand.¹⁹

While the critics of the wage-profit system deployed market-oriented criteria of evaluation sparingly²⁰, their opponents readily harnessed market-oriented repertoires of evaluation. The market order of justification, particularly the market-based criterion of consumer satisfaction, figured

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

prominently in the defenses of capitalism articulated by forward-looking members of the American business establishment. The businessman William Kixmiller observed in his apology for American corporate capitalism, Can Business Build a Great Age? that business could not prosper without mass consumption.²¹

Under the new system there will be a natural leveling of humanity because the success of the new system depends upon a large consuming population; in general, to make money you must serve this population - make goods and help build a large market for these goods...the improvements in productive efficiency brought about by technological developments, resulting in a more effective production of goods, should create their own purchasing power... Now, however, because mass production requires mass consumption, business must perfect circulation..in order for the new economy to function, there must be an adequate flow of purchasing power to the producer so that as a consumer he can buy the products of industry.

In Kixmiller's view, the wage-profit system delivered consumer satisfaction at the same time that it promoted efficiency in production. Thus, the dictates of efficiency did not contradict the imperatives of consumer satisfaction and profit-making. In making this argument, Kixmiller tried to defuse the critics' arguments about the industrial deficiencies of the wage-profit system. He simultaneously affirmed the wage-profit system's capacity to realize the kinds of ends (consumer satisfaction) inscribed within the market order of worth. Thus, Kixmiller felt he had to harmonize these potentially conflicting grammars of worth before he could press them into ideological service. Thus, pro-capitalist ideologists focused their efforts on demonstrating the congruence of market-oriented criteria (such as consumer satisfaction) with the industrial criteria embraced by capitalism's critics. However, they did occasionally defer to industrial criteria of evaluation, even as they put forward arguments founded on consumer choice and other values drawn directly from the market order of worth. At times the defenders of market capitalism even expended ideological resources trying to rebut allegations of inefficiency. Kixmiller and other apologists for market capitalism denied that market capitalist promoted wastage and inefficiency.

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

To a much greater extent than their pro-market counterparts, the critics of market capitalism appealed to the industrial order of worth. Those who contested the legitimacy of the wage-profit system couched their arguments primarily in the idiom of industrial values. They decried the inefficiencies, wastefulness, and inequities spawned by market capitalism. The arguments of the Taylorist engineer Henry Laurence Gantt serve as an excellent example of such discourse. Gantt was one of the first critics of market capitalism to venture beyond the popular critique of the grasping “plutocracy” and extend his critique to the “entire system of selling for price”. In his 1916 book, Industrial Leadership, the Gantt blamed business enterprises' pursuit of "cost efficiency" (economic efficiency) for the inefficiencies of American industry:

Inasmuch as the factories are controlled by men of commercial instincts or training, their gauge is necessarily not efficiency, of which they know nothing, but profits, of which they know a great deal... our difficulty in the past had been mainly with the commercial man, who has certain theories of efficiency gained from the cost accountant which are fatal to our efforts to make improvements of any kind.²²

In 1918, Gantt attacked the “wage-profit system” on account of its wastefulness:

An engineer’s way of eliminating the profit system would be to encourage production and make the distribution of the product such a frictionless thing that salesmanship would become almost a lost art... It is true that our great waste is caused by the system of production for profit...The present system commits us to a vicious circle of strikes, higher wages, then higher prices, with a consequent reduction in the standard of living, which leads to further strikes. This is because production is carried on for profit and profit is determined not by industry in production but by competition in selling products.²³

Gantt's argument thus indicts market capitalism on the basis of its inconsistency with industrial norms.

In his polemic we find a pronounced animosity towards the alleged inefficiencies inflicted by the emphasis on “salesmanship”. Gantt complains that the system of profit-oriented production impedes the realization of industrial ideals such as technical efficiency, productivity, and need satisfaction.

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

During the late forties and early fifties, evaluative criteria derived from the market order of worth began to dominate in ideological discourses about market capitalism. These criteria eclipsed earlier industrial criteria, particularly in ideological statements defending the legitimacy of market capitalism. Arguments about the market system's allocative efficiency surfaced in many market-sympathetic discourses authored during the period. Such arguments followed in the tracks laid down by the American economist Frank Knight in his 1947 treatise Freedom and Reform. In this text, Knight stated that:

A free market simply means a provision for effective intercommunication, so that every man as a buyer or seller (or potentially one or the other) is in a position to offer terms of exchange to every other, and any pair are free to agree on the most favorable terms acceptable to both parties. A free market will establish a price, uniform for all, on every good and service, with the general result that all parties will specialize in production in a manner and degree which secures for all the greatest advantage compatible with the free consent of all...Product prices will be as low, and prices for productive services as high, as is compatible with freedom of choice for producers and consumers. Any profit will reflect superior achievement by the enterprise-unit receiving it, either in gauging consumers' demand or in technical efficiency in meeting this demand..²⁴

Here, Knight argues that the market system properly pits producers against one another in competition for consumers' outlays. In his view, the market capitalist system exposes producers to incentives and penalties which reward efficiency and penalize inefficiency. Further, the system obliges producers to maximize their returns on their investments, thereby ensuring that they produce products which answer to consumers' expressed wants. Thus, Knight's line of justification depended on an economic understanding of efficiency. Rather than conceiving efficiency in technical terms, as conservation of energy, Knight gauges efficiency in terms of preference satisfaction. Knight deems as outcome efficient when it delivers the greatest level of preference satisfaction possible under a given distribution of resources and preferences.²⁵ In Knight's discourse, the notion of "allocative efficiency" displaces notions of "physical efficiency"²⁶ derived from the industrial order of

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

worth. Further, Knight feels no need to pay homage to the ideals of "productive efficiency" that which had exerted a grip even on Kixmiller. Unlike Kixmiller, Knight did not even bother to gesture in the direction of productive efficiency, much less give it center stage. Thus, the pro- and anti-market ideologists collaborated in producing a "competitive contradiction"²⁷ revolving around efficiency and productivity. As we will see, this ideological formation was soon to recede into the background.

LATER DISCOURSES ABOUT MARKET CAPITALISM:

By the late sixties arguments based on the idea of efficiency no longer commanded the support of ideologists intent on justifying the legitimacy of market capitalism. After this critical juncture, proponents of market cast about for alternatives to vindications of market capitalism rooted in notions of efficiency, whether construed as physical efficiency or economic efficiency. The early libertarians writing in the mid-sixties derided efficiency-based arguments as "crass and materialistic"²⁸, and publicly questioned their persuasiveness. Conceding that planned economies might deliver material abundance, the libertarian Frank Meyer urged market-sympathetic libertarians to argue their case on moral grounds.²⁹ During the late sixties and throughout the seventies, a variety of pro-capitalism libertarians attempted to buttress the moral legitimacy of market capitalism by arguing that market capitalism promoted values indispensable to a morally worthy life. As the libertarian Benjamin Rogge remarked in 1979, the ideological defense of capitalism required proponents to abandon familiar arguments about the material abundance enjoyed by members of capitalist societies. As he stated in his book Can Capitalism Survive?:

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

You may be puzzled, then, that I do not rest my case for economic freedom on its productive achievements; on its buildings, its houses, its automobiles, its bathtubs, its wonder drugs, its television sets, its Roquefort dressings. I neither feel within myself nor do I hear in the testimony of others any evidence that man's search for purpose, his longing for fulfillment, is in any significant way relieved by these [goods]. I do not scorn these [material] accomplishments. Nor do I worship them. Nor do I find in the lives of those who worship them any evidence that they find ultimate peace and justification in their idols..my central thesis is that the most important part of the case for economic freedom (market capitalism) is not its vaunted efficiency as a system for organizing resources, nor its dramatic success in promoting economic growth, but its consistency with certain fundamental moral principles of life itself..the significance I attach to these moral principles would lead me to prefer a free enterprise system even if it were demonstrably less efficient than alternative systems...³⁰

Like many other defenders of market capitalism during this period, Rogge found the appeal to productivity unpersuasive and rhetorically inadequate. In redefining the parameters of the debate, Rogge recognized that the market system had to be reframed as an institution incorporating a moral dimension, rather than a system that bore no relationship to morality.

During the mid-eighties, the ideological climate changed yet again. With the ascendancy of "market utopianism"³¹ throughout the Anglo-American public sphere, defenders of market capitalism could vindicate the system by extolling the virtues of the "primordial" market system.³² No longer did they have to tread cautiously and expend energy addressing the charges leveled by their adversaries. Emboldened by the collapse of the Soviet command economy, they exalted the institutions of market capitalism without reservation. Free-market "fundamentalists"³³ argued that in any circumstances the free market preserves cherished values and promotes socially and individually beneficial conduct. As market fundamentalists they presented a case for expanding the reach of the market and fortifying its control over matters of production and allocation. Their far-reaching claims about the virtues of market capitalism did not go unopposed, however. Even as market capitalism has steadily displaced alternative economic arrangements, a growing chorus of voices has decried the expansion of market

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

relations and the substitution of market exchange for other modes of economic provisioning and coordination.³⁴ Thus, over the last fifteen years, a number of market-critical discourses have proliferated alongside arguments favoring the expansion of market exchange and market institutions.

In the following sections of the paper, I will analyze recent texts dealing with the legitimacy and worth of market capitalism, conceived as the overarching socio-economic system/process within which individuals conduct their lives. Like Boltanski and Thévenot, I will focus primarily on discourses geared towards deepening, systematizing, and clarifying the foundations of market-antagonistic and market-sympathetic ideologies.³⁵ By explicating and mapping these discourses, I hope to disclose the foundational “ideologemes”³⁶ at the root of the discourses, as well as the bedrock principles undergirding the orders of justification. It is essential to recognize that these “rationalizing” ideologies do not inhabit a cultural vacuum. Indeed, like all ideological productions, they derive in some way from the “cultural models and meaning systems”³⁷ circulating in the wider cultural system. Before we delve into the intricacies of these sophisticated discourses, therefore, we need to sketch the contours of these folk models.

The linguist George Lakoff has already delineated the two major folk models animating everyday discourse about moral and political issues. Dubbed the “strict father model” and the “nurturant parenting model”³⁸, these two metaphorical meaning systems offer guidelines for individuals seeking moral guidance in their everyday lives. As Lakoff remarks, both models specify the conditions under which we justify the behavior and ends of individuals as morally praiseworthy. Since the claims of

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

morality override nonmoral claims by definition, these models play a central role in structuring discourse about the realms of politics and society.³⁹ Individuals who abide by the strict father model regard morality as a matter of disciplining the self and achieving mastery over one's base appetites. According to this schema, only self-denial can facilitate moral conduct. Individuals who abandon self-discipline in order to cultivate happiness are forsaking the imperatives governing moral behavior.⁴⁰ In its more traditionalist versions, the Strict father model often condemns happiness as "self-indulgence"⁴¹, they nevertheless surface in many libertarian polemics.

By contrast, when individuals embrace the nurturant parenting model, they see the cultivation of happiness and self-fulfillment as serving a moral end, rather than undermining self-discipline.⁴² As Lakoff notes, individuals often base judgments about merits of market capitalism on its congruence with the moral imperatives incorporated into the two models. Adherents of the strict father model champion the "free market". They see it as an institution that enables individuals to achieve self-reliance by exerting themselves and disciplining their appetites. By tying incentives and sanctions to individuals' actions in the economic sphere, the "free market" system enshrines the cherished principle of individual accountability in the social order. For adherents of the Strict Father morality, one cannot behave morally unless one takes responsibility for one's situation.⁴³ For people who favor the nurturant model, however, the market system may advance moral ends, but it only does so if it enables individuals to lead fulfilling and happy lives. In the absence of this "eudaimonistic"⁴⁴ function, the market impedes the realization of moral ends as much as it facilitates their realization. The market system cannot serve moral ends simply by virtue of enthroning the principle of individual

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

accountability in the fabric of the socio-economic order, as it does for adherents of the Strict Father morality. Indeed, whenever the market system operates in ways that make it difficult for people to achieve self-fulfillment, it deserves moral censure.⁴⁵

In the following section of the paper, I will tease apart the “moral” ideological discourses dealing with the merits and drawbacks of market capitalism. In doing so, we will encounter a variety of discourses implicating several different orders of justification. Some of these orders of justification harken back to the “industrial” and “market” orders of justification outlined by Boltanski and Thévenot. Yet, as I argued previously, the post-60s ideologists who crafted these legitimating discourses jettisoned industrial and civic orders of justification in favor of an explicitly individualistic moral framework. This is particularly apparent in the legitimating discourses originating in the liberal and libertarian traditions. Just as the proponents of market capitalism enrolled the moral vocabulary of individualism, the critics of market capitalism enlisted this moral grammar. Thus, the progressive critics of market capitalism also staked out their position from a self-consciously moral standpoint. However, their grammar of worth differed dramatically from the libertarian morality infusing pro-market discourses. Their discourses incorporated moral claims nourished by the “eudaimonistic” values enshrined in the nurturant model of morality. This moral charter invested self-fulfillment and self-development with the status of moral imperatives, unlike the disciplinarian charter of the libertarians. Thus, the anti-market ideologists criticized market capitalism in the name of self-fulfillment and self-development. These new market-antagonistic discourses drew sustenance from the nurturant vision of morality. They opposed the “sovereignty of the market system” and its

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

hegemony over nonmarket modes of provisioning and allocation on the grounds that this sovereignty thwarted individuals in their quest for happiness.

As we recall from the examination of early discourses about market capitalism (1910s-1935), ideologists were still ambivalent about norms drawn from the market grammar of worth. In particular, they were reluctant to entrust ideals of consumer choice and satisfaction with the task of persuading their audience of the virtues (or vices) of market capitalism. Before the eighties, these “market-related” ideals had not yet crystallized to the point where they could serve as foundational values anchoring their own orders of justification. For example, appeals to consumer satisfaction did not appear in the libertarian discourse which matured in the fifties and early sixties. Yet, in the eighties and nineties, libertarian ideologists availed themselves of ideals revolving around consumer choice, consumer satisfaction, and consumer well-being. Thus, contemporary liberal and libertarian discourses⁴⁶ about market capitalism are tightly interwoven with the market order of worth, via the “ideologemes” of consumer choice and consumer satisfaction.

As I will demonstrate through readings of selected libertarian texts, the libertarian ideologists proclaimed the freedom-facilitating character of market capitalism, while at the same time emphasizing its “hedonic”⁴⁷ virtues. Thus, the later liberal and libertarian discourses enrolled warrants that incorporated notions of liberty and consumer choice. These warrants derived from neoclassical understandings of market exchange, rather than moralistic discourses about freedom. Ironically, the libertarians had appropriated notions associated with the very neoclassical theories

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

which were responsible for the notions of efficiency discarded by the moralistic libertarians of the sixties and seventies. As we recall, the liberals and libertarians had disavowed the efficiency and productivity warrants that had served the earlier market enthusiasts so well.

While liberal and libertarian market-enthusiasts mobilized arguments founded on the ideologeme of “consumer choice”, progressive critics of the market enlisted warrants deriving from their “eudaimonistic” morality. Among many progressive critics of market capitalism, warrants rooted in the discourse of self-fulfillment, autonomy, happiness, and self-direction appear more ideologically viable than warrants grounded in the “civic” or “industrial” repertoire of evaluation.⁴⁸ Among most market-antagonistic academics and intellectuals, both expert and lay, the quest to realize private life-projects has become indispensable as a means of delegitimizing the institution of market exchange. Whether they venerate the vaunted efficiency of the market system or not, these critics of market capitalism ground their arguments in ideals of happiness, autonomy, self-fulfillment, and “psychic well-being”.⁴⁹ The two poles of consumer values and producer values now function as the extremes defining the primary “axis of contention” where socio-economic issues are concerned.⁵⁰ In order to frame their arguments, the critics of market sovereignty forged a conception of well-being untouched by “economistic” understandings derived from the market paradigm.⁵¹ Realizing the debt owed to neoclassical economics by libertarian discourse, progressive critics such as Paul Wachtel, and Juliet Schor assailed the cogency and appropriateness of the economistic conception of “preference satisfaction”⁵². In doing so, they reject one of the linchpins of the market order of justification and moved beyond the justificatory apparatus deployed by the libertarians. In framing

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

their eudaimonistic ideals, they took pains to distinguish "happiness" from the consumer satisfaction idolized by the libertarian market enthusiasts. Progressive ideals of happiness, self-fulfillment, and psychic well-being deployed in the progressive discourses owe little to the neoclassical paradigm. Indeed, they are often presented in opposition to the model of "preference satisfaction" elaborated by economists working within the neoclassical tradition.

THE THEMES OF PRO-MARKET DISCOURSE: LIBERTY AND CONSUMER CHOICE

For libertarian market fundamentalists, it is the voluntary character of market exchange that renders it preferable to all other forms of economic activity. In the hands of market-sympathizers, the market system is construed as an arena where individuals pursue their own ends, while contributing the realization of others' ends. As this arena for the voluntary exercise of choice, the market constitutes nothing more than a "neutral facilitator"⁵³ of individuals' own life-projects. At the extreme, libertarian market-fundamentalists celebrate the transfer of exchangeable goods as the very embodiment of freedom-affirming conduct in the public sphere. In freely striking bargains in the open arena of the market, individuals assert their freedom to acquire and dispose of property, subject only to the limitations imposed by other market actors' exercise of their property rights.⁵⁴

As a forum where contractually defined rights prevail over other entitlements, the market is conceived as an arena where individuals can freely strike deals with other individuals, taking into consideration only their own self-defined interests. Inspired by the Austrian libertarian Friedrich Hayek, they laud the market as an institution that permits individuals to act on their own impulses, without having to submit to the will of another person.⁵⁵ By establishing market-driven economic

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

arrangements, society respects the autonomy of sovereign individuals and permits them to freely pursue their ends without deferring to others' dictates. Under the market system's regime of property rights, transactors are never obliged to strike deals with specific partners. Dissatisfied transactors, whether consumers, sellers, or workers, can always refuse to enter into specific exchanges and transfer their services or goods elsewhere.⁵⁶ As a result, the market process leaves producers free to meet demand on their own terms, while leaving consumers free to exercise their power of choice and to withhold their monetary outlays.⁵⁷ In the words of philosopher Elizabeth Anderson, each party to a market transaction views his relationship with the exchange partner as nothing more than a means to the satisfaction of ends defined independently of the relationship.⁵⁸ It is important to note that this freedom includes the freedom to select jobs and line of work freely, subject to the like choices of others competing for the same positions. Thus, market freedoms do not stop at the freedom to select consumable goods and services.⁵⁹

Market-sympathetic ideologists usually frame their justifications or critiques using the vocabulary of disciplinarian moral ideals, particularly self-discipline, noncoercion, self-reliance, and personal initiative. Praising the "free market", they cite the way in which the freedom to transact in market settings works to the advantage of individuals trying to achieve self-reliance. In their celebrations of market capitalism, libertarians rarely praise the way in which market system works to the advantage of individuals trying to achieve happiness, self-fulfillment, and other eudaimonistic ends. And yet, market-enthusiastic libertarians do appropriate "warrants"⁶⁰ seemingly associated with the "nurturant" model of happiness and self-fulfillment.⁶¹ In such cases market sympathizers often point

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

to the usefulness of market exchange and market relations for individuals trying to realize their aspirations and life-goals. It seems likely that these libertarians are trying to exploit the popularity of culturally potent “postmaterialist”⁶² values without committing themselves to the primacy of eudaimonistic values like happiness and self-fulfillment. Unlike their progressive counterparts, the libertarian ideologists rest content with a economistic vision of satisfaction and seldom dwell on the character and destiny of happiness. Thus, when we unpack libertarian and liberal passages dealing with the character of happiness, we find an implicit economistic conception lurking in the background. In their texts, the libertarians show an unwillingness to depart from the economistic understanding of well-being and happiness.⁶³ They seem uncomfortable with notions of happiness inconsistent with the utilitarian vision of preference satisfaction.

The libertarian strain of legitimating discourse proceeds from the premise that the market system facilitates the individuals’ quest for “utility”, however this end is construed. Inasmuch as the market actor can enroll the products, talents, and labor of others in his autonomous quest to realize his goals and aspirations, he enjoys an enhanced “quality of life”.⁶⁴ By inserting himself into the “impersonal”⁶⁵ nexus of market exchange, the market actor enjoys access to goods and services unavailable to the individual engaged in self-provisioning or some sort of associational economy.⁶⁶ This line of thinking appears in many liberal and libertarian texts. Nowhere is it elaborated with such gusto, however, as in W. Michael Cox and Richard Alm’s populist tract celebrating the virtues of American market capitalism, Myths of Rich and Poor: Why We’re Better Off Than We Think, written in 1999.⁶⁷ True acolytes of market fundamentalism, Cox and Alm rail against the impediments to marketized

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

commerce and give their blessing to the expansion of market capitalism into new areas of human activity. Cox and Alm enumerate in great detail the enormous improvements in personal living standards accompanying the expansion of marketized commerce in the United States over the last half century.⁶⁸ They chronicle the proliferation of goods and services that have enriched Americans' lives and lightened Americans' burdens over the past half century. The profusion of exchangeable goods⁶⁹ and services circulating through market channels testifies to society's "tremendous gains from specialization and [market] exchange".⁷⁰

Cox and Alm link this proliferation of goods and services to the overarching values of "consumer choice".⁷¹ To Cox and Alm, individuals should welcome the enlargement of consumer choice as an unqualified blessing. Expanded consumer choice means greater varieties of goods, more leisure time, and more "ways to live one's life".⁷² After American consumers reap the benefits of this abundance for a long time, they begin to desire "intangibles, such as more leisure, better living conditions, and a sense of self-worth".⁷³ Cox and Alm proclaim that market capitalism not only satisfies Americans' desires for more consumer goods, but satisfies American consumers' appetite for more "amenities, more luxuries, and more self-fulfillment" as well.⁷⁴ It is the abundance of material goods made possible by the operation of market capitalism which is responsible for the evolution of individuals' tastes into desires for intangible goods.

In framing their argument, Cox and Alm do not make any distinctions between ordinary consumer goods and services, on the one hand, and amenities and self-fulfillment, on the other hand. Instead,

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

they treat self-fulfillment as a particular kind of consumer good. In equating well-being proper with economically measurable "utility", Cox and Alm are employing the same dialectical stratagem as other libertarian market fundamentalists. By eliding the difference between the state of self-fulfillment and purchasable commodities, they are ruling out any possible discrepancy between the dollar value of what is consumed and the well-being of the consumer. This stratagem makes sense, considering that progressive critics of market capitalism have made the notion of economic well-being a primary target of their criticisms.

Cox and Alm rarely entertain the possibility that the expansion of consumer choice might have perverse effects on the autonomy and well-being of individuals. They do, however, consider the idea that the expansion of consumer choice might not serve to make work more enjoyable for producers. In their discussion of "producer values",⁷⁵ they make a very revealing observation. Cox and Alm decide that, whenever consumer choice comes into conflict with "producer choice"⁷⁶, then the prerogatives of consumer choice necessarily supersede the claims of producer choice. In Cox's words:

Although it's become fashionable to disparage service industries and their jobs, the great truth of free-market economies is that we consumers dictate what we produce and where we work. We are both producers and consumers. It's inconsistent for us as consumers to want mostly services yet as workers to produce mostly goods [we want to produce]. In the end, we're going to work at the jobs that produce what we want to buy.⁷⁷

Thus, in the single instance when a competing value threatens to trump consumer choice, Cox and Alm come down firmly on the side of consumer choice. Cox is not the only market-sympathetic liberal/libertarian to commend consumer choice as a priority worthy enough to nullify the claims of

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

producer choice. The British political commentator Arthur Seldon draws up a list of prized values realized by the unfettered market system. In this list he includes the following requirement:

6. The machinery of economic activity must put the interest of man as consumer over the interest of man as producer. Only the market system under capitalism can perform this task.⁷⁸

For Seldon, Cox, Alm, and other libertarian believers in market capitalism, nothing more than consumption is required for human agents to attain well-being and self-fulfillment. More specifically, it is unnecessary for human agents to work at jobs they find worthwhile and enjoyable. As long as the market system honors individuals' desires for commodifiable goods and services, individuals can always achieve self-fulfillment through acts of commodity consumption (particularly the consumption of leisure goods).⁷⁹ It is therefore undesirable that society respect individuals' preferences as producers at the expense of leaving consumers' preferences unsatisfied. If society were to respond to producers' preferences for autonomous and enjoyable work, it might interfere with consumers' quest for "utility". As we have seen, in the discourse of libertarian market-enthusiasts, a greater level of marketized commerce leads not only to greater freedom, but to greater consumer choice as well. This consumer choice necessarily translates into enhanced well-being and greater possibilities for self-fulfillment. Thus, the libertarians welcome the expansion of marketized commerce into more domains of human activity in name of freedom and well-being.

PROGRESSIVE DISCOURSE ABOUT MARKET CAPITALISM AND ITS EUDAIMONISTIC THEMES

While economic understandings of well-being still inform the arguments presented by contemporary market fundamentalists, progressive critics of the market have moved beyond these conceptions of well-being. As early as the late seventies, market-critical tracts started to focus their

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

critiques not on the injustices and inequities engendered by market capitalism, but on the harm wrought on individuals' lives by a society overreliant on marketized commerce. After a brief hiatus in the eighties, this “vanguard” critique gathered momentum. In the early nineties, a slew of articles and books came out denouncing the encroachment of market capitalism on unmarketized spheres of human activity.⁸⁰

In the view of contemporary critics of the overreaching market, the increased availability of consumer goods does not necessarily translate into social or individual well-being and self-fulfillment. Indeed, as Clifford Cobb and Ted Halstead pointed out in their Atlantic Monthly article "If the Economy is Up, Why is America Down?", the growth of marketized commerce may actually detract from the quality of individuals' lives. The deterioration of the social fabric fuels the growth of marketized commerce. As a consequence, increasing levels of consumer goods often accompany the erosion of individuals' quality of life, not to mention the possibilities for self-fulfillment.⁸¹ Moreover, in Fred Hirsch's view, when the market system prevails over all other modes of provisioning (public provisioning, barter, time share arrangements, self-provisioning, associational provisioning), it constrains individuals to address all their desires through the individualized purchase and consumption of exchangeable goods. Thus, desired goods and services are offered:

..exclusively or predominantly on commercial terms rather than on some other basis.. such as informal exchange, mutual obligation, altruism, associational bargaining, or feelings of service...the economy as a whole becomes more commodity oriented than individuals would choose if they were confronted with the full consequences of their preferences in the context of the economy's capacity to satisfy them..⁸²

Thus, Cobb, Halstead, and Hirsch all agree that marketized commerce cannot spread to all areas of human activity without endangering the well-being of society and individuals. While the libertarian

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

market fundamentalists show an unwillingness to challenge the conventional economic understanding of well-being, Hirsch, Cobb and others thus ground their claims in a self-consciously non-economic understanding of well-being. It never enters Cox's mind that people blessed with consumer choice could prefer self-destructive activities to self-enriching activities. But Cobb and Halstead draw attention to the destructiveness of many activities registered by the price mechanism as positive values.

Melding together earlier criticisms about the market system's corrosion of the social fabric with "psychologistic" arguments about the damage inflicted by the overreaching market system on individuals' happiness and self-fulfillment, these critics of market direct their criticisms towards the effect of marketized commerce on "subjective well-being" and happiness. They dwell primarily on the relationship between individuals' participation in market-mediated institutions (consumption and paid employment) and indicia of psychological and physical health. While their arguments do draw from a psychological grammar of worth, they also incorporate appeals to moral ideals. In fact, their arguments acquire a moralistic tenor when they draw on "eudaimonistic" warrants in their critiques of the overreaching market system.

In his progressive statement The Poverty of Affluence⁸³, Paul Wachtel agrees with the libertarians that the reign of marketized commerce has brought about an expansion of consumer choice in many areas of activity. Just as Cox and Alm catalogue the vast array of goods for sale in consumer markets, Wachtel cites the "panoply of items"⁸⁴ available to the modern American consumer.

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

Whereas Cox and Alm regard consumers' access to goods as the prerequisite for happiness and well-being, however, Wachtel points to the price paid for this access. Wachtel questions whether the drive to maximize the variety and availability of commodified goods and services actually makes individuals happier, more fulfilled, or psychologically healthier.⁸⁵ Wachtel complains that the "sovereignty of the market"⁸⁶, the market's unchallenged authority of over all matters of provisioning, constricts the set of possibilities facing individuals. After considering various arguments, Wachtel concludes that the consumer-oriented economy impoverishes the lives of those who renounce "material accumulation" as a path to happiness. He deplores the "poverty of real choices" facing Americans who want to experiment with lifestyles different from the "consumer way of life" dominating the American landscape.

In his arguments against the overreaching market system, Wachtel is careful to distinguish "economic well-being"⁸⁷ from well-being proper. In this preoccupation with the inadequacy of economic visions of well-being, Wachtel shows his ideological affinity with other progressive critics of the market concerned with the impact of marketized commerce on the well-being and happiness of market participants. In their influential 1995 article "If the Economy is Up, Why is America Down?", Clifford Cobb and Ted Halstead revisit the same issues. When they discuss how economists misuse the GDP as a gauge of national welfare, they make the following argument:

...[the GDP is] simply a measure of total output (the dollar value of finished goods and services). *It assumes that everything produced is by definition "goods."* It does not distinguish between costs and benefits, between productive and destructive activities, or between sustainable and unsustainable ones. The nation's central measure of well being works like a calculating machine that adds but cannot subtract. It treats everything that happens in the market as a gain for humanity, while ignoring everything that happens outside the realm of monetized exchange, regardless of the importance to well-being...⁸⁸

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

While Cobb and Halstead do not follow Wachtel in his psychologistic treatment of happiness, they concur with him as to the conflation of economically measurable well-being and human well-being.

Both writers take issue with the covert equation between market value and human welfare so prominent in the arguments of market fundamentalists like Seldon, Cox, and Alm.

Expanding upon Wachtel's critique, political scientist Robert Lane's The Market Experience revisits many of the issues introduced by Wachtel. Lane, however, conducts a much more extensive and searching inquiry into the market's consequences for human well-being.⁸⁹ On a theoretical level, Lane's work marks a watershed in the development of the quality of life critique pioneered by Wachtel. First, Lane traces individuals' happiness to sources which mostly lie outside the market, such as social relations and self-esteem.⁹⁰ Second, Lane reformulates the issue of subjective well-being, in relation to market-mediated processes, including gainful employment and commodity consumption. In relation to these economic processes, Lane makes a fundamental distinction missing from Wachtel's work. He distinguishes the economic agent in his capacity as producer and the economic agent in his capacity as consumer. For Lane, the productive activities undertaken by the individual, in his role as producer/worker, play a larger role in deciding his overall well-being than his activities as a consumer of commodities. If the person is to optimize his well-being by participating in marketized exchange, he ought to attend more to his productive activities than his activities as a consumer of commodities. Thus, a consumer-oriented market system does not realize the values of happiness and self-fulfillment as well as an economic system that subordinates consumer choice to work enjoyment and autonomy.⁹¹ Lane argues that maximizing access to commodified goods and

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

services does not translate into optimal well-being and happiness.⁹² For Lane, the market system, as it is currently organized, perpetuates an overemphasis on commodity consumption that can depress human happiness, even as it (ostensibly) enhances consumer welfare. In effect, the market system favors the rewards of commodity consumption over the intrinsic rewards of “enjoyment, self-direction, and learning at [paid] work”.⁹³ Since the market system operates in this manner, it actually harms human well-being, even as it enhances consumer welfare.

The progressive critics of the market, ranging from economists like Scitovsky, Hirsch, and Lane to humanists like Wachtel, all problematize the relation between market-mediated processes and eudaimonistic values, specifically autonomy and well-being. They are particularly preoccupied with the pressures marketization brings to bear on individuals participating in the institutions of paid labor⁹⁴ and consumption. Drawing on psychologistic and eudaimonistic visions of autonomy and happiness, they contest the presumption that individuals automatically benefit when they can freely choose from a large variety of commodities. In the words of Wachtel, society should promote a way of life which opens up:

..the possibility of a kind of liberation considerably more satisfying than simply being free to choose what is on the shelves in the grocery store...⁹⁵

In Wachtel's view, an economic and cultural order that inflates individuals' expectations for consumer goods and services, while dampening their aspirations for self-development and self-discovery hardly merits our respect, let alone our endorsement. For the progressive critics of market capitalism, the ever-expanding horizons of commodification may widen the scope of consumer choice. To them, this consumer choice does not assure market actor's happiness, well-being, or self-fulfillment.

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

Indeed, in their view, the market system's "commercializing bias"⁹⁶ threatens to increase individuals' dependency on market relations to a pathological level. Moreover, they argue that individuals enmeshed in market-mediated activities - work and consumption - lack the wherewithal to pursue the kinds of noncommodifiable activities and commitments necessary for fulfilling lives. For these critics, the overreaching institutions of market capitalism, specifically the institutions of mass consumption and employment, throw up obstacles in the way of individuals striving to attain happiness and develop their capacities. Individuals entangled in the institutions of an overreaching market system find themselves stymied, when it comes to realizing their eudaimonistic goals.

Thus, what concerns Scitovsky, Hirsch, Cobb, Lane, and Wachtel has to little to do with "industrial" desiderata such as efficiency and productivity. Nor does it have much to do with social solidarity, equity, or any other norm inscribed within the "civic" order of worth. Instead, their concerns have to do with the plight of the individual trying to realize her private life-goals aspirations while simultaneously coping with the choices and constraints imposed by the institutions of market capitalism. In this way, they share something in common with the libertarian exponents of market fundamentalism, who also place the predicament of the market-enmeshed individual at the center of their discourses about market society.

While Cox and Alm subordinate producer choice (honoring the workers' preferences with regard to work content and conditions) to consumer choice, Lane vindicates the claims of producer choice. Drawing on psychological research into sources of satisfaction, happiness, and self-fulfillment, Lane

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

contends that market actors secure more well-being from their autonomous activities as producers than they secure from their autonomous activities as consumers. Thus, the two sides diverge, as to the meaning and significance of consumer choice in a society where the individual is expected to act as a choice-maker in all areas of her life. For progressive critics of market sovereignty, people cannot lead fulfilling lives as long as they are enmeshed in labor market and consumption regimes where their producer aspirations are subordinated to the desires of paying consumers. An economic system which truly works to the advantage of people seeking well-being would not induce people to barter away their "noncommodity outputs" (challenging work, opportunities for self-development, helping others) in return for commodity outputs which contribute far less to overall well-being. As the sociologist Fred Block remarks in "Why Well-being Does not Count":

There is good reason to believe that people's feelings of well-being have much more to do with [noncommodity factors] than with small variations in their ability to buy marketable goods and services..⁹⁷

Because the overreaching market system feeds off the destruction of the life activities that give rise to these noncommodity outputs, its growth ultimately endangers the well-being that it ostensibly enhances. As long as marketized commerce grows by absorbing nonmarketized spheres of activity and converting them into commodity outputs, people's happiness and autonomy will suffer.

As the French critic André Gorz noted, the marketization of noncommercial activities converts autonomous capacities into tasks performed for monetary compensation. In combination with the "commodity-bias" of the overreaching market system, the market's tendency to cannibalize "autonomous" activities leads to a deficit in noncommodity outputs.⁹⁸ In addition, the marketization of many spheres of activity constrain people to address all of their wants through the consumption of purchasable commodities. It therefore stifles any aspirations to self-provisioning that people may

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

harbor. People forfeit the pleasures that come with doing things for themselves, as they depend more and more on marketable goods and services.

As we have seen, the early ideologists who addressed the legitimacy and worth of market capitalism entered into a debate about efficiency, productivity, and social order. Their ideological struggles yielded a competitive contradiction⁹⁹ at the intersection of the “industrial” and “civic” orders of justification. Defenders of market capitalism ended up trying to vindicate the claims of market capitalism by seizing on its allocative efficiency. Critics sought to undermine these claims by pointing to the technical inefficiencies and wastage of the system. From a "morphological" perspective, the libertarians' discursive strategy makes sense. By interweaving the values of autonomy and well-being with consumer choice, the libertarians fix the meaning of potentially destabilizing terms. This ideological maneuver empties the reservoir of connotations emanating from the terms. It strips it of all meanings which could subvert the libertarian vision of the social order.¹⁰⁰ By adopting an economic understanding of autonomy and well-being, the libertarians also dissociate these terms from any humanistic connotations they may happen to evoke in people's minds. In this way, the libertarian market fundamentalists mount a preemptive strike against the progressives. The progressives are depending on the humanistic connotations of these terms.¹⁰¹ By making both values synonymous with the satisfaction of consumers' preferences, the libertarians manage to suppress interpretations of happiness incompatible with their market-oriented vision. Finally, when libertarians and liberals equate happiness with consumer choice and consumer satisfaction, they strengthen their grip on the vocabulary of subjecthood.

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

When the terrain of the debate shifted, pro-market and anti-market ideologists had to forge a new competitive contradiction. They ended up framing their arguments in the idiom of the private lifeworld. They spoke of autonomy, well-being, self-fulfillment, and personal liberty. Thus, they debated the legitimacy and worth of market capitalism strictly in terms of its consequences for the private lives of individuals. This competitive contradiction displaced the earlier competitive contradiction revolving around the overtly social values of productivity, economic justice, and economic equity. No longer do the terms of the debate originate in orders of justification thematizing the ideals of the social collectivity. Under the terms of this new competitive contradiction, the market system would be judged on the basis of individualistic values, even though the market system was understood to be first and foremost a mechanism for social coordination and control.¹⁰²

CONSUMER CHOICE AND THE LIBERTARIAN FRAMEWORK: A PUZZLE

In books such as Capitalism and Myths of Rich and Poor, we can see that libertarian ideologists equate happiness with consumer choice and preference satisfaction. Rather than interrogating received understandings of happiness, they appropriate the conceptions supplied by neoclassical economics. The economistic vision's lack of moral significance does not deter libertarians from using it in their arguments. As we have seen, the libertarians render consumer choice as a "consummatory value"¹⁰³, the value which determines the worth and legitimacy of all subordinate values. They embrace an economistic vision of well-being that makes consumer choice synonymous with the values of individualism. Seldon, Cox, and Alm rule out the very possibility that society can only stretch the range of consumer choice by sacrificing more important values. But, at the same time, the

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

libertarians define liberty and happiness as the outcomes of the choice-making performances enacted by the free consumer. In the libertarian's vision, the choice-making acts of the worker or producer do not merit the same approval as the choice-making acts of the consumer.

Because libertarians are generally committed to disciplinarian worldview discussed by Lakoff, they find it relatively easy to divest these terms of their humanistic connotations. Only freedom - interpreted solely as "negative freedom" carries moral connotations for adherents of the strict father morality. It is easy to connect this type of autonomy to consumer choice. Thus, the libertarians find it easy to annex the idea of freedom to the all-encompassing value of consumer choice. The value of happiness, on the other hand, lack a moral dimension for adherents of the disciplinarian worldview. For adherents of the "strict father morality", happiness does not have any moral significance in its own right. Therefore, when Cox and Seldon approach happiness as a condition without moral implications, they are unfolding an argument congruent with this morality.

As we have see, the libertarians cite the consonance of market capitalism with principles of liberty, autonomy, and well-being while progressives criticized the overreaching institutions of market capitalism in the name of autonomy, happiness, and self-fulfillment. The eudaimonistic critics of market capitalism operate with a different understanding of autonomy and happiness than the libertarians, however. Whereas Cox celebrates consumer choice as an unqualified blessing, the progressives find the notion of consumer choice impoverished as a surrogate for happiness. For the progressives, the translation of autonomy and happiness into consumer choice renders the idea of

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

happiness devoid of the moral and psychological content it warrants. For progressive adherents of the nurturant model, one cannot do justice to the ideal of happiness without attending to its psychic and moral aspects. Once we restore the moral and psychological content to the notion of happiness, we see that the benefits of consumer choice count for less than producer choice, where market actors' happiness and well-being are concerned. Speaking from the standpoint of nurturant morality, the progressive critics regard consumer choice as an inadequate criterion by which to gauge the eudaimonistic virtues of consumer-oriented market capitalism.¹⁰⁴

Our interpretation of the libertarian discourse still leaves us with several puzzles. First, why would the libertarians exploit the idea of consumer choice so readily in their justifications of untrammelled market capitalism? Why would they employ a line of justification heavily indebted to the neoclassical corpus, when their predecessors labored to extricate themselves from lines of justification built around neoclassical notions of "efficiency" and "productivity"? Second, why would libertarians and liberals make use **only** of warrants grounded in consumer choice, when presenting their case for the moral worthiness of market capitalism? While "consumer choice" is clearly tied to the kind of "negative freedom" cherished by libertarians, "producer choice", the access to the kinds and quantities of work that one most prefers¹⁰⁵ is also tied closely to negative freedom. Indeed, the libertarian and liberal advocates of the consumer-oriented market system do not deny that market capitalism permits individuals to freely choose "jobs or career lines"¹⁰⁶, subject to the choice of other market actors. However, they claim that producer choice counts for little, when weighed against the benefits of consumer choice. Why then does the libertarian so readily favor the claims of consumer

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

choice over the claims of producer choice when producer choice would seem to work just as effectively as a warrant for market capitalism?

This is especially puzzling in view of the theoretical viability of a non-consumer market system where market actors would “consume” work instead of goods and services. As Samuel Brittan argues, it is perfectly possible to imagine a “work-scarce” society where people would exchange goods and services they do not want for work which they do want, rather than the other way around.¹⁰⁷

Although it may seem improbable that most individuals would enjoy working to the point where they were willing to sacrifice access to commodities, nothing about market exchange itself precludes this possibility. It is entirely possible to imagine an economic order in which people “bought” the chance to perform desirable work by exchanging goods and services valued less highly than the additional work. Thus, one can acknowledge the claims of “producer choice” values without repudiating one’s faith in the institution of market exchange. Yet, as we have seen, the libertarians and liberals endorse the claims of consumer choice, while they dismiss the claims of producer choice. Why do the libertarians build their arguments solely on the idea of consumer choice and fall silent when it comes to the virtues of producer choice?

However, this does not explain why libertarians have eschewed arguments about producer choice in this vindications of market capitalism. From this perspective it remains unclear why libertarian market enthusiasts have refrained from trumpeting the claims of producer choice in the same way they champion the claims of consumer choice. After all, the ultimate object of consumer choice is work itself. As Bauman writes, at the upper ranks of the economic hierarchy, modern market

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

societies can cast the job-seeker into a situation of choice resembling the situation of the freely choosing consumer. The cultural directives of market society invites the job-seeker to approach his work as the "object of free consumer choice"¹⁰⁸ rather than the nonchoice of necessity. Moreover, as Robert Wuthnow learns from his interviews with middle class Americans, a large majority of middle-class workers use the language of the choice-making consumer when speaking about their career-related decisions.¹⁰⁹ In Wuthnow's view, most middle-class American workers consider their jobs as commitments undertaken freely for the purpose of personal gratification. Moreover, since the late seventies, a sizable majority of middle-class Americans judged working at "a boring job" unacceptable.¹¹⁰ For today's middle-class self-fulfillment seekers, social respectability and economic security does not suffice for the realization of autonomy and self-fulfillment. In the words of today's disaffected Harvard Law School graduate trapped in the bowels of a large law-firm:

I hate my job, man. I'm dying to get out of here..my job is killing me..I thought I'd be doing something meaningful [here].¹¹¹

Thus, middle-class workers insist on gaining satisfaction from their work, not merely extrinsic rewards like income. Given middle-class workers' attachment to producer choice ideals, one would expect libertarians to emphasize producer choice in their paeans to the market. And yet such arguments pale in comparison to consumer choice warrants in libertarian tracts such as Myths of Rich and Poor and Capitalism.

CONSUMPTION, WORK, AND THE MIDDLE CLASS LIFE-PROJECT PARADIGM

We can begin to unravel this puzzle, when we consider the role played by voluntary consumption in the "life-project paradigm" of the middle classes.¹¹² Consumer choice, as well as producer choice, is

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

bound up with the individualistic “problematic” of the life-world, rather than the societal problematic of efficiency, equity, or social solidarity. As Klaus Eder writes in The New Politics of Class, the cultural repertoire associated with the “good life” and personal autonomy has largely displaced the ideological paradigm associated with societal ideals.¹¹³ Seeking to distinguish itself from the bourgeois, on the one hand, and the lower middle classes on the other hand, the new middle classes have evolved the notion of “the good life”¹¹⁴ as a yardstick for evaluating their life-projects and the life-projects of others. Within this paradigm, the values of autonomy and well-being assume their significance within the framework of a privatized lifeworld. When her horizons are circumscribed by this privatized lifeworld, the individual does not think of autonomy and well-being as characteristics of society, but thinks of them as the outcomes of her own private decisions.

These petit bourgeois values now circumscribe the parameters of the debate between defenders and critics of market capitalism. Both the defenders and critics of market capitalism share a commitment to the individualistic values inscribed within this life-project paradigm. However, the two sides appropriate this paradigm very differently. For the libertarian and liberal advocates of market liberalism, the market system realizes the value of negative freedom, above all other “subjectivized” values.¹¹⁵ Thus, they identify paramount ideals of subjectivity with the freedoms enjoyed by the consumer in a “well-supplied market”.¹¹⁶ The progressives, on the other hand, resist the ideological attempt to identify the ideals of subjectivity with what they regard as an overly restrictive vision of consumer choice. In their struggle against the sovereignty of consumer choice values, they marshal producer choice values as an ideological weapon. They offer the vision of a less consumerist society

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

as a concrete alternative to a society governed by the institutions of an overreaching market capitalism. They object to the ideals of a society where market capitalism has elevated the "modality of the consumer" to the default mode of living. They also protest the legitimacy and worth of in a society cemented together exclusively through the "functional interconnections" of the market system.¹¹⁷

Under the terms of this life-project paradigm, privatized consumption assumes a unique role for the middle-class worker. Generally speaking, it is only in her capacity as consumer that the middle-class individual actualizes her individuality and realizes her privatized aspirations. As Bauman notes, individuals experience their own acts of consumption as solitary performances prompted by impulses which they can claim as their own.¹¹⁸ Whether or not individuals are responding to societal pressures when they consume, they nevertheless experience that consumption as a realization of their freedom and well-being. For the middle-class American, the communal aspects of consumption are hidden from view. As a consequence, middle-class Americans aspire to earn more money so that they will enjoy greater freedom, even when they have to trade off valuable time and energy to secure that money. Without exception, Robert Wuthnow's middle-class respondents identified money with "personal autonomy", "greater individuality... and freedom to be themselves".¹¹⁹

Within the paradigm of the privatized life-project, the modality of the freely choosing consumer appears as the royal road to autonomy and well-being. The modality of the worker, however, signals the suspension of this freedom and well-being in the interests of ultimate objectives which

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

have "no meaningful relations with the individuals' own goals".¹²⁰ Many middle-class workers have a sense that their work is designed to serve the ends of their organization, rather than their own ends.¹²¹ In Catherine Casey's study of commitment in a corporate workplace, many workers reported that they "felt most fully themselves"¹²² while away from the workplace. Despite the efforts of the company to promote workers' identification with the goals of the corporation, many workers had reverted to an instrumental attitude after several years at the company. To them, work was nothing more than a way of making a living and sustaining their private lifestyles. Thus, while the new middle classes condemn the "instrumentalism" and "materialism" of the lower classes, they share the same underlying posture towards gainful employment as working-class Americans.¹²³ Thus, while the ideals of choice embodied in the vocation of the free consumer have gained a foothold in the sphere of consumption, the "heteronomously" organized sphere of production leaves little room for the exercise of the autonomy integral to the life-project paradigm. It is comparatively difficult, therefore, for market-sympathetic libertarians to celebrate the choice-making powers of the worker, when the content of workers' jobs are dictated by the impersonal objectives of the profit-seeking organization. Of course, as we have seen in Cox's argument, the libertarians try to circumvent this problem by citing the preferences of consumers as the ultimate determinants of work content and conditions. But, they refrain from elaborating this argument. Cox and Alm likely realize that it is futile to argue that yielding to the expressed preferences of consumers makes workers any freer than they would be in a society where consumers did not orchestrate the provisioning process. On some level, then, the libertarians grasp the essential modalities of life in consumption-oriented market societies. They understand further that, in a society where the privatized life-project paradigm holds

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

sway, they much couch their appeals in ways that mesh with this paradigm. Thus, they speak of autonomy, choice, and well-being, but limit the scope of these ideals to the choice-making activities of the consumer. They leave aside the choice-making activities of the worker, knowing full well that most middle-class Americans experience the domain of work as one of constraint.

CONCLUSIONS

In tracing the historical evolution of ideological discourse about market capitalism in the United States and Britain during the post-WWI period, we discern a pronounced shift in the thematic locus of legitimation. We observe a corresponding shift in the thematic locus of delegitimation.¹²⁴ As I noted previously, a preoccupation with efficiency and productivity consumed pre-WWII ideologists. Somewhere around the mid-sixties, this preoccupation began to abate. Arguments pertaining to societal ideals of order, efficiency, equity, and solidarity lost their appeal. Ideologists from both camps began to reorient their arguments about market capitalism around questions of individual autonomy, liberty, and well-being. Thus, the libertarian arguments of the fifties and sixties emphasized the market system's role in preserving market actors' freedom of choice. Later libertarian discourses integrated these arguments based on "negative liberty" with new arguments about the hedonic benefits of marketized commerce. For contemporary liberal and libertarian defenders of "free market" capitalism, the "hedonic" virtues of the market system share the stage with the liberty-facilitating virtues of market exchange. Likewise, progressive critics of overreaching market capitalism framed their arguments in the language of autonomy, freedom, and happiness. Thus, by the time we reach the 1980s and 1990s, the individualistic "life-project paradigm" had left

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

its imprint on justificatory and critical arguments alike. Without any deliberate efforts, the libertarians and progressives had forged a novel competitive contradiction. This competitive contradiction revolved around ideals integral to the middle classes' private life-project paradigm. For libertarian and liberal defenders of market capitalism, the system of market capitalism has proven its legitimacy and worth by enlarging the scope of “consumer choice” and broadening the possibilities for consumer satisfaction. For the critics of market capitalism, market capitalism has betrayed its promise by making the modality of the consumer the only modality available to individuals seeking to realize ideals of autonomy and well-being. In this way, the overreaching institutions of market capitalism have disfigured these ideals and left the modern individual's life depleted and impoverished.

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

ENDNOTES

¹ Within the sociology of culture, there is a growing interest in the development and articulation of “interpretative schemata”. These schemata are situated at the intersection of public discourse and “private” cognitive structures. See Hank Johnston, “A Methodology for Frame Analysis” in Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans eds., *Social Movements and Culture*, 1995, (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press), pg. 220. Also see the discussion of metaphorical resources and “folk ideas” in Gary Alan Fine and Kent Sandstrom, “Ideology in Action”, *Sociological Theory*, 11:1, March 1993, pg. 26

² See Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, “Sociology of Critical Capacity”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 1999, 2(3), pgs. 363-7, Peter Wagner, “After Justification: Repertoires of Evaluation and the Sociology of Modernity”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 2(3), pg. 352, Luc Boltanski, *De la justification: Les économies de la grandeur*, (Paris: Gallimard) and Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*, 1999, (Paris: Gallimard), and Michèle Lamont and Laurent Thévenot, “Introduction: Towards a Renewed Comparative Cultural Sociology” in Michèle Lamont and Laurent Thévenot eds., *Rethinking Comparative Cultural Sociology: Repertoires of Evaluation in France and the United States*, 2000, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press)

³ Boltanski and Thévenot, “Sociology of Critical Capacity”, pg. 365. The notion of an evaluative grammar can be understood in reference to everyday discourse as well as ideology. When debating the merits of a book, individuals can appeal to the popularity of the book as evidence of its broad appeal. Within the “market” order of worth, the popularity of the book counts as evidence of its worth, because the worth of any commodity is measured according to its capacity to attract consumers’ money. Alternatively, the disputant can invoke the “originality” of the book as evidence of its quality. If the disputant does so however, she crosses over into a different order of justification. Within the “artistic” order of worth, the popularity of the book does not count as evidence of its worth - indeed its value may be cheapened by its capacity to attract a mass audience.

⁴ Bennett Berger, *An Essay on Culture: Symbolic Structure and Social Structure*, 1995, (Berkeley CA: University of California Press), pg. 35, where he notes that ideologies contain “ideas useful in promoting or defending the legitimacy of group interests and practices through rational intellectual combat”. Moreover, when ideological agents articulate their ideological positions, they are essentially rationalizing some event, decision, or action, rendering them congruent with rationally justifiable set of values, ideals, or norms. Without this rationalizing element, ideological practices degenerate into naked assertions of power, status, or privilege, unfettered by the “cognitive exigencies” which constrain rationalizing discursive performances. Certainly, many social struggles proceed without a true ideological dimension. Indeed, as Bourdieu observes, the taken-for-grantedness of “doxa” militates against the formation of truly ideological discursive formations. It is only when the doxa gives way to a “field of competing possibles”, presenting agents with the choice between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, that process of ideological contestation is inaugurated. Yet, once this process begins, agents engaged in the struggle must attend to the semantic properties and relations of the rivals’ ideologemes, in order to craft their own ideologemes capable of serving their (de)legitimizing functions. For, effective ideologies always serve to legitimate or delegitimize some practice, norm, or value associated with a particular social grouping, institution, or way of life. In order to perform this function, the ideologemes must conform to the logical and thematic requirements which make them effective instruments of rationalization.

⁵ Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, “Sociology of Critical Capacity”, pg. 362, 369

⁶ It is extremely difficult to offer a fully adequate definition of “market capitalism” on account of its complexity, but it is possible to pinpoint a number of defining features. I will leave the task of defining these features, however, to later portions of the paper where I explicate some of the ideological arguments about market capitalism. It should be noted at the outset, though, that the market system (in the most abstract sense) is logically distinguishable from “capitalism”, which refers to specific kinds of markets where labor is treated as a transferable commodity in its own right. See John O’Neill, *The Market: Ethics, Knowledge, and Politics*, 1998, (London: Routledge), pg. 5. Among the ideologies thematizing societal subsystems, ideologies dealing with society’s institutions of provisioning and allocation occupy a prominent position. These ideologies concern the institutional framework that indirectly regulates the production and distribution of all scarce and desired goods. A large proportion of the earth’s population cannot realize their own goals and aspirations without participating in market exchange, whether as sellers of labor power, buyers of commodified goods, or suppliers of capital.

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

Thus, through its orchestration of the labor market and the market for consumer goods, market capitalism touches the lives of almost every individual living on earth. Moreover, with the recession of alternative organizing economic systems, the market system now serves as the key organizing principle structuring global society (See Vicki Birchfield, "Contesting the Hegemony of Market Ideology", *Review of International Political Economy*, 6:1, Spring 1999, pg. 32) and Charles Lindblom, "Market System Coordination" in *The Market System*, 2001, (New Haven CT: Yale University Press), pg. 41. Because the reach of the market system has expanded to such an extent, ideologies dealing with the market system have acquired a unique importance in contemporary societies, particularly Anglo-American societies. Even when proponents of market capitalism have proclaimed the absence of any serious alternative to market capitalism (Daniel Singer, *Whose Millenium: Theirs or Ours?*, 1999, (New York: Monthly Review Press), pgs. 1-2, 8-9), market capitalism remains a popular topics among many different kinds of ideologists. During the late seventies up until the present, ideologists continue to debate the merits of market capitalism as a society-wide institutional framework for the production and allocation of scarce goods. See Bernard Barber, "The Development of Market Ideology", in *Intellectual Pursuits: Toward an Understanding of Culture*, 1998, (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield), pg. 67

⁷ Ann Swidler, *Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies*, *American Sociological Review*, 51, April 1986, pg. 281

⁸ Bernard Barber, *Intellectual Pursuits: Toward an Understanding of Culture*, 1998, (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield), pg. 53. Also, Swidler, pg. 278

⁹ See Peter Wagner, *A Sociology of Modernity: Liberty and Discipline*, 1994, (London: Routledge), pgs. 21, 38

¹⁰ See Klaus Eder, *The New Politics of Class: Social Movements and Cultural Dynamics in Advanced Societies*, 1993, (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications), pgs. 22

¹¹ Wagner, pg. 59

¹² See for example, Svetozar Pejovich, *Economic Analysis of Institutions and Systems*, 1998, (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers)

¹³ See John Gray, *Beyond the New Right: Markets, Governments, and the Common Environment*, 1993, (London: Routledge), pg. 34

¹⁴ See Carlyle's denunciations of the moral bankruptcy of the "cash-payment nexus". Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present*, 1965, [1843], (New York: New York University Press)

¹⁵ See the humanistic Marxian critique formulated by Karl Marx in *Grundrisse: Foundations of a Critique of Political Economy*. trans. Martin Nicolaus, 1973 (London: Vintage), and brilliantly reformulated by Leszek Kolakowski in *Main Currents of Marxism: Volume I (The Founders)*, 1978, (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press). See also Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, 1993, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press)

¹⁶ Henry Wallace, "The Social Advantages and Disadvantages of the Engineering-Scientific Approach to Civilization", *Science*, January 5, 1934, Vol. 79, pg. 4. See especially William Kixmiller, *Can Business Build a Great Age?*, 1933, (New York: MacMillan Company), and Arthur Dahlberg, *Jobs, Machines, and Capitalism*, 1932, (New York: MacMillan Company)

¹⁷ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of Business Enterprise*, 1978 [1904], (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publishers), pgs. 51, 59, 62 and *The Price System and the Engineers*, 1986 [1921], (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publishers), pg. 43, 87

¹⁸ See Margaret Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory*, 1988, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press), pg. 284-9

¹⁹ Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, "Sociology of Critical Capacity", pg. 368

²⁰ If one looks at most of the anti-capitalist tracts from the period, one notices that relatively few of them cite the market-based ideals of allocative efficiency and consumer satisfaction. Such reluctance to use these ideals seems unsurprising, given their popularity with pro-capitalist ideologists.

²¹ William Kixmiller, *Can Business Build a Great Age?*, 1933, (New York: The Macmillan Company), pgs. 249, 295

²² Henry Laurence Gantt, *National Industrial Leadership*, 1916, (New Haven CT: Yale University Press), pgs. 63-5

²³ *ibid.*, pg. 262

²⁴ Frank Knight, *Freedom and Reform: Essays in Economics and Social Philosophy*, 1947, (New York: Harper & Row), pg. 386

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

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- ²⁵ Within the neoclassical stream of thought, this argument carries much weight, even today. See Svetozar Pejovich, *Economic Analysis of Systems and Institutions*, 1998, (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers). See Fred Block, *Postindustrial Possibilities: A Critique of Economic Discourse*, 1990, (Berkeley: University of California Press) Robert Kuttner, *Everything for Sale: The Virtues and Limits of Markets*, 1998, (New York: Alfred Knopf) and Charles Lindblom, "What Efficiency Requires", in *The Market System*, 2001, (New Haven CT: Yale University Press)
- ²⁶ See Donald Stabile, "The Political Economy of the Engineer", *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 45, No. 1, (January, 1986), pg. 44
- ²⁷ Margaret Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory*, 1988, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press), pgs. 183-6
- ²⁸ Jerome Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism*, 1990, (Berkeley CA: University of California Press), pg. 54
- ²⁹ See Frank Meyer, "Conservatism", in *Left, Right, and Center: Essays on Liberalism and Conservatism in the United States*, ed. Robert Goldwin, (Chicago IL: Rand McNally), George Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement since 1945*, 1979, (New York: Basic Books), and Jerome Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism*, 1990, (Berkeley CA: University of California Press), pgs. 57-8
- ³⁰ Benjamin Rogge, *Can Capitalism Survive?*, 1979, (Indianapolis: Liberty Press), pgs. 41, 53
- ³¹ See John Gray, *Beyond the New Right: Markets, Government, and the Common Environment*, 1993, (London: Routledge), pg. 142
- ³² Gray, pg. 111
- ³³ Clifford Cobb, Ted Halstead, and Jonathan Rowe, "If the Economy is Up, Why Are we Down?", October 1995, *Atlantic Monthly*, pg. 65
- ³⁴ The forerunners of these market-critical texts include Fred Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth*, 1976, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press) and Tibor Scitovsky, *The Joyless Economy*, 1st edition, 1978, (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press). During the nineties, market-critical academics published a spate of books hostile to the claims of market sovereignty. See Robert Kuttner, *Everything for Sale: The Virtues and Limits of Markets*, 1998, (New York: Alfred Knopf), Juliet Schor, *The Overworked American*, 1992, (New York: Basic Books), and Robert H. Frank, *Luxury Fever: Money and Happiness in an Age of Excess*, 1999, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press)
- ³⁵ In most cases, the ideologists who shape these discourses are addressing their briefs to an "expert" audience rather than a lay audience. However, in certain cases, the works will incorporate discourses adapted to the demands of educated lay audiences rather than experts. It is important to note, however, that these ideological constructions are situated at the upper end of the "high-low" continuum³⁵ that stretches from elaborately formulated well-reasoned discourses to crudely formulated discourses that appeal to emotions as much as their intellects. See Bernard Barber, *Intellectual Pursuits: Towards an Understanding of Culture*, 1998, (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield), pgs. 72-74
- ³⁶ See Robert Wuthnow, "Infrastructure and Superstructure: Revisions in Marxist Sociology of Culture, in 1992, *Theory of Culture*, eds. Richard Münch and Neil Smelser, (Berkeley CA: University of California Press)
- ³⁷ See Roy D'Andrade and Claudia Strauss, *Human Motives and Cultural Models*, 1992, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press)
- ³⁸ George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: What Conservatives Know that Liberals Don't*, 1996, (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press)
- ³⁹ Lakoff, pg. 159
- ⁴⁰ Lakoff, pg. 74
- ⁴¹ Lakoff, pg. 45
- ⁴² Lakoff, pg. 122
- ⁴³ Lakoff, pgs. 94-7
- ⁴⁴ The term "eudaimonia" derives from Aristotelian moral philosophy, specifically *The Nichomachean Ethics*. Because the term indicates the moral dimension of human flourishing, it seemed apt. Eudaimonistic ideals involve subjective happiness, personal development, and self-fulfillment, but only insofar as they have a specifically moral status. For an excellent discussion of this notion, see Sebastian De Grazia, *Of Time, Work*,

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

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- and Leisure*, 1962, (New York: Random House)
- ⁴⁵ Lakoff, pg. 132
- ⁴⁶ Although liberal and libertarian discourses part company on several important issues, for the purposes of this discussion I am treating them as essentially similar. For an excellent conceptual analysis of their differences, see John Gray, *Beyond the New Right: Markets, Government, and the Common Environment*, 1993, (London: Routledge) and Samuel Brittan, *A Restatement of Economic Liberalism*, 1987, (London: MacMillan Press), pgs. 210-215. For an exposition of the conceptual underpinnings of libertarian thought in relation to the economic arena, see “Liberty, Rights, and Libertarianism”, in Daniel Hausman and Michael McPherson, *Economic Analysis and Moral Philosophy*, 1996, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press)
- ⁴⁷ The term “hedonic” serves as an umbrella term denoting any kind of satisfaction or pleasure. The term plays a central role in the vision of consumer satisfaction propagated by neoclassical economics. For a good discussion of this theory see, Robert E. Lane, *The Market Experience*, 1990, (New York: Cambridge University Press). For an exposition of the conceptual underpinnings of this understanding of welfare, see “Welfare” in Daniel Hausman and Michael McPherson, *Economic Analysis and Moral Philosophy*, 1996, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press)
- ⁴⁸ Under certain circumstances, one can detect a tension between the eudaimonistic defense of the market and a commitment to “traditionalist” values embodied in a religious or quasi-religious worldview. In his book, *To The Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism*, Himmelstein documents the early disputes between conservative traditionalists and libertarians over the role of “material comfort and happiness”. The traditionalists worried that a devotion to these ends might impair the moral healthiness of market society. See Jerome Himmelstein, “Reconstructing an Ideology”, in *To The Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism*, 1990, (Berkeley: University of California Press), pgs. 52-7
- ⁴⁹ From the perspective of intellectual history, one could say that this discourse originated in C. B. Macpherson’s book, *Democratic Theory*, where he contrasts two opposing understandings of liberal democracy - the utilitarian notion modeled on the market, and the Aristotelian notion. See “The Maximization of Democracy”, *Democratic Theory*, 1973, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pgs. 4-6
- ⁵⁰ See Robert E. Lane, “Can the Wheel of History Turn Again?”, in *The Market Experience*, 1990, (New York: Cambridge University Press), pgs. 601-4
- ⁵¹ See Robert E. Lane, *The Market Experience*, 1990, (New York: Cambridge University Press)
- ⁵² See Daniel Hausman and Michael McPherson, “Welfare”, in *Economic Analysis and Moral Philosophy*, 1996, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press)
- ⁵³ See John O’Neill, *The Market: Ethics, Knowledge, and Politics*, 1998, (London: Routledge), pg. 17 and Peter Self, *Rolling Back the Market: Economic Dogma and Political Choice*, 2000, (New York: St. Martin’s Press)
- ⁵⁴ Benjamin Ward, “Property Rights”, in *The Ideal Worlds of Economics: Liberal, Conservative, and Radical Economic Worldviews*, 1979, (New York: Free Press), pg. 359
- ⁵⁵ Alexander Shand, *Free Market Morality: The Political Economy of the Austrian School*, 1990, (London: Routledge), pg. 45
- ⁵⁶ Ward, pg. 359
- ⁵⁷ Don Slater, “The Freedoms of the Market”, pg. 34
- ⁵⁸ Elizabeth Anderson, “The Ethical Limitations of the Market”, in *Value in Ethics and Economics*, 1993, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), pg. 145
- ⁵⁹ Peter Self, *Rolling Back the Market: Economic Dogma and Political Choice*, 2000, (New York: St. Martin’s Press), pgs. 59, 166
- ⁶⁰ See Robert Wuthnow, *Poor Richard’s Principle: Recovering the American Dream through the Moral Dimension of Work, Money, and Business*, 1996, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press), pgs. 153-6
- ⁶¹ See W. Michael Cox and Richard Alm, *Myths of Rich and Poor: Why We’re Better Off Than we Think*, 1999, (New York: Basic Books)
- ⁶² In the public opinion literature on “postmaterialism”, one can find some provocative formulations of traditionalist and posttraditionalist values orientations. The political scientist Ronald Inglehart defines the postmaterialist orientation most broadly as the elevation of “subjective well-being” and “quality of life” over strictly economic values, such as money-making, commodity acquisition, and economic growth. More

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

specifically, Inglehart relates postmaterialism to the supplanting of deficiency (in a Maslowian sense) needs by “being needs”, such “intellectual curiosity, belonging, self-expression, and aesthetic needs” on the one hand and “interesting, meaningful, and congenial work” on the other hand. According to the Maslowian logic governing the development of postmaterialist priorities, once individuals feel that their environment will take care of their physical needs, they can afford to shift their attention from the “conditions of life” to the “quality of life”. Inglehart traces both materialism and postmaterialism to an individuals’ formative experiences of deprivation and abundance. People do not fear the prospect of privation, when their physical/social environment guarantees their sustenance. When such people mature, according to Inglehart, they will find it easy to forego additional increments of material “utility” in order to realize nonmaterial aspirations. As adults, they would rather sacrifice additional wealth for the sake of additional increments of “self-actualization”, something in relatively short supply. Given their relative scarcity, such noneconomic “goods” hold more appeal than additional increments of economic wealth. Numerous detractors from within the public opinion research community have faulted Inglehart’s Maslowian conceptualization of postmaterialism. Scott Flanagan, like many other critics, accused Inglehart of inappropriately fusing two entirely different dimensions of cultural variation. In Flanagan’s view, Inglehart’s “postmaterialism” melds together the “libertarian” axis stretching from “austerity” to “self-indulgence” and the more truly anti-materialist concern with “self-actualization”. Various other analysts have sided with Flanagan in this debate, and have sought to develop the implications of his more elaborate conception. Oddbjorn Knutsen, a Norwegian political scientist, applied a similar two-dimensional model, incorporating the “austerity-hedonism” axis and an orthogonal “autonomy-authority” axis. In a further refinement, Ottar Hellevik, another Norwegian political scientist, assembled a two-dimensional cultural mapping, where a “traditionalist-innovative” axis intersected with an “outer-oriented/inner-oriented” axis. In his view, “outer-oriented” individuals can give precedence to economic rewards in their quest for “utilities”, even when they are no longer preoccupied with material scarcity. Thus, while inner directed “anti-materialists” may pursue self-actualization at the expense of economic rewards, outer-directed “posttraditionalists” may nevertheless desire economic rewards, even though they have repudiated traditionalist values along with their “anti-materialist” brethren. For more on this debate see Inglehart’s books, *Culture Shift In Advanced Industrial Society*, 1990, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press), pgs. 133, 170 and *Modernization and Postmodernization*, 1997, (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

⁶³ As we will see, the archetypal example of this indifference to eudaimonistic values is W. Michael Cox and Richard Alm’s tract *Myths of Rich and Poor. Why We’re Better Off Than we Think*, 1999, (New York: Basic Books)

⁶⁴ It is probably worthwhile, at this point, to clarify the rather abstract conception of “market exchange” involved in these arguments. They are using the term “market” in the broadest possible sense, to mean a system of relations where independent agents enter into competition to capture various possibilities for exchange. The term “market exchange” also implies a regime of property rights, where individuals can transfer control over commodities through the exchange of rights of control, use, and alienation. Defined in this way, the social nexus of “the market” forms a system of exchange-relations in which exchangeable goods mediate interchanges between individual property-owners. See Michel Callon, “Introduction: the Embeddness of Economic Markets in Economics”, in *The Laws of the Markets*, 1998, (Oxford: Blackwell) and Moishe Postone, *Time Labor, and Social Domination*, 1996, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press), pgs. 140-56. In a self-regulating market system where all production is for sale on some market, and all incomes issue from such sales, the most human activity will be coordinated through market relations. Production under such a self-sufficient system will be entirely governed by prices. See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 1944, (Boston: Beacon Press), pgs. 68-9 and Charles Lindblom, *The Market System*, 2000, (New Haven CT: Yale University Press). Defined in this way, the “market system” is a more comprehensive category than market capitalism, a specific kind of market system where capital is in the hands of private owners (Lindblom, pg. 9). A private enterprise system requires that all productive resources (labor, land, means of production) be acquired as privately held commodities.

⁶⁵ Rogge, pg. 51

⁶⁶ For a thought-provoking discussion of what such an economic system would look like, see Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *The Political Economy of Participatory Economics*, 1991, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press)

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

⁶⁷ Not surprisingly, Cox works at a libertarian think-tank (the CATO Institute) and was trained as an economist.

⁶⁸ Cox and Alm, pgs. 12-89

⁶⁹ While Cox does not distinguish exchangeable from nonexchangeable goods, his argument hinges on exactly this distinction, all the more essential for its absence. We do see this distinction in other libertarian treatises, namely Rothbard's *Power and the Market*, where he proposes that the more affluent a (market) society, the more it satisfies peoples' desires for exchangeable goods; hence the marginal utility of exchangeable goods tends to decline over time, while the marginal utility of nonexchangeable goods increases over time. Thus, he concludes, a market society will naturally foster the growth of "postmaterialist" values! The fact that such a development might undermine the incentive structures that undergird market processes, amazingly enough, does not concern Rothbard! See Alexander Shand, *Free Market Morality*, 1990, (London: Routledge), pg. 82. Moreover, this thesis seems to contradict the theoretical conclusions of "human capital theory", which predicts that people will invest more and more in paid work as their real wages increase, because each hour of work is worth an ever-greater quantum of satisfaction (in terms of commodity "inputs" its earnings can secure). Thus, the "opportunity cost" of each hour rises, and the incentive to plow that time into gainful employment also rises, prompting the worker to economize on nonwork time in an effort to maximize his utility. See Henri Lepage, "The Gary Becker Revolution", in *Tomorrow, Capitalism*, 1982 trans., (LaSalle, Ill: Open Court Publishing). Of course, the Becker idea makes little sense, when one realizes that "market goods" are not the only (and not the greatest) contributors to "utility". In fact, the intrinsic rewards of leisure time pursuits may far outstrip the hedonic gain from market goods!

⁷⁰ See W. Michael Cox and Richard Alm, *Myths of Rich and Poor: Why We're Better Off Than we Think*, 1999, (New York: Basic Books), pg. 63

⁷¹ See *Myths of Rich and Poor*, pgs. 36, 55, 63, 148

⁷² In 1999, W. Michael Cox, a Cato Institute Fellow, published a book entitled *Myths of Rich and Poor: Why We're Better Off Than We Think*. Judging from the rave reviews on the dust cover, the book attracted praise from all manner of libertarians and economists.

⁷³ Cox and Alm, pg. 185

⁷⁴ Cox and Alm, pg. 87

⁷⁵ See Robert E. Lane, *The Market Experience*, pg. 665

⁷⁶ See Robert E. Lane, *The Market Experience*, pg. 667, where he discusses the clash between "consumer values" and "producer values" that constitutes the emerging ideological battleground in posttraditionalist society. Lane, however, only approaches work from the "nurturant" perspective, and consequently overlooks the potentially divergent view of work fostered by the "disciplinarian" perspective. According to George Lakoff, conservatives in the grip of the disciplinarian worldview regard work as not only a necessary hardship, but a beneficial hardship, because "hardship builds character". See George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: What Conservatives Know that Liberals Don't*, 1996, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pg. 132

⁷⁷ Cox, pg. 156

⁷⁸ See Arthur Seldon, "The Values of Capitalism" in *Capitalism*, 1990, (Oxford UK: Basil Blackwell), pg. 313

⁷⁹ Interestingly, the authors devote more than a chapter to detailing the joys of leisure-goods consumption!

⁸⁰ See Fred Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth*, 1976, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), Tibor Scitovsky, *The Joyless Economy*, 1977, (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press), Juliet Schor, *The Overworked American*, 1992, (New York: Basic Books), and Robert H. Frank, *Luxury Fever: Money and Happiness in an Age of Excess*, 1999, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press)

⁸¹ Clifford Cobb, Ted Halstead, and Jonathan Rowe, "If the Economy is Up, Why is America Down?", *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1995, p. 34

⁸² Fred Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth*, 1976, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press), pgs. 87, 105

⁸³ In this book, Wachtel synthesized many existing arguments, and forged an encompassing critique of the growth-centered economy. See Paul Wachtel, *The Poverty of Affluence*, 1989, (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers). Many writers have followed his lead, including the economists Juliet Schor and Robert Frank, and the political scientist Robert Lane. In 1990, Lane published *The Market Experience*, a sophisticated treatment of the psychological dimensions of market exchange.

⁸⁴ Wachtel, pg. 37

⁸⁵ Wachtel, pg. 36

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

⁸⁶ Wachtel, pgs. 270-1

⁸⁷ Wachtel, pg. 157

⁸⁸ Clifford Cobb, Ted Halstead, and Jonathan Rowe, "If the Economy is Up, Why Are we Down?", October 1995, *Atlantic Monthly*, pg. 69

⁸⁹ Lane exploits extensive scholarly research into the psychological repercussions of market-based activities, including remunerative employment, market exchange, and commodity consumption.

⁹⁰ For Lane, those activities which do not pass through market channels contribute more to an individual's well-being than any activities channeled through the market, whether "producer activities" or "consumer activities". See Lane, chps. 12-18 and Robert E. Lane, *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies*, 2000, (New Haven: Yale University Press), chpts. 1-4. The term "econocentrism", coined by Lane, is meant to denote an individual who, when allocating her time, energy, and commitment to certain pursuits, finds it most hedonically "profitable" to channel these primary goods into her pursuit of economic tangible goals. The econocentrist diverts most of these goods to gainful employment, so that she works as many hours as needed to boost the amount of disposable income she can apply towards consumption. By contrast, an individual who gravitates towards the psychocentric pole would allocate the bulk of her time, energy, and commitment among the many economically nonremunerative life-domains, such as social relations, leisure, self-directed activity, self-development, etc. At the same time, she restricts the proportion of these resources dedicated to economically consequential domains, relative to the materialist guided by econocentric priorities. At the personal level, then, the materialist prefers economically consequential pursuits and life-domains over their economically inconsequential rivals, when constrained to allocate scarce resources, such as time. See Lane, pgs. 502-4

⁹¹ It is important to note that Lane stops short of advocating a nonmarket associational or participatory economy here.

⁹² Lane discusses the intrinsic satisfactions of work enjoyment and self-direction, the happiness derived from various forms of companionship, and the satisfaction derived from self-actualizing pursuits. See pgs. 470-4, 505-7 and chps. 2-3 in Robert E. Lane, *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies*, 2000, (New Haven: Yale University Press)

⁹³ *ibid.*, pgs. 330, 336

⁹⁴ Progressive theorists interested in the boundary between the public and private spheres, and their maintenance through gendered patterns of behavior, have studied the impact of labor market participation on household labor carried out primarily by women. See Joan Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethics of Care*, 1993, (London: Routledge)

⁹⁵ Wachtel, pg. 32

⁹⁶ See Fred Hirsch, *Social Limits to Growth*, 1976, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press), pgs. 105-9

⁹⁷ Fred Block, *The Vampire State and Other Myths about the U.S. Economy*, 1996, (New York: The New Press)

⁹⁸ See André Gorz, *Critique of Economic Reason*, 1989 [1988], trans. Gillian Handyside, (London: Verso) and *Reclaiming Work: Beyond the Wage-Based Society*, 1999 [1997], (Cambridge UK: Polity Press)

⁹⁹ Margaret Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory*, 1988, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press), pgs. 211-4

¹⁰⁰ Jeremy Gilbert, "In Defence of Discourse Analysis", in Timothy Bewes and Jeremy Gilbert, *Cultural Capitalism: Politics after New Labour*, 2000, (London: Lawrence and Wishart), pg. 61

¹⁰¹ In seeking to understand the genesis and development of contemporary ideologies about market capitalism, we need to recall Margaret Archer's conceptualization of ideological conflict as simultaneously ideational and social in character. The process of ideological contestation, as distinct from nonideological strife, is inaugurated when the antagonistic parties assert contradictory ideas. Ideological strife opens up an unbridgeable gap between the ideological rivals' visions of the situation. The purveyors of ideologies and counter-ideologies seek to invest their social antagonism with an ideational dimension by elaborate ideas understood as antithetical to one another. Rival ideologists formulate their positions with an eye to setting up what Archer calls a "competitive contradiction". The crystallization of this competitive contradiction makes it impossible for disputants to uphold rival positions simultaneously, and thus compels them to take sides in ideological debates. For an excellent discussion of ideologies, see Margaret Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory*, 1988, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press),

Discourses about Market Capitalism in the Age of Subjective Ideals:

- pgs. 187-89
- ¹⁰² See Charles Lindblom, "Market-System Coordination" in *The Market System*, 2001, (New Haven CT: Yale University Press), pgs. 36-41 and André Gorz, *Critique of Economic Reason*, pgs. 31-35
- ¹⁰³ Feliks Gross, "Hierarchies of Values", in *Ideologies, Goals, and Values*, 1985, (Westport CT: Greenwood Press), pg. 231
- ¹⁰⁴ It is certainly possible to critique the market system from the perspective of consumer choice, as Tibor Scitovsky demonstrates in his book *The Joyless Economy*, 2nd edition, 1992, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) and *Human Desire and Economic Satisfaction: Essays on the Frontiers of Economics*, 1982, (Brighton UK: Wheatsheaf Books)
- ¹⁰⁵ See Robert E. Lane, "The Economics of the Intrinsic", in *The Market Experience*, 1990, (New York: Cambridge University Press), pgs. 413-4
- ¹⁰⁶ Robert Wuthnow, "The Morality of the Marketplace" in *Meaning and Moral Order: Explorations in Cultural Analysis*, 1987, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), pg. 87
- ¹⁰⁷ Samuel Brittan, "The Economics of an Alternative Society", in *A Restatement of Economic Liberalism*, 1987, (London: MacMillan Press), pg. 196
- ¹⁰⁸ Zygmunt Bauman, "From the Work Ethic to the Ethic of Consumption", in *Work, Consumerism, and the New Poor*, 1998, (Buckingham UK: Open University Press), pg. 33
- ¹⁰⁹ Robert Wuthnow, *Poor Richard's Principle: Recovering the American Dream through the Moral Dimension of Work, Business, and Money*, 1996, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press), pgs. 110-117
- ¹¹⁰ Daniel Yankelovich, *New Rules: Searching for Self-Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down*, 1981, (New York: Random House), pg. 150
- ¹¹¹ Robert Kurson, "Who's Killing the Great Lawyers of Harvard?", *Esquire Magazine*, August 2000, pgs. 84, 88
- ¹¹² See Eder, pg. 109
- ¹¹³ Alain Touraine, *Critique of Modernity*, 1995, [1992], trans. David Macey, (Oxford UK: Basil Blackwell), pgs. 212
- ¹¹⁴ See Loren Baritz, *The Good Life: the Meaning of Success for the American Middle Class*, 1989, (New York: Alfred Knopf)
- ¹¹⁵ See Alain Touraine, "Culture without Society", in *Cultural Values*, Vol. 2. No. 1, 1998, pg. 146
- ¹¹⁶ Alain Touraine, *Critique of Modernity*, 1995, [1992], trans. David Macey, (Oxford UK: Basil Blackwell), pgs. 220-2 and Don Slater, "The Freedoms of the Market", in *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, 1994, (Cambridge UK: Polity Press), pgs. 333-38
- ¹¹⁷ See André Gorz, *Critique of Economic Reason*, 1989 [1988], trans. Gillian Handyside, (London: Verso), pg. 33
- ¹¹⁸ Zygmunt Bauman, "From the Work Ethic to the Ethic of Consumption", in *Work, Consumerism, and the New Poor*, 1998, (Buckingham UK: Open University Press), pg. 30
- ¹¹⁹ Wuthnow, 1996, pg. 154
- ¹²⁰ See André Gorz, *Critique of Economic Reason*, 1989 [1988], trans. Gillian Handyside, (London: Verso), pg. 36
- ¹²¹ Wuthnow, 1996, pg. 120,
- ¹²² Catherine Casey, *Work, Self, and Society: After Industrialism*, 1995, (London: Routledge), pg. 125
- ¹²³ Middle-class workers often do not perceive the world of work as a domain of constraint and coercion. Wuthnow's middle class respondents always cited the intrinsic rewards of work, when explaining their commitment to their jobs. However, as Wuthnow observes, despite these professions of voluntary commitment, a sense of constraint haunts their statements. See Wuthnow, 1996, pg. 188.
- ¹²⁴ See Alain Touraine, *Return of the Actor: Social Theory in Postindustrial Society*, trans. 1988, (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press), pg. 111