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Cultural Naturalism and the Market God

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by

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This work employs John Dewey's cultural naturalism to explore how and why the orthodox economic tradition functions as a religious faith. Scholars such as the theologian Harvey Cox and others now view orthodox economic practice as a religion. Other scholars such as Max Weber, Alasdair MacIntyre, and numerous others view modern economic practice as exemplifying a particular ethic. A focus in this work are the destructive consequences of practicing the Market faith. This work argues that much of contemporary economic practice maintains a view of science that is incompatible with the kind of naturalism found in Classical American Pragmatism. The history of the development of economics as a religious faith is explored beginning in the seventeenth-century up to the present day. The philosophical assumptions that have composed this relatively new faith are analyzed in detail. The conclusion provides an account of what we may hope for in the future.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Dr. Kenneth William Stikkers for his wealth of knowledge, patience and assistance.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Harvard theologian Harvey Cox wrote an article in the March 1999 issue of *The Atlantic* titled "The Market as God."[1] He claimed without reservation that our economic practices and language are indeed religious. His 2016 book of the same name explicitly identities The Market as a contemporary theology. The idea that market practices have been elevated to the status of *the* ethical ideal is not new. Max Weber argued just that, and he proclaimed that the spirit of capitalism had captured the hearts and minds of Western civilization to such an extent that an inversion of values had taken place. Pope Francis in his 2013 epistle *Evangelii Gaudium*, states that the market has been *deified*.[2] Karl Polanyi's 1944 work *The Great Transformation* propagates the idea that modernity is characterized by economic principles that are employed to *dictate* social and individual life to an extent never before seen. He points to the unprecedented fact that land, labor, and money themselves were all commodified and subjected to the laws of the market in a relatively short period of transition.[3] The sheer number of works, in a variety of fields, that stress the apotheosis of the market is very high. Cox writes that "the phrase 'religion of the market' is not just a figure of speech. Faith in the workings of markets actually takes the form of a functioning religion, complete with its own priests and rituals, its own doctrines and theologies, its own saints and prophets, and its own zeal to bring its gospel to the whole world

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[1] Cox, Harvey. "The Market as God." The Atlantic. March 01, 1999. Accessed July 27, 2018. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/03/the-market-as-god/306397/.

[2] "Evangelii Gaudium : Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World (24 November 2013) |Pope Francis." https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papafrancesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html#No_to_the_new_idolatry_of_money. [3] Robert M. MacIver, foreword to *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Beacon Press, 1957. 68

and win converts everywhere. The fact that acolytes of the market faith do not formally acknowledge it as a religion does not change this reality."[3]

The Market seems to demand our collective *belief.* We know that we believe in The Market because we seem to consistently *act* upon our beliefs in it. A vast number of our doubts are quelled by belief in the principles of The Market.[4] Many assert that The Market, with its multifarious, immutable, laws, applies to every cultural context, thus asserting its *omnipresence*. Many act as if the Market is simply the unfolding of static, unchanging, natural law, thus assuming its *omnipotence*. Lastly, we seem to have agreed that The Market, in some idealized form, will bring about a utopian equilibrium of goods and services, thus demonstrating a belief in The Market's eventual *omnibenevolence*. The goal of any rational society which assumes these premises would have to be the preservation of this market as the highest good. Karl Polanyi went so far as to say that we elevated the market faith to such an extent that "nations and peoples were mere puppets in a show utterly beyond their control [market forces being the puppeteers]."[5] The Market is the new utopian *faith* and it has ingrained itself to such an extent that it is not even identified as a particular faith. The traditional religions have been generally displaced by the "rational market" beginning with the transition to national markets during the eighteenth century. The market and its laws have permeated social life and are treated as the pinnacle of enlightened, transcendent, reason. The new "self" is inconceivable outside the context of "jobs," "productivity," "monetary value," "efficiency" and "competition." Time and space have been transformed by this new faith and therefore our sense of what is possible has changed. If anyone

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[3] Harvey Cox, *The Market as God* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016. 6

[4] Peirce, Charles Sanders, *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings* ed. Nathan Houser. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2008. I am using "doubt" and "belief" in the manner advocated by Peirce in his essay "How to Make Our Ideas Clear."

[5] R.M. MacIver, introduction to *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our* Time, Karl Polanyi (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957,), xi.

doubts the power of the market faith then they need only ask which beliefs powerful institutions are willing to act upon. Economic considerations dominate what is socially possible, and it is then suggested that economic forces have *always* dictated human life and *always* will. The contention that the conditions describing social life today always have been, and always will be, is the most blatant fanaticism imaginable, and yet it seems to be a generally agreed upon faith. My proposal is to employ John Dewey's cultural naturalism as a method to explore *how* and *why* the market is deified and to offer potential solutions to this problem using Dewey's general approach. The use of 'price' as the quantitative measure of objective value is an example of what Max Weber termed "rationalization," and from a cultural naturalist's viewpoint, this term functions as a description of certain habits of thought and action that need to be explored further. Dewey spent his life extolling a profound faith in human intelligence and creativity, and those of us who want to perpetuate the classical American philosophical tradition ought to treat these ideas as *living* and operative in our lives, not, however, as a set of maxims, but as an orientation and approach to human life and the environments that sustain us. It would be contrary to Dewey's cultural naturalism to suggest that it holds unflinchingly to a creed, but one theme that runs through the whole classical pragmatic tradition is a staunch belief that human creative, social intelligence can open up meaningful possibilities, and that our collective and individual *ability* to vigorously push open the horizons of possibility in our lives is, indeed, sacred. That is the assumption directing the goal of this work: to confront the market god as an obstacle to this encouragement of human flourishing. The Market faith provides a comprehensive view of humanity and nature that must be confronted in a way that does not merely preach, lambast, or promise utopia. I aim to provide an analysis that is both a jolting shock to Market ideals and at the same time a call for the imaginative exploration of what it means to live that shared experience we call 'civilization.' Dewey, in my view, provides a canvas that helps illuminate the

nature of what renders our lives significant. The task ahead lies in applying Dewey's insights and critical method toward understanding and questioning the ideals of the Market faith. The esteemed anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who is sympathetic to Dewey's project, defined religion as "a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and longlasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."[6] This explanation helps to clarify what is meant by a "market religion." Concrete examples that demonstrate the market's status as a theology are abundant. Everything from corporate personhood, the economic assessments of the value of individual lives, the proposed economic solutions to pollution and global warming, the ideological barring of government intervention in the free market, the association of economic analysis with 'facts' as opposed to the normative, subjective values held by members of the public, the reduction of all persons, places, and even some trademarked words and phrases, to the status of a commodity. As we shall see, the all-important economic fact/value dualism has granted ultimate authority to The Market, which begins to look like the most blatantly immutable 'fact' of social life. The Market is thought of as that causal force that functions as social arbitrator. The change in our experience brought about by the apotheosis of The Market effects how we experience the world, and this of course effects how we construct our purposes. The market's deification can be best understood by providing some examples of this religion being practiced.

Take the example of the Ford Pinto and cost-benefit analysis as an instance of market deification. Massive numbers of Ford Pinto's were recalled in 1978 due to concerns with the safety of the car, and a number of deaths were reported due to the placement of its fuel-tank.

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[6] Harvey Cox, *The Market as God*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016. 256

What is of note here is how Ford proceeded to handle the situation. Ford and other industries now engage in what is called 'cost-benefit analysis' in order to establish how much should be spent on safety measures, thus assigning a price to the lives of their consumers and determining the value of their lives using that method. A popular undergraduate economics textbook informs us that an industry must assess the cost of implementing safety measures against the cost of the loss of life that will result from not implementing those safety measures.[7] If it is found that the cost of incorporating the safety measures exceeds the cost of the lawsuits resulting from the untimely deaths of their customers, then the industry should not incorporate the safety measures. The textbook states that "the truth is that in a world of scarcity, we can't save everybody from everything, so we have to make hard choices."[9] This is treated by the text not as a normative choice, but instead is a matter of calculating the facts of the matter and simply acquiescing to those facts. To do otherwise would be deliberately irrational. The text goes on to claim that "the *only* problem with cost-benefit analysis is the potential for numerical inaccuracy. It's a matter of estimating probabilities via cost-benefit."[8] I find it necessary to quote one more passage to reinforce the ethic being conveyed. It is boldly stated that "another way Ford's cost-benefit calculations can go awry is if the company uses an inappropriate value for what a life is worth," the implication of course being that a human life can be valued far too highly. Philosophically, this is all very thin reasoning. It is essentially suggesting that price *is*, and *ought* to be, the standard by which the value of a human life is measured. The notion of scarcity is used constantly in economic literature and is so central that it will have to be examined later, but, for now, we should note that a numerical value (price) is *the* standard used to assess the value of human life.

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[7] Grant, Alan P. *Economic Analysis of Social Issues* Boston: Pearson, 2016. 40 [9]
Ibid. 44
[8] Ibid. 44 Italics added.

Yet another variety of cost-benefit analysis is used to determine the value of human life, and it has been termed 'the lost-income approach.' This approach attempts to estimate how much the individual would have earned over the course of a lifetime had they lived. This approach is used when there is a wrongful death or injury lawsuit with which a corporation has to contend. Again, the corporation can simply compare the cost of implementing safety measures with the cost of the number of probable lawsuits to come to a decision. These methods are justified "because the court needs objective and measurable criteria for awarding damages. Whether you like it or not, money is what matters."[9] After all, you cannot deny the "facts." The life of a twenty-six year old serial killer is, by this definition, far more valuable, from the perspective of the all-pervasive market, than the life of a sixty year old nun who has devoted her life to serving the poor, since the twenty-six year old has higher potential earnings in the case of his or her wrongful death. This textbook goes out of its way to emphasize that, despite one's initial discomfort and misgivings, the conclusion the textbook adopts is simply a reflection of the *facts*. Another example of The Market's deification can be found in its supposed solution to the pollution and global warming crisis. It is argued here that market price ought to determine social policy.[12] The pollution issue can be broken down into four different processes. First, there is the cost of searching for the aggrieved parties suffering from the polluting. Second, collectivization costs are the costs accrued from the need for the community to pool their resources to compensate for the losses the industry will sustain from cutting back on their polluting practices. Third, negotiation costs describe the cost of hiring legal professionals to negotiate the terms of the settlement between the aggrieved members of the community and the particular industry.

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[9] Grant, Alan P. *Economic Analysis of Social Issues*. Boston: Pearson, 2016. 48 [12]
Ibid. Chpt. 8 p. 6

Fourth, there is the cost of monitoring and enforcing the industry to ensure that pollution levels remain at the agreed upon amount. Government is ideally held responsible only for the monitoring and enforcement costs. The text emphasizes that this is the "socially optimal outcome." Socially optimal outcomes are those outcomes that cost the least to implement and ensure the greatest production of wealth.[10] The persons of the community are held responsible for the monetary well-being of the corporate *person*. The textbook goes on to say that "government action is required *only* if transactions costs preclude bargaining between polluter and victim."[11] If negotiation, collectivization, and search costs are too expensive for a community to bear then, and only then, should government intervene. The private costs suffered by the single industry are held in equally high esteem as the social costs suffered by the whole community. Price assessment, yet again, determines how communities *ought* to function.
The cap and trade governmental policy is meant to compensate polluting industries so that they can sustain the extra cost of cutting back on polluting. The goal with pollution problems is always to prevent industries from having to "internalize" the cost of the "externality" that is polluting. This "internalization" would of course not be the 'socially optimal outcome' since it would decrease the total wealth of the nation or community. The question of who benefits from these savings is not the concern of the economic "benevolent social planner."[12]

Corporate personhood is the notion that corporations enjoy many of the same rights and responsibilities as natural persons. Corporations enjoy freedom of speech as well as religion. The socially constructed corporate person, which is somewhat a reflection of our own cultural desire for the socially optimal outcome, supposedly based on undeniable, normativity-free, "facts"' is a symbolic reality that is legally regarded as fact. Corporate personhood makes more sense when

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[10] Grant, Alan P. *Economic Analysis of Social Issues* Boston: Pearson, 2016, Ch. 7, p. 30.
[11] Ibid. Ch. 8, p. 8.
[12] Ibid. Ch. 8, p. 9

we consider that wealth creation is at the center of what is socially desirable in the eyes of the market. The interests of natural persons cannot be allowed to override the corporate person's interest in wealth-creation. That sort of normative preference would threaten the hegemony of *price* as the fundamental fact and guarantor of optimal social outcomes. Corporate persons will almost always be monetarily more valuable than any natural person, so the corporate person possesses more *objective* value.

All of these examples suggest that government intervention is generally a sacrilege. All human and natural resources must be employed in the service of efficiently allocating resources in service of the socially optimal outcome. Wealth creation is *the* essential good. The text implies throughout that economics is merely the measure of economic facts, while government is a political, and thus normative, institution. Any distribution of resources driven by normative concerns (the treasured values held by the community) is necessarily inefficient because it is not dictated by market price. Government is therefore an impediment to the socially optimal outcome. Thou shalt have no other god than Market Price!

If price is the objective fact upon which all social policies must conform, then all persons, places, and things must have a price in order to be evaluated and directed, and all things of equal monetary value are interchangeable. Universal commodification is the natural result of the reliance on price for all determinations of objective value and, in no uncertain terms, this contemporary undergraduate textbook implies incessantly that price is the only *objective* means of determining how to proceed regarding any aspect of our experience thought to have objective value. Take, for example, the idea that while the calculation of the employment rate is admittedly

not a perfectly accurate reflection of the situation, it is still "completely objective."[13] The author of the textbook may not have even meant to make such sweeping claims, but the logical result of the distinctions and generalizations that it makes, function to provide this result.

Let us now turn to one other example of the market's deification that may not be so obvious at first: the *Financial Time's* review of Harvey Cox's book *The Market as God*. The reviewer only says one genuinely positive thing about the book, and, interestingly enough, it is that "Cox's project of examining the values and symbols of the market is a good one. It could help yield a better understanding of how the capitalist economy works."[14] He goes on to say that Cox inaccurately characterized orthodox economics as predominantly of the *laissez-faire* variety. The entire book is said to be compromised by this misstep. Cox is not, however, interested in the nuanced debates over economic policy and the relatively minor ideological differences involved in these debates. The dominance of the market faith is so strong that many readers may miss this. *The Market as God* is a work about an orientation toward the whole of life. The preoccupation of the reviewer with which market policy Cox criticizes is a prominent example, from the perspective of the thesis of the book, of the narcissism of minor difference. Cox is describing the replacement of traditional religion with another religion that mirrors Christianity in fundamental ways. He claims that the source of value to which we all refer has become the institution of the market. It is totally irrelevant whether we accept the Keynesian heresy or ascribe to Hayek's principles because the deification of the market remains.

It was the opinion of the Yale professor of law T.W. Arnold that the dominant figure in "American mythology" is the "American Businessman." He boldly states that

> The American Businessman was independent of his fellows. No individual could rule him. Hence,

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[13] Grant, Alan P. *Economic Analysis of Social Issues*. Boston: Pearson, 2016.

[14] Ben-Ami, Daniel. "Book Review: The Market as God by Harvey Cox," *Financial Times*, 21October 2016. Accessed July 25, 2018. https://www.ft.com/content/76d36f9e-8ee5-11e6-a72e-b428cb934b78.

> 'the rule of law above men' was symbolized by the Constitution. This meant that the American Businessman was an individual who was free from the control of any other individual and owed allegiance only to the Constitution. However, he was the only individual entitled to this kind of freedom. His employees were subject to the arbitrary control of this divinity. Their only freedom consisted in the supposed opportunity to become American businessmen themselves...Every demand on these great industrial structures is referred to the conception of the American Businessman as a standard.[15]

The American Businessman described by Arnold are aptly understood as the saints of the Market faith who exemplify proper practice. Arnold claims that "in this mythology are found the psychological motives for the decisions of courts, for the timidity of humanitarian action, for the worship of state's rights and for the proof by scholars that the only sound way of thinking about government is a fiscal way of thinking.[19]" Arnold was one of a number of scholars who became increasingly convinced that capitalism was most fundamentally a system of mythological, religious symbols and habits. The idea of the Market God is by no means totally novel, but this author aims to dissect the situation through the lens and operating tools of cultural naturalism. Why should the deification of the market concern us? What is the real human cost of this worldview? Why is this a severe problem? What does the idea of market practices as the *summum bonum* look like when it is put into practice and operates in our lives? These are the questions that need to be addressed. The critics of capitalism have done a marvelous job illustrating the suffering incurred by capitalism since its very inception. It would require a separate work to describe the complete toll in human suffering brought about by the wholesale adoption of market principles for directing social action. A comprehensive analysis of this toll may not even be practically attainable. Sociologists, philosophers, anthropologists, psychologists, theologians, and many in other fields have unearthed the tragic narratives and experiences associated with the beginnings of capitalism and its development very thoroughly, and this has often locked them into a political battle with most of the economics profession.

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[15] Arnold, Thurman W. *The Folklore of Capitalism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937. 35
[19] Ibid. 36

The first chapter of this work will describe Max Weber's idea of *rationalization* and its function as the practice of the market faith. I will argue that the market economy and the 'spirit of capitalism' are primary manifestations of the habits of thought and action characteristic of rationalization. The beliefs that functioned to produce the medieval economy are vastly different from the beliefs that propagate the market economy. This stark contrast will be elucidated in order to reveal more concretely what rationalization is and the effects it has. Weber famously used Benjamin Franklin to demonstrate rationalization in practice. Franklin's example contrasts severely with past beliefs, and what we find in his pronouncements is the advancement of the market to the status of a religious faith. Chapter One is intended to provide historical and conceptual perspective on this topic. My interpretation of "rationalization" will come from the standpoint of cultural naturalism, and I see Max Weber's analysis of this phenomenon as compatible with this perspective.

The second chapter will provide a relatively condensed portrayal of John Dewey's cultural naturalism and his method of inquiry. It would require an enormous amount of text to argue for *each and every one* of Dewey's important conclusions. This remarkably extensive treatment is not practical for the purposes of this text. Chapter Two will instead locate major themes of Dewey's thought concerning "experience" in general, the process of inquiry, communication, and to some extent democracy. Dewey's cultural naturalism is the groundwork for all of the criticisms being leveled at the market faith. Dewey's thought is the *antithesis* of rationalization, and his naturalism is not merely another "instrument" that can be applied to solve everyday problems, but the fact that this can be done is to Dewey's credit and shows the real force of his approach. His philosophy ultimately forces a normative decision upon the reader; a decision regarding what is or is not possible for human beings to accomplish through constructive participation.

The third chapter will argue that John Dewey's cultural naturalism is an antidote to the market faith. The Market God is the expression of an assemblage of beliefs and is the result of a whole host of historically rooted philosophical presumptions. Dewey takes these philosophical presumptions by the roots and extirpates them. A number of past economic thinkers will be discussed through the naturalist perspective to show what sort of situation was being dealt with and how the methodologies and conclusions constructed to contend with these problems were misguided.

My conclusion will focus on why there is ground for hope in the future. I will criticize utopian predictions and practices in favor of Dewey's approach. The market religion, it will be argued, is an example of utopianism. Karl Polanyi was especially rigorous in showing why the market economy is utopian, but I believe that Dewey's method offers a potential transformation of our orientation to the whole of life that is so drastic that it topples economic absolutist utopianism as a matter of course. Lastly, the tragic aspect of life will be briefly examined to show that the market religion is merely an attempt to render meaningful our otherwise chaotic lives. The fact that the market religion largely did not deliver on its promise of a rationally, mechanically ordered, meaningful society does not entail that its ideals sought to subvert social life.

We are organisms that live within environments that are meaningful to us, and we meet our destruction when our environments are devoid of meaning. My thesis is that the market faith is now sapping our ability to flourish in our shared environments. Let us now turn to rationalization, those habits of thought and action that function as the practice of the market faith.

CHAPTER 2

RATIONALIZATION AND THE MARKET GOD

Adam Smith did not think up principles by which the merchant and manufacturer gained power. He supplied them with a philosophy after they had taken charge of the temporal government.[16]

Max Weber understood rationalization as the replacement of custom and tradition by universal, objective, principles of reason. He meant this in a concrete sense, e.g., the change in laborer's attitudes towards wages, or the new behaviors amongst merchants and manufacturers that focused intensely on profit at the expense of their old, established communal roles. Rationalization also describes a relatively recent change in worldview that stresses a methodical, calculated, stoical approach to life that prizes these virtues in monetary affairs as the highest good. Weber highlights what he means by "rationalization" further by insisting that "labor in the service of a rational organization for the provision of humanity with material goods has without doubt always appeared to representatives of the capitalistic spirit as one of the most important *purposes of their life-work*.[17]" Weber goes on to accurately state that the capitalist employs "rigorous calculation" to achieve this "success.[18]" Weber finds rationalization to be *irrational*. His argument is that rationalization has placed its maxims in the category of the unassailable *a priori.* Rationalization as an end-in-itself is, it is argued, an inversion of the Western ethical tradition. Weber uses the traditional, Greek, eudaemonistic notion of reason and virtue to contrast with the new spirit of capitalism.[19] Weber uses Benjamin Franklin as his primary example to illustrate this inversion, but first the grounds for the historical development of rationalization should be elucidated.

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[16] Arnold, Thomas W. *The Folklore of Capitalism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937. 39

[17] Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: The Talcott Parsons Translation Interpretations*, ed. Richard Swedberg New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009. 38 italics added

[18] Ibid. 38

[19] Ibid. 39

It is my view that Weber was suggesting that the onset of modernity and rationalization in Europe was a *traumatic* experience that left both the intelligentsia and the mass of people, struggling to adapt to an environment whose explanatory edifice had completely collapsed. Weber argued that there were a number of empirical social phenomenon that shaped modern consciousness. First, *enclosure* dislocated people from their traditional roles and lands, thus producing enormous numbers of "beggars and thieves."[20] Second, rationalization removed Aristotelian *teleological* thinking so that calculation usually employed for the purpose of accumulation quickly supplanted consideration of "natural ends." Third in Calvinism, with its strict, severely *methodical* and stoic approach to ethical life, in combination with the anxiety so obviously associated with the idea of predestination, there arose an immediate need to display one's salvation by demarcating and distinguishing oneself via methodical strictness in service to an ethical system. This ingrains a distinct quality to communal life. A frantic desire to prove the elevated status of one's soul becomes a frantic pursuit for methodical strictness and calculation. Fourth, Martin Luther's idea of "the calling" changed the social situation. Individualism was promoted through the emphasis placed upon the individual's capacity to serve the divine by finding the proper occupation. These beliefs are not only the result of a collective relation to the means of production. There is a dynamic interplay between our ideals and technological change. The specific social reality that developed was by no means inevitable.

The process of rationalization extends beyond what we now call the economic sphere and is also an orientation toward experience in general. Economic life is simply the epicenter of this orientation. The example of Benjamin Franklin's shows rationalization put into practice.

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[20] More, Thomas. *Utopia*. ed. and trans. Clarence H. Miller Yale University Press, 2001. 18-22 St. Thomas More describes the process whereby livestock, especially sheep, take over the peasant's lands, thus creating bands of thieves and beggars.

Franklin's moral bookkeeping is an example of an extremely *methodical* approach toward life.[21] Franklin would devote himself to a single virtue each week to better his character. He drew up a table to rigorously organize his development. What is of note is the planned, organized, and somewhat severe nature of this approach to life. Franklin's moral bookkeeping *prescribes* to future experience what is most significant and limits to some extent the horizons of what is possible within situations. This rule-oriented approach "doesn't really allow us to grasp the *character* of the moral agent, at least in any sense more profound than his or her 'reasoning' and motivations at any given time."[22] Franklin's moral bookkeeping obviously resembles the development of the ethical demand for economic bookkeeping . Luca Pacioli, the father of accounting, and Franklin share the methodical outlook, but Pacioli seems to have had different ends. Pacioli centered his accounting work on a transcendent metaphysics in service to God, while Franklin's virtues are arranged in a methodical matter for the sake of efficiency as an end in itself.[23] Pacioli was deeply influenced by the Pythagoreans, hence the focus on the quantitative. Pacioli and Franklin are separated by nearly two centuries, but the primary difference seems to be that Franklin is not bookkeeping for the sake of upholding spiritual, metaphysical principles, but is instead trying to maximize utility, which is in tandem with working toward accumulation for its own sake. The contrast between Pacioli and Franklin helps clarify the meaning of modern rationalization.

Weber focuses on Benjamin Franklin's sermon regarding the ethic of accumulation because it reveals a novel view of the *summum bonum* that irrationally renders accumulation the

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[21] Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: The Talcott Parsons Translation Interpretations*, ed. Richard Swedberg New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009. 22

[22] Alexander, Thomas M. *The Human Eros: Eco-Ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2013. 185

[23] Pacioli, Luca. *Particularis De Computis Et Scripturis: 1494*. Translated by Jeremy G. A. Cripps. Seattle, WA: Pacioli Society, 1994. Pacioli emphasizes the importance of theological notions in Chapters 1 and 2.

transcendental end of all action.[24] Franklin painstakingly provides rules for action that guarantee, to the greatest extent possible, successful acquisition. Weber points out, almost always as a shocking reminder to contemporary readers, that "a state of mind such as that expressed in the passages we have quoted from Franklin, and which called forth the applause of a whole people, would both in ancient times and the Middle Ages have been proscribed as the lowest sort of avarice and as an attitude entirely lacking in self-respect."[25] This is not to inspire guilt, but to awaken us to the very peculiarity of our common sense.

The process of rationalization was initiated within the context of what Weber termed "traditionalistic business.[26]"Traditional business practices viewed work as a means for securing a comfortable existence that allowed for ample leisure time. Money was generally spent relatively quickly rather than saved as if it were an end in itself. According to Weber, the insecurities brought upon the individual by the "Protestant ethic," and the simultaneous development of bourgeois institutions and social relations, created a novel *modus operandi* amongst entrepreneurs driven by an acquisitive ethic that was conceived of as evidence of God's grace. A successful professional venture became evidence for the elevated status of the individual's soul, and this view spread even more rapidly considering the breakdown of the mediating role the Catholic Church had played between God and the individual's soul. The *insecurity* and *instability* of this new relation to the divine drove an insatiable desire to find proof of salvation through one's "calling."

Weber also draws our attention to the fact that these entrepreneur agents of rationalization were not "economic adventurers" but "...above all temperate and reliable, shrewd

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[24] Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: The Talcott Parsons Translation Interpretations*, ed. Richard Swedberg New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009. 22

[25] Ibid. 26

[26] Ibid. 33

and completely devoted to their business, with strictly bourgeois opinions and principles."[27] The spontaneous enjoyment of life is not conducive to constant attention to business. Novelty is an immediate threat to the regular, planned management of acquisition. This new entrepreneurial, capitalist spirit permeates all of life. It is not merely a new instrumental strategy, but a purposeful orientation. Weber bluntly states that "what is here preached is not simply a means of making one's way in the world, but a peculiar ethic. The infraction of its rules is treated not as foolishness but as forgetfulness of duty. That is the essence of the matter. It is not mere business astuteness, that sort of thing is common enough, it is an ethos. *This* is the quality that interests us."[28]

Rationalization focuses on specific elements of experience at the expense of others. Weber draws us to numerous examples of this concentration of attention. He insists that the spirit of capitalism and the Puritan asceticism that partially inspired it, realizes a world where

> to waste time is thus the first and, in principle, the worst of all sins. The span of life is infinitely short and precious if one is to 'make sure of' one's election. To lose time through sociability, 'idle talk,' extravagance, even through taking more sleep than is necessary for health (six to at most eight hours), is considered worthy of total moral condemnation. Franklin's remark that 'Time is money' is not yet found, but the proposition is true, so to speak, in a spiritual sense: it is infinitely valuable, since every hour lost is taken away from work in the service of God's glory. Hence, passive contemplation is also valueless, indeed in some cases actually objectionable, at least when indulged in at the expense of work in one's calling[29]."

Temporality becomes a source of incredible anxiety when understood as a thing that can be utilized or "wasted." This anxiety creates the need to compartmentalize as many facets of experience as possible to designate which activities constitute "waste." Once the desirable activities, and to some degree their consequences, are identified, all means can be procured toward organizing and communicating those ends. Weber's above passage is enlightening

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[27] Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: The Talcott Parsons Translation Interpretations*, ed. Richard Swedberg New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009. 34

[28] Ibid. 24

[29] Weber, Max. *Max Weber: Selections in Translation*. Edited by W. G. Runciman. Translated by E. Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978. 141-2

because the compartmentalization that is called for is so severe and specific, and yet, it resembles the contemporary capitalist "work ethic" to a high degree. The medieval world had a different conception of economic activity, and this radically different perspective will help to identify rationalization. Now that we are equipped with some of the basic characteristics of rationalization, the contrast with the medieval and ancient world will be more apparent. The change in our conception of the spaces we inhabit is most marked when it is taken into account that markets during the ancient and medieval periods had distinct boundaries.[30] The time and place for market activity was strictly controlled. Statues of Hermes could be found throughout the Athenian agora, and this deity was intended to be the patron of both thieves and merchants. The whole merchant class was generally held in suspicion. The medieval context saw the introduction of the "fair."[35] The "fair" was a planned, politically controlled, event that usually lasted over a month and involved long distance trade. It was forbidden for fairs to take place within the local community or city. The fair was marked off from other social activities and was a raucous occasion that was tolerated for political gain by feudal authorities. The market was still a localized event that did not dictate other aspects of social life. The transition away from feudalism required a change in the way local communities saw themselves in relation to their neighbors, since the local community had traditionally been a center of political control and cultural identity. Market activity in the past took place within a nexus of values that were deemed more significant than market activity. Other values characterized what the market was and what could be done. Profit, accumulation and efficiency were subordinate to the wider cultural concerns. This historical context helps show the enormous differences that have come about due

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[30] Smelser, Neil J., and Richard Swedberg, eds. *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press in Association with the Russell Sage Foundation, 2005. 251 [35] *Ibid*. 235

to the change in relations and attitudes toward the market. Our lived environments and perceptions of others and ourselves, have changed drastically.

The difference between the spirit of capitalism and the Medieval world's interpretation of the purpose of economic activity is remarkable. For example, the views regarding *time* are incompatible. R.H. Tawney generalizes the Medieval view very nicely when he says,

> But on the iniquity of payment merely for the act of lending, theological opinion, whether liberal or conservative, was unanimous, and its modern interpreter, who sees in its indulgence to interesse the condonation of interest, would have created a scandal in theological circles in any age before that of Calvin. To take usury is contrary to Scripture; it is contrary to Aristotle: it is contrary to nature, for it is to live without labor; it is to sell time, which belongs to God, for the advantage of wicked men; it is to rob those who use the money lent, and to whom, since they make it profitable, the profits should belong; it is unjust in itself, for the benefit of the loan to the borrower cannot exceed the value of the principle sum lent him; it is in defiance of sound juristic principles, for when a loan of money is made, the property in the thing lent passes to the borrower, and why should the creditor demand payment from a man who is merely using what is now his own?[31]

I quote this passage in bulk because it reveals in detail the common economic perspective before the process of rationalization took hold. It is a view that, whether justified or not, stands in stark contrast to the spirit of capitalism. The market and acquisition in the medieval world was obviously subservient to other values. Compare this medieval perspective with Franklin's view that "time is money." If time belongs to a deity, and time is best devoted to that deity, then equating time with money effectively displaces that deity. Franklin's view of what *nature* compels us to do is contrary to the medieval view. The medieval outlook is one of a complex, interlocking hierarchy of determined *ends* that we ought to pursue. Franklin, on the other hand, offers accumulation as the most obvious, natural purpose.

Thomas Aquinas' ideas are sharply contrary to rationalization. He understood a plethora of passions as being fully real and emphasized that "not every moral virtue is about pleasure and pain as its proper matter, since fortitude is about fear and daring..."[37] These virtuous passions

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[31] Tawney, Richard Henry. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study*. London, NY: Verso, 2015. 55 [37] Aquinas, Thomas. *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas: Representative Selections*. Edited by Dino Bigongiari. New York, NY: Hafner Publishing Company, 1953. 121

were deemed unquantifiable and so epistemologically useless by many in the modern period. Aquinas believed that "the common good was the end of each individual member of a community, just as the good of the whole is the end of each part."[32] Politically, Aquinas' thought is utterly opposed to rationalization and its market god, since he believes that "to succor the needy," which is associated with the passions of "mercy" and "pity," as well as being "liberally beneficent" are essential to the practice of justice, which of course transcends price, or any other kind of rational calculation, in importance[33].

Aquinas rejects the concept of private property in favor of the idea that "man ought to possess external things, not as his own, but as common, so that, to wit, he is ready to communicate them to others in their need."[34] He goes even further by declaring that the rich man "sins if he excludes others from using it [his external things]."[35] The "laws" of the market are subordinate to the practice of virtue. Aquinas argues that when those in need steal from those who have a superabundance, it is not a sin but a necessity.[36] The rich man is sinful for not sharing, and the poor man is not sinful for taking what is needed. It is also permissible to steal from the rich in order to give to a neighbor who is in need.[37]

On the subject of price Aquinas believed that "it is altogether sinful to have recourse to deceit in order to sell a thing for more than its just price, because this is to deceive one's neighbor so as to injure him."[38] All of the proclamations that Aquinas makes regarding price are dependent upon the ethical situation of the buyer and seller. "Efficiency" does not supplant the

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[32] Aquinas, Thomas. *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas: Representative Selections*. Edited by Dino Bigongiari. New York, NY: Hafner Publishing Company, 1953. 121

[33] Ibid. 124

[34] Ibid. 130

[35] Ibid. 130

[36] Ibid. 138

[37] Ibid. 139

[38] Ibid. 144

importance of virtue. Usury is condemned "because this is to sell what does not exist, and this evidently leads to inequality which is contrary to justice."[39] The contrast between the medieval and modern view is most pronounced when Aquinas insists that "*the just price of things is not fixed with mathematical precision, but depends on a kind of estimate, so that a slight addition or subtraction would not seem to destroy the equality of justice*.[46]" This idea would later be completely turned on its head. The idea of a market god with its devoted practitioners of rationalization begins to become clearer in light of the contrast with Aquinas. The Market god is no longer associated with traditional religion and has marked out territory of its own.

The spirit of capitalism has long since shed its religious influence, although there is still interplay between capitalism and religious organizations. Weber informs us that, "in fact, it [the capitalist system] no longer needs the support of any religious forces, and feels the attempts of religion to influence economic life, in so far as they can be felt at all, to be as much an unjustified interference as its regulation by the State."[40] This notion helps to explain why the market is identifiable as a separate religion. The traditional customs that constrained the market not only no longer exert much influence, but these traditional practices are thought to interfere with the higher, objective, *factual* principles of the market.

The process of rationalization and the dawn of the spirit of capitalism occurred within a context of incredible upheaval, and a revolution in thought and practice took place. Traditional village life, and the whole conception of the world which fostered this environment, was cast aside in such a swift and usually violent manner that we are still struggling to regain our footing in this relatively new environment. Robert M. MacIver, in his "Foreword" to *The Great*

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[39] Aquinas, Thomas. *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas: Representative Selections*. Edited by Dino Bigongiari. New York, NY: Hafner Publishing Company, 1953. 148 [46] Ibid. 145 italics added

[40] Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: The Talcott Parsons Translation Interpretations*, ed. Richard Swedberg New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009. 36 parenthesis included

Transformation, affirms this point by reminding us that "relentlessly they [the new class of merchants and manufacturers] began to grind society itself into its atoms. *Therefore men had to discover society*.[41]" A person who has lost nearly all sense of solidarity and belonging may begin to question the existence of the external world, the possibility of having knowledge even of loved ones, and may also cease to believe that the world is intimately, analogically connected, but, instead, finds a world of discrete parts that, usually despite themselves, operate together in a system which has not the slightest thing to do with normative considerations. Bernard Mandeville's rationalized world in "The Fable of the Bees," for example, takes individual vice for granted and he goes on to propose that the central task is to *organize* and *plan* social institutions in such a way that these individual vices can be channeled toward productive ends.[42] This is a whole worldview that largely dismisses the moral power of solidarity and the efficacy of our attempts to develop virtue together. Individuals and their vices are *prima facie* facts, and statesman must simply employ their Reason to mold a social machine that is oiled by the vices of the actors.

For Weber, the "spirit of capitalism" and the "process of rationalization" are inextricably linked. Weber uses the phrase "process of rationalization" when describing the annihilation of traditional social bonds largely for the sake of acquisitive efficiency.[43] Rationalization therefore describes a movement away from time-honored, rooted understandings of ourselves, symbols, and one another, in favor of much more "abstract," depersonalized relations toward persons and things. The neoclassical economist Ludwig von Mises follows Bernard Mandeville's example

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[41] Robert M. MacIver, foreword to *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Polanyi, Karl. Beacon Press, 1957. x parentheses and italics added.

[42] Mandeville, Bernard De. *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Pr., Liberty Classics, 1988.

[43] Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: The Talcott Parsons Translation Interpretations*, ed. Richard Swedberg New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009. 33

when he says that "while under precapitalistic conditions superior men were the masters on whom the masses of the inferior had to attend, under capitalism the more gifted and more able *have no means to profit from their superiority other than* to serve to the best of their abilities the wishes of the majority of the less gifted. In the market economic power is vested in the consumers."[44] The intentions, values, personalities, and traditions of the capitalist have no import here. It is the systematic organization of social and economic forces that make all the difference. This is not a matter of whether or not Mises is "correct"; what is interesting are his premises and methodology. Mises believes that "the fundamental principle of capitalism is mass production to supply the masses."[52] The fundamental principle of capitalism may indeed *result* in mass production, but it is fundamentally dependent on a whole legion of philosophical assumptions that provide the fuel and traction for the process of rationalization. Economics merely provides the most barefaced, extreme example of rationalization. Mises' contentions are the result of a variety of influences. Mises, just like Mandeville, is interested in organizing desires and interests to achieve the optimal social outcome defined by optimized consumption. The consciences of individuals and their cultivation of virtuous habits is not considered. Mandeville and Mises have a rationalized, mechanical view of social life.

It is worthwhile to note for the sake of historical clarity that Catholic social teaching has been trying since the Middle Ages, and is still trying, to mount a defense against rationalization and the unfettered Market God. The Jesuit economist Heinrich Pesch, in his work *Ethics and the National Economy*, offered a stinging critique of the very notion that market principles ought to direct and control the whole of social policy.[45] Pesch strongly believed that virtue and moral

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[44] Mises, Ludwig Von. Compiled by Margit Von. Mises. ed Richard M. Ebeling. *Money, Method, and the Market Process*. Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990. 191 italics added [52] Ibid. 192

[45] Pesch, Heinrich, S.J. *Ethics and the National Economy*. Translated by Rupert J. Ederer. Norfolk, VA: IHS Press, 2004.

development make our social lives possible, and this lesson he tried to impart to economics. The idea of the "just wage," nearly forgotten in contemporary economics, was revived by Pesch. Pesch had worked out an entire social and economic worldview that he labeled "solidarism." Terms such as “private property,” “justice,” “charity,” “vocation,” and “usury” were revised and given deep moral significance. He knew that these ideas could be changed *de jure* in accordance with the solidaristic system, but *de facto* change would require an immense shift in social consciousness. Pesch's example provides one amongst many retaliations against rationalization. The common factor in all rationalistic thought and behavior, made explicit by scientists and philosophers of the period *after it was a social reality*, is "mechanistic" thinking. Nature is understood here as a machine governed by the laws of efficient causation. Society, being a part of nature, was not exempt from this mechanistic reduction. It is hardly surprising that price was latched onto as the proper measuring tool to be applied to the social machine given the desperate need to make the new theoretical worldview function in some practical sense. This worldview was permeated by the belief in the predictability, permanence, and regularity of nature. "The concept of unchanging scientific laws, expressible in mathematical terms, was of particular importance in this tradition and a mathematical approach came to be its dominant characteristic.”[46] The quantifiable abstractions of "a mathematical world in which speed, time and distance were the only considerations" give us a fully *rationalized* world, and these assumptions can be transferred to social life, with price being the quantity to be measured.[55] The mechanistic scientists and philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries successfully propagated their views and ultimately toppled all opposition. "It is only fair to say that by the

[46] Kearney, Hugh. *Science and Change: 1500-1700*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1971. 25
[55] Ibid. 64

nineteenth century, mechanism had itself acquired some of the intolerant characteristics of an orthodoxy."[47]

Even God was now a divine engineer tinkering with a machine. This was the opinion of Rene Descartes, who found in this God the ideal of "power and truth rather than love and goodness."[48] The laws of mechanics are now the laws of nature. "Descartes stripped away from his view of the universe all that was extraneous to its mechanical functioning."[49] What was most real were the mathematical descriptions of phenomenon. The objects themselves are rendered interchangeable and mathematical relations became the only viable, objective, descriptive accounts. A science of measurement, according to Descartes, "would surpass in utility and importance all the other sciences, which in reality depended on it."[50] This denial of the metaphysical status of qualitative experience would have serious social ramifications, and was the method and habit of thought that gave intellectual weight and credence to rationalization.

Perhaps the most effective and all-embracing theoretical proponent of rationalization was Thomas Hobbes. His "Leviathan" unambiguously brought the mechanical conception of nature into the political sphere. "Hobbes is the first modern logician to grasp the significance of the 'causal definition.'[51] Hobbes' epistemological position demands that "if one wants to 'know' something, he must constitute it himself; he must cause it to develop from its individual elements."[52] Knowledge is by these means transformed into the process of dissolution and rearrangement, which always requires the imposition of the will upon passive nature. This method must be carried into social life to be consistent; it is an analysis that "must not stop until

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[47] Kearney, Hugh. *Science and Change: 1500-1700*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1971. 70
[48] Ibid. 152
[49] Ibid. 156
[50] Butterfield, Herbert. *The Origins of Modern Science*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1961. 90
[51] Cassirer, Ernst. *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*. Translated by Peter Gay and Fritz C.A. Koelln. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951. 254
[52] Ibid. 254

it has penetrated to the real elements, to the absolute indivisible units."[53] This method proposes an ideal method of inquiry that is not empirically verifiable or achievable, but the need to carry out his atomizing principle drove this kind of inquiry and could not be questioned for the project to come to any kind of fruition. The empirical reality of the family, culture, the state, and even the individuals themselves had to be suspended for the process of investigation to ever begin. Knowledge is derived from addition and subtraction, along with the abstraction necessary to posit a mechanical, atomistic world. "In order to use individual wills as counters in his calculation, he treats them as abstract units without any particular quality."[54]

Hobbes and Descartes put into abstract theory the very social process that Weber explained sociologically. The postulated social-religious, foundational unit of "price" runs methodologically and epistemologically parallel with the metaphysical postulate of individual, corporeal "units." The logical possibility of *relations in general* now becomes a serious problem. The social result of this is that "rule and submission are the only forces which can transform politically into one body that which by nature is divided, and which can keep this body in existence."[55] Market price therefore cannot be usurped from its deified throne if the "unitindividual" is to be measured for the sake of guaranteeing social cohesion.

Weber's sociological account is an explanation of how we found ourselves in such a manifestly difficult situation. Aristotelian wisdom accepted at face-value that virtues such as romantic or parental love were realities just as empirical measurements are. Weber, and other thinkers who document the transition to the market's ascendency, find themselves describing cultural trauma. This extension of the social contract, mediated and symbolized by market price,

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[53] Cassirer, Ernst. *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*. Translated by Peter Gay and Fritz C.A. Koelln. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951. 255

[54] Ibid. 255

[55] Ibid. 256

to the whole of life would strike ancient and medieval thinkers as pure barbarism. The "social contract," based upon the aforementioned foundational principles, is a highly alienating interpretation of experience. One need only consider the intimate relation of a mother to her child, or the medieval view of the relation between the human and divine, to see the limitations of such a contract theory.

The dominance of the mechanical theory of the universe is the metaphysical description of a social scene where "it is a matter of course that capital, as the *dominating principle* of the society identified by its presence, must color and infiltrate the institutions and beliefs that lie beyond its immediate ambit of operation."[56] It is a society that sees in the laws of capital the salvation of humankind.

We now turn to what is wrong with rationalization and why it is detrimental to human flourishing. This has been touched upon in the Introduction, but this has been principally a descriptive account of the contrasts between different worldviews in an attempt to elucidate rationalization and devotion to the Market God. What we will find in what follows is that the Market God demands sacrifice, human or otherwise. The consequences of rationalization are most glaring and consequential in the field of economics, since this is, after all, a "market" god. Cultural Naturalism cuts at the root of the market faith and denies that many fundamental principles relied upon by economists are examples of scientific experimentalism. Instead, economists have put forward foundational moral postulates concerning human nature, nature generally, history and the ethical purpose of communities and individuals.

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[56] Heilbroner, Robert L. *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986. 84 italics added

CHAPTER 3

JOHN DEWEY'S CULTURAL NATURALISM: A METHOD FOR INQUIRY

Although our century has been preoccupied with the question of meaning, perhaps because so much of modern life threatens to be meaningless, many of the dominant theories would have done well to begin where Dewey did and think deeply about the nature of experience and the relation of human beings to the world before elaborating their conceptual refinements[57]

It is important to bring cultural naturalism to bear on the problem of rationalization because this philosophy offers the groundwork upon which we can understand how and why we value what we do in fact value. Dewey's theory of *experience* shows us how we develop and deploy our ideals, and his re-examination of what "experience" is and means can provide the perspective necessary to orient ourselves to the world, and communicate with each other, in a way that promotes all that we hold dear. Our hope should be placed in education and in our ability to communicate our hopes and anticipate their consequences. I will show that the Market faith prevents experimental inquiry. How cultural naturalism serves as an antidote to our present ills is a question that will be addressed in Chapter 3. I will show how rationalization and the Market God are problems from the cultural naturalist perspective. A detailed explication of cultural naturalism will lay the groundwork for my critique of rationalization and our readiness to sacrifice to the Market God. John Dewey is the central figure of this philosophical movement, so his work will be the focus. Some of John Dewey's important ideas need to be elucidated before rationalization's relationship to the Market God can be directly evaluated.

What differentiates Dewey and other cultural naturalists from the Western philosophical tradition? A leading concern for the naturalist is the attempt to provide a descriptive account of the "generic traits of existence." It is beyond the scope of this work to provide a detailed analysis

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[57] Alexander, Thomas M. *John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience, and Nature: The Horizons of Feeling*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987.119

of Dewey's philosophy as a whole. The investigation of communication, intelligence, habit and democracy are the primary concerns here. However, to begin with these concerns without some remarks on Dewey's foundational descriptions and postulates would be a mistake. Thomas M. Alexander, in his upcoming work on Dewey's *Experience and Nature*, summarizes some of the defining and distinguishing ideas advocated by Dewey. He states that,

> In the second chapter Dewey begins his metaphysics of nature proper. After clarifying the differences between philosophy as love of wisdom and metaphysics as the description of the "generic traits of existence," Dewey selects as his primary generic trait, "the precarious and the stable." He shows how for the most part Western philosophy has elevated one term, the stable (in various characterizations, such as "being" or "reason"), over the other as designating what is truly real. The result in the history of philosophy has been to turn an important distinction into a spectrum of rigid dualisms. By treating the precarious as "equally real" as the stable—indeed as inseparable from it—we can develop a functionalistic, event-oriented naturalistic metaphysics. Nature includes the possible and the potential as well as what is actual. Dewey concludes the chapter by a preliminary sketch of his own conception of Nature as a plurality of processes, translating the mind/body dualism into ways of characterizing events.[58]

I cite this passage in full because it provides a wonderful account of what sets Dewey apart from the prevailing philosophical tradition. Notice that Nature is now devoid of any assumed ontological hierarchy of being. Nature is as it functions. The abandonment of foundational dualisms between categories demands an empirically descriptive account of processes and interactions. Biological functions are a kind of natural process that are no more or less "real" than other processes. Communication through the use of symbols is no less "real" than the processes described by the physicist. A preliminary look at our culture shows that there is still a tendency to prioritize certain observable processes as the primary *causes and determinants* of other, purportedly less ontologically fundamental processes. This mistake is made when there is any effort to theorize about science as if there exist finished conclusions rather than a continual process of inquiry.[59] Economists, most obvious in the eighteenth and nineteenth century but still

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[58] Unpublished Manuscript provided by Dr. Thomas M. Alexander

[59] Aristotle's "Posterior Analytics" provides an example of scientific conclusions being treated as finished products rather than as part of the ongoing process of inquiry.

today, are guilty of relegating scientific conclusions to the status of finished products that can then be used as eternal premises.[60] The treatment of the stable as more causally fundamental in the hierarchy of being than the precarious created an environment where reductionisms of all kinds were not only likely, but nearly impossible to avoid. All phenomena simply had to be attributable to some unchanging cause(s). "Rigid dualisms" functioned to provide room for necessary causes of other, more precarious, natural processes that were, by extension, less ontologically fundamental.

Dewey created what can be called a "conversational teleology," in contrast to Aristotle's "narrative teleology."[61] For Dewey, form evolves by engaging the possibilities of a present situation-- the way an ongoing conversation does. Some possibilities are close at hand, some remote; some possibilities are more conducive to furthering inquiry by having been analyzed, ordered, and directed in reflection. Inquiry would *not take place* if situations that needed to be overcome to initiate further activity did not present themselves in our experience. We are not given eternal problems to wrestle with *a priori*. Problems that obstruct our purposes and activities, whether "hypothetical" or "practical," compel us to inquire as part of the natural process of engaging within a lived situation. The consequences of this new approach have profound implications both in philosophy and practical life. Absolute certainty is now an impossibility in an environment that is always characterized by a degree of precariousness.[62] But at each stage of our lived experience the field of immanent possibilities changes as form takes one direction and closes off other possibilities. So, this is an open-ended teleology.

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[60] Thorstein Veblen provided an explanation for why this is the case, and Veblen's work will be very briefly explored later.

[61] Alexander, Thomas M. (personal communication, August 1, 2018). The idea of the distinction between "conversational teleology" and "narrative teleology" was communicated to me privately.

[62] Dewey, John. *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action*. New York, NY: Capricorn Books, 1960. 3-25

Possibilities open up, or are made determinate, within lived situations. Possibility, as an abstract *universal* concept, has no place in Dewey's metaphysics. Possibilities do not present themselves all at once, and this entails that the concept of "possibility" cannot be eternally separated as a category opposed to actuality. Possibility and actuality interact, i.e. function, in our embodied experience as we physically and reflectively engage with *an* environment in specific situations. Even the concept of "the environment," as opposed to the live creature, is incompatible with Dewey's approach. There are environment*s*, and these environment*s* sometimes operate as creatures who use symbols. The cultural sphere with its abundance of symbol usage is a kind of environment that is wholly natural.

Dewey's open "conversational teleology" does not provide given *fixed* ends that are then the grounds for further developments. Different "stages" of association are observably different in a qualitative sense, but, of course, the qualitative and quantitative are not essential dualisms either. These distinctions are operative tools that compel different kinds of behavior in a situation. The value of John Dewey's empirical-denotative method lies in how it functions in our lives. A reader who is looking for an internally consistent logical system that *corresponds* with reality by building an argument starting with simple, irreducible, parts will be either befuddled or disappointed by Dewey's philosophy, but this rationalistic approach is precisely the philosophical methodology that Dewey wants to cast aside.

There are a wide variety of different schools of economics, just as there are a plethora of metaphysical systems, that one could subscribe to. How are we to decide which internally consistent system to adopt? One school of economic thought will build its premises from the rationally self-interested individual, while another cannot imagine how one could not start with anything but historically determined modes of production.

Problems such as these demand a philosophy that makes sense of meaning, communication, inquiry, and intelligence. Dewey argues constantly that the philosophical tradition does not provide us with the tools necessary to handle communicative situations in which there are fundamental disagreements concerning human nature or our experience in general. An ingenious scholar in the Aristotelian, scholastic tradition would have had an incredibly difficult time engaging in a fruitful debate with the new Hobbesian perspective during the seventeenth century. These disparate groups often did not share the same fundamental assumptions, vocabulary, or even, at times, purposes. The pendulum swung away from Aristotelian scholasticism so completely that this worldview was abandoned almost wholesale.[63] The method of science developed haphazardly behind the bars of *a priori* foundations. Dewey encapsulates this difficult situation by noting that,

> In the first place, the Aristotelian metaphysics of potentiality and actuality, of objects consummatory of natural processes, was intricately entangled with an astronomy and physics which had become incredible. It was also entangled with doctrines and institutions in politics and economics which were fast getting out of relationship to current social needs. The simplest recourse was to treat the classic tradition as the Jonah of science and throw it bodily overboard.[64]

Note that the "simplest course" was to abandon the classical tradition regardless of the valuable insights that this tradition contained. This is, for Dewey, evidence of the fact that this change was largely an historical *reaction* rather than an intelligent anticipation of consequences. This is far from advocating that the new developments were somehow a mistake. I am suggesting that the situation with economics today is somewhat comparable to the warring philosophical camps that one would find in seventeenth century Europe. Social circumstances that present us with an amalgamation of self-contained, systematic, incommensurate metaphysical systems to

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[63] Alexander, Thomas M. *The Human Eros: Eco-Ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2013. 184

[64] Dewey, John. *Experience and Nature*. Edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Vol. 1. 37 vols. The Later Works. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988. 109

choose from leads to a general inability to communicate to overcome problems that inhibit mutual understanding.

Dewey's whole career can be partially seen as a vigorous attempt to understand more comprehensively processes of social change that have traditionally been disastrous and chaotic *reactions* to abruptly changing circumstances that have brought about inestimable misery. He proposed a method that could, if implemented, potentially enrich life and broaden our understanding of ourselves and our environment. He recognized that, to come to this understanding, a reconstruction in thought was necessary. Dewey's thought was therefore centered on a moral imperative: the imperative to realize more of human creative potential by enabling us to recognize the consequences of our beliefs by reevaluating how thought and action function in our experience, thereby discovering more fully what thought and action mean in a concrete sense.

One way to understand the profound scope and implications of Dewey's thought is to explore what he means by "communication," "meaning," "intelligence," "inquiry," and "democracy." Dewey's empirical-denotative method will become clearer while investigating these important topics, and it will become clearer *why* Dewey's thought should be applied to our market-centered social experience, and *how* his thought can help us understand our own purposes and problems more thoroughly.

The first thing to emphasize is that communication, and the correspondence between things and their meanings, does not somehow occur prior to human interaction. The difference between the interaction of molecules and of communicative human beings is one of empirically distinguishable quality. Human interaction through speech is no more or less "natural" than the

movement of atoms.[65] Speech and meaning *emerge* as qualitatively distinct and are different kinds of interaction than other natural interactions. The idea that new qualities emerge as distinct in our experience rules out the notion that we could apply the method of the physicist to come to a full understanding of human communication and culture. The mistake made in the past has been to assume that meaning is subjective belief in isolatable propositions and that communication is merely the transfer of this subjective meaning to an object that could then be socially demarcated and thus rendered mutually comprehensible.[66]

Dewey traces much of the current confusion regarding communication to the history of our concept of "inner experience" and finds that it is a modern discovery that had not occurred to the ancients as we understand it now.[67] The problem is that the moderns retained the ancient ideas of essence and form in altered guises and relegated these concepts to the purely subjective realm, but "failure to recognize that this world of inner experience is dependent upon an extension of language which is a social product and operation led to the subjectivistic, solipsistic and egotistic strain in modern thought."[68] A brief survey of commonly held beliefs, at least in the Western world, and of much of contemporary philosophy, would suggest that Dewey's insight here was somewhat forgotten or ignored.

Communication is thus not the mechanical transformation and interpretation of subjective "sense-data." We communicate by imaginatively anticipating and sharing in a situation that involves all the actors. The act of uttering a sound or of pointing is not the stimulus that compels

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[65] Dewey, John. *Experience and Nature*. Edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Vol. 1. 37 vols. The Later Works. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988. 141

[66] Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Alexander Campbell Fraser. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press Warehouse, 1894. 8

[67] Dewey, John. *Experience and Nature*. Edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Vol. 1. 37 vols. The Later Works. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988. 136

[68] Ibid. 137

us to act.[69] These gestures and sounds do not exist as atomistic signs that we translate independently. Instead, we take into account our *temporality* and recognize that it is our creative capacity to anticipate the behaviors of others, in their full context, that allows our own thoughts and actions as well as others to be meaningful. Communication is fully interpenetrative, i.e. it is a temporal transaction wherein significance is creatively constructed through interaction.

"The heart of language is not 'expression' of something antecedent thought. It is communication; the establishment of cooperation in an activity in which there are partners, and in which the *activity* of each is modified and regulated by partnership."[70] Dewey uses the broad word "activity" here because communication conceived of outside of general interaction and embodied behavior is a faulty account of communication. The creative act of coming to a consummatory understanding occurs through the capacity to anticipate behavior by projecting oneself within the other's situation.

Intelligence is the *capacity* to engage in the communicative activity just described, i.e. it is the capacity to imaginatively anticipate consequences. Intelligence is therefore not an inherent capacity pertaining to some individuals and not others; it is the result of consummatory interaction. The term "consummatory" has a specific meaning for Dewey. It refers to those experiences wherein there is an intensification of meaning. These experiences are identifiable and have a rhythm that allows for the growth and development of meaning. Experience is consummatory when there is union between the live creature and its environment. The consummatory is not necessarily happy. It is *an experience* that can be recalled as significant.

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[69] Dewey, John. *Experience and Nature*. Edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Vol. 1. 37 vols. The Later Works. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988. 141

[70] Ibid. 141 italics added

Note that "even such words as long and short, solid and hollow, still carry to all, but those who are intellectually specialized, a moral and emotional connotation.[71]" These words are indications of things in the world that first denote how we should behave and are not primarily cognitive labels. Consummation is therefore not merely an instance of "knowing" propositions or processes in the strictly epistemological sense. Consummation is *lived*. Consummation requires a situation to be orderly enough to make some meaning of what is otherwise disjointed, fractured, and in flux. If a situation is too ordered then its predictability and monotony renders the situation meaningless. It is difficult to discern a rhythmic *beginning* and *end* within an overly monotonous situation. Spontaneity and fruitful interaction are thus diverted.

Art, for Dewey, is the highest intensification of meaning in experience reflectively expressed through some medium. Artistic activity "celebrates with particular intensity the moments in which the past reinforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is."[72] Art is a selective culmination through expressive activity of consummatory situations.

> Experience in the degree in which it is experience is heightened vitality. Instead of signifying being shut up within one's own private feelings and sensations, it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events. Instead of signifying surrender to caprice and disorder, it affords our sole demonstration of stability that is not stagnation but is rhythmic and developing. Because experience is the fulfillment of an organism in its struggles and achievements in a world of things, it is art in germ. Even in its rudimentary forms, it contains the promise of that delightful perception which is esthetic experience.[73]

This passage implies that our "senses" are not passive receptors of data because experience *is* "the fulfillment of an organism in its struggles and achievements in a world of things." Our whole bodies are active and participatory in the flow of perception, and, as was previously stated, meaning is directly perceived. Cognitive activities ought not be divided into different "faculties" for the sake of their ability to process "data" or the "manifold" without at once severing the vital,

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[71] Dewey, John. *Art as Experience*. New York, NY: Perigee Books, 2005. 15
[72] Ibid. 17
[73] Ibid. 18-19

rhythmic, roots of all our interactions with the environment.[74] We share with the animal kingdom nearly every function; our exceptionalism, so far as we know, is found in our ability to do more than act, react, and sense in a seamless way; we are busy "saturating it [experience] with the conscious meanings derived from communication and deliberate expression."[75] Experience does not "begin," as Hume believed, with the passive reception of "lively impressions.[76]" "Experience" signifies the active tensions, releases, and struggles of the living creature. We do not subjectively "experience" the sensation of unity with an environment. We *experience that unity*. Dewey's descriptive account of experience, and experience's highest culmination in art, is central to his whole philosophy, but Dewey does not *reduce* his other ideas about more symbolically complex interactions to his theory of experience in general because his philosophy is one of growth, adaptation, and association; hence there are no fundamental categories, processes, or substance(s) that *cause* all other phenomena, or make phenomena possible, either in a transcendental or causal fashion. We must simply keep in mind what "meaning" is in light of this view of art and experience. The attempt to intellectually sever, rupture, or disjoin the rhythmic flow of experience, inhibits the formation of meaningful associations, and this severance leads to a greater sense of meaninglessness and isolation, with all of the consequences that flow from that. This severance alienates us from those expressive artistic experiences of unity. It is with this descriptive account of experience in mind that we move back to the issue of communication.

Communication can either foster or divert consummation. If one cannot anticipate the significance of what is being said and adjust one's behavior accordingly, then there is no

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[74] Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 104

[75] Dewey, John. *Art as Experience*. New York, NY: Perigee Books, 2005. 23 parenthesis added

[76] Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2003. 1

opportunity for mutual growth and understanding. Our use of words such as “individual,” “the state,” “nature,” and many others have such a plurality of historical meanings that it is possible to use these words without having the slightest hope for mutual understanding. The dictionary definition is often unhelpful, simply because connotations can be different and the function of a term varies in different situations. The Italian Fascists famously redefined “freedom” to such an extent that it no longer had any resemblance to the traditional idea of freedom.[77] These examples of symbol manipulation have various explicit purposes, but they do arise from an environment. Modern environments are composed of so many cognitive dualisms such as body and soul, spirit and substance, freedom and determinism, form and matter, that symbols can be reformulated in an ethereal dialectical performance, since this realm of the ideal has not had a connection established in reflection with the way we do in fact experience the world. The dualistic conception of fundamentally important ideas severs us from the very relations that sustain the importance of those ideas. An idea (whether it has existential import or is hypothetical) that is *severed* from the environment in which it had a clear function that indicated certain behaviors, is no longer rooted in an organic purpose that was the result of a worthy adaptation. Imagine the concept of "love," "fear," or "hope" as ideas separate from direct experience and then neatly placed in solely linguistic, logically coherent matrices. These ideas quickly begin to hold only a modicum of their original meaning. As symbols these abstracted ideas do not compel the same sorts of behaviors as they once did. In fact, this division of the "rational," "ideal," or "linguistic" from the realm of "sense data," the "manifold," or "impressions" only denigrates and delegitimizes the ways in which we do experience the world.[78]

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[77] Mussolini, Benito, and Giovanni Gentile. *The Doctrine of Fascism*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Zhingoora Books, 2018. 4

[78] Dewey, John. *Art as Experience*. New York, NY: Perigee Books, 2005. 194

Intelligence is cultivated by encouraging existential pluralism of these consummatory situations. Individuals, indeed whole cultures, that are only engaged with limited situations, objects, and individuals will have a much more difficult time assessing the consequences of their actions and the actions of others due to their relative inability to adapt to cultural shocks and unanticipated meanings that cannot be interpreted within closed and exclusionary methods of inquiry. The flourishing of individuals and communities requires associational variety. If we accept Dewey's interactive, social theory of communication and meaning then we must reject the idea that the solitary genius, or even a single set of principles, ought to be responsible for cultivating intelligence. This would be equivalent to blundering haphazardly through existence and hoping for spontaneous salvation for the very reason that it is not an *adaptive* orientation. Social intelligence demands that we not only grow in our capacity to anticipate direct consequences, but that we cultivate the depth and breadth of what we are able to identify as significant, since this would enable a greater understanding of indirect, distant social consequences. The lesson of radical empiricism is that the concepts we deploy to bring meaning to experience are not constitutive of experience.[79] New, emergent properties will forever continue to surprise us. Intelligence is fostered by confronting experience in an open way that allows for reorientation and adjustment.

The most intelligent approach to human life would include the recognition of the centrality of meaning and value.[80] The haphazard evolution of social structures, which is a wholly natural variety of interaction, has resulted in tremendously disintegrated, fractured and disjointed orientations toward existence. This is the central concern in Dewey's *Art as Experience*. Dewey implies that without a deep sense of significance and value life becomes

[79] Dewey often called this view the "intellectualist fallacy."

[80] Alexander, Thomas M. *The Human Eros: Eco-Ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2013. 140

unlivable. Modern civilization has thus far largely failed to conceive of life as a search for meaning because of the enormous stress laid upon transcendent, linguistic epistemic problems that are isolated from what we experience as problems. Of course, meaning is not a "thing" to be captured but is instead a social endeavor aimed toward deepening how we associate and inhabit a shared space.

Those who are still seeking certainty regarding the most precious questions that confront us must be disappointed that no precise definitions have been given to "meaning" or "value," but I agree with Dewey scholar Thomas Alexander when he states that they "cannot be given precise definition here, the kind cherished by analytic epistemology, for they are understood to denote the richest and profoundest ways in which we exist. Quite simply, we seek fulfillment on a number of levels and flourish when we find it and wither when we do not. A human life that has been denied or stripped of love, friendship, happiness, creative work, curiosity, awareness of mystery and beauty, and, above all, hope, has been destroyed."[81] Meaning is determinate and is comprehensible within an environment, but as a general abstraction, devoid of active and participatory connection with an environment and relegated to an ideal, cognitive sphere, we find that the concrete significance of the term is lost. The assignment of a strict definition to "meaning" would be an implicit denial that meaning is denoted in and through the aesthetic, which is the most unifying sort of activity between the person and its environment. "qualitative and qualifying situation is present as the background and the control of *every* experience."[82]

What we can say is that, for Dewey, "meaning was to be understood as the symbolic *use* of biological gestures toward the end of coordinating social action. The individual needed to be

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[81] Alexander, Thomas M. *The Human Eros: Eco-Ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2013. 140

[82] Dewey, John. "Common Sense and Scientific Inquiry" in *The Essential Dewey*. Edited by Larry Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998. 385

able to take a social standpoint or perspective in order to interpret himself."[83] Meaning is an emergent level of interaction that cannot be reduced to the biological functions that make it possible. Culture and meaning emerge as different kinds of existences than biological interaction. Dewey's "principle of continuity" establishes that novel levels of interaction emerge from previous ones. This does not suggest that a metaphysical principle is developing, guiding, or commanding what new forms of interaction emerge. It is a descriptive, empirical account based on the principle that we should refuse to deny our primary, *pre*-cognitive experience by inserting our conceptualizations as somehow being the true causal reality of our experience. This necessarily restricts the meaning of experience and closes possibilities that could otherwise be left open.

This leads us to the notion that our experience is largely not an experience of "knowing." The experience of knowing, and of verification for the purpose of discovering truth*s*, is something that *happens* in experience, but it does not constitute our experience. We sometimes inhabit situations that demand verification, and there are then subsequently emergent "truth*s*." "Communication relies upon the pre-reflective context of social action which lends itself to natural articulation and thereby also makes possible a vast refinement and development of symbolic activity itself."[84] The pre-reflective, or what Dewey calls "primary experience," is the context of feeling that is potentially reflective. The shared life-world wherein social life takes place is the medium where communication takes place. The dualism of the immediate and the mediate is not a description of eternally distinct categories. The principle of continuity promotes the idea that meaning is developed from situations that are *aesthetic and historical*. "Feeling" is not a static category, but is informed by past behaviors and anticipated consequences.

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[83] Alexander, Thomas M. *John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience, and Nature: The Horizons of Feeling*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987. 123

[84] Ibid. 123

Communication progressively renders us self-conscious by actively engaging us in a shared symbolic world. We are able to reflectively isolate distinct meanings for the purpose of directing behavior. Habit, as has been said, is also central for Dewey. What the cultural naturalists provide with this new view of habit is an opportunity to move away from the idea that "each object in the external world carried its nature stamped upon it as a form, and that intelligence consisted in simply inspecting and reading off an intrinsic self-enclosed complete nature. The scientific revolution which began in the seventeenth century came through a surrender of this point of view."[85] A virtuous habit for pre-scientific individuals is therefore the ability to orient oneself in a way that consistently reiterated and reaffirmed the essential, fixed nature of a thing. The evolutionary, temporal perspective fundamentally alters this view. To know a thing is now to describe complex matrices of interconnections that are in a constant process of development. This is why it is such a constant challenge to know; it is not simply a matter of identifying and labeling changeless categories. One of Dewey's central points is that if we fail to apply this insight to moral problems, then we will consistently fail to understand social life more fully. It is not that ancient epistemology was wholly *false*. The issue is that it was so restrictive, and it provided barriers to the growth and expansion of relations and hence meanings.

This examination of communication and meaning enables us to look at a new understanding of "habit." Habits are not merely tendencies developed by each separate individual *in vacuo*. Instead, "customs persist because individuals form their individual habits under conditions set by prior customs."[86] This is not a deterministic insight but a recognition that the culture in which we grow is a biological fact which we need in order to thrive just as we need the

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[85] Dewey, John. *Human Nature and Conduct 1922*. Edited by Jo Ann. Boydston. Vol. 14. The Middle Works. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988. 41

[86] Dewey, John. *Human Nature and Conduct 1922*. Edited by Jo Ann. Boydston. Vol. 14. The Middle Works. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988. 43

sun. The assumption that the habits that constitute our identities are individual inventions or ingrained "essences," irrespective of context, is empirically as fallacious as the geocentric model of the solar system. It is useless to assert that the individual is the precondition for society, first, because it devolves into the kind of dialectical metaphysics that quickly abandons the novelty of empirical reality for the fixity of definitions, and second, because we observe that no human being could physically persist without association with some form of established culture.

So much of the confusion regarding our ideas on habit derive from our propensity to separate thought from habit.[87] Thought is sometimes conceived of as the disembodied deployment of the distinct faculty of reason. Habits are then only the results and outcomes of our lack or abundance of reason. This separation has the consequence of crippling our capacity to employ thought in action. Thought disconnected from habit becomes a separate realm of hypothesis incapable of being practically tested.[88]

Dewey applies these insights to economics and finds that "critics of the existing economic regime have divided instincts into the creative and the acquisitive, and have condemned the present order because it embodies the latter at the expense of the former. The division is convenient, yet mistaken. Convenient because it sums up certain facts of the present system, mistaken because it takes social products for psychological originals." [89] Psychological reductionism of this kind denies the theory of habit just discussed because it ignores entirely the historical, developmental, constantly operative nature of habit. Instead we are given an *isolated* cause, such as greed, as a sufficient explanation for complex social behaviors.

What is inquiry, given the theory of communication, intelligence, meaning, and habit that have been illustrated? Dewey's theory of inquiry describes a method to attain socially established

[87] Ibid. 49
[88] ibid. 49
[89] Ibid. 99

ends. Inquiry does not begin unless a situation is "problematic," i.e. the situation frustrates, obstructs or diverts our purposes. Inquiry is therefore a function in our experience. Every inference involves a habit of thought. "When these habits are noted and formulated, then the formulations are guiding or leading principles. The principles state habits operative in every inference that tend to yield conclusions that are stable and productive in further inquiries.[90]" These principles are still hypotheses that attempt to garner specific consequences. Dewey is employing what he terms the "principle of the continuum of inquiry" which is an application of the more general "principle of continuity" to the problem of inquiry. This principle of the continuum of inquiry accounts for how an indeterminate situation becomes cognitively determinate, over time, through selective attention to some purpose.

Leading principles conceived as categories removed from temporal development and human purposes, describe *a priori* categories that, while supposedly guaranteeing certainty by emphasizing permanence, fail to account empirically for scientific practice and experience in general. Methods of inquiry are continually being modified to best suit problems that are apparent. A successful inquiry that secures desired ends informs how inquiry ought to be conducted in the future. "As the methods of the sciences improve, corresponding changes take place in logic.[91]" Our experience informs how we inquire, and the meaning of inquiry itself can change. The idea that logical inquiry provides a fixed picture of the structure of reality presents a much different understanding of ourselves and the world than a belief that inquiry is adaptive and respondent to changing environments and the resulting changes in the meanings of problematic situations.

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[90] Dewey, John. *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. Edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Vol. 12. The Later Works. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 2008. 13

[91] Ibid. 14

This interpretation of inquiry readily lends itself to a whole vision of the *significance* of democratic culture, and it cements the notion that all inquiry is *communal* and *normative*. In his work *Pragmatism and Democracy*, Dmitri N. Shalin states that " democracy is an embodied process that binds affectively as well as rhetorically and that flourishes in places where civic discourse is not an expedient means to be discarded when it fails to achieve a proximate goal but an end in itself, a source of vitality and social creativity sustaining an emotionally intelligent democratic community."[92] Democracy is not a Kantian end-in-itself but is simply the most conducive social arrangement and set of ideals yet devised to ensure the enrichment of human life through consummatory communication and the resulting deepening and expansion of meaning in cultural life.

Democracy is not only a set of institutions, but a way of living. This way of living is being thwarted today by what Naoka Saito diagnosed as "the sense that one cannot articulate one's feelings or even that, in the loss of one's own taste, one does not know 'what one really wants'" and that "the weakening of the personal sense of being is tied up with the loss of a sense of the common good in the public realm.[9394]" The market ideal, for example, is not a personal sense of being, but a force conceived of as external to, yet in many ways determinative, of individual life. The obstruction of communication sets in motion a situation wherein an individual becomes lost within social forces that obstruct the cooperative growth of meaningful social practices. "Organic" social life for a cultural naturalist is defined as that social arrangement which acknowledges the centrality of temporal interaction in all human behavior. A refusal to acknowledge this instills stultified social habits that are the result of underdeveloped degrees of

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[92] Shalin, Dmitri N. *Pragmatism & Democracy: Studies in History, Social Theory, and Progressive Politics*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2011. 297-298

[93] Saito, Naoko. *The Gleam of Light: Moral Perfectionism and Education in Dewey and Emerson*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2005. 1; John Dewey. *Construction and Criticism*, in *The Later Works of John Dewey*, vol.

[94] ed. Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale, IL: Carbondale University Press, 1984. 133

cooperation and interaction. The usual social response to such ossified circumstances is a release of confused, inarticulate frustration that does not know what it wants and is simply a reaction to situations wherein the sharing of meaningful experiences is obstructed, diverted, or dissipated.

Discussions of freedom, equality, fraternity, and participatory government are all notions that can only be comprehended adequately within the context of even more primary social purposes. The Italian fascists justified much of their behavior by inverting the meaning of much democratic terminology.[95] This twentieth century tragedy puts on full display the need for clearly defined descriptions and purposes that situate our most cherished ideals, or these ideals will become the playthings of sophists who may or may not be concerned with how their linguistic inversions function as consequences in human life. Dewey is adamant that no individual can fully realize herself when conceived solely as a locus of inherent freedoms *from* various social bodies. Our freedoms flourish and develop through an oftentimes painful process of cooperation. We have seen that our very self-conception is a product of creative interaction, but this idea of the self is not compatible with a notion of the self that is defined as a categorically separate bastion of freedom, a castle of freedoms being assaulted by the assumedly despotic hordes outside its walls.

This "rugged individualism" that relies so heavily on an empirically faulty view of the self, and depends on freedom understood solely in a negative sense, will invite extreme reactions from a variety of sources because of the desperation for meaning felt by *isolated* selves.[96] Dewey could be misinterpreted as suggesting that *the goal* of human life is greater control of social consequences, or that the ultimate task is the improvement of scientific methodologies. These

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[95] Mussolini, Benito, and Giovanni Gentile. *The Doctrine of Fascism*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Zhingoora Books, 2018.

[96] Dewey, John. "The Lost Individual" in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*. Edited by John J. McDermott. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. 598

misinterpretations especially ignore Dewey's work *A Common Faith*, where Dewey makes clear that the processes of growth, adaptation, and adjustment are, in the last analysis, the *spiritual* engagements of a social self that is rooted in a place.[97] To suggest otherwise would entail that a grid of fully rational, deterministic, certain principles can, or *should*, replace the pluralistic wonder, indeterminacy, and mystery that has been so important to human experience throughout the ages.

The cultural naturalist's account of democracy does not pretend to provide certain principles to establish democracy's final authority and legitimacy. However, we can mutually feel the consequences of the meanings that we assign to the most significant aspects of our lives. Social organization is significant precisely because it can encourage us to anticipate creatively in the inner-lives and behaviors of others, thus informing our own responses and identities. The question is what to do in light of the consequences of the past. I do not use the term "nihilism" because it can be interpreted as an essential metaphysical truth about the human condition generally. The sense of nihilism (which does seem peculiarly modern) is the result of the way in which human beings are participating in social life. Metaphysical nihilism is just as faulty a perspective as metaphysical, rationalistic absolutism. Both of these perspectives consider the journey of the intellect to be complete and that our task is then to contend with that fundamental reality. The cultural naturalist's embrace of democracy is an explicit rejection of this finished "block universe."

The meaning of science has often been misconstrued, resulting in the conclusion that science is nothing more than a means to break facts into their component parts for the purpose of passively observing a more fundamental reality that exists outside of any human purpose. Any view that rigidly separates facts and values leads to this misconception. Science is properly

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[97] Dewey, John. *A Common Faith*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

understood as a method of coordinating activity to secure the means to accomplish socially established ends. The method of science is a socially cultivated array of habits. The cultural naturalist does not believe that there can be science without democratic habits. Dewey termed the democratic, scientific orientation "experimentalism."[98] The key to Dewey's view of science rests on the analysis of experience just given, and this view can be appropriately summarized as a view "that experience means experienced things; that all philosophic conclusions are to be drawn from the things as experienced (not from the concept of experience, which I have held to be purely empty excepting as indicating a *method* of procedure and recourse); that things are what they are experienced *as*, or experienced to *be*, I have asserted."[99] This statement is crucial because it counters the accusation that Dewey maintains that the only things that have "reality" are those things that *have been* experienced. Of course, this claim dismisses the fact that we project and anticipate consequences. We imaginatively construct situations and their consequences. Dewey's thought looks forward at the hypothetical and possible rather than strictly backward to what has been experienced.

There is *usefulness* in the distinction between "physical facts" and "human purposes." "An occurrence is a physical fact only when its constituents and their relations remain the same, irrespective of the human attitude toward them."[100] A brief survey of our current social scene, while impractical to assess here, shows that the tendency to err falls on the side of interpreting social relations and their consequences as physical facts. Whole institutions and minutely specific human behavioral trends are often analyzed without any thought being given to human

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[98] Dewey, John. "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" in *The Essential Dewey*. Edited by Larry Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998. 14

[99] Dewey, John. "Pure Experience and Reality: A Disclaimer" in *The Essential Dewey*. Edited by Larry Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998. 121

[100] Dewey, John. "Science and Social Control" in *The Essential Dewey*. Edited by Larry Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998. 369

[109] Ibid. 370

purposes. These supposedly "factual" social events become a series of disconnected propositions without any purpose to unify them and render them intelligible. We are left spinning amidst these random facts without knowing how they relate to our purposes.

> The building up of social science, that is, of a body of knowledge in which facts are ascertained in their significant relations, is dependent upon putting social planning into effect. It is at this point that the misconception about physical science, when it is taken as a model for social knowledge, is important. Physical science did not develop because inquirers piled up a mass of facts about observed phenomena. It came into being when men intentionally experimented, on the basis of ideas and hypotheses, with observed phenomena to modify them and disclose new observations...Imperfect and even wrong hypotheses, when acted upon, brought to light significant phenomena which made improved ideas and improved experimentations possible.[109]

All inquiry involves purpose and planning. Removing the role of human purpose after coming to a conclusion is a fallacy. The charge is often made that this reduces all conclusions to relativism, subjectivism, and thus obscurity. Any accusation like this assumes a number of postulates regarding human experience. First, this charge assumes that human purposes are fundamentally outside of "nature," so that our tampering with facts is an intrusion upon the epistemological purity of what we are attempting to analyze. It is possible to assign human purposes to occurrences where this is unwarranted, e.g. the desire for a measurement to be one number to fit a purpose, while in fact the result of the measurement was not compatible with that purpose. However, this is an opportunity for adjustment and reorientation rather than proof that our purposes are "subjective and internally constructed" maxims imposed upon "objective and passive" nature. Second, it assumes that the intellect is the active agent which reads and records the facts (or form) of nature while nature is the passive object (matter) that presents an amalgamation of facts to be molded and acted upon. We have already seen that this dualism is unfounded. Third, this charge divides the moral life and its preoccupations from the activity of the understanding or intellect, thus preventing organized assessments of the consequences of our purposes.

Science and art are not essentially separable. "The practices of the arts were in turn the source of science, when once the empirical methods were freed in imagination and used with some degree of freedom of experimentation."[101] All inquiry is imbued with the esthetic, as the esthetic (this is Dewey's spelling of "aesthetic") is the vitality of rhythmically fulfilling experience. This was illustrated in detail previously. The divorce of the practice of science from other varieties of artistic practice only accentuates the intellectual wall that has been erected between the "intellect" and the "passions." Our practices reify continually this arbitrary division, and we go on to wonder *why* so-called "nihilism," or the problem of meaning, continues to haunt us! We must make our purposes explicit when studying social relations, or the facts accumulated will serve whatever various whims happen to interpret the mass of conclusions waiting to give us social direction.

"Common sense" and the scientific attitude are not the same, and this distinction helps to clarify what the scientific, experimental orientation actually is. To say that they are not the same only implies that the common sense and scientific dispositions are different adjustments to different kinds of problematic situations. Of course, no situation is entirely a "common sense" one or a "scientific" one. A common sense world with all of its inquiries belong to a kind of approach to behavior. The common sense environment involves "problems of use and enjoyment" as well as "activities and products, material and ideological, (or 'ideal') of the world in which individuals live.[102]" The scientific orientation is adopted when knowledge is sought for its own sake, apart from its application in acquiring *immediate* enjoyments and uses. The justification of the terms "theoretical" and "practical" is found in their functions as designating

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[101] Dewey, John. "Social Science and Social Control" in *The Essential Dewey*. Edited by Larry Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998. 371

[102] Dewey, John. "Common Sense and Scientific Inquiry" in *The Essential Dewey*. Edited by Larry Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998. 380

these two kinds of behavior (the common sense mode of behavior and the scientific). "Common sense...applies to behavior in its connection with the *significance* of things.[103]" The scientific and common sense orientations are suited to different kinds of situations. It has been generally believed since the beginnings of modernity that common sense is arbitrary and "qualitative" while science is "quantitative" and also a system of necessary connections. The domain of science and its quantifiable, necessary relations is separated from culture and the passions which direct that domain under the intellectualized scheme. Logic seems to work differently when engaged with science or common sense. However, "the question, summarily stated, is that of the relation to each other of the subject-matters of practical uses and concrete enjoyments and of scientific conclusions; not the subject matters of two different domains whether epistemological or ontological.[104]" It was noted previously that inquiry would not occur if situations did not arise that inhibit action, so it follows that scientific problems are developed from within concrete common sense problems. Scientific conclusions are then reintegrated into common sense "in a way that enormously refines, expands and liberates the contents and the agencies at the disposal of common sense.[105]" Scientific activity is an orientation and a *stage* in the activities of life that are response to *felt* problems.

There is never a fully isolatable scientific problem or object. Every situation, including a situation in which scientific activity is taking place, is composed of multifarious phases, aspects and components. A situation is a field of meanings and as well as possible and actual impulses. We concentrate our attention on specific problematic objects because they have *relative* importance and meaning within an environment. Attention to everything at once would make action impossible considering our temporality. Besides, experience does not present everything

[103] Ibid. 381
[104] Ibid. 383
[105] Ibid. 383

at once, but rhythmically.[106] We only designate as "cognitive" those objects that we are not currently using as functional tools for securing enjoyment or use. Cognitive objects are only understood as such because they are thought to be objects *of knowledge* rather than as signs directly demanding a certain behavior. The mistake that is often made is our tendency to consider this object *of knowledge* as an eternal and unrelated thing.

The meaning of quality "is not anything that can be expressed in words for it is something that must be *had*."[116] Words are capable of pointing out aspects of the relations that have their own qualities which are parts of the inexpressible feeling of the whole. We can designate a thing as generally horrifying, but we cannot express in words the quality "horrifying."

These observations have drastic consequences for the practice of science. On the one hand, we should not be looking for an internal essence or definition of an isolated thing. Also, the drive to separate the esthetic from scientific practice for being "subjective" is unwarranted, since this accusation is based on an artificial dualism and is observably false. This reflective division can have the result of cultivating sciences that either "... amass facts tirelessly and yet the observed 'facts' lead nowhere. On the other hand, it is possible to have the work of observation so controlled by a conceptual framework fixed in advance that the very things which are genuinely decisive in the problem in hand and its solutions are completely overlooked.[107]" Either the split between the theoretical and practical becomes a rigid, systematic rationalism or an attempt to analyze an infinite array of facts that cannot be touched by human purposes.

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[106] Experience is not a "succession of events." It is imaginative activity, selective attention based upon immediate perception of meanings, and general rhythmic attunement with an environment. [116] Ibid. 385

[107] Dewey, John. "Common Sense and Scientific Inquiry" in *The Essential Dewey*. Edited by Larry Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998. 386

Almost never shall the practical and theoretical meet in this circumstance in the minds of those engaging in inquiry.

The thrust of Dewey's philosophy of science is aimed toward emancipating the social sciences, including economics, "in exactly the sense that would clear away misconceptions about ourselves and our arrangements and empower us to reconstruct the social world more in accordance with our wants and aims."[108] All too often the social scene appears as a confused mass of data or of individual moral shortcomings, and contemporary experience has shown that neither of these initial observations have much bearing on coming to useful conclusions in social science. The situation is so bad that "the prime condition of a democratically organized public is a kind of knowledge and insight which *does not yet exist*."[109] Democracies cannot rely on the aims and plans of enlightened technocrats, nor can we have faith in a self-correcting social mechanism. "Citizens need to understand what was happening and why...in the absence of a widely shared understanding of the 'forces' at work, no democratic public could emerge."[110] The division of inquiry into a plethora of specialized branches has had the effect of allowing researchers to ignore whatever is outside of their field, in contrast to real social experience. The psychologist, sociologist, and economist bring different analyses to any given social occurrence, sometimes even using incompatible conceptual frameworks. It is little wonder that cross-disciplinary cooperation is difficult. This situation "guarantees backwardness," and this

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[108] Manicas, Peter T. "John Dewey and American Social Science" in *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation*. ed. Hickman, Larry A. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998.47

[109] Dewey, John. *Experience and Nature*. Edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Vol. 1. 37 vols. The Later Works. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988. 339 italics added

[110] Manicas, Peter T. "John Dewey and American Social Science" in *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation*. ed. Hickman, Larry A. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998. 57

"fragmentation prevents us from grasping causes and connections."[111] The institutional arrangement promotes and encourages failure.

For Dewey, "causality is a logical category, not an ontological one."[112] The positivist ascribes to events an inherent "if x then y" structure than is procedurally deterministic. Each piece of data becomes the thing that causes the next in a line of inferential succession. "The scientific problem is not, as the positivists would have it, to make better predictions. The scientific problem is to identify what it is about the nature of water and seeds such that a good rain will (ceteris paribus) cause the seeds to grow."[113] What kinds of associations and interactions does the object exhibit? Situations demanding verification do not provide conclusions that are determined in advance of our inquiring about them. We can only discover associations with a purpose in mind. We cannot methodologically proceed as if the "essence" of each thing naturally and necessarily leads to the next proper thing in the great chain of being. Science has enormous social import because "every measure of policy put into operation is, *logically*, and *should* be actually, of the nature of an experiment."[114] We must be able to interpret the consequences of a hypothesis; we must also not treat the premises that make up the hypothesis as immutable laws that causally determine the ends achieved. What we are discovering is how objects interact. Dewey flatly reminds us that "there are no such things as uniform sequences of *events*."[115] A consequence of the sequential determinism characteristic of positivistic science is the removal of human purposes from the explanation of absolutely

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[111] Manicas, Peter T. "John Dewey and American Social Science" in *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation*. ed. Hickman, Larry A. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998 . 57

[112] Ibid. 53

[113] Ibid. 52

[114] Dewey, John. *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. Edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Vol. 12. The Later Works. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 2008. 502

[115] Dewey, John. *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. Edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Vol. 12. The Later Works. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 2008. 445

everything; human beings, *as* human beings, no longer have any association with nature. The causal determinist removes the human agent entirely and replaces agency with a necessary sequence of component parts.

The philosophical views given in this chapter form the basis of the critique of economic thinking that will be put forward in the next chapter. Recent anthropological research is, and has been, confirming the validity of Dewey's opposition to fundamental dualisms and the modernist obsession with highly specialized and specific epistemological problems. Most cultures throughout history have assumed interrelatedness in experience and inquiry, and form no strict division between "culture" and "nature." Inquiry in general is integrated into social life and conclusions are not provided a separate existence for most peoples.[116]

The principle of continuity, which Dewey maintains throughout his work sees the whole of experience as processes of growth and adaptation. Economic science disregarded this perspective to the utmost degree throughout most of its history, as we will see. This next chapter will address why rationalization and our devotion to the market god is not a good thing. Most economic science is implicitly or explicitly opposed to cultural naturalism because of the logic that it follows and by the way these sciences are practiced. The orthodox economists of the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century showcase the antithesis of cultural naturalism and rationalization. The effect of this is subservience to the Market God, not in a metaphorical fashion, but in a very real sense. Everything stated in the next chapter should be read with the philosophical conclusions of this chapter kept in mind.

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[116] Descola, Philippe, *Beyond Nature and Culture*. Foreward by Marshall David Sahlins, Translated by Janet Lloyd. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. 6

CHAPTER 4

A CULTURAL NATURALIST'S CRITIQUES' OF ORTHODOX ECONOMIC SCIENCE

Secondly, there came also the trend to unconditional profit-making. The primacy of business interests was proclaimed around the world. Once profit-making becomes unconditional, things are important only to the extent that they can be made to serve economic needs. At this point, man comes to be regarded merely as a factor of production. Life becomes just one vast business operation. Heaven and Earth are reduced to being an enormous factory, and everyone who lives off of it and is a part of it is registered as if in some giant ledger book according to his monetary value. All ideals which are oriented toward the human person and all endeavors which are geared to human welfare are eradicated. What counts now is the fullest possible development of the business mechanism. What is purely a means becomes the absolute goal.[117]

We can now examine pure economic science from the vantage point of cultural naturalism, but first, let's observe a potential social consequence of "pure" economic science.It is to the great embarrassment of "pure" economic science that the household is not more rational and that the individuals who compose the household-economic-unit usually fail to assess the demands of the market. It is not yet possible for very many sexually active people, who are associated through the marriage contract, to conduct rational cost-benefit analyses regarding the production of additional human resources with any degree of precision. It would be a modest proposal to provide married individuals with the appropriate statistical models necessary for predicting how they ought to proceed in light of the general human resource problem. Perhaps, it could be statistically determined, with at least a greater degree of accuracy, how many additional human resources ought to be produced to ensure the least number of irrational economic actors and to ensure the socially optimal outcome.

The household is the last bastion of irrationality, superstition, and inefficient artistic production dominated by craftsmen, that the market must overcome if efficient production and consumption is to be encouraged. The household is admitted by most economists to be a

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[117] Pesch, Heinrich, S.J. *Ethics and the National Economy*. Translated by Rupert J. Ederer. Norfolk, VA: IHS Press, 2004. 155

fundamentally important economic unit.[118] What good is pure economic science if households consistently refuse to acquiesce to the laws of enlightened self-interest? Superstition and obedience to wanton passions are generally looked down upon, so it is *rational* to guide the household to more effectively measure the value of its activities via the objective measure of *price*. This method is even superior to utilitarianism because price is *prima facie* quantified and therefore more easily interpreted than the "hedon" could ever be.

This market intrusion into the household would first be seen as an insult to propriety, but this situation is entirely malleable. Individuals could be encouraged to conduct more effective cost-benefit analysis within the household, and the socially optimal outcome would be promoted even further. The principle of accumulation for the sake of profit for the promotion of the general welfare could easily be instilled within the household. The use of contracts could be culturally encouraged and extended to all familial matters to guarantee smooth transactions and the efficient functioning of the free market mechanism.

Families must adjust themselves to the demands of the Market. Where they live, work, and raise their offspring is usually determined by impersonal "job opportunities." What is often taught to children is how to survive in light of the Market's demands. Who to associate with, and how, is mediated by Market considerations. This "private sphere" of family life does not look very private. The ancient Greek terms "oikos" and "nomia" form the origin of our word "economic," but "oikos" referred to the *household*, while "nomia" referred to *management*. The Greek conception of "economics" was something like the practice of caring for the household. The "polis" was the public, political realm where one was expected to *present oneself*. The assumption of the Greek view is that the care of the home was the central problem of the

[118] Becker, Gary Stanley. *A Treatise on the Family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993. This work is an example of the family conceived as an economic actor.

"economy." Today, *the household serves the Market*.

This is all very dystopian. It would all seem to be material for fiction if it were not for the fact that the theoretical foundations used here are upheld by the Austrian and Chicago schools of economics.[119] Today, most economists treat economics as a problem involving individual calculators of monetary costs and benefits. No other factors are considered worthy of consideration when analyzing macro or micro economic situations. It will now be shown that Cultural Naturalism is almost entirely incompatible with the ideas of orthodox or "neoclassical" economics.

First, it is necessary to strike at the heart of what is wrong with attempts at reducing all experience to the ideological model of "the market religion." The previous chapter on Cultural Naturalism emphasized the startling conclusion that "value," "significance," or *meaning* is at the very top of the hierarchy of needs. Food, sex, water and shelter occur within a vast matrix of associations and the (almost always unintentional) fracturing and atomizing of these associations can, and sometimes does, lead to despair, purposelessness, decay, and death. The market faith has forced individuals of every persuasion to observe and *embody* a cultural landscape wherein concepts serve as the metaphorical equivalent of heavy artillery in a battle over different forms of social association. The consummatory experiences of beauty, artistic expression (both in practice and enjoyment) and even the sublimity of the mysterious, are relegated to mere means in service to abstract, formalistic plans for future forms of interaction. Of course, these battling economic forms of social interaction are remarkably limited in variety.

The conceptual artillery continues to rain down *ad infinitum* since distinctions and elaborations upon the foundational premises promote *rationalization* further. We can become increasingly estranged from the kinds of experiences that Dewey describes in *Art as Experience*

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[119] Hunt, Emery K. *History of Economic Thought: A Critical Perspective*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002. 465

and which serve to *integrate* us so closely with our environments. *Art as Experience* is not merely a descriptive project. It can also be understood as an attempt to *rehabilitate* us. The "market mechanism" or Stalin's "Real Existing Socialism" are symbols so distant from our finite embodied activities, and yet these conceptual constructions must be deployed to fill in for the experiential fractures and disconnects *that thwart consummation* but that *we reflectively constructed initially.* The Market disciple is not genuinely *introspective* in that the conceptual artillery shells continue to be fired, thus assuring an experiential Verdun, devoid of much consummation. The question of what experience seems to tell us, what the basic rhythms and vitalities of life illustrate for us, is utterly forgotten in favor of a formalism that could never replace integration, involvement, and genuine participation with significant forms of expression. Experience is not only being reduced to cognitively determinate language (at the expense of the recognition of the precognitive); it is being reduced to a remarkably specific and peculiar language that is the culmination of the centuries-old *rationalization* that was explored early on in this work. Dewey's emphasis on the precariousness of existence reminds us that the Market's proselytizing mission could be, or become, suicidal if the means and ends which perpetuate it are no longer even recognized as *human* means and *human* ends. The dualism separating "nature" and "culture" functions to lead us to the conceit that we must always bring the "form" that is "culture" to bear on seamless manifold "matter" or "nature." This cultural "form" *has been the process of rationalization* for some time now. Anthropologists such as Philippe Descola have empirically demonstrated that many cultures cannot conceive of separating "nature" and

"culture."[120] Nature conceived separately from culture reduces it to something that is not inherently meaningful; it is only meaningful insofar as it is "standing-reserve."[121]

Mark Fisher, in *Capitalist Realism*, discusses how "representations" and "symbols" within the market system are usually granted higher ontological status, and thus importance, than the practical, social processes of adaptation to the precariousness of life.[122] Symbols used to meet productivity targets, or to measure or denote certain kinds of narrowly defined economic associations function to isolate abstract "human resources" from the wider field of activity. Fisher uses both the market system and Stalinism to illustrate this problem. The familiar issue of a project "looking good on paper" but failing to be a practical solution is a failure of means satisfying ends, but the problem hints at more ingrained and substantial habits of thought. Extreme examples of this occur when the ideological, symbolic requirements are met but the end product does not function as intended in practice. Sometimes it is *pretended* that the end product does work as intended to ensure that the failed assumptions maintain their symbolic significance. It was stated earlier that the market faith reflexively distances us from precognitive experience by guiding our selective attention toward its own symbols, as if these symbols expressed the fixed essence of "nature," the "individual," or "society." The whole of what we do and undergo is assigned a remarkably precise, narrow set of functional meanings. The ability to readjust or to creatively reimagine our problems becomes increasingly difficult the more this market faith is zealously defended.

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[120] Marshall David Sahlins, foreward to *Beyond Nature and Culture* by Descola, Philippe. Translated by Janet Lloyd. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. xvii

[121] Heidegger, Martin, *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*. ed, David Farrell Krell. San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1993. 307 Heidegger's idea of the commodification of Being seems appropriate to invoke here.

[122] Fisher, Mark. *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* Ropley: Zero Books, 2009. 42

The central issue is one of "values," but the term "values" is so historically laden with uses totally contrary to cultural naturalism that it is difficult to employ. "Values," rather than having a separate, ethereal existence in atomistic minds, or residing in the objective movement of Geist, are time-honored links established between means and ends. How things are brought into connection, and for what purposes, brings to light what "values" are. It is often implied that values spring into being from the reflective capacity of each conscious individual but…

> there is no mysterious uniqueness about consciousness. A great deal of nonsense has been written about its unshareability. It is often remarked, as if it were a profound insight, that one can never really get into another person's consciousness. But this is not as extraordinary as it has been represented to be. If an adjustment is being made and I happen to be in the focus of that adjustment, and myself, as a part of the whole, cooperating in constituting it, then, of course, the rest of the universe (including other members of society) will be out of that focus in the margin somewhere. Two persons could not very well be at the same focal point without coalescing into one. And if consciousness is simply the process of the universe when and where it is undergoing tensional transformation, then it is no marvel that no other individual feels this tension just as I do. I am this center of transformation, this focus of adjustment, while yet it is the focusing of the entire system.[123]

"Values" are those adaptations that have been socially successful, reflected upon, and expressed symbolically. Bawden's statement suggests that "values" emerge when each person's adaptation, being a focus of adjustment, coalesces and agrees in the process of social cooperation. The fact that these adaptations are in mutual harmony (thus opening new possibilities) intensifies the activity and provides the opportunity for granting what was precognitive symbolic significance. If Bawden's concise naturalist statement holds, then the "focus of adjustment" should be recognized as located *not* within the immutable laws of the Market but in individual and social *processes*. Therefore, one cannot make pronouncements concerning the "invisible hand" causing certain natural social events to occur because of some externally imposed "law" of behavior. What human beings *actually* do and *actually* undergo is what concerns us.

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[123] Bawden, H. Heath. *The Principles of Pragmatism: A Philosophical Interpretation of Experience*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910. 72

Now it is appropriate to examine individual economists with cultural naturalism in hand. The thinkers will be introduced somewhat chronologically. Adam Smith is often held up as the architect of free-market economics, so this critique will begin with him. Some general problems are characteristic of all the orthodox economists we will examine. They all serve that compendium of habits of thought and action that have been termed *rationalization*, but these economists each offer somewhat unique ideas to be criticized. The consequences of a surprising number of these ideas have been demonstrably horrifying, while others have been seemingly more benign. What we will witness most of all is what rationalization looks like when put into practice and accepted as "*real*." The premises of orthodox economics has remained shockingly stable from its inception to the present day, and that will become increasingly noticeable as this critique moves forward. These economists all are dealing with problems of *life and death*, but it is hard not to notice that the language and form of economic expression has become increasingly banal, formalistic, and specialized over time. This is *the central consequence* of rationalization in microcosm. The ideas central to cultural naturalism discussed in the previous chapter must now be brought to bear on the enormous faith that the following thinkers have in the market.

Adam Smith's whole project is an attempt to bring a sense of meaning and purpose to an otherwise inscrutable new social world. The foundations laid by his new philosophy, which grew out of the historical practice of rationalization, has been elaborated and expanded upon until the present day. However, economists after Smith have moved away from traditional theological notions, as well as virtue ethics, more than Smith would have ever fathomed. Smith believed that our pursuit of riches "is always founded upon the belief of our being the object of our attention and approbation. The rich man glories in his riches, because he feels that they naturally draw upon him the attention of the world, and that mankind are disposed to go along with him in all

those agreeable emotions with which the advantages of his situation so readily inspire him."[124] Adam Smith vigorously contested the idea that human nature is essentially selfish, or the idea that accumulation could be an end in itself, but his thought has become the scaffolding of the market faith regardless. Smith does have a thoroughly rationalized view of society and nature, despite not having an unbridled faith in the market mechanism (he was very suspicious of the merchant and manufacturer's ability to conspire against the common good).[125] He claims that "in almost every other race of animals each individual, when it is grown up to maturity, is entirely independent, and in its natural state has occasion for the assistance of no other living creature."[126] It is the task of human beings to procure the affections of others, despite the natural inclination toward independence. Smith finds that the *atomistic*, isolated individual creature is in a more natural state than if it were dependent (this is very reminiscent of Thomas Hobbes). Chapter Two of Book One in the *Wealth of Nations* puts the new Newtonian, rationalized worldview on full display. Each individual is treated as a bundle of self-interest that might, perhaps, consider the passions of others, so long as the transaction is of mutual advantage. "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest...Nobody but a beggar chooses to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow citizens."[127] This principle could theoretically be extended as far as one would like.

What Smith provides us is a new ideal for which to strive. The beggar is simply *irrational* and has chosen her path incorrectly. Irrationality describes anything that opposes the process of rationalization, anything that even so much as invokes virtue ethics. The focus on

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[124] Smith, Adam. *The Essential Adam Smith*. Edited by Robert L. Heilbroner and Laurence J. Malone. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987. 79

[125] Ibid. 196

[126] Ibid. 169

[127] Ibid. 169

mechanically rearranging social conditions at the exclusion of personal habits required for personal and social flourishing is a complete abandonment of the virtue ethics tradition. One could rummage through Smith's collected works to reimagine and reinterpret what he *really* meant, but it seems clear what the practical, historical effects of these ideas has been. "The economic historian Murray Rothbard reports that Adam Smith neckties were worn as a badge of honor in the upper echelons of the Reagan Administration."[128] Whatever Smith "really advocated," he is now the patron saint of the *laissez-faire* market system. However, he did claim that individuals *did not need to practice virtue* in order to live in a just society, since the social mechanisms of a market society would guarantee sufficient amiability for harmonious living.[129] The cultural naturalist cannot accept that Smith's *method of inquiry* is science properly understood. Smith relied on the application of mechanical law, an order of fixed sequences of events, a pre-established order that it is our duty to uncover and elucidate. Smith's method of inquiry may be centuries old and stocked full of theological premises that are no longer attended to, but to this day much of his approach has been retained. Smith saw in his descriptions of social life the workings of the divine. His task was to accurately describe the natural order as it was initially designed, and he states that "philosophy is the science of the connecting *principles* of nature."[130] This natural order was presumed to be Newtonian and thus mechanical, but we have seen that the pre-determined "causal chain" is not compatible with the observations and conclusions of the cultural naturalist. Smith insists that Newton's "universal empire" is the supreme philosophy.[131] Smith is still very concerned with social harmony, i.e. justice (unlike economists we will witness later), but he relies in practice on human beings having fixed,

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[128] Cox, Harvey. *The Market as God*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016. 142-143
[129] Smith, Adam. *The Essential Adam Smith*. Edited by Robert L. Heilbroner and Laurence J. Malone. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987 . 91
[130] Ibid. 31
[131] Ibid. 35

immutable essences. The passages from Smith just cited refer to individuals behaving mechanically in a predictable, self-interested fashion. Of course, what counts as "self-interested" is also narrowly defined. Accumulation, self-interest, and rationality are already intimately related in this relatively early stage in the development of economic thought.

However, we have seen that "accumulation" and even "self-interest" only derive the significance that they have through social interaction and *communication*. There is no preestablished guarantee that the behaviors of Smith's law of supply and demand will even persist. Every application of the law of supply and demand is therefore the reaffirmation of an ethical postulate. Smith's law of supply and demand states that as prices for a good or service rise the quantity demanded falls, and as prices for a good or service fall the quantity demanded rises. This is all an account of social behavior and what ought *naturally* to be the case.

Adam Smith, and other thinkers who contributed to capitalist theory such as John Locke, Hobbes (with his rationally self-interested individual), Hume and many others were trying to answer a fundamentally difficult question. *Upon what basis can anyone claim moral ownership of anything?* John Locke is noteworthy because he presents an odd synthesis of rationalization with the older natural law view. Locke did assume that morality stemmed from Nature or God, but he transferred the teleological focus to the individual. Labor provides the right to property. The right of owning is now more central than the responsibilities involved with owning property. Even the natural law theorist now saw the primary economic unit as the atomized individual. Life itself becomes increasingly a matter of attaining individual self-sufficiency. Life, liberty, and property all must be secured on the basis of an individual actor's efforts.[132] This is a religious worldview of individuals each securing their place in the world. Life is the primary end, but

[132] Locke, John. *The Second Treatise of Government*. Edited by Thomas P. Peardon. New York, NY: Liberal Arts Press, 1952. 17

liberty and property are necessary for that end. If property is secured on a solely individual foundation, then we have a very atomized view of life's activities. We have a view of the world involving individuals and their *natural* individual rights. The one-sidedness of this social view is striking.

Jean-Baptiste Say (1767-1832) saw himself as a direct disciple of Adam Smith, and his conclusions make him worth mentioning. Say was convinced that "a free market would always adjust automatically to an equilibrium in which all resources-- including labor-- were fully utilized, that is, to an equilibrium with full employment of both labor and industrial capacity."[133] "Say's Law" has to do with the *natural* movement of capitalists and consumers corresponding with rates of profit and supply and demand. Behavior is dictated wholly by the laws of the competitive free market.

The classical economist Nassau Senior (1790-1864) provides a look at the market faith put into practice politically without any reservation. Senior became influential in the Whig party and was granted a position in the Poor Law Labor Commission. He helped create a new poor law that held to the following position...

> *(*1) workers should accept any job the market offered, regardless of the working conditions or the pay involved; (2) any person who would not or could not find work should be given just barely enough to prevent physical starvation; and (3) the dole given to such a person should be substantially lower than the lowest wage offered in the market, and his general situation should be made so miserable and should so stigmatize him as to motivate him to seek any employment , irrespective of the pay or conditions.[144]

The market for these thinkers is a mechanism, and different social groups make up its parts. If one group fails in its role within the overall mechanism (and the working class is usually blamed) then we must somehow make the circulation of trade more efficient, thus reducing externalities.

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[133] Hunt, Emery K. *History of Economic Thought: A Critical Perspective*. 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002. 138
[144] Ibid. 142

Rationalization in these cases are "habits" in the naturalist sense. Rationalization is now the social condition set by prior customs. A critique of the social programs of Say and Nassau must notice that the market is no longer a social hypothesis but has an air of factuality that renders it practically immune to experimental tampering. Matters of life and death are decided by the way things are thought to be necessarily ordered. Nassau and Say view the market as the way things *are* so that social conditions must be made to properly reflect this reality. The suggestion that economists such as Nassau and Say were "greedy" or "selfish" or "lacked compassion" is at once banal as well as unscientific and unhelpful. They expressed a market tradition and ordered life as such. The purpose of a naturalist critique is not to immediately demonize existential and social conditions but to elucidate them in order to offer the potential for attaining objects of experimental inquiry. Smith, Say and Nassau have an *idealistic, fixed* view of the end they want to achieve. The fact was that the poor had to be kept impoverished as the *means* by which their fixed ideal was to be reached. The proper application of the experimental method would demand that our available means *inform* our ends and vice versa. If means or ends are neglected then we breed fanaticisms that have completely lost sight of the contexts of problems.

Thomas Malthus's work *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) is rationalization taken to grandiose heights. He uses a simple mathematical principle to deduce that population is swiftly overtaking our capacity to produce sustenance. Populations are said to increase geometrically while resources required for sustaining the population increase arithmetically.[134] Malthus prophesies an untenable situation that is swiftly approaching. Again, this fails the naturalists assessment regarding what counts as experimental method. Malthus uses a hypothetical mathematical model to assess a social situation and finds that the social scene does

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[134] Malthus, Thomas. *An Essay on the Principle of Population, as It Affects the Future Improvement of Society with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet, and Other Writers.* London: Electronic Scholarly Publishing Project, 1998. http://www.esp.org/books/malthus/population/malthus.pdf. 4

not consent to his model. Malthus assumes that the production of population and the production of necessary resources remain fixed *regardless* of our attitudes toward them and that these social processes are not themselves objects of experimental inquiry. Malthus' conclusions may appear downright archaic and benign, but the reliance on mathematical modelling in contemporary economics is, as we shall see, surprisingly similar to Malthus' approach. I would presume that many contemporary economists would immediately take issue with the primitive mathematical model used, but what of Malthus' view of scientific method and inquiry in general? Malthus' very notions of population, necessary resources, and their relations are the result of a rationalistic culture; it is a shared, communicated world.

Malthus' conclusions and method do not encourage human flourishing because the method employed does not advance social intelligence: a formula is imposed upon social life without taking into account sufficiently the practical way in which life is suffered and lived. Malthus looks at human sexual passion as a law unto itself that will remain fairly constant.[135] Malthus looks at social life in general as a *mechanical system* of checks and balances. Populations rise and fall, depending on the grinding death brought about by the necessary tendency for populations to exceed the amount of resources necessary to sustain them. We are caught in an ethical paradox that is rationally consistent, yet hardly reflective of "the facts." It is the task "of the most penetrating mind to calculate its periods," namely, the periods of destitution and abundance in the market-society. What Malthus is asking us to measure are the results of *our own* postulates and habits. Malthus believed that the price of labor would fall as laborers became more abundant. The abundance of laborers was attributed to the abundance of resources that

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[135] Malthus, Thomas. *An Essay on the Principle of Population, as It Affects the Future Improvement of Society with Remarks on the Speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet, and Other Writers.* London: Electronic Scholarly Publishing Project, 1998. http://www.esp.org/books/malthus/population/malthus.pdf. 9

allowed for breeding. The laborer is comfortable at this stage until population *inevitably* outpaces resource production. At this stage the price of labor will increase drastically due to starvation.

This problem will occur cyclically *ad infinitum*. This is a very deterministic, mechanical world.

David Hume wrote on the new market economy from the perspective of his moral philosophy, and this involved the idea that public *utility* is the sole origin of justice. The problems and conclusions that he reached shed enormous light on the problems associated with rationalized modernity. He struggled, as did Smith, with the question of whether vast material wealth has a deleterious or beneficial effect on our moral sentiments. Hume was writing during a period of economic transition, but he obviously emphasizes the benefits of the new economic faith and claims that the ethical benefits far outweigh the costs of this change. It is characteristic of him to isolate a (perhaps the) central problem, and here he does exactly that. He first assumes that the new economic order will in fact distribute material wealth optimally to the population. Hume assumes for his argument that the new economic regime is beneficial: "there is some highly rational element in human nature which once exposed to 'refinement' inevitably leads one to the continued pursuit of 'true' pleasure-- a view which is not readily reconcilable with and the Stoic's emphasis on the difficulty of the instinctive and irrational elements in human behavior."[136] We are again caught in a dilemma that has plagued contemporary and modern ethical thinking. The problem has two aspects. First the dualism constructed between "reason" and "instinct" is unhelpful and theoretically questionable. Second, and just as important, the new market economy demands habits of thought that center around *quantitative accumulation* if the market is to expand and for capital to circulate for the sake of profit. These habits are directly at odds with the refined moderation that Hume advocates. It is as if the distinct faculty of "reason"

[136] Eugene Rotwein, Introduction to *David Hume: Writings on Economics* by David Hume. 2nd ed. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970. ciii

is supposed to descend upon us and curb those very habits that are necessary for the proliferation of markets.

We are also called upon to *measure* our activities with regard to their general propensity to dispense happiness. This requires a detached, abstracted perspective that measures utility and form habits in the personal and economic spheres relative to entirely different standards. The trouble with rationalization is especially noticeable in Hume's economic writings because Hume must construct an unassailable line of demarcation between our avaricious passions and our rational intellect. However, we have seen that this is not how experience is structured. In fact, the social conditions that Hume describes are most noteworthy because of the apparent need to assess, almost always *cognitively*, each situation's capacity for producing "refined happiness." The issue is that our experience is not primarily cognitive. Our relations to an environment can become cognitive while we mutually adapt to it, but our habits will guide our *selective attention* whether or not we become cognitively aware of the specific relations in any given situation. Hume presents us with an impossible task, but it is to his credit that he identifies such a serious difficulty with modern economic conditions.

The adoption of Hume's advice is a demonstration of rationalization's foothold in practical life. Social conditions under the Market faith demand a constantly detached and reserved assessment and evaluation of situations so as to determine their utility. These "detached" habits of measuring are utterly opposed to Dewey's hopes for human life and civilization generally. We must be allowed to engage with our environments and perceive their deep value. This requires the *rhythmic intensification* of experiences without constantly experienced disjointedness. Intensification is stunted when our habits are to look consistently to *future utilities* to be gained, thus robbing the present of its significance.

These eighteenth-century thinkers were given the enormous task of interpreting a social world with the Newtonian model as evidently the most successful means of conducting any inquiry. "It would seem evident, none the less, that of all areas of human behavior Hume believed the field of 'politics' to be the most fruitful for scientific analysis."[137] Hume was surely not alone in thinking this. Newton pushed the physical sciences to new heights, but moral science looked comparatively primitive. Adam Smith made it plain that Newton set the definitive standard for all inquiry.[138] Nassau's and Say's economic ideas and the ominous decision to implement new poor laws stem from the decision to mechanize culture fully in a deterministic, Newtonian, utopian vision. Why should the laws governing the heavenly bodies, by which we can predict their movements, not also inform how we direct economic policy?

The nineteenth century witnessed the apotheosis of rationalization in economic analysis and in social studies generally. Recall Hugh Kearney's statement that the mechanistic metaphysical view became an almost unquestionable dogma in learned circles for much of this century. The Romantic philosophical movement attempted to diffuse this tendency, but economists seemed impervious to the Romantic's pleas. Alfred Marshall, the Austrian School, a number of English economists, and others clung to mechanistic rationalization and the rationally self-interested individual.

The influence of utilitarianism in such a tendency cannot be overstated. The hedonic calculus and the focus on utility maximization eliminated any remnant of the old virtue ethics. Economics could now use the concept of individual and social *utility* to ignore the cultivation of virtue. What was conceived as subjective and qualitative was purged from economic analysis in

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[137] Eugene Rotwein, Introduction to *David Hume: Writings on Economics* by David Hume. 2nd ed. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970. xxx

[138] Smith, Adam. *The Essential Adam Smith*. Edited by Robert L. Heilbroner and Laurence J. Malone. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987. 35-36

favor of objective measurement without any serious ethical ideal proposed outside of the promotion of a vague notion of material welfare (sometimes regardless of *who* received this bounty). A scoundrel's utility counts as much as that of a saint's.

Rationalization entails depersonalization because it suffocates what is conceivably possible in social life. Individuals rapidly become quantified means to the ideal end of material abundance and social harmony that will be experienced in the distant future. The seemingly abstract concept of rationalization is tied intimately to habitual justifications for the enslavement of children. The early nineteenth century provided a situation where "children endured the cruelest servitude. They were totally isolated from anyone who might take pity on them and were thus at the mercy of the capitalists and their hired managers, whose main concern was the challenge of competitive factories. The children's workday lasted from fourteen to eighteen hours or until they dropped from complete exhaustion."[139] The fact that economic theories existed that could rigorously defend these practices is proof enough of the unscientific uselessness of accusing past capitalists of being "greedy" or "selfish" and ending the analysis on that note (as is usually done). A fully rationalized culture is exemplified by individuals who practice efficient production, accumulation, distribution, and calculation. We should not expect any population to break with old habits and create new practices *ex nihilo*.

Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) illustrates the ceremonial and symbolic significance that accumulation adopted in the course of the Market's development. He was a colleague of Dewey's in Chicago and the two influenced one another greatly. According to Veblen, accumulated wealth had to be *displayed*, and codes of conduct revolve around how one displayed what one accumulated. I interpret Veblen as explaining what practices erupted onto the

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[139] Hunt, Emery K. *History of Economic Thought: A Critical Perspective*. 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002. 68

social scene to fill the vacuum left by the end of the feudal order. Conspicuous consumption and the tendency to value almost arbitrarily certain objects at the cost of general well-being are associated meanings that developed under the basic assumptions of the Market faith. I will now turn to specific nineteenth century economists and their traditions. This tradition is most notable for the extreme effort devoted to emulating Newton's ability to assign mathematical values to natural forces. Jeremy Bentham serves as an excellent starting point. We find a concerted effort in Jeremy Bentham and many subsequent worldly philosophers to construct ethics as an exact mathematical science, and economic thinking increasingly reflected this effort. Contemporary economic science *still* holds this as its ideal objective. Alfred Marshall used utilitarianism, and by extension the principle of marginal utility, i.e. monetary quantity indicates the quantity of "hedons," to imply that money is the measure of the quantity of pleasure received by the consumer. Money became the identifying marker of desire in general. The hedon may have been largely abandoned as the theoretical unit of pleasure, but the dollar took its place. The Market knows what we want better than anyone, given our inability to meet the Market's ideal of "rationality." Market rationality became the ethical ideal, so much so that to this day the ways in which the Market suggests we *ought* to act are taken as *natural facts* rather than as moral postulates. This is clearly in congruence with the anthropologist Clifford Geertz's definition of religion that was given at the beginning of this work. He described religion as "a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic." For Bentham utility, pleasure, and happiness were synonymous. His *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1780) became "the philosophical basis of neoclassical economics

during the last several decades of the nineteenth century."[140][141] Rationalization and its mechanistic habits of thought were now postulates dominated by an air of *factuality*. Bentham saw society as an individualistic enterprise of calculating pleasure. We have seen that these traits are fundamental to rationalization and that cultural naturalism's analysis of experience and the social nature of consciousness presents a very different reality.

Bentham states in his early writings that "no regulations nor any efforts whatsoever, either on the part of subjects or governors, can raise the quantity of wealth produced during a given period."[152] He later abandoned his trust in the Market's ability to reach equilibrium regarding supply and demand. Instead, he advocated for governmental interference to ensure that wealth inequality did not become too great. What this really entails is a modification of the practice of the Market religion, not a challenge to it. Bentham "believed in a diminishing marginal utility of money."[142] Redistribution is therefore not inherently wrong. But the standards used for judgment and action are thoroughly *market* standards. The actual and potential of social association is conceived in terms of the Market faith. What is most remarkable about the economic thought of figures like Bentham is just how little has changed in these debates for approximately three centuries. This is evidence, if anything, of profound intellectual stagnation. Particularly predictable and noteworthy is Bentham's conviction that the incentive to work had to be imposed upon the masses, since the masses were considered naturally lazy and unproductive. This whole notion is dependent on the atomizing and calculative influence of rationalization and is antithetical to the cultural naturalist's view of what experience is and means.

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[140] Hunt, Emery K. *History of Economic Thought: A Critical Perspective*. 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002. 130

[152] Bentham, Jeremy. *Jeremy Bentham's Economic Writings*, vol. 1, p. 201 quoted in History of Economic Thought.
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[142] Hunt, Emery K. *History of Economic Thought: A Critical Perspective*. 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002. 134

Human activity is conducted within a context of deeply felt meanings and the bringing closer of the hypothetical ideal through artistic expression in the present is what intensifies and heightens our experiences. The project of forcing the masses to submit to the market mechanism, and to place their faith in it, annihilates much of the significance of what we do and undergo. Market efficiency and the ideal equilibrium of supply and demand is a distant, utopian end-in-view that never approaches consummation for the individual worker. Artistic expression requires some control over the selection of materials and ends in the environment. The absence of this freedom creates conditions where work *is* oppressive and meaningless. Bentham judged the masses lazy when in fact he judged them lackluster practitioners of the Market faith. In tightly knit communities people work hard simply to be valuable (and valued) members of that society. When bonds are weak such incentive evaporates.

Bentham's dualistic, confrontational individualism and the atomization characteristic of rationalization, engender situations with barriers to the very conditions that foster *communication*. Individual cognition is an adaptive capacity through the use of symbols that gain the meanings that they do through *social use*. If "ordinary persons" who, "in accordance with human nature," are "egoistic and interested in maximizing their own pleasure," then Bentham has presented us with a Hobbesian ethical mathematics that can serve to bring cultural symbols under the fold of the Market faith.[143] Rationalization has perhaps lasted so long because it is a general collection of habits of thought that can subsume expression in general within its matrices of interdependent symbols. The individual is a unit in the Market mechanism as is the unit of pleasure, and these units must function in specific ways for the Market to function according to its ideal, which is the ideal for which we all must strive. The Market's status as a religion is also demonstrated by the fact that when we must attain belief and get rid of doubt in difficult social matters, the Market is

[143] Hunt, Emery K. *History of Economic Thought: A Critical Perspective*. 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002. 135

the final, and most authoritative, source of doubt alleviation.

The next sources that will be examined were all published by economists in the late nineteenth century. Alfred Marshall definitively broke with much of the tradition by insisting that "ethical forces are among those of which the economist has to take into account. Attempts have indeed been made to construct an abstract science with regard to the actions of an 'economic man,' who is under no ethical influences and who pursues pecuniary gain warily and energetically, but mechanically and selfishly. But they have not been successful, nor even thoroughly carried out."[144] It would be difficult to blame Marshall for not identifying the peculiar ethic of 'economic man.' The "mechanical" economic doctrines were so widely accepted during Marshall's life that he assumed that these doctrines were free of normativity. The severe mistake, according to Marshall, is the refusal to include ethical thinking in economic analyses. Economic science *could* therefore be a pure positive science in theory. Marshall does not wish to dismiss any motivational factor in economic action.

Marshall no longer expects every class of persons to calculate their interests with equal effectiveness. He believes that the rationality of individuals rests on a sliding scale, and he terms this his "Principle of Continuity."[145] Marshall admirably concedes that various groups measure their successes differently, and that these standards change over time, but he does not go so far as Dewey. Marshall retains his standard of optimal market rationality and assesses various groups according to that standard (the implicit assumption being that mechanical action and quantification are still the epitome of rational thinking). He does not want to "draw artificial lines of division where nature has made none," so that economic categories are no longer static, but

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[144] Marshall, Alfred. preface to *Principles of Economics*. Vol. 8. London: Macmillon and Company, 1930. vi
[145] Ibid. vi

the content considered significant undergoes little change.[146] Marshall is desperately trying to make economic science more flexible in a changing world, but he can give up almost none of the serious assumptions that constitute the Market faith. Marshall attempted to adapt the thought of Herbert Spencer and G.W.F. Hegel to the practice of orthodox economics but was constrained by the Newtonian assumptions of his field. While physics eventually moved on with Einstein and Heisenberg, et. al., economics *remains* stuck with Newton.

Marshall very clearly states that "the steadiest motive to ordinary business work is the desire for the pay which is the material reward of work...the motive (to work) is supplied by a definite amount of money: and it is this definite and *exact* money measurement of the steadiest motives in business life, which has enabled economics far to outrun every other branch of the study of man."[147] Despite Marshall's new emphasis on evolutionary continuity, his fundamental assumptions remain totally embedded in traditional views. Marshall believes that economics has discovered something constant about human nature, and he attributes the success of economic science to this recognition. Cultural naturalists hold the contrary view that what is being measured is the relative success or failure of a particular social experiment. What Marshall is admitting is that a rationalized faith has been communicated and practiced for such an extended period that the meanings of the symbols used are now fairly constant. The phrase "*ordinary* business work" is very telling. *Ordinary* practice is still a mechanical matter concerning costbenefit analysis.

I believe that sociology, anthropology, psychology, and philosophy have all "outrun" this kind of economics concerning the "study of man." This is because the opposite of Marshall's

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[146] Ibid. ix

[147] Marshall, Alfred. *Principles of Economics*. Vol. 8. London: Macmillon and Company, 1930 . 14

conclusions are often more accurate descriptions of the human condition.[148] Anthropologists have helped reveal the diversity of human cultural experience. Sociologists could, and surely have, described the ceremonial significance of "ordinary business" and contrasted these ceremonies with the behavior of other social classes.[149] Contemporary sociologists almost never contend that group behavior and values could be accurately measured by tracking monetary spending . Marshall's conclusions must appear to the contemporary social scientist like ethical assumptions, prescriptions, and descriptions of, at most, the cultural practices of the modern industrialized world rather than objective and universal descriptions of "human nature." Marshall holds the view that the quantity of money spent is the measure of the quantity of pleasure received (which is the same here as "value received"). He makes this clear by maintaining that "an opening is made for the methods and tests of science as soon as the force of a person's motives --*not* the motives themselves-- can be approximately measured by the *sum of money*, which he will just give up in order to secure a desired satisfaction; or again by the sum which is just required to induce him to undergo a certain fatigue."[150] I remarked at the beginning of this work that *price*, for liberal economists, is held up as the only means by which we can measure value, and this idea is on full display in Marshall's *Principles of Economics.* Communication is distinguished by creative anticipation of the intents and dispositions of others. If we constrict reflection by assigning fixed value solely to the "money spent" as the signifier of the "pleasure received," then we will habitually become stuck in rationalization. Marshall's hypothesis is a self-fulfilling prophecy because he is reifying the social function of price. We behave in large part according to our creative anticipations of others, and our self-hood is defined

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[148] Descola, Philippe, *Beyond Nature and Culture*. Foreward by Marshall David Sahlins, Translated by Janet Lloyd. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

[149] Thorstein Veblen does exactly this in his *Theory of the Leisure Class*

[150] Marshall, Alfred. *Principles of Economics*. Vol. 8. London: Macmillon and Company, 1930. 15 italics added

by how we appropriate and give back symbols in a social setting. The symbol, "price," serves a social function that Marshall wants to emphasize further despite the fact that it *already serves that function*.

This kind of analysis may broaden and enrich our common sense to some extent, but these conclusions and methods are largely constraining because they reaffirm and *justify* ethical postulates that are already believed *religiously*. If they were not believed religiously, in Clifford Geertz's sense, then they would *not* be utilized as incontrovertible, factual standards. Human flourishing requires growth and thus adaptation. Experimental inquiry is necessary for effective adaptation, and this sort of inquiry must include communication and intelligence if inquiry is to be *experimental* at all. Intelligence is the constantly developing (or decaying) capacity to anticipate consequences via communication in a precarious world. The obsession with money as the sole symbol of real value undermines any attempt to promote social intelligence because it limits what we can anticipate; it limits how we can adapt and how we experiment.

Marshall rejects a static economic normality, and he rejects the idea that economic laws are exact in the same sense that physical laws are exact. He only maintains that economic laws describe general tendencies. This is a more accurate description than what is generally found in contemporary economics textbooks intended for undergraduate use, and it is more accurate than what came before. Marshall defines "economic normality" as "that which may be expected in the long run under certain conditions (provided these conditions are persistent) from the members of an industrial group."[151] I cannot find much fault in this idea of "normality," but there is the general problem that "normal" infers expected and predictable when what we are talking about is an ethical *prescription*.

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[151] Marshall, Alfred. *Principles of Economics*. Vol. 8. London: Macmillon and Company, 1930. 34
[163] Ibid. 33

Marshall distinguishes "economic laws" as "those social laws which relate to branches of conduct in which the strength of the motives chiefly concerned can be measured by a money price."[163] This is especially interesting because it assumes that, theoretically, economic laws probably will not come to dominate most, if not all, "branches of conduct." What is or is not an "economic law" is obviously a cultural matter. The idea of price as the universal measure of value has encouraged a rationalized social scene wherein an increasing number of branches of conduct are economic. The pursuit of profit tends to create situations involving monetary transactions where there were none before. Economic laws can then begin to describe *more* of our possibilities over time.

Marshall is perhaps most famous for his "marginal theory of utility," but "the utility perspective in economic theory was incomplete until the entire economic process, as envisioned and defined in this tradition, could be shown to be wholly the result of rational, calculating, maximizing behavior."[152] Marshall was a committed utilitarian, and he imbued his work with the assumption that individuals operate on "rational, calculating, maximizing behavior." He went so far as to believe that "[individual] utility-maximizing calculations controlled the real flow of the services of capital and labor from the household sector to the business sector and of the consumption of commodities from the business sector to the household sector.[153]" The trouble with "utility maximizing calculation" as an ethical practice is that it is reductionistic regarding meaning and value. Concrete activities and objects themselves, and all the relations that these things involve, become *mere means* for the acquisition of abstract utils, i.e. money. The effect is the outright dismissal of the significance of most of human experience for the sake of catching

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[152] Hunt, Emery K. *History of Economic Thought: A Critical Perspective*. 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002. 286
[153] Ibid. 289

fleeting experiences of euphoria or "pleasure."[154] The addition of a Market faith that utility serves to assist only makes matters far worse.

We find in Marshall an attempt to include evolutionary thinking within a utilitarian, market system. The contrast between these two approaches was severe enough to prompt Thorstein Veblen to put forward a stinging indictment, which lead him to coin the term "neoclassical economics." The problems that are brought to light by Marshall's work are so dire and significant that no general agreement has been reached even today. The essays found in the work *What is Neoclassical Economics: Debating the Origins, Meaning and Significance* reveals something important and perhaps unsettling: the foundational concepts involved within mainstream economic method could be archaic and fallacious. Veblen's cultural naturalism informs this book. Unfortunately, many economists either ignored Veblen's criticisms, or they were forgotten during the frenzied attempt to construct accurate mathematical economic models. We can now suggest that our historical experience shows that it was not wise to dismiss Veblen while the mathematical construction project went on unchecked. The economist Tony Lawson writes in 2016 that

> the contemporary discipline of economics, most now agree, has lost its way. It is easy enough to demonstrate that this is due largely to the widespread contemporary persistence with methods of mathematical modelling (whether through mainstream insistence or through heterodox confusion/optimism) in conditions where this persistence is unwarranted. The ultimate solution and, as Veblen clearly saw, basis for any relevant economics lies first in uncovering the nature of social reality and second, certainly no less important, in taking seriously any ontological or metaphysical insights so uncovered in fashioning the methods of economic science. It is to understand the nature of society and then to ensure that research methods are appropriate to that nature.[155]

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[154] Dewey, John. *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action*. New York, NY: Capricorn Books, 1960. 258

[155] "What is this 'School' Called Neoclassical Economics" by Tony Lawson in *What Is Neoclassical Economics?: Debating the Origins, Meaning and Significance*. ed. Jamie Morgan. London: Routledge, 2016. . 67

Our discussion of the historical practice of rationalization has lead us to today with our "persistence with methods of mathematical modeling." My contention throughout has been that this is a *religious* practice that was founded by economists' unbridled faith in the notion that we could understand cultural objects using the same Newtonian methods used to understand the objects investigated by the physical sciences. The *kind* of generalizations that Marshall wanted to make are distinguished from generalizations made in the physical sciences only by their apparent lack of predictive power. The Market demands this predictive power because as a functional deity it needs this quantitative method in order to fix our collective belief. I anthropomorphize the Market to help show its social function and that the Market is connected to a history. Alasdair MacIntyre states outright that the bureaucrat of modernity, with his focus on excellence as material efficiency, is a conceptual *fiction* that was constructed as a response to the ethical vacuum in which individuals found themselves at the end of the Middle Ages.[156] I agree with him almost entirely, but instead rely on the framework of an open teleological naturalism that comes from the American philosophical tradition. The only significant practical difference between MacIntyre's position and my own is my claim that rationalization is a historically religious practice and that the Market is a functional deity. John Dewey and Alasdair MacIntyre would agree that the removal of teleology, i.e. *purpose* or final cause, from our methods of inquiry was a colossal error that is difficult to fathom. Rationalization is a religious practice *devoid of telos*. This is not to say that no ends are established in inquiry, but only that the ends established are fairly immediately identical with the means used. The reasons given for the engagement in rationalized inquiry become self-referential remarkably quickly because all human action is, mechanically and "scientifically" speaking, interchangeable. Different kinds of

[156] MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981. 76

objects and events do not display a different kind of *telos*. This quantitative interchangeability makes the comprehension of unique purposes impossible.

Nineteenth-century economists such as W. Stanley Jevons, Alfred Marshall, Carl Menger and F.Y. Edgeworth all can be said to have rationalistic worldviews, despite their differences. The individual is a rational calculator of its interests. Those interests relate to the wider mechanism of the Market. The Market is a religious concept because it establishes the final *end* toward which all the rationally self-interested individuals are acting. A thriving Market provides more utils, or material prosperity, to all. The Market is the only concept left in a rationalistic worldview that is teleological, but the *telos* of the Market is nothing more or less than the thought-to-be "natural" pursuit of material prosperity by mechanical means, understood largely as governed by social laws that largely mirror the laws of the physical sciences.

F.Y. Edgeworth is noteworthy because he is perhaps the most exemplary theoretical practitioner of rationalization and the Market faith imaginable. His work, *Mathematical Psychics: An Essay on the Application of Mathematics to the Moral Sciences*, reaches into the inner life of the human being, quantifies it, and formalizes those quantities. The purpose of Edgeworth's entire project is unsurprisingly vague. He simply wants to mathematize the soul to promote the general happiness, and he takes his project to be justified *prima facie*. Edgeworth immediately mentions that Jevons is supportive of his project.[157] Edgeworth quickly tries to argue that all phenomenon can be understood quantitatively. This whole project is put into question by the cultural naturalist account of experience and meaning as well as by the more specific account of means, ends, and their relation. Edgeworth's entire enterprise exists within a self-contained normative box, and perhaps this explains why he did not find it necessary to give reasons for why his purposes were

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[157] Edgeworth, F. Y. *Mathematical Psychics: An Essay on the Application of Mathematics to the Moral Sciences*. London: C. Kegan Paul & Company, 1881. 1

justified. Mathematics could be applied to ethics through the hedonic calculus of economics. Economics is trying to make ethics an exact, mathematical science. The cultural naturalist position implores us to view Edgeworth's mission as shockingly *arbitrary*. If we cannot give and ask for reasons *why* the human being's virtues, habits, likes, and dislikes, ought to be mathematized without falling into almost immediate circularity, then what we are dealing with is an attempt at arbitrary social *control*. The quantification of all ethical behavior and even "mental-states," such as likes and dislikes, preempts any other conception of human possibilities outside of the system Edgeworth is putting forward. This reduces cultural objects to the status of physical objects. The issue is that, because humans have such malleable habits, we could begin to resemble those objects studied by physical science. This is a catastrophe because cultural beings, unlike physical objects, are capable of reflecting imaginatively on their possibilities. Any attempt to stifle such an ability conceptually will not make us increasingly moral or immoral, but unreflective and *amoral*.

The twentieth century saw the horror of the Great Depression and two world wars, yet the Market faith continued. Karl Polanyi helps us to understand why. T.W. Arnold, author of *The Folklore of Capitalism*, is also immensely helpful.

Polanyi provides a place to begin: He remarks that "the nineteenth century was unique precisely in that it centered on a definite institutional mechanism." He insists that "the breakdown of our civilization was timed by the failure of world economy, it was certainly not caused by it. Its origins lay more than a hundred years back in that social and technological upheaval from which the idea of a self-regulating market sprang in Western Europe. The end of this venture has come in our time; it closes a distinct stage in the history of industrial

civilization."[158] Polanyi is correct except for his announcement that the idea of the self-regulating market concept has died. Polanyi rightly lays the blame for the apocalyptic events of the twentieth century at the feet of the self-regulating Market. Polanyi immediately goes on to notice that powerful families such as the Rothschilds were loyal only to the international market and the firms needed for that activity.[159] They could not belong to a particular *place*. Time and space could hold no relations that were sacred enough to prevent them from making "their fortune in the financing of wars; they were impervious to moral consideration; they had no objection to any number of minor, short, or localized wars."[160]

Polanyi's analysis of these powerful families ties directly with the cultural naturalist account of *meaning* presented in the last chapter. If social relations that are rooted in shared consummatory experience and expression are severed or omitted from human life, then an environment can lose any sense of significance. What presumably remains significant for many individuals involved in *haute finance* are those relations, which are the historical result of rationalization. But, as we have seen, these kinds of relations are experientially transitory, abstract, and conceptually dissociated from any particular time or place. This is one reason why the importance of uncovering our Western historical experience is important: to show that our thinking *does* inhabit a time and place. Rationalization is necessarily *ahistorical*. Quantified, mechanical experience has no *mythos* in reflection; a grand mythic narrative is not available to help the Rothschilds develop and strengthen an *identity* outside of their relations to rationalized financial institutions. Anyone in the Rothschild's position, then or now, is able to appeal to the Market faith when observers demand a justification for their behavior. It is *tragic* that these

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[158] Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1957. 5

[159] Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1957. 10

[160] Ibid. 10

individuals *personify* the rationally self-interested, calculative individual through action. We are seeing this now with respect to the Saudis. President Trump has suggested that we shouldn't be too harsh on them for murdering an American citizen because, after all, they're very good customers of U.S. made arms!

Polanyi comments further on the Market faith by reaching back further into history to a pamphlet written by Daniel Defoe in 1704.

> Defoe insisted that if the poor were relieved, they would not work for wages; and that if they were put to manufacturing goods in public institutions, they would merely create more unemployment in private manufactures. His pamphlet bore the satanic title: *Giving Alms no Charity and employing the Poor a Grievance to the Nation*, and was followed by Doctor Mandeville's more famous doggerels about the sophisticated bees whose community was prosperous only because it encouraged vanity and envy, vice and waste. But while the whimsical doctor indulged in a shallow moral paradox, the pamphleteer had hit upon basic elements of the new political economy.[161]

If there is any doubt that the contemporary world still thinks in Defoe's terms, then one need only bring up the consistent use of the term "welfare queens," those unfortunate souls who function improperly within the larger mechanism. The kind of ethical methodology that Defoe was illustrating is *not* an ethical method at all. Ethical thought requires the recognition of human potentiality. Defoe's description of the problem, and many contemporary descriptions as well, look at the life of the community as though it were a purely "logical" problem in the sense that the categories being employed are *fixed* and the conclusions of specific inquiries are *finished*. It is curious that, once the Market faith became fact, it became inconceivable to question important premises *regardless of the fact that these premises prompted additional social problems.* Polanyi reinforces that problems were, and still are, *real* by recording that

> there had been meanwhile a continuous growth in the number of the poor: in 1696, when Bellers wrote, total rates approximated 400,000 pounds; in 1796, when Bentham struck out against Pitt's bill, they must have passed the 2 million mark; by 1818, Robert Owen's beginnings, they were

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[161] Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1957. 108-9

> nearing 8 million. In the 120 years that elapsed between Bellers and Owen the population may have trebled, but rates increased twentyfold. Pauperism had become a portent.[162]

Larry A. Hickman reminds us that, for the cultural naturalist, "ends-in-view are goals that are formed, and continually *re*formed, as their measure is taken by the very means that are employed with a view to their realization. Conversely, when ends are taken as ends-in-view, then means are formulated and reformulated in the light of changing ends in-view.[163]" The early and many contemporary defenders of the Market faith do not conduct inquiry in this way. The final and fixed end then and today is the promotion of the proper functioning of the Market according to general laws (that are largely based on the physical sciences) for the sake of material prosperity. The trouble is that methods which take ends of inquiry as immutable "has led to dysfunctional social stratification, gratuitous executions, and even open warfare, all of which have been rationalized on idealistic grounds. The caste-system of Hindu India, the 'witch' trials of seventeenth-century New England, and the Crusades of eleventh-century and twelfth-century European Christianity all provide examples of idealistic strategies of ends-dominated technological practice."[176] My central claim here is that the ends established by the religioushistorical practice of rationalization remain almost entirely *fixed* while the means to achieve those ends change somewhat over time. Utilitariansim, quantification, materialism, a methodical approach to action, etc., have been used historically as *means* toward achieving a Market system that grants material prosperity. Daniel Defoe's 1704 pamphlet shows that the *ends* of economic thought and practice have changed very little in three centuries. Metaphysical views have altered over the centuries within cultures dominated by the Market faith, but the concept of

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[162] Ibid. 110

[163] Hickman, Larry A. "Technologies of the World, Technologies of the Self: A Reply to Kenneth Stikkers." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 10, no. 4 (1996): 257-71. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25670197. 260

[176] Ibid. 262

the lazy, useless, inefficient "pauper" or "welfare queen" fits just as well in Defoe's historical context as it does our own.

Only a worldview with tremendous religious force could possibly compel so much of an entire civilization to neglect to modify this end-in-view for centuries, when the end being pursued is evidently unhelpful. If the end being pursued did not require modification, then there would have been no justifiable reason for Gerrard Winstanley to have written either *The True Levellers Standard Advanced: Or, The State of Community Opened, and Presented to the Sons of Men* in 1649 or *The Law of Freedom in a Platform* in 1652. If the zealous, rationalized practitioners of the Market faith had understood their ends to be modifiable *ends-in view* then there would have been no impetus for the creation of socialism, anarchism, or Marxism. Inflexibility demanded a genuine and determined response. This kind alteration away from *fixed ends* in theory and practice would eliminate the Market's status as a deity.

Polanyi's notion of "fictitious commodities" is illuminating. He begins from the premise that "it can be readily seen that market economy involves a society the institutions of which are subordinated to the requirements of the market *mechanism*."[164] Land, labor, and money itself were commodified in this mechanism, but the issue is that these "commodities" are in fact the necessary conditions for our biological survival. "Since the working of such markets threatens to destroy society, the self-preserving action of the community was meant to prevent their establishment or to interfere with their free functioning, once established."[165] The atomization of communities was a necessary ingredient for the later construction of monopoly and class division.

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[164] Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1957. 178 italics added

[165] Ibid. 201

A cultural naturalist must ask how commodified land, labor, and capital were constructed as functional symbols before ultimately agreeing with Alasdair MacIntyre that these symbols are socially deployed as measures of bureaucratic effectiveness posing as "virtue."[166] Communities did not decide upon commodification in a *democratic* fashion. This reformulation of land, labor, and money is characterized by symbols that addressed problems construed and grasped by a relatively minuscule cabal of highly educated men. The communities that had to suffer the effects of the Market system were not a part of the *community of inquirers* that conceptualized the Market faith. If we apply Dewey's understanding of communication to this situation we find that the elites who grappled with these problems of social organization fixed their goals without creatively anticipating the meaning of their abstractions through conversation with the wider community. Mechanistic thinking of the kind that has been investigated throughout this work rules out this conversational, open, teleological approach as a matter of course. Knowledge of the Market was treated as a source of hidden truth that had only to be described correctly and then implemented for the sake of material salvation. The extreme danger of commodifying land, labor, and exchange itself, devoid of significant and participatory communication with the wider community can hardly be overstated. A relatively small community of inquirers could not hope to imagine the *direct* consequences, let alone the indirect consequences, of implementing a paradigm shift in social thinking. It is clearly an impossible task.

The workers and peasantry reacted to the commodification of land, labor and money after they noticed that such things as "the commons" no longer existed, since they were removed from their lands through acts of enclosure. An imposing, antagonistic, *inscrutable* social force was, from their perspective, apparently seeking to harm them. Economists saw these inevitable losses

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[166] MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981. 82

as externalities necessarily suffered for the sake of installing the free-market system. Workers and peasants who did not comply were considered lazy and largely incapable of rational, selfinterested, cost-benefit analysis. Rationalization functioned as the set of conceptual tools used to justify the project. The point is not whether we are on our way to the utopian free-market society in the idealized long-run. The problem is the method used and the habits of thought that are so clearly examples of what Dewey wanted to expose as ultimately ineffectual and far removed from how we actually experience and solve problems.

John Maynard Keynes' essay "Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren*"* is a masterpiece of mechanistic utopianism. Keynes merely reaffirms the benefits of "technical efficiency" and shows that our labor practices are maladjusted to technological progress. One need only tamper with the system in such a way that reflects the economic facts and we shall have freedom from want. He believes that our economic problems will be solved in one-hundred years (so by 2030). Keynes implicitly assumes that Bernard Mandeville was correct and insists that human kind's "relative needs" are insatiable and infinite, thus guaranteeing relative scarcity. Keynes divides the economic pursuit of basic needs from higher cultural pursuits. Constant surplus and abundance will finally free us from the admittedly unreasonable love of money, and we will be able to once again condemn usury and avarice. The stated assumption is that the flourishing of the technologically advanced market system will bring about a moral paradigm shift that frees us all.[167]

Nothing in Keynes' essay strays away from rationalization and its associated habits of thought. What happens to communities in the future is, for the cultural naturalist, a matter of human purposive *will*. "Abundance" or lack thereof is itself *defined* by communities and depends

[167] Keynes, John Maynard. *Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren*. Yale University, www.econ.yale.edu/smith/econ116a/keynes1.pdf.

on what purposes communities agree upon, i.e. what is agreed to be *sacred*. What ideals are driving Keynes' technological society of abundance? Where is meaning communicated and a moral landscape inhabited? How can a community function ethically if it is assumed that desires are naturally insatiable? What Keynes leaves out is the possibility that his assumptions regarding the meaning of material abundance are culturally and historically contingent and therefore misguided. The assumption is that before our technologically driven quest for abundance, life must have lacked meaning and must have been nasty, brutish and short.

I believe that Keynes has left out any kind of human *mythos*, or narrative, that is not accounted for by the implicit and explicit goals of modern economic practice. It is possible to inhabit spaces of material abundance that are still bereft of deep, felt significance. Meaning is just as important as the efficient production of food. It is just as real and just as natural. To suggest otherwise is to separate human activities from our reflections on the purpose of those activities, and this is what Keynes does. Keynes presents a caricature of the modern working person and calls this caricature "Adam." He aptly notices this character's compulsive habit to work and suggests that this work-instinct ought to be outgrown and surpassed in the near future. Keynes blithely reminds us that the "Adams" of the world will continue to work vigorously on arbitrary projects that are no longer necessary for our prosperity. What has just been described, whether knowingly or unknowingly, is rationalization and our subservience to the Market deity since there is no established *end* of our activity outside of the methodical pursuit of material abundance.

Many readers of Keynes' article will, and have, undoubtedly asked themselves what on earth their purpose was in working so hard. Weber asked exactly that question in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*." Looking back, what did their acting out the spirit of capitalism achieve? The answer "material prosperity for future generations" rings empty and

hollow. What significant narrative form, or mythos, does this provide for the beleaguered, compulsive capitalist or worker? What means and ends are experienced as indispensably valuable? Keynes constantly uses the term "progress" to describe the growth of the Market. Material prosperity is the measure of meaning.

Of course, "meaning" is *actively* had and undergone by the live creature before we ever encounter a problematic situation wherein we must examine the purpose of our symbolic structures in reflection. But there needs be some narrative that provides meaningful relations in reflection of what we are engaging in. Lack of such a meaningful narrative blocks our ability to flourish, thus also our ability to interpret ourselves and our environments. Keynes most obviously provides an inadequate narrative in which to place our lives. Human beings, according to his narrative, seem to be conduits (a mere *means*) whose purpose is the promotion of material prosperity.

The contrast between Keynes' *Weltanschauung* and what is expressed by Giovanni Gentile's *Doctrine of Fascism* is so enormous that it should demand our attention. Gentile subscribed to a kind of idealism that rejected the entire liberal empiricist philosophical tradition. He can be understood as part of a general historical reaction against the liberal and materialist philosophical movement. Every use of the term "liberalism" in Gentile's work could be replaced by "Keynesianism," and the work would have the same intended effect.[168] Gentile suggests that collective suicide is preferable to inhabiting Keynes' world. This civilizational suicide is labeled "heroic."[169] Fascism, in my view, is largely an incoherent, violent, indeed suicidal, reaction against the Market religion because this religion does not provide any wider purpose. *The*

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[168] Mussolini, Benito, and Giovanni Gentile. *The Doctrine of Fascism*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Zhingoora Books, 2018.

[169] Eco, Umberto. "Ur-Fascism." The New York Review of Books. June 22, 1995. Accessed September 2018.

Doctrine of Fascism uses the notion of "liberalism" as a foil in contrast with its own ideal. Gentile refutes every tenet of rationalization and the Market religion, but retreats to brute conflict, or cultural "struggle," as the only true reality.[170] The emphasis on *struggle* is a mask for what Emile Durkheim described as "*anomie*" in his work *Suicide*.[171] Rationalization is a practice that furthers *anomie*. The annihilation of social bonds that provide moral guidance and a unified sense of self and purpose, is anomie. Gentile's fascism emerged from *anomie*, and the state's characteristic response to anomie-through-rationalization, has historically been self-annihilation, and Gentile's fascism is no exception. This is because of the absence of community and a strong sense of identity that emerges from *anomie*. The state itself then seeks to fill the narrativevacuum with its doctrine of the value of so-called "struggle."

Could Gentile and Keynes have a meaningful conversation? The cultural naturalist would insist that they *ought* to. Intelligent behavior is defined by the ability to communicate and find common purposes through the interpenetrating exchange of active, participatory, open dialogue. To abandon communication is to abandon intelligence; to abandon intelligence is, at least for human creatures, to embrace violence as the only form of expression left available. The fact that the Market religion is bereft of legitimacy can be found in the fact that it does not engage in dialogue with its detractors, and many who embody the Market faith have, to some extent, known this enough to employ violence as their primary mode of expression and persuasion. The general dismal of the poor, and the violent acts committed against socialist groups, provide examples of this. If tribal or nomadic life is not efficiently productive and "profitable" then it has

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https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1995/06/22/ur-fascism/.

[170] Mussolini, Benito, and Giovanni Gentile. *The Doctrine of Fascism*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Zhingoora Books, 2018. 2

[171] Durkheim, Émile. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. Edited by George Simpson. Translated by George Simpson and John A. Spalding. New York, NY: Free Press, 1997. 254

no *raison d'etre*.[172] These nomads or tribesman *ought* to be brought within the Market's liturgical year, persuaded by its high priests, and begin to *conceive of themselves* in relation to Market symbols.[173]

One last illustration of the deleterious effects of rationalization and subservience to the Market God can be found in T.W. Arnold's book *The Folklore of Capitalism* (1937). Arnold, an economic institutionalist and legal realist, wrote this work during the Great Depression as a response to the fanatical, unproductive zeal that surrounded him. Some of Arnold's complaints can also be found in John Dewey's *Individualism Old and New*, but Arnold is remarkably specific in his diagnosis of peculiarly modern superstitions.[174] For one thing, he points to the strange fact that market theology is usually

> studied apart from the living organizations which profess it as a creed. If it is found to be good our troubles must come from a sinful refusal to follow Capitalism logically. If it is found to be bad our troubles are the result of not voluntarily abandoning it. Such a point of view makes it impossible to observe how creeds actually operate in the world of temporal affairs. It leads only to pounding the table and preaching the evils of sin. This chapter will therefore be based on the assumption that social creeds, law, economics, and so on *have no meaning whatever* apart from the organization to which they are attached. To say that the organizations voluntarily choose them is as meaningless as to say that the Catholic Church voluntarily chose the Catholic religion in preference to Protestantism.[175]

It is sufficiently obvious that Arnold views our Market system as a social *creed* and explicitly compares it with the Catholic religion. The defenders of the Market faith, during Arnold's time as well as our own, treat the Market as an ideal ethical system that mere mortals may never see actualized.[176] He goes on to say that "the notion that men obtain a creed, either through the exercise of pure reason or from some other superhuman power, is so firmly fixed in popular and

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[172] Sahlins, Marshall, preface to *Stone Age Economics*. London: Routledge, 2008. xi

[173] Harvey Cox, *The Market as God* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016. 197

[174] Toward a New Individualism Dewey critiques “rugged individualism” based on almost exactly the same premises that Arnold assumes.

[175] Arnold, Thurman W. *The Folklore of Capitalism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937. 22-23

[176] Ibid. 22

scholarly thinking about government because it is the essence of all worship, and of all religion...Nothing disturbs the attitude of religious worship so much as a few practical observations. And yet that spiritual need is something which cannot be denied to any group of men, not even to scientists.[177]" The problem is that an untested and unexamined faith can begin to reveal horrific consequences and it becomes necessary to put it to question.

Arnold believes that the Businessman has become a mythological character and that we now compare all other social roles with this *central* role. The

> American Businessman was independent of his fellows. No individual could rule him. Hence the 'rule of law above men' was symbolized by the Constitution. This meant that the American Businessman was an individual who was free from the control of any other individual and owed allegiance only to the Constitution. However, he was the only individual entitled to this kind of freedom. His employees were subject to the arbitrary control of this divinity. Their only freedom consisted in the supposed opportunity of laborers to become American businessman themselves."

Arnold goes on to argue throughout his work that the independent, individual businessman no longer exists as a social reality but that the modern world continues to treat it as a matter of religious importance that this individual does exist. We have anthropomorphized the Market in similar fashion, and the Market's devilish mythological counterpart is "governmental interference."[178] Such protagonists and antagonists are mythological characters of religious significance but now have little bearing on addressing concrete problems involving social association. This mythological Businessman is rationalization *par excellence*. He or she is isolated, self-sufficient, and responsible only to an abstract document the contents of which are equally, if not more, abstract, and amenable to theological interpretation. Reinterpretation is so uncommon because "nothing seems clearer than that the attitudes of any given ruling class are so

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[177] Ibid. 30

[178] Arnold, Thurman W. *The Folklore of Capitalism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937 .37

set that all arguments in the world will not change them."[179] My account of communication amends this by suggesting that the task of changing these attitudes is made all the more difficult by ruling classes.

The Market religion pervades contemporary life because "smaller institutions always follow the pattern of the larger ones."[180] He found that "Yale was doing what it could to search for truth in the same organized efficient way in which the United States Steel Corporation made steel."[181] Yale University was "tempered and molded by the great overshadowing divinity, the American Businessman."[182] Arnold's thesis is remarkably similar to Harvey Cox's. The Market God or mythological Businessman are religions in their own right, and these theologies leave us ill-equipped to cope with real problems. Cox was correct to emphasize that the Market God is fraudulent because it delivers nothing that it promises. These mythologized economic entities promise fulfilling lives by providing purpose. But the market faith provides no way to respond to the Great Depression. This faith can only suggest that the Market's tenets were somehow betrayed.

The American experience of the Great Depression provides as dramatic an example of the failures of the market faith as anyone could ask for. Enormous economic and political institutions simply refused to face the practical realities confronted by the American people because to do so would be an affront to the Market God and the principles associated with this free-market faith.[183] "Mystical attacks on practical measures achieved an astonishing degree of success.[184]" Slogans were recited to ensure the people's faith regardless of whether or not these

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[179] Ibid. 38
[180] Ibid. 39
[181] Ibid. 39
[182] Arnold, Thurman W. *The Folklore of Capitalism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937 . 39
[183] Ibid. 70
[184] Ibid. 47

theological tenets provided for *basic needs* and the necessary practical reforms. Attempts at reform were constantly lambasted as deviations from sound economic "principles" or "laws." What should be an earnest, *scientific*, activity became, due to the long history of rationalization that has been described, a theology demanding our faith.

The era of the Great Depression presented an environment where "the only class which was permitted to think objectively about what it was doing without violating its own creed was big business. In this area both learned and popular philosophy proved that whatever mistakes business made canceled each other, that its greed was only a form of unselfishness, and that its corruption was only the work of an occasional emissary of Satan sent up from below to plague mankind."[185] The Market faith defines good and bad in terms of quantifiable values, and business practices were not in conflict with this. Mandeville, Hobbes, and a vast array of other thinkers of that era set in motion a social order that saw the apotheosis of the mythological Businessman. "The terms Communism and Fascism are used to denounce these new organizations as breeders of heresy. The acceptance of the slogans of Capitalism as tools rather than as truths is still over the horizon."[186] The aptly used idea of "heresy" in the sense just used is not conducive to identifying problems and employing effective dialogue to achieve some kind of social intelligence.

The religiosity of the Market's practitioners can also be demonstrated by using another one of Arnold's examples. These examples are telling because they are matters of life and death.

> The remedy for fever established by the time (the Medieval period) was the art of bleeding to rid the body of those noxious vapors and humors in the blood which were the root of the illness. Of course, patients sickened and died in the process, but they were dying for a medical principle, so it was thoroughly worth-while. To depart from that principle would have the same effect on human health as the failure to shoot strikers occupying the plant of an industrial concern in a sit-down strike...[187]

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[185] Arnold, Thurman W. *The Folklore of Capitalism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937. 43

[186] Ibid. 45

[187] Ibid. 56

The strikers are shot out of devotion to an internally consistent set of religious ideals. The Market cannot have these kinds of externalities. Economists can only regret "man's tendency to follow false economic reasoning, just as the preachers regretted man's tendency to sin. Nevertheless, they felt that the only refuge was in a deeper search for the Word and in more fervent preaching."[188] This has been the general reaction of social policy makers since the early seventeenth-century. Attitudes have changed to some extent, but recent articles like the one that will be examined next, still show that this religious impulse has not subsided.

A popular economics article titled "Brain-Focused Economics: More Than Just Comparative Advantage" (2018) demonstrates that we still practice rationalization and are largely subservient to the Market deity. Richard B. McKenzie takes the seemingly radical position that traditional neoclassical economists are wrong when they assume that individuals involved with free-trade are perfectly rational. McKenzie writes that

> In real-world markets inhabited by decision makers who have evolved flawed mental resources and thinking processes, competitive market forces can reduce decision-making flaws and thus lower production costs and raise real incomes by more than conventional economists have heretofore claimed. Flawed decision makers are led by competitive pressures, as if by an "invisible hand," toward (not to) improved (not perfect) decision heuristics that, when adopted—even grudgingly—add to the otherwise achievable gains from trade.[189]

What McKenzie provides throughout the article is a full-fledged definition of *rationality*. The market functions to "help to overcome innate flaws in people's thinking, leading to greater cost saving, efficiency, and welfare."[190] McKenzie criticizes the conventional economic idea of *perfect* rationality in favor of improving and honing market rationality, since cognitive science

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[188] Ibid. 66

[189] McKenzie, Richard B. "Brain-Focused Economics: More Than Just Comparative Advantage." Brain-Focused Economics: More Than Just Comparative Advantage. July 2018. Accessed September 2018. https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/serials/files/regulation/2018/6/regulation-v41n2-3.pdf. 36

[190] Ibid. 40

and behavioral economics have dispelled the usefulness of *perfect* rationality as a standard for human behavior. McKenzie claims (and I agree in a practical sense) that "with conventional economic theories grounded in perfect rationality, there is no way markets (or any other institutional setting) can improve (or worsen) the brain's allocation of its own resources and decision making."[191] What is interesting is that the abandonment of an ideal, perfect, standard of rationality does not lead McKenzie to abandon reductionism, but to accommodate the acceptance of contingency and a scientifically informed view of mind to the long tradition of Market rationalization.

Evolutionary biology is brought into McKenzie's analysis as the background within which Market cost-benefit analysis is understood. The arbitrary division between nature and culture functions to demand that we either prioritize the tradition of rationalization and the Market faith as a cultural institution *or* we simply acquiesce to the pure facts of scientific observation and abandon our sacred symbols and start over completely. McKenzie chooses to use Market rationalization as an ethical ideal to which flawed human nature must comport itself. The division between nature and culture has an insidious, insoluble effect. The Market, even considering McKenzie's rejection of perfect rationality, presents us with a *transcendent* ideal which conflicts almost immediately with our natural "decision-making flaws." Our only recourse becomes the constant practical advocacy of the transcendent Market faith which our human nature must serve, despite its flaws. If this sounds familiar, that is because it is a curious variation on the theme of Christian theology.

The purpose of rationality is not open to possibility as such in McKenzie's account.

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[191] Ibid. 40

Instead, intelligence is in service to cost-benefit analysis *as a fixed end*. I have stated before that the condition for the practice of ethics requires radical, creative openness to possibility in reflection. Fanaticism breeds within environments where articles of faith are not recognized as faiths in the first place. No clear distinction is made in this article between scientific economic principles and the conclusions of natural science, and the two branches of inquiry are treated as partners working toward a similar goal, i.e. material prosperity. It is insisted throughout the article that the competitive Market improves our rationality. Logically, this is equivalent to suggesting that praying to the Holy Spirit is a mere means to improve our faith, but the purpose of the Market faith is clearly material prosperity as an *end-in-itself*.

I do not arbitrarily focus on Richard B. McKenzie as though his essay were some special, peculiar instance of proselytizing the Market faith. His article merely stood out as an applicable example of what is generally assumed in economics. It is to his credit that he discredits "perfect rationality," but it is more than a little peculiar that the whole standard is not abandoned altogether, but a kind of economic Calvinism is advocated instead. He reminds us that despite our inability to live up to our own symbolic constructions "improvement [of our powers of ratiocination] is not only possible but almost assured.[192]" The brain "allocates its resources," which are "scarce." It is telling that *economic metaphors* are used to describe the activities of the mind. We must accept our fallen nature in the face of the almighty demands of the free-market.

[192] McKenzie, Richard B. "Brain-Focused Economics: More Than Just Comparative Advantage." Brain-Focused Economics: More Than Just Comparative Advantage. July 2018. Accessed September 2018. https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/serials/files/regulation/2018/6/regulation-v41n2-3.pdf. 40

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION: HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Our thinking about symbols of money and credit seldom takes such a fact-minded point of view. Here we are caught in formulas which pretend to be universal truths. We believe in the capitalistic system, as we used to believe in democracy, not as a tool, but as a set of abstract principles to be followed. The systems of government over which we have our theological disputes are no longer monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, but Capitalism, Communism, and Fascism. Capitalism is a good thing in the abstract. It has its following of learned men and philosophers. It is no more descriptive of social organization today than the theology of the monarchy was descriptive before the French Revolution.[193]

The sheer *capacity* to symbolically reduce everything to an economic value shows how entrenched the Market faith is. Little competition exists to counter this worldview. Resistance has emerged sporadically for centuries in Marxian, religious, or traditionalist forms. The secret of the Market faith's success probably lies in the fact that it is more flexible than older forms of association. The Market faith seems to provide practical results to a degree, but these positive outcomes are all too often reserved for a few. This faith's progress is measurable, since we can see that our material wealth and ability to control how we attain that wealth has continually increased since the abandonment of the Aristotelian ethical tradition. The general unwillingness to examine the full implications of our economic *ends-in-view* has led to a situation wherein mere means are elevated to the status of resolute, immobile, fixed *ends*.

Dewey was correct to focus on criticizing the many fundamental dualisms that we rely upon in theory and in practical life. The division between "nature" and "culture" is especially significant. Rationalization would not be possible, and the Market faith *could not be practiced*, if the metaphysical and epistemological division between these two categories collapsed. The separation of human *purposes* from natural phenomena has encouraged a situation that demands form be imposed from without upon an often unwilling universe. The impetus toward idealistic

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[193] Arnold, Thomas W. *The Folklore of Capitalism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937. 47

philosophy most certainly stems from this situation which is jarring, alienating, and disturbing in a fundamental manner. It is my view that the Market faith has been universalized, relied upon, and allowed to define rationality, largely because we do not really want to allow a *total* separation between a mechanical, deterministic "nature" and our beloved purposes. A total separation cannot occur because the separation is a false one. Modernity and the Enlightenment project extended the application of Market principles because, one way or another, we had to *enact* our ethical purposes. This was cleverly accomplished by treating these ethical purposes as universal laws, tendencies, standards or, in more recent years as pure, normativity free "facts."

It is often said today that the Market deity allowed for, or somehow even created the scientific advancements that we now enjoy.

> It is a great mistake to suppose that our mechanical inventions of machines and implements-- the steam engine, the telegraph, the telephone, the motor car, and the other agencies of production and distribution-- are the actual fruit of the present industrial order. On the contrary, they are the fruit of the discoveries of a comparatively small number of scientific men who have not labored for recognition and who have never got it, very much at least, in the way of pecuniary recognition.[194]

This passage emphasizes a great tragic consequence of the Market faith; the elimination of our recognition of human will from life. That "small number of scientific men" opened up what is possible in our experience, but the mask of mechanical determinism prevents the true import and value of their efforts from being acknowledged. A sense of meaninglessness will undoubtedly accompany a faith that separates nature and culture as well as facts and values. The humanity of the scientist and the ideals held by scientists, and by all those who seek to know, are consistently eroded when it is held that what they feel, think, and want to pursue in relation to the observed facts are not "natural" realities but "cultural" figments. The scientist or economist today purports to have access to a special realm of "facts" through the use of technical languages generally

[194] Dewey, John. "The Economic Basis of the New Society" in *Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy*. Edited by Joseph Ratner. New York, NY: Modern Library, 1939. 419

inaccessible to plebeians uninitiated in these arts. In fact, scientists and economists are simply "initiated" by being made aware of a set of problems that have developed a vocabulary historically for contending with these problems. These problems are actually communal and cannot be truly segregated from the rest of the community because solutions have *consequences.*

"...We have had production and distribution organized on a non-social basis-- a basis of pecuniary profit. And when they suddenly had to be switched over to the basis of public need and public service, they naturally broke down. The great inefficiency here is, however, the failure to utilize human power."[195] My addition to Dewey's insight is that this "non-social basis" of pecuniary profit has been a theological position that has gripped our imagination to such an extent that its guides our general view of what intelligence itself is. Dewey states in a different essay that "we are always possessed by habits and customs, and this fact signifies that we are always influenced by the inertia and the momentum of forces temporarily outgrown but nevertheless still present with us as part of our being...But change is also with us and demands the constant remaking of old habits and old ways of thinking, desiring and acting.[196]" The issue is that the Market faith suspends the development of new ways of "thinking, desiring and acting." We desire, think and act within the context of the fundamentally important concept of *scarcity* mediated throughout by free-market, "non-social" forces.

Dewey believed fervently that our "mechanical forces of production" have been employed for the sake of accumulation as an end in itself and that this "is the cause of the continually growing social chaos and strife.[197]" I have tried to stress with Dewey that we cannot

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[195] Dewey, John. "The Economic Basis of the New Society" in *Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy*. Edited by Joseph Ratner. New York, NY: Modern Library, 1939. 420

[196] Dewey, John. "The Meaning and Office of Liberalism" in *Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy*. Edited by Joseph Ratner. New York, NY: Modern Library, 1939. 451

[197] Dewey, John. "The Meaning and Office of Liberalism" in *Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy*. Edited by Joseph Ratner. New York, NY: Modern Library, 1939. 453 [211] Ibid. 454

simply preach "to individuals that they should place spiritual ends above material means. It can be brought about by organized social reconstruction that puts the results of the mechanism of abundance at the free disposal of individuals."[211] Curiously enough, Catholic social teaching has a long tradition of being in agreement with Dewey on this point. St. Thomas Moore made the same criticism regarding the prevalence of beggars and thieves in the seventeenth century.[198] The Jesuit economist Heinrich Pesch makes similar claims in *Ethics and the National Economy*.

So much of my own hope for the future rests on a Deweyan foundation further supplemented by the many crucially important ideas put forward by Alasdair MacIntyre. Thomas Alexander has promoted the notion that Dewey formed a "conversational teleology," (which was examined earlier in this work) and MacIntyre has situated our circumstances historically. MacIntyre provides us with a desperately needed narrative of where we stand historically and what that *means*, thus providing further context to Dewey's analyses of *how* to flourish in meaningful communion. MacIntyre calls for nothing less than the reconstruction of teleological, communally agreed upon, moral practices and the vocabulary to express those practices.[199] I agree that pluralism without a common moral language, which entails the inability to genuinely persuade or dissuade others of moral claims, is not illustrative of genuine community but of a kind of warfare often waged by means other than open violence. *Dewey points us to our shared, purposive, experience of the world as the basis for this reconstructive project.*

The reconstruction of communities informed by a shared practice of purposive, i.e. teleological, virtues requires experimentalism in moral theory. "Reflective morality demands observation of particular situations, rather than fixed adherence to *a priori* principles...it is, in short, the method of democracy, of a positive toleration which amounts to sympathetic regard for

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[198] More, Thomas. *Utopia*. Translated by Clarence H. Miller. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001. 22

[199] MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981. 238

the intelligence and personality of others, even if they hold views opposed to ours, and of scientific inquiry into facts and testing of ideas."[200] The method best exemplified by the practice of rationalization and devotion to the Market deity is utterly opposed to experimentalism in moral theory because it is

> the method of appeal to authority and to precedent. The will of divine beings, supernaturally revealed; of divinely ordained rulers; *of so-called natural law, philosophically interpreted; of private conscience;* of the commands of the state; *or the constitution;* of common consent; of a majority; of received conventions; of traditions coming from a hoary past; of the wisdom of ancestors; of precedents set up in the past; have at different times been the authority appealed to. The common feature of the appeal is that there is some voice so authoritative as to preclude the need of inquiry.[201]

The encouragement of experientialism in moral theory could be encouraged by simply *accepting and teaching the true significance of what happened in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.* Textbooks in high schools and colleges usually present a naive picture of "progress." This semi-fictional glossing over of history only prolongs and deepens scars that reach into our being. Moreover, historical revisionism of this magnitude hides from us what the problems that beset us are. It requires intellectual figures like MacIntyre to show us what our narrative is and what the consequences of its abandonment are. Dewey is not suggesting that we neglect history when he advocates experimentalism. In fact, we *must* know what happened, at least broadly, if we are to behave in an intelligent way. The results of past experiments must be known. Obstruction of historical knowledge, *especially historical trauma*, usually manifests as delusional and destructive behavior.

This work has partly been an attempt to illustrate a cultural narrative and the potential role that Dewey's thought could play in addressing the pressing crises involved in this embodied, historical narrative. Rationalization has been defined as the remaking of society in accord with

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[200] Dewey, John. "Experimentalism in Moral Theory" in *Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy*. Edited by Joseph Ratner. New York, NY: Modern Library, 1939. 775

[201] Ibid. 776 italics added

abstract reason through the replacement of custom and tradition and thus also the removal of social roles preserved by custom and tradition. Rationalization is a habitual, cultural practice in the Deweyan sense of "habit." It is not like Geist moving us toward an ideal state of selfactualization, knowledge or freedom. Dewey redefines many of our most central concepts so that we stand a chance of reorienting ourselves to one another and to the wider environment in such a way that our crises can be addressed. First, "truth" is never a noun that is possessed by economists, or the Market, or any inquirer. Truth is a practice of engagement with persons and things, i.e., experimentally testing ideas. It would be more accurate to say that "she is going out truthing today" rather than to say that "she has just now acquired a truth," as though conclusions can be eternally held. This observation places *meaning and artistic engagement* at the center of human life and moves the practice of verifying propositions closer to the periphery. Dewey was given an opportunity to respond to his critics near the end of his life in his *Library of Living Philosophers* volume. I think that he seems ever so slightly exasperated, no doubt because the habits of reflection he spent his life criticizing are so deeply engrained that his critics would sometimes implicitly rely on those assumptions when confronting Dewey's ideas.

I have concentrated on the Market *religion*, so it would be fruitful to address what Dewey thought about God, faith, and hope. His work *A Common Faith* addresses these questions in a deeply compelling manner. My view is that the central problem pertaining to faith, hope, and God has to do with the relationship between, and the metaphysical statuses of, possibility and actuality. Ideals, which are possibilities that can bring about action, have sometimes been treated in the Western philosophical tradition as subjective constructions of the imagination. Possibilities are therefore not "real" but are instead fanciful mental constructions. Common parlance shows that "subjective delusions" and "subjective ideals" have such a close epistemic relation because of the enormous epistemic gap artificially constructed between the subjective and objective the

possible and the actual. Mechanistic determinism is the wholesale denial of possibility, i.e. of the ideal, in Nature. Ideals that we reflect upon when implementing a plan for what we ought to do are therefore, according to the deterministic position, not indications of the existence of genuine possibility. It's as though the phenomena that we perceive *seem* to include possibility, but noumenal reality (which includes the human agent) is antecedently determined mechanically. These deterministic theories substitute lived-experience with a philosophical conclusion that is a universal claim and serves as the basic assumption underlying all subsequent inquiry.

The denial of the deterministic position involves the recognition that possibility is real, i.e. *natural*. "Nature, existence, or 'the Universe' is not just what actually is: it includes *all* its possibilities as well."[202] Lives can only find fulfillment and meaning if it is recognized that the actual is *not* all that there is.

The rise of the Market faith can perhaps be better understood when we realize that the supposed fruits of "the Market" are *almost immediately* tangible, corporeal, verifiable and measurable. The Markets ideals are *close to hand* (or close to being actual) because the Market is given credit for providing us with our material abundance. Little faith is required to trust a deity that supposedly provides quick material prosperity. The issue is that the promise of material abundance is precisely as far as this faith will ever take the believer. This faith provides what Max Weber thought was the highly rational pursuit of wholly irrational ends. It is a faith devoted to acquiring satisfaction from external goods at the exclusion of internal goods.[203]

I worry that the Enlightenment project, which is practiced rationalization, has implanted itself even into how we understand religious institutions and religious experience. The Catholic

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[202] Alexander, Thomas M. foreward to *A Common Faith* by John Dewey. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. xxiii

[203] MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981. 178

faith, for example, is *not* a sack full of epistemically "justified true beliefs." "Subject knows proposition" epistemologies threaten to strip the legitimacy of the religious from our lived experience. These philosophical approaches which focus intently on epistemology as *the* central issue create a situation in which theists, and other spiritually minded individuals, cannot hope to defend their whole orientation toward life. But the advantage possessed by the Catholic faith over the Market faith, for example, lies in its constant focus on viewing the actual in the light of the possible.[204]

The atheists of Dewey's time felt betrayed by *A Common Faith*. A new definition of God is given in this work, and Dewey shows no sympathy for militant, deterministic, materialist atheism. Of course, he also has no sympathy for absolutist religious dogma.

> The three crucial themes Dewey presents in *A Common Faith* are: (1) the distinction between religions and "the religious" as a form of experience, (2) the idea of God as the creative intersection of the ideal or possible and the real or actual, and (3) the infusion of the religious as a pervasive mode of experience into democratic life. Insofar as the "Abrahamic" religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have defined themselves by sets of theological dogmas about the world, they have been challenged by modern science as well as by other religions with dogmas of their own. If by "religions" one means "beliefs," religions conflict not only with science but also with each other."[205]

These concerns indicate Dewey's central purpose of eradicating the habitual belief that *man exists in isolation*. The Market faith would disintegrate into oblivion if cultures accepted that "a religious attitude, however, needs the sense of a connection of man, in the way of both dependence and support, with the enveloping world that the imagination feels is the universe."[206] This disintegration would occur because the Market religion requires "isolated man's" desire for

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[204] Stikkers, Kenneth. *God Works in Strange Ways, or How William James's Pragmatism Led This Philosopher into the Catholic Church*. http://people.sju.edu/~jgodfrey/StikkersJamesianCatholicism_APA_E_2007.pdf This provides an excellent account of the relationship between the Catholic faith and pragmatism.

[205] Alexander, Thomas M. foreward to *A Common Faith* by John Dewey. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. xxii

[206] Dewey, John. *A Common Faith*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. 49

[221] Ibid. 15

power, domination and control generally devoid of the sense of wonder (openness to possibility) characteristic of a properly religious attitude.

The "religious" is described by Dewey as a distinct form of experience. Some changes in our ourselves are deep seated and profound.

> "They relate not to this and that want in relation to this and that condition of our surroundings, but pertain to our being in its entirety. Because of their scope, this modification of ourselves enduring. It lasts through any amount of vicissitudes of circumstances, internal and external. There is a composing and harmonizing of the various elements of our being such that, in spite of changes in the special conditions that surround us, these conditions are also arranged, settled, in relation to us.
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> This attitude includes a note of submission. But it is voluntary, not externally imposed; and as voluntary it is something more than a mere Stoical resolution to endure unperturbed throughout the buffetings of fortune. It is more outgoing, more ready and glad, than the latter attitude, and it is more active than the former. And in calling it voluntary, it is not meant that it depends upon a particular resolve or volition. It is a change *of* will conceived as the organic plenitude of our being, rather than any special change *in* will.[221]

I believe that this passage describes not only the form of religious experience, but also that change that drives individuals to practice philosophy. My grave concern with the Market faith can ultimately be summarized as the worry that we will begin to account only for "this and that want in relation to this and that condition of our surroundings." Religious experience needs to be expressed through artistic practice in a way that Market worship could not conceivably allow. That light of wonder which compels us to wander out of Plato's cave and to incorporate into our being the mystery that is found into our fundamental attitudes is constantly in danger of being extinguished further by rationalization.

The religious form of experience is not individualistic as it might seem from the passage just quoted. A social arrangement is fully capable of stifling or encouraging the artistic expression of "the religious." I go further and emphasize that we understand our religious experience through our engagements with others. The idea of the "universal" or the "whole" is not a factual idea that can be verified in experience. It is an ideal, or imaginative projection.[207] This projection depends very much on social interaction. If the *whole* of cultural life is stripped

[207] Dewey, John. *A Common Faith*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. 17

down to deterministic market relations, laws, or tendencies, then what does this open up for us imaginatively as individuals and communities?

The imagination is fundamentally important for any cultural naturalist. First, we accept the reality of possibility in nature. Second, our *ends* are possibilities reflected upon. Third, the *imagination* compares, contrasts, and imagines the consequences of, these ideal possibilities. The activity of imagination is where ethical decision-making occurs. I do not mean to imply that the imagination is a separate faculty in a Kantian sense; thinking imaginatively is *active* just as other undertakings such as sex or eating are active. All of these activities are processes of being-in-theworld.

Dewey is trying to *rehabilitate us to the sacred*, but I am arguing that this cannot happen on a large scale while we fail to grasp the historical development of rationalization, its culmination in the Market, and how all this operates in our daily lives. The sacred requires a meaningful cultural narrative. An alternative could be a reliance on an *anti-social* Nietzschean solution which depends upon the power of the Ubermensch to save us through sheer force of individual will. I reject this *prima facie* as contrary to the philosophical, empirical, and social premises for which I have argued.

Cultural naturalism conceives of artistic practice as not just a "way of life" but as descriptive of meaningful expression in life in general. The practice of rationalization has artistic elements, but it obscures and diverts energies and experiences to such an extent that much of life's potentialities are forgotten or not conceived of. This is due to the splicing of experiences that could otherwise have been consummatory into quantitative segments put to use as means for equally quantified ends. Why would one *value* being personally entangled in a culture in which *personal cultivation of virtue is not necessary for justice*? In other words, how does one locate the value of their purposes in a social environment that is conceived of as indifferent to our

purposes? Wherein lies *purpose* and meaningful expression without a common good which arises organically from cooperative social interaction?

Hope is found in the educative capacity to enrich one another's lives through the identification of common problems, community building, and the identification of sacred practices through social artistic expression. "Unlike the path to the enveloping whole through philosophic reflection, art, and nature lead us there through immediate experience...consecutive reasoning is less a guide to wisdom than are imagination and sensitivity to the ineffable."[208] I would add two things to this valuable insight. First, the term "immediate" should be taken as merely descriptive of a peculiarly modern dualism rather than as our fixed epistemic predicament.

Second, "imagination and sensitivity to the ineffable" is a social *project*.

Precariousness, that generic trait of existence, certainly offers hope. Projects, such as the Market religion, that seek to create a static, wholly determinate, quantified set of social conditions will no doubt be transformed thanks to the impossibility of permanent stasis in experience. Problems are perhaps already revealing themselves that the Market could not hope to solve. Significant change may be a necessity in the near future. The Market religion may collapse for a reason similar to why feudalism collapsed. As Tawney writes, "The feudal intellectual order's obstinate refusal to revise old formulae in the light of new facts exposed them helpless to a counter-attack, in which the whole fabric of their philosophy, truth and fantasy alike, was overwhelmed together. They despised knowledge, and knowledge destroyed them."[209] It is certainly true that many of the high priests of economics and much of the general laity simply cannot conceive of there being any problem with the market religion, despite the *constant*

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[208] Fishman, Stephen M., and Lucille Parkinson McCarthy. *John Dewey and the Philosophy and Practice of Hope*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007. 29

[209] Tawney, Richard Henry. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study*. London, NY: Verso, 2015. 276

violent reactions against it. It is implied that rationalization just isn't complete *yet*, but that these disembodied abstract principles of reason will be victorious in the ideal future. This is the kind of superstitious thinking that indicates a retreat from the realities of the world and the actual state of affairs. Charles S. Peirce would no doubt see this as the "method of tenacity" in practice.

I would like to launch a vociferous defense of pragmatic, naturalistic, communitycentered Catholicism, but this is such a large and contentious topic that it should be reserved for a different work. I will suggest that if Catholicism abandoned many of the standards imposed upon it by the Enlightenment and rationalized modernity, then it could begin to express itself as the *embodied, lived, practice of sacred virtues* as demonstrated through Christ. Catholicism is more Deweyan than one might expect: both pragmatists and Catholics concentrate intently on the desire to build harmonious communities that allow peoples to flourish. A shared emphasis is also placed upon shared communal practices rather than mere shared beliefs.

My own personal experience of Catholicism was partially responsible for my love and admiration for Dewey's philosophy. I am Catholic with or without stating that the specific epistemic claims of the Church regarding the metaphysical statuses of the angels, demons, and other supernatural entities are "justified true beliefs" or "verifiable propositions." A similar circumstance pertains to the Market religion, only the influence is largely negative. I can deny most, if not all, of the propositions put forward by the Catechisms of the Market faith, but I still live in situations fully mediated by Market relations. Hope can be grasped when we become conscious of the symbols that hold sway in our lives. This requires introspection, communication, and deep concern for one another.

I find that another source of hope comes from an unlikely source, that source being sensual passion and physical interaction. I depart from the usual Catholic stance on this issue.

Aquinas generally condemns sensual excitement as temptation to sin.[210] Universal principles of abstract reason have a very difficult time reaching the private, personal realm of physical intimacy and connection (although it is possible). I agree with Dewey scholar Richard Shusterman in that the body is "more basic than ink, paint, or brushes, than violins or drums, than wood and stone, the human body is the primary instrument for making art. And it is also the primal, indispensable medium for perceiving art."[211] Human beings can communicate meaningfully in a physical way even without any other "instrument for making art."

Even when confronted by situations devoid of immediately perceivable meaning, human beings can come to see *the other as meaningful*. The scaffolding that always opens the social world to possibility is the capacity to find meaning in *the other* no matter the limitations in mutual symbolic understanding. The bare essentials that potentially compose meaningful experience will never fully dissipate. I emphasize physical communication because the conditions for meaningful experience are available to live creatures even without mutually understood symbolic communication. Symbolic meaning can be constructed organically through the most basic of social interactions because we are not separated from nature. These basic points give reason to hope because the problem of meaning and fulfillment is *never* a lost cause. As Alexander writes,

> The world of the twenty-first century faces what may be the ultimate challenge in the survival of many species (including our own). In addition, we face the explosion of the human population, possibly beyond sustainable numbers, and the development of an intimate worldwide electronic culture of corporate consumerism. The civilization of modernity, now exported around the globe, carries with it its inherited dichotomies. These must be critiqued. Not only does this require an exploration of the negative consequences of certain assumptions, but an historical understanding

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[210] Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation*. Translated and edited by Timothy S. McDermott. Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1991. 429

[211] Shusterman, Richard. "Body and the Arts: The Need for Somaesthetics." *Diogenes* 59 (2013): 7 20. http://dio.sagepub.com/content/59/1-2/7.

> of how those assumptions were generated and how they evolved. To critique the present, we must understand its historical genesis, especially in terms of the interplay of metaphysical commitments and social legitimation. Worldviews are narratives that empower[212]

The Market faith is no longer a worldview (or narrative) that empowers. It has become a belief system that attempts to limit practically and theoretically our ability to identify our common problems and establish a common good. Our conception of common goods are thoroughly mediated by Market concepts and relations. These relations are understood as *facts* rather than as ethical *postulates*. These facts are touted in an *ahistorical* manner. Economic texts usually remove their formulae from the concrete historical problems that these formulae were created to solve. What is more, these economic formulae were natural outgrowths of more general philosophies. I have tried to show that this whole process is a *tragic* historical narrative and not a naive account of "progress." I call this historic narrative "tragic" because our "narrative" itself was lost in the process. This is a consequence of asserting that we now have objective laws of abstract reason that are *independent from our embodied cultural life.* We are just as alienated from objective economic laws as we are from the laws of physics.

We inhabit a cultural space where the attachment of the word "science" to any activity provides that activity with an immediate legitimacy that compels us to action. This use of the word "science" is more in accord with what Charles S. Peirce called the "method of tenacity" than the "method of science.[213]" Science can easily be perverted to mean "unquestionable because the conclusion is a measurable quantity." Science is meant to open up possibilities for whole communities by consciously engaging with the way things interact. Scientific conclusions are *not* separable from the purposes that drive scientific investigation. Scientific conclusions should inform us and help us modify our purposes in light of what we find.

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[212] Alexander, Thomas M. *The Human Eros: Eco-Ontology and the Aesthetics of Existence*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2013. 77

[213] Peirce, Charles S. "The Fixation of Belief" in *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings*. Edited by Christian Kloesel and Christian Kloesel. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992. 116

It is my suspicion that much of the inflexibility that we find in economic theory is explainable in terms of the discipline's desire to justify itself as a "science." The conception of science being used is a faulty one for the reasons just given. There is constant pressure put on economics for *results*, so much so that merely entertaining the notion that foundational economic concepts are wrong is terrifying because this threatens economists' ability to demonstrate political results. Political agents often rely on the Market faith as the standard of their own success or failure. They use economic jargon that usually does not reflect the real problems that communities face.

What we need is nothing less than a new democratic ethical vocabulary that is teleologically open. We need to *provide* educations that *present* realistic narratives that are based on historical reality. The magical and *ahistorical* thinking characteristic of the Market faith cannot thrive when individuals are aware of a historical narrative. Much of our present thinking is the residue of an ancient ontological hierarchy in which each thing had its natural place and purpose. The Market deity has taken up residence at the top of this old hierarchy, but we do not use the ancient vocabulary to describe it. It is a strange and destructive synthesis of feudal and Enlightenment ideals. It can be described as a metaphysical hierarchy devoid of the old *telos* that gave each thing its proper *end*.

I have argued that orthodox economics *is* a contemporary religion and that rationalization is the practice of this religion. My use of historical and contemporary sources places this claim in a real context. It would have been contrary to cultural naturalism to neglect this context. I have provided a narrative, and the effectiveness of this narrative is what is up for debate. The claim that economists no longer universally subscribe to a "free" market ideology is not a refutation of my thesis, regardless of whether that is true. What is under discussion is a centuries-old historical *faith*. The consequences of abandoning this faith need to be explored and seriously considered. I

believe that communities just might abandon the Market faith as a condition for solving their practical problems. If a problem has a solution but it is not considered appropriate by the market system, then communities may just abandon that system out of sheer desperation. The trouble is that the denizens of the Market faith often react violently to those who reject their tenets.

My greatest fear is that the Market faith will suffer a violent demise of some sort. Intelligent social action is the opposite of pure *reaction*. Intelligence demands that we employ some *means* of transitioning away from a Market faith and toward an ethic that centers itself on communal flourishing. If communities began to view "artistic production" as meaningful activity that permeates life, instead of a specialty left to isolated experts, then the Market would no longer have hegemony over deciding what we *ought* to do. This is because the Market faith attempts to isolate art (especially fine art) from practical life and so limit our ability to express ourselves meaningfully. The "rational" assembly line such as the one found in the film *Metropolis*(1927) threatens to invade our inner-lives. I think that this form of social association conflicts so deeply with our human need for meaning that communities will not stand for it in the long run. My greatest concern isn't whether or not the Market faith *will be* a casualty of history. My concern is with *how* this faith will be laid to rest.

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