

ABSTRACT

Liberal Capitalism as a Constraining Ideology

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In this thesis, I explore the benefits of liberalism and capitalism, but I also criticize some of their ideological tendencies, criticizing them for overemphasizing the role of politics and economics in human flourishing. First, I examine the benefits of liberalism and capitalism. Then, I evaluate the meaning of ideology and eventually distill a definition of ideology that I will use to evaluate liberalism and capitalism. Thereafter, I then describe the ideological tendencies in liberalism and capitalism, finding that ideological liberalism and ideological capitalism result in the reduction of mankind. I conclude that ideological liberalism and ideological capitalism are harmful. The proper way to interact with liberalism and capitalism is thus not to hold them as ideologies, but rather to use them as tools for the benefits they supply.

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LIBERAL CAPITALISM AS A CONSTRAINING IDEOLOGY

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Liberalism and capitalism have had ambiguous results. They have positive benefits, but they also have negative consequences of which we should be cognizant. I want to explore some of the benefits and negative consequences in this thesis.

I define liberalism as the political movement over time to tear down the barriers to human freedom. Liberalism is very difficult to define as it encompasses various freedoms. Ludwig von Mises' definition of liberalism varies greatly from that of Patrick Deneen. But in this thesis, I build upon the concept of "waves" of freedom described by Dr. David Corey in his article "Against the Deformations of Liberalism." The first wave of freedom in the modern West is freedom from religious persecution. The second is freedom from foreign domination. Hobbes's *Leviathan* exemplifies the third wave of freedom, such as the freedom from civil war. Locke and Milton write on the fourth wave, freedom from arbitrary rule and tyranny—and it is here that "liberalism" begins. The fifth freedom is freedom from government interference in the economy, which is very closely related to both liberalism and capitalism. The sixth wave of freedom is freedom from rule by another, so, "republicanism" and "democracy." This is freedom from rule by an individual or group that does not include oneself or one's representative. The seventh wave of freedom is the freedom from tyranny of the majority, as described by Tocqueville. The eighth wave of freedom is freedom from exploitation and/or oppression by privileged sub-political groups. This freedom is pursued in two areas: the social sphere

and the economic sphere. The ninth and final freedom is freedom from biological necessity. Some examples of this freedom include the pursuit of human enhancement and genetic engineering.

Liberalism begins with waves four and five as an effort to free citizens from overbearing government. It has a political and economic focus. As liberalism develops, however, it grows to include new foci: democracy, social justice, and biological fairness. Liberalism is inherently a movement to gain freedom from barriers to autonomy and freedom; it is liberating.

I define capitalism as an economic system in which the forces of supply and demand are set loose from government control. The purest form of capitalism is laissez-faire capitalism as outlined by Adam Smith in his work *The Wealth of Nations*. Capitalism values productivity and innovation and views the free market system as the best guarantor of these goods. Capitalism is in essence, the fifth freedom described above. It is freedom from interference in the economy.

In this thesis, I explore the benefits of liberalism and capitalism, but I also criticize some of their ideological tendencies, criticizing them for overemphasizing the role of politics and economics in human flourishing. I devote the first chapter to exploring the benefits of liberalism and capitalism. I spend chapter two exploring the meaning of ideology and eventually distilling a definition of ideology that I will use to evaluate liberalism and capitalism. In chapter three, I describe the ideological tendencies in liberalism stemming from the over-politicization of man. In chapter four, I identify the ideological tendencies in capitalism to view man as purely economic and to use men as commodities. Finally, I conclude that ideological liberalism and ideological capitalism

are harmful. The proper way to interact with liberalism and capitalism is thus not to hold them as ideologies, but rather to use them as tools for the benefits they supply. Liberalism and capitalism are useful, but they should not be viewed as supplying the meaning of a life well lived.

CHAPTER TWO

The Benefits of Liberal Capitalism

This thesis is fundamentally a criticism of modern liberal capitalism; however, I write from the perspective of someone who fully acknowledges the strengths of liberal capitalism. And I do not want to be thought unaware of these strengths. Therefore I think it most appropriate to begin my thesis with a chapter that focuses precisely on these strengths. In this chapter I argue that capitalism finds its strongest defense in terms of three social goods: productivity, freedom, and responsibility. In what follows I shall subdivide these three social goods into different aspects and emphases, but here I wish simply to flag the areas in which capitalism can be and has been defended.

Capitalism

Productivity

One social good resulting from capitalism is national productivity. I shall divide productivity into three separate benefits: the overall wealth that capitalism attains, the greatest amount of knowledge that capitalism acquires, and the innovation resulting from freeing an economy from planning. While some may argue that productivity acts as a corrosive agent upon culture or a way of life, I argue that the benefits of productivity result in a stronger society and a better people. Productivity of a nation, namely wealth and innovation, is an incredibly valuable asset, since it leads to human flourishing through poverty reduction and economic stability, and through this economic stability, productivity leads to the rising importance of public goods in policy. Productivity leads to

increase wealth and capital in a nation, which allows the citizens to fulfill their individual primary needs and then look out for the public goods, such as environmental health, social programs, public education, and transportation.¹ In order to protect things important to a society, productivity and wealth are crucial to provide prosperity for citizens. The wealth that citizens gain gives people the ability to purchase more expensive goods, which generally are better for society, such as sustainable goods, locally grown produce, and independent art, rather than the cheaper, most ready products, which often are mass-produced, imported, and produced in unethical circumstances.²

Wealth. Among the most essential arguments for capitalism's importance is that capitalism is effective. It does what it claims to do: it increases wealth across all classes. The world has recently seen the greatest increase in overall wealth in the late twentieth century, as the majority of countries began to implement capitalism in their economies. The best way to measure a country's development and wealth is in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, as "its great strength is that it captures the fundamental availability of goods and services, and of income to spend on goods and services... a bigger GDP means that a country can do more to provide the whole range of goods and services that contribute to human well-being."³ While not inevitably delivering wealth to all, regardless of economic class or social situations, a rising GDP per capita rate indicates that the people across all classes have an increasing access to markets and opportunities to increase their wealth. Additionally, a high GDP per capita indicates

¹ Noell, Edd, et al. *Economic Growth: Unleashing the Potential of Human Flourishing*. AEI Press, 2013. p. 37.

² Ibid p. 74-75.

³ Ibid. p. 15.

development including, but not limited to, increased education and literacy rates, increased life expectancy, decreased infant mortality rates, and increased environmental regulation.⁴ The increase of wealth, namely measured through GDP per capita is tremendously valuable to any state, as it results in an increased standard of living for all people, regardless of class. One example of this is the development of China by introducing capitalism into what was previously a strictly planned economy. China has experienced positive growth rates in their GDP per capita once Deng Xiaoping opened China to capitalism in 1978. Prior to this, the growth rate of GDP and GDP per capita was stagnant, if not negative.⁵ Through the introduction of free-market principles, China became an economic powerhouse and continues to develop economically, providing one of many examples of the positive effects of capital on overall wealth.

Knowledge. Capitalism also allows for the greatest sources of knowledge. It is structured in such a way that those with varying amounts and forms of knowledge (whether it be statistical or experiential) can participate and regulate their actions in the economy.⁶ There is an uneven dispersal of knowledge amongst the population with regard to statistical knowledge and experiential knowledge. In order to account for the insufficiency of a small group with limited knowledge, it is best to allow the deregulation of economies. This greater participation in the economy will allow for a greater amount

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ World Bank. GDP (Current US\$) - China | Data. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=CN>. Accessed 20 Nov. 2019.

⁶ Hayek, F. A. "The Use of Knowledge in Society." *The American Economic Review*, vol. 35, no. 4, The American Economic Association, Sept. 1945, pp. 524-526.

of information to enter the system, resulting in a more diverse and holistic approach to the economy.

Innovation. Capitalism cultivates innovation through the competition it allows in liberating a planned economy. By allowing individuals to choose what and how much they want to produce, there becomes competition among actors to sell the most of their product. In order to gain a competitive edge among their competitors, a creator is driven to innovate his or her product. According to Friedrich A. Hayek,

Competition is essentially a process of the formation of opinion: by spreading information, it creates that unity and coherence of the economic system which we presuppose when we think of it as one market. It creates the views people have about what is best and cheapest, and it is because of it that people know at least as much about possibilities and opportunities as they in fact do. Apart from the competition created in a free-market economy, the only impetus for innovation is an individual's creativity. ⁷

Innovation, which is a crucial aspect of any society, as it leads to productivity, is best cultivated through a capitalist society as there is a benefit for innovation. Invention is a self-sustaining pursuit, as it breeds more innovation, and thus more productivity and wealth. "Innovative activity can be considered a cumulative process, in which there is feedback from one innovation to the next" writes scholar William J. Baumol, "once the free market has launched its innovation machine, the inherent structure of the mechanism leads the machine to grow more powerful and productive with the passage of time".⁸

Innovation is crucial for the success of capital markets and developing countries, as it

⁷ Hayek, Friedrich A, "The Meaning of Competition." *Econ Journal Watch*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2016.

⁸ Baumol, William J., editor. "Introduction:: On the Engine of Free-Market Growth." *The Free-Market Innovation Machine*, STU-Student edition, Princeton University Press, 2002, p. 12.

provides the basis for extending beyond a sustenance-based economy and flourish into more productivity and innovation.

Freedom

In addition to increasing the wealth of all participants, capitalism is also the economic plan to offer the greatest amount of freedom in the economy. The three ways that capitalism primarily promotes freedom is in the supporting of property rights, consumer choice, and impartial democratic markets. In order for a consumer to choose to buy, sell, or invest, there needs to be a protection of ownership to ensure the justice of the process.

Private Property. Private property is essential to capitalism, and it is a form of protection of the fairness that free-market capitalism promises. The respecting and guarantee of property rights, even for the most disenfranchised of citizens is the first step towards establishing a free market economy.⁹ In order for a society to prosper and allow human flourishing beyond simply subsistence, a society needs to preference capital over redistribution. Redistribution of very little GDP per capita results in no growth or comfort. John Locke writes of the flourishing that private property entails in his *Second Treatise of Government*, saying that when one adds one's own labor to property, not only does it become one's own property, but one improves upon that property. Locke writes,

He who appropriates land to himself by his labour, does not lessen, but increase the common stock of mankind: for the provisions serving to the support of human life, produced by one acre of inclosed and cultivated land, are (to speak much within compass) ten times more than those which are yielded by an acre of land of

⁹ Rajan, Raghuram G., and Luigi Zingales. "Financial Dependence and Growth." *The American Economic Review*, vol. 88, no. 3, 1998, pp. 10

an equal richness lying waste in common. And therefore he that incloses land, and has a greater plenty of the conveniencies of life from ten acres, than he could have from an hundred left to nature, may truly be said to give ninety acres to mankind: for his labour now supplies him with provisions out of ten acres, which were but the product of an hundred lying in common.¹⁰

Private property, when one properly uses it, leads to increased wealth. Private property is crucial for economic growth and development of the economy.

Freedom of Choice. Once the government has established private property, competition in the marketplace can develop, and thus, the freedom of choice can develop. This choice extends beyond simply that of the consumer to include that of the worker and the investor. The free market economy empowers individuals to create wealth in order to choose, according to their own discretions, how thus to participate in the economy. This empowerment of the consumer is not the only freedom that arises from the market system; the worker himself or herself has a power not afforded in a different economic system. In the capitalist system, the worker has the power to decide whether or not to produce a product. Adam Smith writes on the benefits of this free enterprise and how it is natural among all forms of creatures. He writes,

Man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and shew them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this: Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. ¹¹

¹⁰ Locke, John. *Of Civil Government : Second Treatise* . H. Regnery, 1963. p. 35

¹¹ Smith, Adam. *Wealth of Nations*. BiblioBytes. Book I Chapter II.

This choice provided with free enterprise, paired with societal development allows for the introduction of trade beyond subsistence commodities, allowing later for aesthetic pleasures such as art. Capitalism allows an artist to choose how to produce his or her art, and to choose beyond subsistence work. There will be natural consequences, but the worker's skill and freedom to use that skill in any way he or she desires is the ultimate bargaining chip, as utilized in unions.

Democratic Participation. Additionally, capitalism, through the promises of private property and consumer choice, allows equal, democratic participation in the marketplace without discrimination, allowing anyone, regardless of identity to partake in a voting system of how the economy should run, and offers a voice to all consumers, regardless of identity. A consumer can choose to purchase a product or vote for its continual presence in the marketplace and support its producer's actions. The consumer has a voice through their opportunity for positive participation in the market economy to voice his or her desires for society and the running of the economy. One can choose to boycott a certain product if one wants, and the democratic principles of the markets will affect how the company will respond to that boycott. Another example of democratic participation through the markets is through supporting causes. For example, without proper regulation, productivity can cause environmental hazards and pollution, but through the means of capital and the free choice of the consumer to decide which products to purchase and in which industries to invest, a consumer essentially votes for the way the markets should continue. A consumer can choose to purchase whichever goods one wants, and as wealth flourishes, he or she has the opportunity to purchase for

more than subsistence, but also for conscience. A consumer can choose to support more expensive, sustainable goods as a vote to help that cause thrive. This democratic facet of capitalism and the free market society breeds the equality of men in a consumer society.

Capitalism promotes equality and fairness through the promotion of a non-discriminatory market. The market does not discriminate on the basis of sociological identities. It likely does discriminate on the basis of personal traits, such as courage, energy, and risk aversion, but it does liberate the product from the identity of the creator. The transaction between two parties is just in the sense that so long as the transaction is limited to the goods exchanged, there is no further discrimination allowed within the system. Any discrimination occurring in the markets is the result of a discriminatory society, as the market focuses only on the transaction of goods for capital. Capitalism allows for an impersonal market in which biases due to identities are less likely to occur.¹² The focus is not the seller, but rather the commodities. This has the most objective outlook upon the goods presented in the marketplace. This impersonal view of commodities can benefit both the producer and the consumer, cultivating a society focused more on the just and fair transaction of goods for money rather than the identities of the two parties.

Responsibility

In addition to the productivity and freedom for which capitalism allows, capitalism also fosters a responsible society. I argue that this responsibility is manifest in

¹² Friedman, Milton. *Capitalism and Freedom*. The University of Chicago Press, 1963. p. 21.

the personal virtue of charity, self-responsibility, and human rights that follow from a capitalist society.

Personal Virtue. In addition to a net increase of wealth, freedom, and sources of knowledge, capitalism fosters an environment in which citizens can foster personal virtue, namely charity. Capitalism utilizes peoples' selfishness to create a system in which others can benefit. This economic system promotes cooperation rather than discord, codependence rather than fighting, emulation rather than envy. Through providing freedom and choice in the markets, capitalism empowers people to flourish individually, so they can then use their own capital to invest in others or provide charity. This encourages people to be responsible citizens, promoting not only their own welfare, but offering aid to those in their communities who do not have the opportunities to thrive in the free market system due to their circumstances. An increase in government welfare leads to a decrease in charity, as the people have less of an expendable income due to the taxes that pay for welfare programs.¹³ Capitalism allows mankind to help another, and in essence help himself, as Smith wrote earlier. With a planned economy and greater systems of welfare, charity and this selfless nature are stifled.

In addition to providing a venue through which others can gain wealth to distribute it back to the community, capitalism liberates charity from necessity, turning mandatory welfare back into a virtue. This redefinition of providing goods to others from a mandatory tax to an act of choice provides benefits to the citizens, molding their character and promoting civic virtue. By removing the government from its position as

¹³ Ibid. p.191.

middleman to the redistribution of wealth, the citizens with wealth can see the effect of their giving, affecting their outlook on the charity itself and fostering a sense of empathy with those by nature or circumstance less fortunate. By removing the mandatory aspect of redistribution, the people have a choice in which to participate in the redistribution of wealth, fostering a deeper connection to the community in which they serve.

Self-Responsibility. Additionally, man's selfish nature is again a check for balancing charity and self-responsibility. Those who do not provide charity allow for a society in which self-responsibility and discipline for betterment serve as a check for the altruism still allowed and promoted in capitalism. Therefore, by balancing capitalism's provided opportunity for charity with the limited amount of charity, those who receive charity still have an impetus to work and become self-sustainable. Capitalism provides a venue for people to develop as virtuous citizens through participating in charity.

Human rights. Beyond the encouragement of virtue, capitalism also allows an avenue for the promotion of the dignity of the individual through production, and thus human rights in society. While it may simply correlate with capitalism rather than be caused by capitalism, the connection between the two is significant. Friedman says that at the core, liberal philosophy and capitalism rests upon,

A belief in dignity of the individual, in his freedom to make the most of his capacities and opportunities according to his own lights, subject only to the proviso that he not interfere with the freedom of other individuals to do the same.¹⁴

¹⁴ Ibid.

Capitalism and the free market rest upon principles of freedom and democracy, and in doing so, they support philosophically the flourishing of the individual human, so “human rights and economic growth may develop in tandem or unevenly, but they fundamentally support one another.”¹⁵ In his comparative work on America, *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville provides a comparative study of two cities on the Ohio River, one permitting slavery and the other outlawing slavery. His conclusion through this comparison is that slavery is not compatible with flourishing in a free market system, as the Southern city allowing slavery is underdeveloped while the one on the North side has a flourishing, productive society, as he writes, “servitude, while so cruel to the slave, was fatal to the master.”¹⁶ Capitalism ultimately depends on the belief that any barriers to the economic productivity of an individual should be removed, so any human rights violations are thus condemned under capitalism.

In observing the benefits of capitalism, namely the increased productivity, freedoms, and the responsibility of a society, one can conclude that when capitalism is functioning in its proper form, it is a beneficial economic structure in which not simply the country, but the individual citizens prosper economically. Productivity brings wealth, and wealth allows the citizens of a capitalist society to look beyond their subsistence and to their individual desire for human flourishing. Through this wealth, they can support causes democratically through their consumer choice in the markets, purchasing according to their own desires and their own discretions. When working properly, capitalism allows for individual flourishing for those who thrive in competitive markets.

¹⁵ Noell, et. al. p.105.

¹⁶ Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. Library of America Paperback Classics, 2012. p.331.

Liberalism

Having explored some of the benefits of capitalism, I want to turn to the political structure that supports it, namely Liberalism. Liberalism is a political philosophical movement beginning with promoting constitutional limits on absolute sovereignty and providing economic freedom. It has adapted and accommodated newer freedoms, relocating the concept of individual autonomy and liberty in various spheres ranging from the political, economic, social, international, and domestic. Liberalism has an ever-expanding tendency; it applies to every aspect of an individual's life. It is "a movement of liberation, a clearance of obstructions, an opening of channels for the flow of free spontaneous vital activity."¹⁷ In this way, liberalism has expanded from simply the political sphere by providing protections from the freedom from foreign domination, domestic civil rule, absolute rule, rule by another, and the tyranny of the majority to the economic sphere in the freedom from a government regulated economy to the social and domestic sphere by providing the freedom from oppression of a privileged class. In the following section, I will examine the benefits of this political philosophy to society, encompassing all of the freedoms guaranteed, apart from one. Here I will not stress economic liberalism, as it is, in effect, capitalism, which was previously addressed.

Liberalism eludes precise definition. However, much of the liberal tradition is identified as beginning with the liberation from arbitrary rule as displayed through the writings of John Locke (namely his *Second Treatise on Government*), the work of Kant, and the Federalist Papers. These works all argued for rule of law over the rule of man,

¹⁷ Hobhouse, L. T. (Leonard Trelawny). *Liberalism*. H. Holt and Co., 1911. p.22.

leading to a movement of constitutionalism following political revolutions. All men became limited by laws; rather than having an “infallible” ruler there was the “infallible” law. However, in a retreat against tyranny, liberalism corrected itself and pushed for representative government in an attempt to limit the rule of others and the rule of the majority. Democracy took on both republican characteristics as well as a constitution. Liberalism eventually took on the battle against government interference in the economy, considering it an infringement upon rights ultimately resulting in a less productive society. Writers such as Adam Smith and Richard Cobden exemplified this movement towards the liberation of humanity through Laissez-Faire economies. Capitalism is the economic embodiment of liberalism. Finally, the barriers that liberalism took upon itself as an offense to human rights became the freedom from both economic and political exploitation. Writers such as Mill, Hobhouse and Dewey, took on a complete liberation from all barriers in every sphere of life. The ultimate crux of liberalism is the elimination of barriers to the rights of humans. While new rights may be adopted by the movement, the underlying basis is the liberation of all individuals from any institutionalized limits upon their rights.

I argue that liberalism benefits society and the individual in the sense that it promotes human dignity, institutionalizes republicanism and democratic procedures, and allows for the flourishing of the individual as well as community.

Human Dignity

One significant benefit of liberalism is that it promotes human dignity, as demonstrated from the outset. Through liberalism's attack on the tyranny of arbitrary rule and its promotion of the rights of the minority groups, it supports human dignity.

Against Tyranny. The arbitrary rule of monarchs, occasionally associated with tyranny, is an affront to human dignity, lessening the value of an average individual to another distinguished one. Hobhouse writes in *Liberalism*, that regardless of the relative wisdom of one individual over others, there is a need for the support and corrective of the people. Any form of government that limits the participation of the mass is a limit on the effectiveness and rightness of a government; even a technocracy limits the rights of mankind. While leadership is necessary, "the perfection of leadership lies itself in securing the willing, convinced, open-eyed support of the mass."¹⁸ Cristiano writes that "nondemocracies and partial democracies reliably fail to protect [human rights]."¹⁹ Kolodny continues this line of thought in his writing on the four demands of social equality, which includes the equal distribution of power and authority, stable relative influence of power, stable perpetual relation between individuals, shared influence on shared problems, and the constitution of equal opportunity. In all of these, especially in political procedures, nondemocracies and partial democracies disappoint.

Because political decisions are inescapable for all of us, are taken to have final authority over all of us, and use force against all of us, to deprive any of us of equal opportunity to influence them would amount to a kind of subordination. The

¹⁸ Ibid. p.119.

¹⁹ Christiano, Thomas. "An Instrumental Argument for a Human Right to Democracy." *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2011, p. 143.

fact that a given decision will otherwise have greater effects on my substantive interests than yours, or the reverse, is not directly relevant.²⁰

The attack on tyranny in which liberalism is historically grounded is an attack against the political systems that infringe upon the rights, equality, and essentially dignity of individuals. By advocating for democratic procedures over any other political system, liberalism promotes the dignity of mankind.

Protection of Minorities. This protection of human life underscores the entire movement, to the point where liberalism corrected itself in order to address problems it created, namely the tyranny of the majority. Beyond the attack against tyranny and arbitrary rule, liberalism promotes human dignity through its support of the protection of minorities, especially economic minorities through the support of "social justice". Without this movement to support minorities, liberalism might have faltered; however, through this protection against the tyranny of the majority, we enjoy the benefits of capitalism with the protections of the oppressed. The protections against the majority is the ultimate corrective of liberalism. The most work done for the oppressed was following the Second World War, when the political ideology of liberalism saw the great destruction of the tyranny of the masses through the various populist, fascist movements. This led to attempts to limit the suppression of rights and the loss of human life through wars and oppressive regimes. One of the most significant works accomplished in the name of liberalism is the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which reinforces the presence of democracy, capitalism, and human rights in the name of

²⁰ Christiano, Thomas. *The Constitution of Equality: Democratic Authority and Its Limits*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

liberalism.²¹ It is this barrier to the overpowering of the masses that truly offers a corrective to the oppression of the majority. The masses, while now represented by the government, must be subject to law and to each other. Liberalism is ultimately a rule of law over a rule of man or a rule of men. It is through liberalism's attempts to promote the dignity of all humans that it offers a corrective.

Republican and Democratic Procedures

As identified through the adamant push for constitutionalism, liberalism presents a strong case for republicanism and democratic procedures. Liberalism, through these democratic procedures, provides for the protection of rights of individuals and the legitimacy of outcomes from these political procedures. Hobhouse argues for the necessity and the good of democratic procedures that liberalism encourages, writing in his *Liberalism* that “democracy is not founded merely on the right or the private interest of the individual. This is only one side of the shield. It is founded equally on the function of the individual as a member of the community.”²² While one could propose an argument that the foundation of liberalism is the gradual removal of barriers to an individual's rights, which may seem opposite to the basis of democracy, these two complement one another. While some individuals may be endowed with a greater wisdom or have walked through more experiences, there is still room for error in every person. A tyranny, as explained previously will likely violate human dignity, so the best

²¹ Wallach, John R. “Dignity: The Last Bastion of Liberalism.” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, vol. 4, no. 2, Aug. 2013, p. 316.

²² Hobhouse p.110.

way to ensure that the rights of individuals will not be infringed upon by one person is to have a leader confirmed in his or her actions by the voices of the masses. When liberalism and democracy work together, they transform many individual wills into one common social will upon which all governance will occur. When the community binds together and contemplates the problems of the day, each individual subjects himself or herself to the will of each other, so no one individual will infringe upon the rights of others. Democracy and liberalism in this sense work as a balance to each other. Public procedures and democratic politics force individuals to look to their neighbors and work together in an unsaid pact to protect each individual's rights; no one individual will have a tyranny over another.

There is a necessary component of democracy and liberalism that ties them together; by the definition of each, they require republicanism and individuals joining together in communitarian and public procedures. With this requirement of an informed population that promotes community involvement, there arises a problem of an ill-informed, apathetic community that will not participate. Hobhouse himself writes that this social will depends upon the assumption that "the individuals who [democracy] will enfranchise can enter into the common life and contribute to the formation of a common decision by a genuine interest in public transactions."²³ This requirement does not necessarily demand that a community be informed and involved, but rather proves that the system has a potential of falling apart. However, he defends the fact that this assumption exists by writing that democratic procedures serve as a balance from the

²³ Ibid. p.111.

ignorant and relies on the diversity of individuals. Hobhouse also continues to argue for the philosophical compatibility of liberalism and democracy by writing

Individuals will contribute to the social will in very varying ways, but the democratic thesis is that the formation of such a will, that is, in effect, the extension of intelligent interest in all manner of public things, is in itself a good, and that more than that, it is a condition qualifying other good things.²⁴

It is through this necessity of democratic procedures and republicanism that one finds a legitimacy of outcomes in the public sphere. Academics such as Niko Kolodny and Thomas Cristiano argue that political legitimacy only arises in a democratic system, as only in a democracy are individuals treated with the dignity and political equality that liberalism demands. In essence, while the previous section argued that tyranny infringes upon the overall dignity of an individual, democracy promotes and is necessary for political dignity of mankind. Thomas Cristiano writes that it is a human right to have democracy, and that any other form of government is an infringement upon right.²⁵ Cristiano also writes that the only legitimate political authority is found in the full recognition of the equality of individuals, writing,

Since there is no defensible natural authority of some sane adults over others, legitimate political authority must be grounded in part in the fact of disagreement among equals and must respect the judgments of each as an equal.²⁶

Recognizing that the source of legitimacy is equality in political procedures, the only truly legitimate political system is democracy, proving the push of liberalism to promote this, as it is the removal of barriers to a right. The democratic procedures and

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Cristiano, Thomas. "An Instrumental Argument for a Human Right to Democracy." *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2011.

²⁶ Ibid. *The Constitution of Equality: Democratic Authority and Its Limits*. Oxford University Press, 2008. p.236.

republicanism which liberalism promotes provide for the protection of rights of individuals and the legitimacy of outcomes from these political procedures.

Human Flourishing

Another benefit that liberalism provides is the flourishing of the individual; it provides a freedom from societal demands. While one should not have the same lack of constraints on actions as one is afforded through liberalism for his or her opinions, the individual should have the freedom of expression and the freedom to be diverse.²⁷ Mill writes on this subject, agreeing that while children should be raised and taught the values of a community to be best prepared for the full human experiences, once they mature into adults, they should have the freedom to interpret their experience however they desire, further writing,

It is the privilege and proper condition of a human being, arrived at the maturity of his faculties, to use and interpret experience in his own way. It is for him to find out what part of recorded experience is properly applicable to his own circumstances and character. The traditions and customs of other people are, to a certain extent, evidence of what their experience has taught them; presumptive evidence, and as such, have a claim to his deference: but, in the first place, their experience may be too narrow; or they may not have interpreted it rightly.²⁸

This freedom to interpret experiences from one's own experiences, also called pluralism, allows the diversity of character and the freedom from cultural norms.

The freedom that liberalism provides to express oneself and be oneself breeds productivity and innovation, as "genius can only breathe freely in an atmosphere of

²⁷ Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. Watts & Co., 1929. p.53.

²⁸ Ibid. p.54.

freedom.”²⁹ Liberalism is essential to individual flourishing, as this innovation is impossible without the freedom to push customs and tradition.

Beyond the previously mentioned areas in which liberalism allows an individual to flourish, it also allows for a community to flourish. An individual is the unit of composition of a state. If something in any aspect were to affect the individual in a detrimental manner, then the state will suffer from this as an aggregate whole. In protecting one’s neighbor’s rights, one protects the community, and thus oneself, as “there is no side of a man’s life which is unimportant to society, for whatever he is, does, or thinks may affect his own well-being, which is and ought to be matter of common concern, and may also directly or indirectly affect the thought, action of those with whom he comes in contact”.³⁰ An individual is more than an end to oneself; in this sense, liberalism promotes the flourishing of state and the growth of interpersonal bonds. While liberty is not the sole basis of a flourishing society, its promotion and protection among neighbors is crucial to the well-being of all in society. Social obligation is at the core of the liberal relationship between men, specifically between men within the community of the state, as each individual owes his or her fellow citizen support of positive goods and rights, and in return society owes to him the means of maintaining a civilized standard of life.”³¹ To edify this case that Hobhouse presents, Estlund equates “liberal associationism” with liberalism, signifying that intrinsic in liberalism is a communitarianism and collectivism necessary for liberalism to properly function.³²

²⁹ Ibid. p.60.

³⁰ Hobhouse p.58.

³¹ Ibid. p.79.

³² Estlund, David M. *Democratic Authority: A Philosophical Framework*. Princeton University Press, 2008. p.426.

Rawls also argues that liberalism necessitates a focus on communities and associations as a supplement to the focus on individualism. Rawls writes in *Political Liberalism*,

It is incorrect to say that liberalism focuses solely on the rights of individuals; rather, the rights it recognizes are to protect associations, smaller groups, and individuals, all from one another in an appropriate balance specified by its guiding principles of justice.³³

The protection of rights of an association is as necessary to liberalism as the protection of the rights of individuals, as individuals are so closely tied to associations. Liberalism therefore promotes the growth and flourishing of both the individual in providing rights and liberties, but also the communities in which the individual participates.

Liberalism benefits society and the individual in the sense that it promotes human dignity, institutionalizes republicanism and democratic procedures, and allows for the flourishing of the individual as well as the community. The democratic procedures and republicanism which liberalism promotes provide for the protection of individual rights and the legitimacy of outcomes from these political procedures.

³³ Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism*. Columbia University Press, 2005. p.221.

CHAPTER THREE

What is Ideology?

The previous chapter has reviewed the many goods associated with liberal capitalism, however, the main goal of this thesis is to examine the extent to which liberal capitalism functions as a constraining ideology. In this chapter I explain how I will use the concept of ideology and arrive at a set of elements of critical ideology. First, I critique Karl Marx's definition of ideology, claiming that it rests on highly contested deterministic theories. Then I examine the definitions of ideology proposed by Oakeshott and Voegelin. Finally, I build on the work of Oakeshott and Voegelin in order to define ideology for the purposes of this thesis.

Readers might expect me to turn to Marx's definition of ideology for a critique of liberal capitalism as a constraining ideology. Marx defines ideology in his work *The German Ideology*, writing,

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc. of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. - real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms.¹

Essentially, ideology to him is the set of ideas engrained into a culture as a result of the previous economic order. While Marxism does claim that liberal capitalism is a form of

¹ Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The German Ideology*. People's Pub. House, 2010. p.9.

ideology and offers a critique of liberal capitalism, I find his critique to be overly deterministic.

I am not alone in my doubt of Marx's definition of ideology; other academics find his definition to be lacking. Boyan Znepolski writes that Marx subjects the cognitive, cultural, and political definitions of ideology to his overarching definition of ideology as a "global social phenomenon" that is "a function and expression of a particular limited situation, a situation not of society at large but of only one stratum or one segment of society."² Ideology is simply the set of beliefs and thoughts of the ruling class; ideology is inherently bourgeois. Znepolski also finds these two critiques of Marx's definition of ideology: "From a sociological point of view, ideology is insurmountable and inherent only to class societies; from a methodological point of view, we can speak of ideology only if it is possible in principle to distinguish subjective notions of reality from objective reality."³ Marx's definition of ideology subject alternative definitions of ideology in an *ad hoc* fashion to support his critique of the bourgeoisie.

Often assumed and occasionally built upon, historical determinism and materialism permeate much of Marx's works. He explicitly describes it when he writes, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living."⁴ Marx writes that all of the present is defined by the circumstances of the past, endorsing the controversial and highly questioned theory of historical determinism.

²Marx, Karl. *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. 1852. p.186-187.

³ Znepolski, Boyan. "Marx's Concept of Ideology and Its Successors." *Dialogue and Universalism*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2018, p. 193.

⁴ Marx, Karl. *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. 1852. p.186

Little argues in his work *The Scientific Marx* that Marx's use of historical determinism leads to unaddressed problems such as "the nature of historical determination, the relative primacy of the forces and relations of production, the extent to which institutions of the super-structure may causally influence the economic structure, and the role of class conflict and politics in the historical process."⁵ Marx does not elaborate on these issues, but rather in *Capital* uses a very specific form of historical determinism very limited in scope with little to no justification of the claims made previously in his other works promoting such broad historical determinism:

His chief concern—in *The German Ideology*, in *The Communist Manifesto*, and in *Capital*—is with the property relations and the relations of production found within a given social order. The mode of production is the concept that Marx uses most often in characterizing the dependency of noneconomic phenomena such as ideology or politics on facts about material life; the suggestion is that both technology and social institutions of production impose a "logic" on social life.⁶

Drucker expands on Little's criticisms, specifically focusing on the necessity for a change of ideology due to the switch between those ascending to power and those with power. If Marx's proposal were to be correct, then the ascending classes sow the seeds of their own destruction. In Marx's writings, class struggles determine all struggles, and the fate of these class struggles rests upon the sustainability of certain modes of production. History is determined by materials, which I will break down into economic determinism and technological determinism.

Economic Determinism

⁵ Little, Daniel. *The Scientific Marx*. U of Minnesota Press, 1986. p.42.

⁶ *Ibid.* p.46.

Economic determinism can be defined as the belief that economic structures are the basis for all other structures: economic, cultural, political, etc. Marx shows his belief in this, writing,

The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch.⁷

Marx claims that economic structures lead to the political and social environment in which we live. All things depend on the structure and flow for the economy. McMurty comments on Marx's claims, saying that in Marx's economic determinism economic structures do not simply determine the actions of individuals, but also, "the economic structure determines the legal and political superstructures, the ideology, and the mechanical habits, forms of social consciousness by blocking or selecting out all such phenomena that do not comply with it."⁸ Economic determinism underlies all of Marx's definition of ideology, which brings with it philosophical flaws.

Technological Determinism

Beyond economic determinism, Marx further utilizes technological determinism. While economic determinism claims that actions, ideology, political institutions, and cultural structures depend on the previous economic order, technological determinism

⁷ Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The German Ideology*. People's Pub. House, 2010. p.21.

⁸ McMurty, John. *Structure of Marx's World-View*, Princeton University Press, 1978. p.161.

argues that the economic status of a certain time depends upon the technological development. McMurty writes on Marx's use of technology in determinism, claiming,

The relations of production/economic structure correspond to a definite state of development of the forces of production insofar as the units of effective ownership involved in the former correspond in scale to the units of technological integration involved in the latter... insofar as the social coordination of exchange and appropriation of products corresponds to the social coordination of the production of these products.⁹

Marx's definition of ideology rests upon the success of the pre-determined creation and ownership of technology. This technological determination underlies and drives the economic determination, leading to another faulty premise in his definition. Marx's dependency upon both economic and technological determinism are intellectual flaws in his definition of ideology.

In search of a better way of understanding ideology, I turn now to the work of Michael Oakeshott and Eric Voegelin.¹⁰ Oakeshott defines ideology as 'abstract principles or a set of related abstract principles which has been independently premeditated.'¹¹ Ideologies are generalizations about life abstracted from life and simplified in order to create a succinct and cohesive outlook. In the strongest sense, they are abstractions of reality with the intent to understand the world around an individual.¹² Rather than a well-examined set of beliefs, an ideology is a form of mental shortcut one takes to better understand life and then structure his or her own life around. This is problematic in the way that one lives. Beyond that, ideology for Oakeshott demands the

⁹ Ibid. p. 191, 193.

¹⁰ I rely heavily on the article by Dr. David Corey, "Oakeshott's Concept of Ideology".

¹¹ Oakeshott, Michael. *Political Education: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the London School of Economics and Political Science on March 6, 1951*. Cambridge [England: Bowes and Bowes, 1951]. Print. p.116.

¹² Corey, David D. "Oakeshott's Concept of Ideology." *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol. 19, no. 3, Oct. 2014, p.267.

creation of a set of rules on how to live and perceive the world. Ideology is an abstraction of reality that shapes the reality of an individual.

Ideology, while in some ways beneficial, is primarily flawed in practice. One way in which Oakeshott recognizes the benefits of ideology is through political education, as an ideology may offer “sharpness of outline and precision to a political tradition.”¹³ However, ideology offers a weak understanding of the world. All of the premises rest upon an abstraction of the world and practical knowledge, while “successful human action often depends on habit, knack, prudence, inspired genius, intuitive leaps, creativity, sympathetic awareness, taste, and discrimination.”¹⁴ This lack of understanding leads to belief systems based on individual experience and related experience, which leads to multiple, different ideologies. To Oakeshott, “Ideology was responsible for much of the political and moral confusion of the modern world, introducing a range of concepts that were not just misleading but false.”¹⁵ Oakeshott expands on his beliefs, writing:

So far from a political ideology being the quasi-divine parent of political activity, it turns out to be its earthly stepchild. Instead of an independently premeditated scheme of ends to be pursued, it is a system of ideas abstracted from the manner in which people have been accustomed to go about the business of attending to the arrangements of their societies. The pedigree of every political ideology shows itself to be the creature, not of premeditation in advance of political activity, but of meditation upon a manner of politics. In short, political activity comes first and a political ideology follows after.¹⁶

¹³ Oakeshott p.36.

¹⁴ Corey p.268.

¹⁵ Gamble, Andrew. “Oakeshott's Ideological Politics: Conservative or Liberal?” *The Cambridge Companion to Oakeshott*, edited by Efraim Podoksik, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012, p. 155.

¹⁶ Oakeshott, p. 51)

Ideologies differ from person to person, causing factions in political life. Ideology, in its abstractions and fabricated doctrines, leads to an incorrect view of the world and political confusion.

In contrast to Michael Oakeshott's view of ideology as an abstraction leading to a dogmatic set of beliefs, Eric Voegelin writes of ideology as a "pseudo-scientific intellectual system."¹⁷ To Voegelin, an ideology is a mixture of both intellectual and emotional pursuits, and he characterizes it as a modern phenomenon growing from the rise of Christianity and the rise of modern technology.¹⁸ He defines it officially in his work "Israel and Revolution", writing "Ideology is existence in rebellion against God and man. It is the violation of the First and Tenth Commandments, if we want to use the language of Israelite order; it is the *nosis*, the disease of the spirit, if we want to use the language of Aeschylus and Plato."¹⁹

A more complete understanding of Voegelin's definition of ideology can be drawn from his other works. He gives multiple characteristics of ideology: apocalypse, Gnosticism, immanentization, and scientism. Voegelin writes of ideology as a set of beliefs with a sense of apocalypse in so far as it is an idea that the present world of imperfection will be followed by a more perfect phase. Ideology has the sole purpose "of enacting such a transformation; activism and progressivism are inherent to their character."²⁰ Building on this sense of apocalypse, ideology requires a sense of

¹⁷ Corey p.267.

¹⁸ Corey, David D. "Eric Voegelin's Critique of Ideology." *Tradition v. Rationalism: Voegelin, Oakeshott, Hayek, and Others*, Lexington Books, 2018. pp.5-6.

¹⁹ Voegelin, Eric. *Order and History*. University of Missouri Press, 2001. p.24.

²⁰ Franz, Michael G. *Ideology and Pneumopathological Consciousness: Eric Voegelin's Analysis of the Spiritual Roots of Political Disorder*. 1988. Loyola University of Chicago, PhD dissertation. Loyola University. pp.143-144.

Gnosticism, or knowledge of how to bring about the more perfect world. Ideology additionally views the human condition as inherently flawed and a thing which humans must aim to escape.²¹

Another aspect of ideology is immanentization, or the belief that human action on earth rather than divine action in a transcendent realm will bring about the desired end. Building on his concept of modernism and the rise of science is the characteristic of scientism, or the belief that modern science will assist us in finally transforming man and his natural world into paradise. Ideology holds with it a rejection of the old world and embraces the technological advances of modernity. Voegelin writes on the significance of technology being used to transcend the issues of the “old world” through science and technology,

[T]he ideological revolt against the older type of doctrine derives . . . the better part of its strength from the contemporaneous experience of power to be gained over nature through the use of science and reason. Ideology is a commensal of modern science, drawing both its pathos and aggressiveness on the conflicts of scientists with church and state.²²

For Voegelin, “ideology is a modern revolt against the limits of the human condition, a revolt in which man strives for his own world-immanent salvation through historical speculation.”²³ Voegelin characterizes ideology by apocalypse, Gnosticism, immanentization, and scientism; it is essentially a revolutionary set of beliefs with the aim to better the flawed world through technology .

Voegelin criticizes ideology by claiming that ideology erodes political life. Similar to Oakeshott, he argues that ideologies are harmful in practice, as they cause political

²¹ Corey “Eric Voegelin’s Critique of Ideology” p.7.

²² Voegelin, Eric. “Immortality: Experience and Symbol.” *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 60, no. 3, 1967, p. 75

²³ Corey “Eric Voegelin’s Critique of Ideology” p.10.

dissolution, since no one person holds the same beliefs. Voegelin argues that political community requires some form of cohesion, while ideologies in politics lead to estrangement and increased individualism. He writes in “The German University and the German Society” :

The public life of society is thus characterized not only by the spirit, but also through the possibility of estrangement from it. Between the extremes of the spiritually genuine public life and the disintegration of a society through the radical privatization of its members, lie the actual concrete societies with their complex field of tensions between spirit and estrangement. Every concrete society, therefore, has its own particular character of public life through which the genuineness of sickness of its spirit can be recognized.²⁴

For Voegelin, ideologies take away what a political community holds in common and replaces it with individualism, leading to more political tension and an inability to function as a political community should.²⁵

Building on the work of both Voegelin and Oakeshott, I will define an ideology as a set of dogmatically held beliefs about the cause of the world’s ills paired with beliefs about how to remedy those ills through political actions. In essence, an ideology must both be diagnostic, prescriptive, and reductive. Moreover, these beliefs have to be false or deeply flawed, either through making impossible claims or intellectual reductivism. Positive knowledge in areas where it is not possible will lead to impossible claims. One example is the statement, “money will make someone happy.” It is impossible to make this claim as it is a broad, relative statement. A set of beliefs must also not be reductive, or an oversimplified account designed to make problems seem less complex and more easily solvable than they really are. One example of this is the statement, “individuals are

²⁴ Voegelin, Eric. “The German University and the Order of German Society: A Reconsideration of the Nazi Era,” in *CW*, vol. 12, p.7.

²⁵ Corey “Eric Voegelin’s Critique of Ideology” p.12.

equal". It allows for a wide amount of interpretations and exceptions; it ultimately reduces a very large and complex question of equality. Because ideology is based in action, it has to come to one conclusion that excludes the other options, leading to mutual exclusivity. With this definition of ideology as a set of beliefs that is both diagnostic and prescriptive, that is flawed or impossible, I will argue that liberalism and capitalism are held as ideologies in my following chapters, which leads to the creation of mankind as either solely political creatures or solely economic creatures.

CHAPTER FOUR

Homo Politicus

The ideology of liberalism casts man as a solely political creature with the goal of perpetual revolution and liberation. In this section, I will evaluate liberal capitalism according to the standard of “ideology” established in the last chapter. I intend to show that liberal capitalism leads in practice to a reductive philosophical anthropology and generates prescriptions that are not up to the task of advancing human flourishing.

Liberalism as Diagnosis and Prescription

The aim of liberalism is to liberate mankind from all sorts of barriers and to increase the autonomy of the individual. Its philosophical anthropology emphasizes freedom and autonomy. Thus Hobhouse, for instance, who is an advocate of liberalism, claims that it “finds humanity oppressed, and would set it free.”¹ Liberalism’s diagnosis of all of humanity’s ills is that we suffer barriers to our individual autonomy.² Liberalism is staunchly individualistic, demanding autonomy as a facet of liberty that must be respected. This sentiment is well expressed Justice Kennedy’s famous opinion in in *Lawrence v. Texas*. As he says on behalf of the Supreme Court,

At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life. Beliefs about these matters could not define the attributes of personhood were they formed under compulsion of the State.³

¹ Hobhouse, L. T. (Leonard Trelawny). *Liberalism*. H. Holt and Co., 1911. p.8.

² Kekes, John. *Against Liberalism*. Cornell University Press, 1997. p.201.

³ Kennedy, Justice. *LAWRENCE v. TEXAS*. 2003. p.13.

This autonomy leads to the virtual self-worship of the individual as his or her own creator. As philosopher John Gray puts it, “what makes autonomy valuable is that it enables individuals to make their own choices among options and lives that are valuable but incompatible.”⁴ Liberty, autonomy, choice, and individualism are at the core of liberalism; without these concepts, liberalism would cease to be what it is.

Bearing in mind the sole cause of the ills of mankind being the barriers to individual autonomy, liberalism prescribes perpetual liberation from these ills. The solution is constant liberation of the people. Liberalism involves *perpetual* liberation because it finds new barriers to liberty as time goes on. Hobhouse, for instance, claims that liberalism is “a living force in the modern world and [has] the prospect of transforming its ideals into actualities.”⁵ The goal of liberalism is to constantly change and transform. There is no distinct end. So far it has turned its attention to civil liberty, fiscal liberty, personal liberty, social liberty, economic liberty, domestic liberty, international liberty, political liberty, and local, racial, and national liberty. Liberalism is at its core, a belief in the power of progress into freedom. Liberalism’s “key idea has been that of improvement, or, in politics, reform.”⁶ This improvement sacrifices security for progressive social systems that check each other through their development. It is more of an evolving spirit than a set of institutions or programs. It seeks to constantly reject prior institutions as the spirit grows.⁷ There is no aspect of life which liberalism does not consume, because barriers inevitably arise in every aspect of life.

⁴ Gray, John. *The Two Faces of Liberalism*. 2000. pp.98-99.

⁵ Hobhouse p.369.

⁶ Minogue, Kenneth R. *The Liberal Mind*. Methuen, 1963. p.62.

⁷ *Ibid.* p.64.

Evaluating Liberalism in Terms of Ideology

How solid are the diagnosis and the prescription offered by liberalism? Not very solid, I would argue. First, the claim that the goal of mankind is to reach liberation and autonomy fails to recognize the intractable problem of evil. Secondly, the existence of pluralism directly conflicts with the necessary pursuit of liberation. The existence of pluralism requires the ideology of liberalism to scrutinize its own “harmony principle,” which it cannot adequately do without undermining its core principles or dissolving culture and community. Let me treat each of these problems in turn.

In its attempt to increase human autonomy, liberalism fails to recognize the prevalence of wickedness and evil. It aims to lower barriers to freedom, but in doing so, opens up the possibility for mankind to act evilly and harm others. In other words, an underlying assumption in liberalism is the belief

that if people are allowed to make their own decisions without external interference, if they do not have to contend with poverty, discrimination, crime, and any other social ills, if they are not ignorant, indoctrinated, or enraged by injustice... then they will do what is good and not what is evil.⁸

This belief denies the fact that men are evil and inherently self-serving. Liberals tend to blame all evil and vice on circumstances rather than on human failings. This is a flawed doctrine.

In addition to liberalism committing itself to the promotion of autonomy, the ideology of liberalism also commits itself to pluralism, which leads to a philosophical conflict. Liberalism cannot both endorse autonomy and support pluralism. Anytime a political morality commits itself to pluralism, it faces the problem that must deny the existence of an overriding value. The main dilemma of liberalism is to deny the primacy of autonomy

⁸ Deneen, Patrick J., et al. *Why Liberalism Failed*, Yale University Press, 2018, p.202.

in order to fully embrace pluralism, but it cannot do so and still retain its identity. As Kekes writes,

Liberals cannot consistently appeal to some more basic overriding value and simultaneously deny that any value is overriding, as their commitment to pluralism requires them to do. Given that liberals are committed to regarding some values as basic, their commitment is either arbitrary, because it lacks justification, or it is inconsistent with their commitment to pluralism.⁹

Philosophically, the internal conflict that liberalism faces between autonomy and pluralism discredits its stance and legitimacy. Autonomy and pluralism cannot coexist as values without conflict.

This philosophical problem manifests itself fully in a practical crisis that liberalism must address: the “harmony principle,” which liberalism parades as the solution to pluralism, is errant due to competing and conflicting values, as well as rival freedoms. The “harmony principle” maintains that all values and rights will work together in harmony and will not cause conflict in a perfectly liberal society. However, due to pluralism and varying values, there are rival freedoms and rights that are fundamentally incompatible, which leads to a lack of legitimacy of the liberal state. A plural society leads to various values, and “being logically incompatible is only the simplest way in which vital liberal freedoms may be rivals. They can also undermine one another through their practical effects and through the tendency of some of their uses to weaken or subvert legal regimes.”¹⁰ Some examples of these incompatible freedoms are the freedom of speech between racists and racial minorities. Sometimes the freedom of one must be curbed or limited in order to ensure the freedom of another. Regardless, one group will feel disenfranchised by the limitation of a universal right, and “when society

⁹ Kekes, John. *Against Liberalism*. Cornell University Press, 1997. pp.209-210.

¹⁰ Gray p.79

contains sharply divergent ethical beliefs, an appeal to basic rights will not produce a settlement that is accepted as legitimate.”¹¹ Practically, the interaction between these rival freedoms leads to a less legitimate state and demands the state to deny pluralism in order to practically function as a state.

This dissolution of culture and thus, the communities that bind individuals together in collective values, leads to the existence of two remaining social stratum: the individual and the government. As Gray writes of those who live in a liberal society, “For us, having a life in common cannot mean living in a society unified by common values. It means having common institutions through which the conflicts of rival values can be mediated.”¹² Liberalism promotes an individuated polity, and “the more individuated the polity, the more likely that a mass of individuals would inevitably turn to the state in times of need.”¹³ The state becomes stronger, as the people turn in times of searching for liberation from their civil society and their communities to the state, seeking a political correction to the unrest and the liberation they crave. This desire to gain more autonomy and liberty feeds the presence of liberalism in a society, and

the expansion of liberalism rests upon a vicious and reinforcing cycle in which state expansion secures the end of individual fragmentation, in turn requiring further state expansion to control a society without shared norms, practices, or beliefs. Liberalism thus increasingly requires a legal and administrative regime, driven by the imperative of replacing all non-liberal forms of support for human flourishing (such as schools, medicine, and charity), and hollowing any deeply held sense of shared future or fate among the citizenry. Informal relationships are replaced by administrative directives, political policies, and legal mandates, undermining voluntary civic membership and requiring an ever-expanding state apparatus to ensure social cooperation.¹⁴

¹¹ Ibid. p.117

¹² Ibid. p.121.

¹³ Deneen p.61

¹⁴ Ibid. pp.62-63

Human flourishing is thus sought in two rival places: the individual and the government. When a human looks and sees the inability to flourish, the one place to which he or she can now turn is the state. I will draw on this dependency on the state later in this chapter.

The ultimate result of all of these crises is the evolution of men into political creatures rather than complex creatures made to reason, feel, and commune with each other. With the isolation of man, “only constraints approved by the liberal state can finally be acceptable. The assumption is that legitimate limits upon liberty can arise only from the authority of the consent-based liberal state.”¹⁵ Once the state becomes the sole creator of constraints, the state becomes the sole guarantor of flourishing. Man’s telos transforms from communion with his or her fellow man to political revolution and liberation in an eternal and insufficient pursuit of happiness. The ideology of liberalism is so closely tied to this phenomenon of government aiding in this pursuit that the *Declaration of Independence* advocates revolution until one has the ability to pursue happiness,

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness... That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.¹⁶

This mentality displayed in the Declaration of Independence places the responsibility of protection of the ability to pursue happiness in the hands of the government, and paired with the dissolution of civil society and community, the one source outside of oneself wherein an individual can search for happiness is the government. Eventually, this will lead to an eternal state of unrest and revolution. Man will become a political creature

¹⁵ Ibid. p.69.

¹⁶ *The Declaration of Independence: Full Text*. <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/>.

dedicated “to alter or to abolish” anything that obstructs his or her way of achieving what one believes to be happiness.

The results of the evolution of man into a solely political creature is the problem of perpetual revolution. This is problematic because no one political system will best suit all people for their pursuit of happiness and because mankind should seek happiness outside of the political realm. In light of the problem of pluralism mentioned earlier, no political environment will be conducive to the pursuit of happiness for all people. This will lead to an inevitable fight for happiness, or inalienable rights, between individuals, escalating into a political war. The deformation of man into a merely political creature leads to the increasing politicization of aspects of human life outside of politics and the eventual dissolution of political community and society.

This perpetual revolution also increases the politicization of things outside of the political realm. Beyond the reduction of mankind into solely political creatures with the desire to revolutionize, ideological liberalism reaches into more and more aspects of human life. In a system in which our end is ultimate freedom, when we fail to reach the happiness to which we feel entitled, we inevitably *search* for new barriers to our freedom in order to reach happiness. This leads to people discovering ever-new areas of “revolutions” that are thought to be necessary in order to reach a sense of existential satisfaction. However, when this revolution reaches its end, the people will inevitably still feel meaningless, as if they have not completed their end. This will lead to a cycle of perpetual revolution. This has deleterious effects on both society, or the community outside the realm of politics, and the political community, or the state.

First, liberalism results in a dissolution of society, or community with culture and tradition. The pluralism and autonomy inherent in ideological liberalism results in individualism and man as his own creator. Men become creatures of autonomy and isolation. Gray writes that “the fundamental premise of liberalism is that the natural condition of man is defined above all by the absence of culture, and that, by contrast, the presence of culture marks existence of artifice and convention.”¹⁷ Prior to liberalism, man was at the least a partial product of the culture and community in which he was born; now, culture is a product of mankind, who conquers nature, time, and location to make a new culture subject to his or her own autonomy. In warring against nature in order to make oneself the ultimate creator of oneself, man also had to war against culture and the community culture affords; isolation from social constructs and society altogether is the inevitable result of liberalism.¹⁸ Man is a culture of himself or herself, an era of an individual, and a community of one. Free of constraints, man is also free of any society.

Secondly, ideological liberalism results in a dissolution of political society because it first results in the expansion of the state into every aspect of life. This expansionism of ideological liberalism results in mankind holding every aspect of life so tightly. In a society that emphasizes rights and revolution, we politicize everything, especially things outside of the realm of political community. During the process of perpetual revolution, the realm of politics extends in a sense of manifest destiny. There are only so many aspects of the political life against which citizens may revolt. This leads citizens to seek other areas of life which present barriers to their freedom and relates back to Deneen’s writings on human beings turning to the state for their happiness and

¹⁷ Gray p.67

¹⁸ Ibid. p.90.

satisfaction. The state is the one area in which those who hold the ideology of liberalism may see the reform and improvement of their society, so they turn politics into the battleground of desires. Ideological liberalism expands the realm of the state, which will eventually lead to the dissolution of the political community.

Some examples of the expansion of the political sphere include politicization of religion, politicization of relationships, and the politicization of social life. With regard to the politicization of religions, while religious organizations cannot openly endorse or campaign for political candidates or parties, politics still feeds on the power of religion. While calling upon one's moral obligation has been commonplace in politics over time, the recent use of religious language and the "chosen one" language is a recent acquisition of politics. Politicians call upon religious duties and utilize religious language for their own profit. As an example, President Donald Trump's campaign manager tweeted on April 30, 2019, "There has never been and probably never will be a movement like this again. Only God could deliver such a savior to our nation, and only God could allow me to help. God bless America!"¹⁹ Politics reaches into the sphere of religion in order to achieve political gains and influence.

Additionally, as politics expands, more people allow it to affect their relationships. This occurs through political tribalism, with increasingly more people associating with those of the same political party. A PEW Research Center survey found that "Two-thirds of consistent conservatives and half of consistent liberals say most of

¹⁹ Parscale, Brad (@parscale). "Loved watching the crowd fill up for the 547th Rally in Green Bay. There has never been and probably never will be a movement like this again. Only God could deliver such a savior to our nation and only God could allow me to help. God bless America!" 30 April, 2019, 8:07 am. Tweet.

their close friends share their political views.”²⁰ Additionally, there is a rise in Americans’ dating and marrying within their own political party. A 2016 PEW Research Center survey found that “fully 77% of Republicans who are married or living with a partner – and an identical percentage of married Democrats – say their spouse belongs to the same party.”²¹ With a rise of ideological liberalism, there is a rise in the politicization of friendships and relationships.

Beyond religion and relationships, ideological liberalism demands people to take political stances on social life. Social media and the rise of entertainment result in the demand of celebrities of all backgrounds to take political stances. Comedian and host of the *Tonight Show* Jimmy Fallon received criticism for not criticizing President Donald Trump in his show.²² When football player Colin Kaepernick took a knee during the playing of the national anthem during his game, people and corporations from both sides took a political side, escalating the situation and displaying the increase of the politicization of sports. Social media additionally requires individuals, regardless of celebrity status to take stances on all sorts of issues. From banners on Facebook profile pictures to trending hashtags on twitter to petitions shared on all social media platforms, individual citizens are expected to hold political opinions, share those political opinions, and most drastically, advocate those beliefs. With a rise in boycotts from Starbucks to Nike to Chick-fil-A, people must express their political beliefs in their consumerism and

²⁰ Taylor, Paul. “Demographic Trends Shaping US Politics in 2016 and beyond.” *Pew Research Center*, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/27/the-demographic-trends-shaping-american-politics-in-2016-and-beyond/>.

²¹ Doherty, Carroll., et al. *Partisanship and Political Animosity in America: 6 Key Facts*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/06/22/key-facts-partisanship/>.

²² Itzkoff, Dave. “Jimmy Fallon Was on Top of the World. Then Came Trump.” *The New York Times*, 17 May 2017. *NYTimes.com*.

then pronounce it to their “friends” on social media. Ideological liberalism leads to the politicization of every aspect of human social life.

The politicization of everything leads to the dissolution of political community because reform and revolution are the ends of ideological liberalism. Through ideological liberalism, politics becomes a tool and technique to remove all suffering from a society and political community.²³ This attempt to use politics as a solution to suffering rather than the creation of a government that best serves a community results in the conversion of "politics into a crudely conceived moral battleground. On one side we find oppressors, and on the other, a class of victims. Once the emotional disposition to see politics in this way is established, then we find people groping around trying to make the evidence fit."²⁴ Because reform is imagined to be the teleology and end of mankind, every fight for reform is one of existential satisfaction. Politics is not a realm of limited war and compromise. Politics is the realm of total war. This results in citizens fighting against each other, rather than shaping a political community in which they can live and thrive. Ideological liberalism does not reach solutions, but rather results in a dichotomy of winners and losers in politics. Ideological liberalism dissolves politics into war rather than the interaction between citizens.

In conclusion, ideological liberalism creates mankind in the image of politics, rather than creating politics in the image of a relational mankind. The results of this are the increasing politicization of aspects of human life outside of politics and the eventual dissolution of political community and society. Mankind should not be a creature with only political ends. This denies the importance of goods outside of politics like family,

²³ Minogue pp.13-17.

²⁴ Ibid. pp.17-20.

relationships, friendships, academics, work, and religion. Ideological liberalism leads to politics conquering every other aspect of human life.

CHAPTER FIVE

Homo Economicus

The ideology of liberal capitalism portrays man as an economic creature. Humanity is no longer seen qualitatively but rather quantitatively in terms of how much each individual contributes to an economic good. In this section, I will use the work of Ludwig von Mises as a spokesman for the fifth wave of freedom (economic freedom), or liberal capitalism.¹ I will also evaluate liberal capitalism in terms of my definition of ideology. The argument of this chapter is that liberal capitalism does indeed lend itself to an ideological view of man—that his fundamental problem is one of economic want and that the solution to this problem is to be found simply in economic freedom. I maintain that this is a badly reductionistic view and an obstacle to genuine human flourishing.

The first aspect of ideology that I find prevalent in liberal capitalism is a false diagnosis of the ills of humankind. This diagnosis is a claim on what humans essentially are; it is descriptive of human nature and the problems of human beings: In Liberal Capitalism, human beings are pursuing one principal goal, which, according to Von Mises “the best possible satisfaction of human wants; it is prosperity and abundance”². In liberal capitalism, there is no greater accomplishment than economic betterment.

Von Mises diagnoses the fundamental problem of humankind to be limitations on economic productivity. Von Mises writes, “It is in the nature of man continually to strive for an improvement in his material condition. ... [I]t is certain that men always strive for

¹ Mises, Ludwig Von. *Liberalism: the Classical Tradition*. Mises Institute, 2018.

² Ibid. p.192.

an improvement in their conditions and always will. This is man's inescapable destiny".³ If this belief is held without the belief that "it is true that all this straining and struggling to increase their standard of living does not make men any happier" the implications of the above statement are disastrous.⁴ Mankind's principal end should not be economic prosperity or productivity.

Based on its faulty diagnosis, capitalism as Von Mises presents it attempts a prescription. After claiming that the main problem is limits on economic productivity, Von Mises asserts that the only solution is to create a system in which men can expand their productivity through protecting the property of individuals. "The foundation of any and every civilization, including our own, is private ownership of the means of production".⁵ If one has ownership of the means of production, then one can best capitalize on productivity and reach full economic potential. "The program of liberalism, therefore, if condensed into a single word, would have to read, *property*, that is, private ownership of the means of production."⁶ Liberal capitalism, at least as Von Mises presents it, maintains that the only way to allow humans to consistently be productive and increase their standards of living is to ensure private property.

To expand on the solution of ensuring private property, Von Mises proposes a system that fixes the wrongs of barriers to productivity, by claiming that "What we (liberals) maintain is only that a system based on freedom for all workers warrants the greatest productivity of human labor and is therefore in the interest of all the inhabitants

³ Ibid. p.190.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. p.60.

⁶ Ibid. p.19.

of the earth.”⁷ This statement claims that private property and economic freedom are in the interest of all the inhabitants of the earth. This is an oversimplification and a prescriptive statement based on a false belief.

Beyond proposing a system that will increase material comfort, Von Mises claims that any other system would make matters worse. There is an existential threat to human happiness, and there is only one solution. There is a sense of dualism here. A person can only pick one of two options in an economic system: “Either capitalism or socialism: there exists no other way.”⁸ This exclusivity also leads to drastic, almost apocalyptic repercussions for those who disagree with the system of capitalism, as Von Mises writes, “There is no third way. The same is true of property: either-or—either private ownership of the means of production, or hunger and misery for everyone.”⁹ This threatening, slippery slope fallacy reveals one way in which liberal capitalism is ideological. In conclusion, liberal capitalism as presented by one of its most ardent defenders, Ludwig Von Mises, is a reductive ideology.

The ideology of capitalism is a form of reductivism that overemphasizes the economic dimension of mankind to the exclusion of other political goods. Ideological capitalism has an ideological manifest destiny, attempting to capitalize on parts of life that should not exist in the realm of the quantifiable. Ultimately, ideological capitalism turns life into a series of economic transactions, making man simply an economic creature.

⁷ Ibid. p.20.

⁸ Ibid. p.79.

⁹ Ibid. p.88.

Hannah Arendt characterizes the problems here by claiming that man lives not only in the the *vita activa*, or the active life, but also in the *vita contemplativa*, or contemplative life. Even the *vita activa* consists of multiple components, not all of them exhausted by strictly economic activity. These include labor, work, and action. Labor, according to Arendt, is the process of exerting physical energy towards sustenance. This definition refers to the labor of animals and slaves who serve a master. It is a process that has no distinct end, never referencing a final product.¹⁰ In contrast, work is the process of creating things of value, or as Arendt writes, “the sheer unending variety of things whose sum total constitutes the human artifice.”¹¹ Action, which includes speech, is the physical activity that discloses a part of a human to another. It is characterized by both equality and distinction, as it is the act of relating to another person.¹² Labor and work are the focus of the ideology of capitalism, as capitalism emphasizes the need for perpetual productivity and an endless desire to improve one’s standard of living.

While labor and work are necessary to provide goods that aid in living, such as food, shelter, and means, through the passing of time, the function of labor has become exalted as one of the highest of activities, as it produces economic goods. This results in the eventual creation of a cyclical consumption culture, which Arendt calls the “victory of the *animal laborans*.”¹³ This results in a world of simply production and consumption, turning the economy into one of a “waste economy, in which things must be almost as quickly devoured and discarded as they have appeared in the world.”¹⁴ This emphasis on

¹⁰ Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. University of Chicago Press, 1958. p.80.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p.136.

¹² *Ibid.* pp.175-176.

¹³ *Ibid.* p.320.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p.134.

the importance of property, production, and consumption is characteristic of ideological capitalism.

The necessary result of holding capitalism as an ideology, as von Mises does, is the ultimate reduction of humans into solely economic creatures. The three aspects of ideological capitalism that lead to a simplified view of mankind are the philosophical anthropology of man as essentially productive creatures, the capitalist solution in the institution of private ownership, and the need to increase one's standard of living and ownership in order to attain happiness. One cannot adequately account for human dissatisfaction by pointing to obstacles to production. Man suffers from other ills that are more metaphysical and existential. Man will never be satisfied in his pursuit of an improved standard of living.

Beyond the reduction of mankind into solely economic creatures with only economic ends, ideological capitalism embraces an economic manifest destiny, with people commodifying more and more aspects of human life. In a society that emphasizes economic success and claims that the end of man is economic productivity, we commodify everything, especially those things which we should not. These things that should not be commodified include relationships, non-physical goods, and political goods. Let me take up each in turn.

Friendships, love, and family all fall into the category of human relationships. When capitalism bleeds into these aspects of life, the relationships and thus, the individual humans in these relationships, must bear the burden of an economic and quantifiable value. Ideological capitalism does not limit itself to commodifying the individual who holds that ideology; it spreads into how the individual views others and

relates to others. Recognizing this distorting tendency, Pope John Paul II argues in *Love and Responsibility* that a human is a “somebody” which “sets him apart from every other entity in the visible world, which as an object is only ‘something.’”¹⁵ This distinction reaffirms my previous statement that humans are beyond any other quantifiable objects and should not be limited to productivity. All of these reductions of relationships inevitably lead to the view of humans as tools to accomplish an economic end or provide a satisfactory reductive of the goods the relationship should provide.

Friendships suffer especially under the ideology of capitalism. While philosophers have argued about the nature of friendship, the view I embrace is the one which Aristotle employs when he writes of *philia*, that friendships revolve around either utility, pleasure, or virtue. He writes that “To be friends therefore, men must feel goodwill for each other, that is, wish each other’s good, and be aware of each other’s goodwill, and the cause of their goodwill must be one of the lovable qualities mentioned above.”¹⁶ The perfect friendship is that which embodies the characteristic of virtue and good, and that the other two friendships are imperfect. When one of these imperfect friendships fails to provide one individual with some form of benefit, whether it be economic productivity or pleasure, it fails to be productive and thus is not valuable. However, friendships are important for more than simply benefits and fail when they are only based on the economic benefits one can gain. Friendships should embody some form of productivity in the sense that they should not hinder or harm one of the individuals, but the productivity

¹⁵ Wojtya, Karol. *Love and Responsibility*. Rev. ed., Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1981. p.21.

¹⁶ Aristotle., and Irwin, Terence. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Second edition., Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1999. p.21.

cannot be quantified. Friendship is a good in and of itself, not demanding utility or material goods.

Love also suffers from ideological capitalism by becoming transactional. Love is reduced to a carnal sexual desire or one of simply pleasure. Individuals engaged in love in the ideology of capitalism inevitably utilize “love” or abandon it for better prospects. This is manifest through the view of marriage and love as solely sources of pleasure or economic power. In a *New York Times* Article “The Marriages of Power Couples Reinforce Income Inequality,” one author claims that “power marriages” are on the rise, in which couples join together to gain forces and increase economic and social power.¹⁷ These marriages are based on attraction and prosperity, turning love and marriage into a commodity.

C.S. Lewis writes of *eros* or romantic love in his book *The Four Loves*. He defines love as *eros* or romantic love as the infatuation and commitment to a beloved or individual. The love desires nothing from the individual except to become one with that person. Eros in the proper sense turns an individual into “love’s contemplative” according to Lewis.¹⁸ Lewis calls the reduction of love to carnal sexual desire *Venus*. *Venus* does not desire a distinct individual or a “beloved” but desires a person simply for the sake of sexual pleasure. He writes that a man in love in *eros* desires a beloved, but a man with *Venus* desires any woman.¹⁹ Pope John Paul II expands on this in *Love and Responsibility*, writing that valuing a relationship for its utility and sexual pleasure alone results in the reduction of both parties, “if I treat someone else as a means and a tool in

¹⁷ Cowen, Tyler. “The Marriages of Power Couples Reinforce Income Inequality.” *The New York Times*, 3 Jan. 2016.

¹⁸ Lewis, Clive S. *The Four Loves*. Collins, 1982. p.133.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p.134.

relation to myself I cannot help regarding myself in the same light. We have here something like the opposite of the commandment to love.”²⁰ Love and marriage should not view the object of said affection as a means to a productive end; it will result in the disposal of the other. When love is built upon the basis of consumption and productivity, it views the one who should be the beloved as a tool for gain, for as Lewis writes, “one does not keep the carton after one has smoked the cigarettes.”²¹ Ideological capitalism turns marriage and love into commodities and sources of power and economic productivity.

What about family life? Does the ideology of capitalism affect even this most sacred of spaces? I argue that it does; it encourages the view that family is nothing more or less than a business-like institution. The first effect is seeing a family as a business institution that should have an output. One example of this in contemporary life is the *Wall Street Journal* article “Family Inc.” which presents a healthy family as one that follows rules of operation of a business, which routine family performance reviews, payment to children, and branding sessions.²² Family should not operate as a business does. It has no outputs, but rather is an environment that allows for the community and healthy living. An individual never leaves his or her family and always remains a member of it. While work and productivity is necessary to keep a family functioning, it is not the end of the family. Another ill of viewing the family through a capitalist lens is the inevitable reduction of individuals to productive units. This is most clearly manifest in the view of children as investments. Parents calculate the cost of raising a child, weighing

²⁰ Wojtya p.39.

²¹ Lewis p.135.

²² Feiler, Bruce. “Family Inc.” *Wall Street Journal*, 10 Feb. 2013.

the importance of education, hobbies, and health on how it will affect their children. While it is good to provide these goods for one's children, parents should not expect a return on their so-called "investment" in their children. To love one's child is to provide him or her with the opportunities and the environment to flourish in whatever way he or she is best fit.

Ideological capitalism continues on its manifest destiny by commodifying non-physical goods of life, including religion and education. These are distinct from relationships in the sense that they do not directly lead to the commodification of individuals and are distinct from political goods in the sense that they do not affect the political community, but rather one's individual personhood. Ideological capitalism leads to the commodification of religion, turning the spiritual into the economic, as well as the commodification of education, turning the university into a factory that has an economic output.

In ideological capitalism, religion is an instrument to gain monetary growth and increase productivity. One worships to feel happy and thus more productive. So often, people sweep aside religious traditions in the favor of economic gain, ignoring holidays, days of worship, in order to increase economic gain and make money in order to survive. that In both religion and education, the overall concepts are commodified, and the institutions which protect and foster these non-physical goods become businesses. In religion, the church, temple, or place of worship becomes a business with the primary motivation to increase revenue and "spiritual output". The church must always be growing, or else the people are failing as employees of their religion or god. With studies performed on why people are leaving the church, the church's obsession with numbers

keeps looking towards attendance and away from the flourishing of spiritual life. The rise of megachurches that provide their members with goods, such as coffee shops, book shops, and gyms, is evidence of the rise of the commodified religious man. The manifest destiny of ideological capitalism brings about the new crusades for religion: save people by making them more comfortable in their material possessions.

The commodification of education follows a similar path to the commodification of religion; both instrumentalize goods that have non-economic ends and turn institutions into businesses that concern themselves primarily with output. As Patrick Deneen writes, liberal capitalism devalues a liberal arts education, or an education meant to liberate the individual in favor for technical education. Liberal arts were meant to cultivate the free person and the free citizen, in accordance with this understanding of liberty. The liberal arts made us free.”²³ However, liberal capitalism overtook the liberal arts by replacing teachings on liberal arts with studies emphasizing individual desires to increase in wealth, or the STEM degrees and business degrees.²⁴ The economic productivity of these degrees made them more valuable and sought after by students desiring economic success, which led to the eventual decline of the liberal arts education. An education that was meant to liberate individual became replaced with an education as a tool for economic productivity. This concept expands into the realm of the institutions of education, which are no longer a source of liberation and education, but instead are the grounds of training for a life of labor and economic productivity. We lose all sense of a liberal education that liberates and set us free because education becomes an instrument for increased economic gain. Students need a high economic return on their investment in their education.

²³ Deneen p.113.

²⁴ Ibid. p.116.

Education in the realm of capitalism and in the realm of labor is a commodity rather than a non-physical good.

Beyond the commodification of humans, relationships, and non-economic goods, ideological capitalism makes us deaf to genuine political goods. Ideological capitalism subordinates the political creature to the economic creature. This was Hannah Arendt's most basic critique in her book *The Human Condition*. Capitalistic man will disregard justice, security, national character, and solidarity in pursuit of economic gain.

Ideological capitalism views the government as a means to overall and communal economic productivity. In this ideology, the highest good that a government should pursue is the protection of private property and the insurance that the free markets can run in order that productivity may increase. All other political goods should serve these means. Security allows for trade and productivity growth, but apart from the demands of protecting private property, governments have no demand to ensure security.

Governments will set aside security for the sake of economic growth and trade. Due to the triumph of labor for the sake of productivity as the primary function of mankind, ideological capitalism leads to the rejection of political goods such as security, national character, and solidarity.

Hannah Ardent expands on the consuming nature of ideological capitalism, claiming that capitalism turns economic and productive functions, which properly belong in the realm of the private into the realm of the public, or that of politics. She claims that the realm of the household is the realm of the private. It encompasses the economic activity and any other activity that people required by necessity to survive.²⁵ In contrast, the

²⁵ Arendt p.30.

public life or *polis* is the realm of freedom and of action.²⁶ The difference between these two is that in the household, there is required inequality in order to sustain life and economic work, while in the polis, or political world, there is equality.²⁷ As stated earlier, the process of labor exists in the household, as it is necessary to continually provide goods to exist. In contrast, work exists in the public and political sphere.

In character with the never-ceasing cycle of labor, the private and economic life starts to take over all aspects of the public life, as “everything gets absorbed into the collective needs of the whole society, conceived as a gigantic organism of production and consumption”²⁸ The cycle of a waste economy consumes the political life, subjecting the political man to that of the economic man because, “As long as the *animal laborans* remains in possession of [the public life] there can be no true public realm, but only private activities displayed in the open.”²⁹ Now that the economic life has overtaken the political, the general population holds the shared assumption that the function of government is to improve the standard of living and allow for increased economic productivity. Economic good is political good.³⁰ All other political goods become subservient to economic productivity.

Capitalism as an ideology results in the triumph of economics over all other sectors of life. It commodifies all things, especially those which are not quantifiable, such as human relationships, political goods, and non-physical goods. The ideology of

²⁶ Ibid. pp.30-32.

²⁷ Ibid. p.33.

²⁸ Beiner, Ronald. *What's the Matter with Liberalism?* University Of California Press, 1995. p.365.

²⁹ Arendt p.134.

³⁰ Beiner p.369.

capitalism turns humankind into creatures of labor and economic function; it subjects other goods to those of economic value.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

Capitalism and Liberalism have many good things to recommend them, but they also have a tendency to become ideological and to fetter man's pursuit of his highest ends. The result of holding these two systems of thought in an ideological way is less human flourishing. Ideological liberalism refashions mankind as a *Homo Politicus*, inspiring mankind to constant reform and revolution in order to reach a never achievable existential satisfaction. This is ultimately unsatisfying because mankind's good is not liberation and freedom. Freedom is simply a means to some greater, more meaningful end. Ideological capitalism similarly refashions mankind into a *Homo Economicus*, claiming that the end of man is to constantly produce and improve his economic standing. This again is unsatisfying because one will never reach complete satisfaction by means of economic growth. Both liberalism and capitalism have been defended in terms of increasing satisfaction, but whenever one holds the two as ideologies, they hinder satisfaction or happiness. They will always be seeking, always desiring, and always restless. They will never supply the happiness we desire.

The solution to ideological liberalism is a change of perspective from revolution and liberation in the political sphere to a perspective of community and conversation. Man is not made for the state; man is made for community. There are facets of liberalism that are beneficial, such as the advancement of human dignity, the support of republicanism and democratic procedures, the flourishing of the individual, and the protections of the disenfranchised. However, a society should not sacrifice the

advancement of community upon the altar of the pursuit of happiness. In order to alter the telos of mankind, one needs to place man in a new environment; mankind has adapted to this increasingly political environment. One needs to introduce civil associations into society to remove man from the state of eternal political revolution. In addition to this, politics will need to be conducted less as a competition and more as a discussion. In order for democracy to operate properly, there needs to be trust throughout the community, which cannot be achieved through this politicization and view of politics as a competition. As Gray writes of this dialectic method of politics, which he calls *modus vivendi*, “it does not seek convergence on the truth—even the truth of value pluralism. The idea that political life could be without illusions is itself illusive. ...It seeks only to cure us of the false hopes that go with philosophies that promise an ends to conflicts of value.”¹ Politics is made for man; man is not made for politics.

The solution to ideological capitalism is similar to that of ideological liberalism; ultimately one should value community and the individual over the value of economic productivity. Capitalism is a useful tool to better both the individual and society materially, but it should not be a guide for every decision one makes. The benefits of capitalism include increased productivity, freedoms, and the responsibility of a society, and one can conclude that when capitalism is functioning in its proper form, it is a beneficial and functional economic structure. However, the flaws of ideological capitalism pose a threat to the philosophical aspirations of man. Humans are not tools for production and innovation. They are not commodities to increase one’s standing in the markets. In order to bypass the tempting ideology of capitalism, one should aim at charity

¹ Gray pp.136-137.

and hold economic success lightly. We can facilitate this through an emphasis on community and the importance of non-economic goods like family, friendships, religion, and education. While this is a very positive and almost naïve solution, the most beneficial and practical solution is to know and recognize the signs of holding capitalism as an ideology. The markets are made as a tool for man; man is not made as a tool for the markets.

To avoid reducing man to a commodity or a merely political creature, one must avoid ideology overall and engage with fellow humans, recognizing their inherent complexity and value. There is no perfect solution or ideological replacement to the ideologies of liberalism and capitalism, but there is the ability to safeguard against the dissolution of society by returning to a view of man as a complex creature, not simply a political creature or an economic creature. In order to avoid the pitfalls of liberalism and capitalism, one must hold them not as ideologies, but recognize their value as tools. Capitalism and liberalism are means rather than ends. Mankind is neither *Homo politicus* nor *Homo economicus*. Man is a complex creature with ends greater than productivity or freedom; man is made for communion with others.

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