

“Economic planning would not affect merely those of our marginal needs that we have in mind when we speak contemptuously about the merely economic. It would, in effect, mean that we as individuals should no longer be allowed to decide what we regard as marginal.

“The authority directing all economic activity would control not merely the part of our lives which is concerned with inferior things; it would control the allocation of the limited means for all our ends. And whoever controls all economic activity controls the means for all our ends and must therefore decide which are to be satisfied and which not. This is really the crux of the matter. Economic control is not merely control of a sector of human life which can be separated from the rest; it is the control of the means for all our ends. And whoever has sole control of the means must also determine which ends are to be served, which values are to be rated higher and which lower – in short, what men should believe and strive for.” Friedrich Hayek, The Road to Serfdom¹

“... man lives in a symbolic universe. Language, myth, art, and religion are parts of his universe. They are the varied threads which weave the symbolic net, the tangled web of human experience. All human progress in thought and experience refines upon and strengthens this net. No longer can man confront reality immediately; he cannot see it, as it were, face to face. ... He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols or religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except by the interposition of this artificial medium. His situation is the same in the theoretical as in the practical sphere.” Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man²

In the above quotation, Hayek is giving expression to the practically exclusive economic focus of our culture. As he says, we believe that the economic is of paramount importance because material means are necessary for the realization of meaningfulness of any sort. It is the key to everything we hold dear and, therefore, must be our greatest concern.

This economic emphasis manifests in countless ways in our society. In his documentary "Civilization: the West and the Rest"³, the historian Niall Ferguson characterizes the Protestant work ethic as the "sixth killer app"⁴ that has been crucial to Western cultural supremacy for at least two hundred years. He explains that by "working, accumulating capital and deferring consumption in order to prove their own godliness"⁵, the Protestants established the economic focus that was key to Western industrial and political dominance. In other words, the most successful religious doctrine has been one that expresses holiness in the form of "thrift and industry"⁶ and competes for congregants in capitalist fashion.

Another instance of this predominately economic orientation is encountered in the remarks made by Scott Reyburn, a journalist who reports on the art market, during his participation in a debate entitled "The Art Market is the Best Judge of Good Art".⁷ There, he said that "...Vermeer, like all artists, was making money; he was earning a living. And that's what artists do and it hasn't changed. The market is timeless the way that the artists make work to make money is also timeless."⁸ Therefore, the best artists are, first and foremost, trying to pay the bills, while the market grants them the means to express themselves aesthetically through its recognition and compensation of the best works.

Additionally, our democratic political process is understood as a competition for votes that is fundamentally the same as commercial competition. In his book Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, Joseph Schumpeter quotes a politician identified only as "one of the most successful politicians that ever lived" as saying "What businessmen do not understand is that exactly as they are

dealing in oil so I am dealing in votes."⁹ Our political life, then, also operates with business methods that efficiently generate support and accumulate the "political capital" needed to accomplish any goal.

These and countless more examples collectively depict an economic attitude which was encapsulated in Calvin Coolidge's famously concise pronouncement that "the business of America is business". However, a closer look at the 1925 speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors¹⁰ from which this phrase comes discloses certain little discussed but highly significant discrepancies. First of all, Coolidge's actual words were "...the chief business of the American people is business."¹¹ Secondly, Coolidge moderates the American fascination with wealth by saying: "Of course, the accumulation of wealth can not be justified as the chief end of existence. But we are compelled to recognize it as a means to well nigh every desirable achievement. So long as wealth is made the means and not the end, we need not greatly fear it."¹² And in another place he qualifies that fascination again: "We make no concealment of the fact that we want wealth, but there are many other things that we want very much more. We want peace and honor, and that charity which is so strong an element of all civilization. The chief ideal of the American people is idealism. I cannot repeat too often that America is a nation of idealists. That is the only motive to which they ever give any strong and lasting reaction."¹³

The absence of the word "chief" in the popularly accepted misquote, along with our ignorance of the ideal limitations that he places on money-making constitute a fundamental alteration of Coolidge's meaning. His point that business is only one of a number of concerns that occupy Americans and his warning about the dangers of concentrating solely on means are completely lost. Coolidge clearly understands economic acquisition as a way of facilitating meaningful purpose, but there is no purpose beyond pure acquisition when our business is just business. In essence, the catchy reformulation of his actual words is indicative of a general displacement of non-economic forms of meaningfulness by the drive to make money, which this essay will argue is profoundly problematic intellectually, morally and spiritually.

Indeed, the recent disastrous exploitation of the most visible and concrete symbol of American optimism, namely home-ownership, exemplifies this point. The significance of family life, personal identity, private property and the other meanings associated with the home were leveraged in order to generate profits. The purpose was never to assist in the realization of the American Dream, but rather to harness that hope to the financial apparatus and force it to add power to the all important economic machine.

Even though it is usually understood as a discrete disaster, the economic collapse that followed was actually the result of the practice of leveraging meaningfulness that pervades our lives. The irresistible terms that drew buyers into the housing market and the assurances of minimal risk given to investors to encourage the purchase of mortgage backed securities are among the familiar techniques that constitute business as usual. The same tactics are more or less subtly operative in the ever present ads and commercials that say things like "because family matters, BUSINESS MATTERS" and "money can't buy happiness, but it can buy _____ and that's pretty close." All such techniques generate sales and profits by promising to deliver the meaningfulness of intimate relationships, achievement, security, health, prosperity and truth itself to those who can and will pay the price demanded. The same logic was operative as the meaning of the private home and the integrity of the American economy were exploited for profit; it was simply applied on such an unprecedented scale that it produced global catastrophe.

Thus, the deep frustration, disappointment and betrayal felt in the wake of the crisis mark an acute instance of a more diffuse process that is reducing the idealism that Coolidge applauded to a forced and

even desperate form of superficial optimism. Our economy increasingly seems to be designed to deny us housing, health care and other material requirements that have to be met before intellectual, cultural and spiritual fulfillment is even possible. The contradiction between this general loss of meaningfulness and our tremendous wealth brings to mind Cassirer's argument that the symbolic articulation of meaning is the core principle of human life, culture and self-awareness. In the quotation above and throughout his philosophy, Cassirer demonstrates that the human being lives in a world composed of meanings that take on a number of distinct forms, including economic value, prosperity, and optimism as well as "language, myth, art and religion".¹⁴ According to this perspective, each of these modes of meaning make unique and equally vital contributions to the experience of reality. The specifically economic form of meaning and the modes of science, religion, politics, history, ethics, art, language and technology are equally indispensable, while giving complete precedence to any one of them is a grave error that distorts experience.¹⁵ On the basis of these few elements of Cassirer's thought, then, we can begin to see how the coincidence of our immense wealth and increasingly debilitating pessimism may actually be a product of our economic single-mindedness.

To follow up this suggestion, we can examine one of Cassirer's specific demonstrations of the way in which consciousness transforms given content into meaningful experience through different cultural and symbolic rules. Cassirer does so with a hypothetical drawing which first takes on the purely aesthetic meaning of "a beautiful line in the style of Hogarth".¹⁶ This way of understanding the drawing requires "the objectification of feeling, and the subjectification of nature"¹⁷ which is the key principle of the articulation and apprehension of the "inner forms" of feeling¹⁸ that constitute aesthetic significance. A reversal of this artistic perspective, however, negates "the subjectivity of the knower in order to establish a pure system of differential signifiers"¹⁹, thereby shifting to the physical objectivity of scientific vision. The lines on the paper come to represent a mathematical principle or physical law, like "the image of a certain trigonometric function, such as the image of a sine curve" or "the law of a certain natural process, such as the law of periodic oscillation."²⁰ But, then, the same mark takes on a mystical aura that "is like a primeval revelation from another world, from the world of the 'sacred'"²¹ because it has been "projected into the fundamental opposition between the 'sacred' and the 'profane'"²² that constitutes the "logic" of mythico-religious experience. Thus, the aesthetic experience of the drawing involves its engagement in a way that stabilizes some aspect of emotional life to make it accessible to thought, and which requires indifference to the physico-mathematical idea of objective nature. In order to shift to the mode of science, however, the feelings that are of foremost importance in the forms of art and religion have to be set aside before the line can begin to be significant in terms of causality and other physical principles. And, from the perspective of religious faith, the scientific and aesthetic forms of objectivity are dismissed as mere worldly concerns as the believer experiences the linear elements of the image as the delimitation which sets the holy apart from the secular.

In this way, consciousness shifts from one perspective to another by successively employing the fundamental rule that is specific to each cultural mode, which gives the drawing a very different meaning as each form of vision is activated in turn. And since the mind cannot assume more than one perspective at a time, because I cannot do calculus and compose poetry simultaneously, a single mode must be provisionally regarded as the operative form of meaning while the others are treated more or less indifferently. Consequently, a certain tension exists between the modes of cultural vision as they each vie to become the medium of the realization of meaningfulness.²³ This tension can never be resolved in a final or absolute sense, but only as an equilibrium between forms that must be continually renewed through the process of advancing one cultural mode to the foreground of consciousness to bring its specific logic into focus and then allowing it to recede and make room for another. The coordination of these vectors of meaning and their particular contributions to the expansion of human

self-awareness constitutes, for Cassirer²⁴, our never-ending cultural task of subjective and objective discovery.

Therefore, the necessity of adopting just one of these symbolic perspectives at any given moment²⁵ cannot be allowed to reduce “the richness and fullness that is offered in the various basic orientations of cultural consciousness by trying to force them together into a general form”.²⁶ But this is just what our commercial society does as it tries to force the whole of life into the economic mold and discards anything that doesn't fit as irrelevant. Our material mentality makes us oblivious to the significance of anything that is not commodified, monetized or financialized. This is why, for example, economists deny language its importance as an indispensable way in which human beings give order to their world. Hayek insists that because language is not and cannot be the product or possession of a single mind it functions, along with the price system and other social forces, as an impersonally objective constraint on behavior.²⁷ Baudin laments the human reliance on language because words have emotional, aesthetic and social associations that contaminate pure economic thought²⁸, and Knight accepts language as an unaccountably mysterious force²⁹ that might be put to “rational” use.

Unlike them, Cassirer would, in keeping with his assertion that every symbolic form has vital significance, insist that the economic should be evaluated on its own terms and with regard to its own logic.³⁰ Therefore, his philosophy avoids the simple dismissal of the economic as insignificant which concerns Hayek.³¹ But if we return to Cassirer's hypothetical drawing and interpret it as a textbook diagram of supply and demand or a representation of price movements on a securities exchange, do we do economic thought and action justice? Do we satisfactorily reveal how the drawing “means and “says” differently, according to the characteristic perspective of meaning”³² that economic logic is here proposed to be? Surely economic vision would actually regard the picture in material terms as an object that is to be produced or acquired?

Cassirer would agree that the drawing must be physically delivered to consciousness before its aesthetic, scientific or religious significance can be apprehended. His philosophy recognizes the material component as well as the meaning that make up every symbol,³³ and acknowledges the dependence this meaning has on its physical carrier. However, Cassirer also insists that the separation of the two is theoretical and cannot be made actual because objective experience is itself constituted by the bond between the symbol and the symbolized. There can never be something that is purely material and completely devoid of meaning because even sensory perception involves active cognitive engagement and interpretation.³⁴ Therefore, the apparent antithetical relationship between profit-seeking and meaningfulness cannot be an absolute exclusion of meaning, but must have some positive significance. The economic must stand alongside the other modes of expression and cooperate with them in the determination of objective experience.

As both Coolidge and Hayek point out, wealth relates to meaning as the primary “means to well nigh every desirable achievement”.³⁵ It constitutes the material conditions that facilitate the realization of whatever is important. In Cassirer's terms, therefore, the meaning of the economic can be understood as the possibility of meaning per se, with the qualification that for physical resources to serve as the expression of potential meaningfulness, the fulfillment of this potential must be suspended. Thus, the relation between the material sign and its immaterial import is not severed, but they are in a sense separated as much as they can be. In other words, not only are the other cultural forms simply put on hold with the adoption of economic vision, as they would be if, for example, aesthetic vision was operative, but the realization of meaning as such is held in abeyance as a distant goal that must be prepared for and anticipated.

This suspension of the movement from the material component of the symbolic to its meaning creates the cognitive space for economic pragmatism to function in terms of its own instrumental standards and values, such as efficiency and effectiveness. It is the intellectual location of the deferral of consumption, the investment of savings, the sacrifice of current production in the name of higher future productivity and the other forms of accumulating means that pervade commercial society. Of course, this postponement of the goal of significance doesn't make the material or profit-oriented mode of culture devoid of thought, but gives its symbolic operations, representations and determinations value solely as instruments for the attainment of some more or less remote end. On the most basic level this means that even the direct sense of accomplishment that attends the making of something from start to finish must be sacrificed in order to make room for the application of the concept of the division of labor. The atomization of a given task into a number of tenuously related operations undeniably results in a huge increase in productivity, but it also deprives the worker of any direct claim to the produce of the inter-mixture of her labor with nature, as Locke³⁶ might put it. As the endless chore of doing one discrete step over and over replaces the craftsman's concern with the complete physical realization of a product, the worker is confined to a mode of experience that lacks significance in comparison to some prospective situation that is expected to be indirectly invested with meaning by her effort. And so, as wage earners³⁷ and jobholders³⁸, we tend to regard the job at hand as an activity that fills the time while we look forward eagerly to the weekend or payday.

But in Cassirer's symbolic philosophy this necessary deferral of purpose or meaning would end with a shift from economic vision to some other mode of significance. The economic task would be set aside after it has generated the material requirements that would allow consciousness to realize meaningfulness in other ways. As mentioned, however, this doesn't happen in our society. The economic does not give place to the other cognitive vantage points which are equally important in the cultural process of "triangulating" reality. Indeed, this inflexibility is deemed to be a feature of reality which is considered truly real because it is unchanging. Accordingly, the material task does not facilitate other forms of symbolic expression but is understood to constitute the one and only form of valid and authentic experience. The instrumentalization of meaning becomes an obligatory feature that brands and legitimizes all thought and action. As is often lamented, even release from the productive chore described above merely allows the worker to engage in a form of consumption which also denies fulfillment in order to sustain and increase material demand. Likewise, Cassirer's drawing³⁹ and the meanings that it might convey would be valued only to the degree that they produce sales, much as "home-sweet-home" and the soundness of the U.S. economy were appropriated and used to generate profit during the housing boom of the first decade of this century.

When meaning is withheld and leveraged to this extent, the tension between the symbolic forms is superficially resolved in favor of the economic mode, but in actuality it is twisted into the imperative to maintain a single-minded material focus. The non-economic forms of culture have to be subordinated and entrained as means for supporting and reinforcing the cognitive and cultural primacy of the economic. Aesthetic vision, for example, is distorted into a method of managing attention that ultimately constrains thought to economic vision: "Emphasis is necessary in advertising, as in all the arts. ... Real emphasis is obtained, whatever the means employed, through sparing use. Only one element or thought should dominate."⁴⁰ Likewise, the logic, so to speak, of religion is also impressed into service to justify the economic. In an often quoted passage, John Adams argues that "[t]he moment the idea is admitted into society, that property is not as sacred as the laws of God, and that there is not a force of law and public justice to protect it, anarchy and tyranny commence. If "Thou shalt not covet," and "Thou shalt not steal," were not commandments of Heaven, they must be made inviolable precepts in every society, before it can be civilized or made free."⁴¹ And Mirowski has clearly demonstrated how neoclassical economists simply lifted the mathematical techniques of field physics in order to

acquire the prestige and legitimacy of a precise scientific discipline.⁴²

Something more subtle than overt domination occurs, however. With its unique capacity to hold the other forms of experience in suspension, the economic bias effectively makes its over-determination imperceptible.⁴³ The plurality and mutual determination of the different orientations of meaning, as we saw in the relations between the scientific, religious and artistic interpretations of Cassirer's drawing, are obscured because these orientations are prevented from fully realizing their specific expressive possibilities. Therefore, the economic becomes the sole form of objective experience by default because its limitations cannot be critically ascertained outside of the context of the objective roles and contributions of the other symbolic forms. In other words, thought is simultaneously reduced, by definition, to the activity of "calculating self-aware minds"⁴⁴ and denied the conceptual tools needed to recognize and challenge this diminishment.

To be absolutely clear, the domination of culture and cognition by economic logic is not the result of any grand or occult conspiracy.⁴⁵ It is the consequence of a belief in the purely economic nature of existence that is screened from reflective evaluation so thoroughly that it cannot be seen for the reification of a discrete cultural perspective that it is. Conscious coordination is unnecessary at a fundamental level because life simply works in a singular way. This insensible constraint of experience and action to the economic mode reinforces its identification with reality as a whole precisely because its logic operates automatically and apparently without human mediation. Econo-centrism's radical suspension of meaning makes it appear to be objectively real in the sense of being completely free from the subjectivity of "mere" symbolism.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, during crises like the Great Recession we get a glimpse of the cultural nature of existence that econo-centric mentality tries to conceal from itself. The breakdown of the totally impersonal and self-evident economic basis of everything reveals it to be something less than expected. And as all of the institutions, plans and certain knowledge that are dependent upon it totter, the initial response is quite naturally one of paralysis because the disintegration of reality as such is the only alternative to this material absolutism. This interruption of econo-centric vision allows the ethical and political modes of meaning in particular to very briefly emerge as sources of productive analysis and viable corrective measures before the economic bias can recover and move to shut down this shift to other cultural forms. As Mirowski has shown⁴⁷, however, there is a quickly initiated and calculated response that includes the contentious reassertion of the supposed objective superiority of economic knowledge which, on a day to day basis, discreetly shields it from responsibility for the intellectual contradictions and social dysfunction that it produces. But this step is insufficient to neutralize politics and ethics on the basis of their "subjectivity" before they manage to identify our excessive reliance on economic logic as the cause of failure. The economic mode is too obviously implicated in the fiasco, so it resorts to all other available rhetorical and "persuasive" means to render every other perspective so incoherent that economic thought appears technically precise and pragmatically decisive in comparison.

When econo-centric mentality falters in its occupation of consciousness and is seen to hypocritically manage reality, a contradiction emerges between the conviction that the economic constitutes the self-sufficient, integrating factor of everything and humanity's responsibility for the reality that it determines through culture. As Hayek says, the "(d)issatisfaction of everybody with his lot will inevitably grow with the consciousness that it is the result of deliberate human decision."⁴⁸ The econo-centric efforts to obstruct awareness of this contradiction merely turn the distress it causes into an increasingly inarticulate and intense anxiety. More and more radical forms of willful ignorance become necessary to obscure the fact that the cultural supremacy of the economic actually relies upon a specific preconception of reality and cultural manipulation. The central human concern with meaning

is leveraged further and further until society turns in on itself and disasters like the 2008/2009 financial collapse become perversely acceptable or even welcome, to those who suffer as well as those who benefit, as long as economic primacy is successfully reaffirmed in their wake.⁴⁹ And finally, our refusal to critically examine our own thinking and the profit-mentality that dominates it brings us to the irrationality of today. Now, a degenerate version of the sense of infinite possibility, the "ideal of...idealism" in Coolidge's words, that pure economic logic promises displaces meaning to such an extreme that econo-centrism's own absolutism must clutch at any nationalistic, tribalistic, racist, fundamentalist or authoritarian justification that comes to hand.

- 1 Hayek, Friedrich. *Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), 91-92.
- 2 Cassirer, Ernst. *An Essay on Man* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1970), 27.
- 3 *Civilization: The West and the Rest, Episode 6: Work Ethic*. Directed by James Runcie, Written and Presented by Niall Ferguson, Chimerica Media Ltd, 2012. Retrieved from YouTube (July 11, 2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhzreZkOSIY&list=PLSP9UbXmBuqoeOQjfe6wjW2npyrY9muOa&index=6&t=0s>. My transcriptions.
- 4 Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest, Episode 6*
- 5 Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest, Episode 6*
- 6 Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest, Episode 6*
- 7 Reyburn, Scott. Debate (sponsored by intelligencesquared.com). *The Art Market is the Best Judge of Good Art*. Saatchi Gallery, London, UK. October 7, 2011. Retrieved from YouTube (October 22, 2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSWmmhPeytc&list=PL46E99F39AE9F0F9C&index=9>. My transcriptions.
- 8 Reyburn, *The Art Market is the Best Judge of Good Art*
- 9 Schumpeter, Joseph. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1976), 285.
- 10 Coolidge, Calvin. "Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C.," January 17, 1925. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=24180>.
- 11 Coolidge, "Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C."
- 12 Coolidge, "Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C."
- 13 Coolidge, "Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C."
- 14 Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 27.; also Cassirer, Ernst. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: Volume 1: Language*. Trans. Manheim, Ralph (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 78.
- 15 Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 23.
- 16 Cassirer, Ernst. "The Problem of the Symbol in Philosophy", *The Warburg Years*, ed. and trans. Lofts, S.G. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 259.
- 17 Langer, Susanne K. *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling, Volume 1* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 87.
- 18 Langer, *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling, Volume 1*, 87.
- 19 Lofts, S.G., *Ernst Cassirer: A "Repetition" of Modernity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 190.
- 20 Cassirer, Ernst. "The Problem of the Symbol in Philosophy", 259-260.
- 21 Cassirer, Ernst. "The Problem of the Symbol in Philosophy", 259.
- 22 Lofts, S.G., *Ernst Cassirer: A "Repetition" of Modernity*, 103.
- 23 Lofts, S.G., *Ernst Cassirer: A "Repetition" of Modernity*, 191.
- 24 Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 252.
- 25 To my knowledge, Cassirer's most emphatic characterization of the distortion of thought and culture by the exclusive adoption of a single form of vision is his point that when knowledge is defined solely in terms of the "Ideal of objectifying science...[the] primary phenomena of the "I", of "willing"...disappear, because they are now behind our backs and the turn in viewpoint that would be necessary in order to make them visible again lies completely outside the methodological possibilities and the methodological competence of objective science." from Cassirer, Ernst. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Volume 4, The Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 144. - This essay is an attempt to demonstrate that our economic orientation constitutes a similar sort of turning away from other forms of meaning, and that this single-mindedness and the sense of reality it supports are becoming increasingly difficult to maintain.
- 26 Cassirer, Ernst. "The Problem of the Symbol in Philosophy", 260.

27 “But those who clamor for “conscious direction”—and who cannot believe that anything which has evolved without design (and even without our understanding it) should solve problems which we should not be able to solve consciously—should remember this: The problem is precisely how to extend the span of out[sic] utilization of resources beyond the span of the control of any one mind; and therefore, how to dispense with the need of conscious control, and how to provide inducements which will make the individuals do the desirable things without anyone having to tell them what to do.

“The problem which we meet here is by no means peculiar to economics but arises in connection with nearly all truly social phenomena, with language and with most of our cultural inheritance, and constitutes really the central theoretical problem of all social science.” from Hayek, Friedrich. “The Use of Knowledge in Society”, *American Economic Review*, XXXV, No. 4; September, 1945, pp. 519-30.

28 Baudin, Louis. “Irrationality in Economics”, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, LXVIII, No. 4; November 1954, 492-493.

29 Knight, Frank. “Economic History”, *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas, Volume II*, ed. Wiener, Philip. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 50.

30 Cassirer, Ernst. "Form and Technology", *The Warburg Years*, ed. and trans. Lofts, S.G. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 280.

31 Hayek, *Road to Serfdom*, 91-92.

32 Cassirer, Ernst. "The Problem of the Symbol in Philosophy", 260.

33 Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 39.

34 Cassirer, Ernst. "The Problem of the Symbol in Philosophy", 260.

35 Coolidge, "Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C."; Hayek, *Road to Serfdom*, 91-92.

36 “Whatever, then, he removes out of the state that Nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with it, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property. It being by him removed from the common state Nature placed it in, it hath by this labour something annexed to it that excludes the common right of other men.” from Locke, John. An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government. Chap. V, Sec. 26. *The Great Books of the Western World, Vol. 35*. ed. Maynard, Robert. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), 30.

37 “...“earn, you should earn.” ... now stands before us plain and pure as a sort of categorical imperative.” from Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. trans. Kalberg, Stephen. Third Roxbury Edition (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2002), 239 (Note 89).

38 Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Second Edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 46.

39 Note Heilbroner's point about the central importance of withholding in concept of property: Heilbroner, Robert. *Behind the Veil of Economics: Essays in the Worldly Philosophy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), 38.

40 Young, Frank H. *Technique of Advertising Layout* (New York: Covici Friede Publishers, 1935), 45.; compare to: “...the sphere where diverse means and very subtle ways of projecting ideas force themselves on one's attention is the sphere of art.”, Langer, Susanne K. *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling, Volume I* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 81.

41 Adams, John. *The Works of John Adams*. Edited by Charles Francis Adams. 10 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1850—56), Vol. VI, 8-9.

42 Mirowski, Philip. *More Heat than Light : Economics as Social Physics, Physics as Nature's Economics* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3.

43 Mirowski, Philip. *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste: How Neoliberalism Survived the Financial Meltdown* (United Kingdom: Verso, 2014), 28. - Mirowski's characterization of the worldview that led to the financial crisis of 2008/2009 as the “ideology of no ideology” neatly sums up a fundamental insight that pervades his writings and which, I think, can also be expressed as the

exploitation of the cognitive and cultural powers that Cassirer describes for the purpose of diminishing rather than expanding human self-awareness.

44 Smith, Vernon. "Theory and Experiment: What Are the Questions?" *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* (Amsterdam: Elsevier B.V. 73(1), 2010), 3-15; quoted in Nik-Khah, Edward., Mirowski, Philip. *The Knowledge We Have Lost in Information: The History of Information in Modern Economics* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017), 239.

45 Further research could, I suspect, reveal that the contradictions and willful ignorance that are necessary for sustaining the cultural primacy of the economic run so deep that they constitute the seedbed of cognitive dissonance from which conspiracy theories emerge.

46 "If there exists a means of possessing a reality absolutely, instead of knowing it relatively, of placing oneself within it instead of adopting points of view toward it, of having the intuition of it instead of making the analysis of it, in short, of grasping it over and above all expression, translation or symbolical representation, metaphysics is that very means. Metaphysics is therefore the science which claims to dispense with symbols." Bergson, Henri. *The Creative Mind* (New York: The Philosophical Library, Inc., 1946), 191.

47 Mirowski. *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste*, 343-355. - Mirowski explains the strategic sophistication of this response in great detail, including the crucial "deployment of agnotology"(p. 344) which I understand to be the diminishment of awareness of the cultural and symbolic nature of objective experience mentioned in note 43.

48 Hayek, *Road to Serfdom*, 107.

49 Mirowski. *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste*