

Cultural Goods and the Limits of the Market

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For my mother
Joyce Evelyn Keat

and in memory of my father
Ernest Frank Keat

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Preface

The chapters in this book were written over a period of ten years or so. Four of them (Chapters 1–4) have been published previously; the others (Chapters 5–8) have not, though the final one draws on other published papers not included here. All of them, though in different ways, address a single problem, that of 'market boundaries': they explore the possible grounds for regarding the market as an inappropriate framework for the conduct of certain kinds of activities, and hence for placing limits on the scope or extent of the market domain. Their main focus is on a particular, though loosely defined, class of such activities which may be called 'cultural', including broadcasting, the arts, academic research and so on. They are intended to show why it is that cultural activities of this kind, and the institutions within which they are conducted, should be 'protected' in various ways from the operation of the market.

The Introduction, as well as outlining their respective contents, sketches out the trajectory of thought which led to their composition. It is written in a somewhat more personal mode than is usual, but I hope it will prove helpful in making sense of what follows, and not be seen merely as self-indulgent. It also makes clear my indebtedness to the work of several writers, especially Alasdair MacIntyre and Michael Walzer, despite my sometimes being critical of their claims and putting their ideas to uses they would not endorse.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the long period of time over which the various chapters have been written, I changed my mind about certain things in the course of writing them. These changes are explained in the Introduction; they imply that some of the arguments relied on in the earlier chapters, in Part I, are rejected in the later ones, in Part II. Having concluded that some (though not all) of what I had previously argued was wrong, I should perhaps have excluded these earlier chapters, or tried to re-work them to bring them more fully into line with the later ones. But I decided not to do this, and have instead included them in their original form. After all, I might now be wrong to think they are wrong, and perhaps someone else will find my reasons for doubting them unconvincing. And in any case, despite these intellectual doubts, I still find the arguments in Part I more attractive than some of those in Part II.

Much of the initial impetus for this work came through my involvement in Lancaster University's Centre for the Study of Cultural Values (now the Institute for Cultural Studies): in particular, through its series of interdisciplinary research seminars and conferences on the Values of the Enterprise Culture (1988–90, with some financial support from the Economic and Social Research Council) and on contemporary forms of consumption (1990–91, with some financial support from the Nuffield Foundation). Chapters 1 and 2 were written during this period, which was one of the most intellectually exciting and personally congenial I have experienced. Amongst many members of the Centre I am especially grateful to Nick Abercrombie, Paul Heelas, Eileen Martin, Paul Morris and Nigel Whiteley.

Chapter 3 was also the outcome of an interdisciplinary research project at Lancaster University, this time between the Department of Philosophy and the Centre for the Study of Environmental Change (CSEC), with financial support from the ESRC (1992–95). I would like especially to thank John Foster, Robin Grove-White, Michael Jacobs, Bron Szerszynski and Mark Peacock from CSEC, and my colleagues in Philosophy who were involved in this: John Benson, Michael Hammond, Alan Holland, Jane Howarth and Jeremy Roxbee Cox.

The work on recognition and scientific institutions in Chapters 4 and 5 began while I was a visiting fellow at the University of Edinburgh's Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities in 1991; I would like to thank its Director, Peter Jones, for his warm welcome and support. The more recent work, on Chapters 6–8, has mainly been done since I moved permanently from Lancaster to Edinburgh University in 1994. I am grateful to many members of the Social and Political Theory Research Seminar there, especially to Zenon Bankowski and John Holmwood.

Finally, I would like to give special thanks to two people: to John O'Neill, for many years of discussion about markets and political philosophy, and for reading a draft version of the whole volume and telling me it was worth completing; and to Mary McCusker, both for encouraging me throughout, and for providing me, through the example of her own work in theatre, with a clear sense of why it is important to articulate a case against the commercialization of culture. I'm sorry that what I have to say falls short of what both of them would have wanted me to demonstrate.

RUSSELL KEAT

Acknowledgements

Four of the essays included in this volume have been previously published elsewhere, and are reproduced here with the kind permission of their respective publishers: Routledge (Chapters 1 and 2), The White Horse Press (Chapter 3) and Basil Blackwell (Chapter 4). Full bibliographical details of the original publications, the titles of which have been retained for their publication here, are provided in the initial asterisked footnote for each of them.

Introduction to *Cultural Goods and the Limits of the Market* (2000)

Russell Keat

A striking development in Britain (and elsewhere) over the past 20 years or so has been the introduction of market or quasi-market principles and forms of organisation into a wide range of institutions and social practices which had previously operated on quite different bases. I have in mind here not so much the privatisation of publicly owned industries, but the radical reconstruction of a wide range of institutions which, although remaining within the public sector, have increasingly been required to operate in commercially-modelled ways. Amongst these have been local government, education and health-care institutions, and also those which might broadly be termed *cultural* in character, including broadcasting, the various arts, academic research and so on. It is with these 'cultural' institutions that I shall primarily be concerned in these essays, though some of what I have to say may have wider application.¹

I started thinking about the issues raised by these developments in the mid-1980s, for rather obvious reasons. I was working in a university which, like others in Britain at that time, was coming under increasing pressure to adopt the techniques, outlook and organisational forms of commercial enterprise. Unlike the public utilities and nationalised industries, universities were not being privatised, but they were being encouraged or required to operate as if they were: students were to be seen as consumers, prospectuses refashioned as promotional literature, seminar-papers replaced by 'presentations'. Similar changes were taking place in other cultural institutions. Public subsidies for the arts were not removed, but the Arts Council required those it supported to construct commercially-modelled business and marketing plans as a condition of its financial support. The BBC remained a public service broadcasting institution, but through a succession of organizational changes became increasingly hard to distinguish from its commercial counterparts.

Changes in these public sector institutions were largely the result of direct pressures exercised by a government committed to a specific political project. But similar changes were taking place for at least partly independent reasons in institutions outwith the public sector, including the various professions and the 'less commercial' occupants of the market domain. Publishing provides a good example: while university presses were re-modelling themselves on the ways in which commercial publishers had previously operated, these were themselves becoming more like other businesses than they had been before. In overall terms, a major process of de-differentiation between previously distinct organizational forms and institutional norms seemed to have been set in train, with the market both expanding into new areas and intensifying its pressures in existing ones. Nor does this process show any obvious signs of being reversed with the demise of neo-liberal governments in the late 1990s.

It seemed to me then, as it still does now, that there was something fundamentally wrong with this expansion and intensification of the market - that it undermined the integrity of cultural institutions and reduced their potential contribution to human well-being. But I found it difficult to articulate and develop a convincing theoretical rationale for this response. The essays presented here record my attempts to do so; in this Introduction I try to explain what led me to approach the problem in the way that I have.

One difficulty I had from the outset was that I felt unable to draw on theoretical critiques of the market developed within the socialist tradition. From this perspective one would naturally object to any *extension* of the market because one objected to the market *as such* - if something is inherently bad, the more of it the worse; correspondingly, the defence of existing non-market institutions from market incursions would be seen as damage-limitation while waiting for a better future. But the socialist critique of the market could not, it seemed, be sustained. It assumed the possibility of some radically different, non-market basis for organising economic production which preserved what was good about the market, eliminated its ills, and did not generate other, more significant, ones of its own. Yet neither in theory nor in practice did there seem to be such an alternative.

This did not mean that there was no alternative - at least in theory - to distinctively *capitalist* forms of the market, since market socialist theorists had shown that capitalism and the market could, as it were, be de-coupled.ⁱⁱ It would then be possible to construct a system in which - unlike centrally planned ones - both the economic benefits of the market and its consistency with political liberties are preserved, whilst at the same time eliminating capitalist forms of ownership and control and all that is objectionable about these. But although market socialism offered a preferable alternative both to state socialism and to the capitalist market, its 'adoption' would not resolve the problems with which I was concerned, since one would still need to work out what reasons there might be for opposing the extension of 'the market' to cultural institutions, whether this took a capitalist or a socialist form.ⁱⁱⁱ

Of course this is not the only problem that market socialism fails to deal with; in particular, as its (socialist) critics have been quick to point out, it does not in itself provide an adequate solution to issues of distributive justice. However, what was problematic about extending the market to cultural institutions did not appear to be primarily a matter of distributive (in)justice. For although in some cases, such as the introduction of entry charges for museums and galleries, what was happening could be criticised on these grounds, in many others it could not, either because free access was retained or because it had never existed anyway.^{iv}

So in arguing for the protection of cultural institutions from the market, it seemed one could draw neither on arguments against the market *tout court*, nor on arguments about justice. Rather, one had somehow to show that there were certain kinds of social activities and institutions which *are* appropriately governed by the market and others that are *not*, and that cultural institutions belonged to the latter category - though quite possibly for different reasons than might apply to other such cases. In other words, the issue should be conceived as one of market *boundaries*.

The idea that the market has its proper place, but should not be permitted to intrude where it does not belong, is in many respects a quite familiar one. It is reflected, for example, both in the insights of everyday wisdom - 'there are things that money can't buy' (and are at least as important as those that it can) - and in various theorisations of modernity, such as Hegel's 'division' of society into the family, civil society (including a market economy) and the state, each of which is constituted by different kinds of social relationships and norms which would be inappropriate and destructive if practised 'elsewhere'.^v However, it was Michael Walzer's *Spheres of Justice*, published in 1983, that influenced me most in thinking about market boundaries. 'Like Hegel', Walzer argued that political theorists should recognise the highly differentiated character of modern societies, in which one finds a number of distinct spheres which differ in their institutional character, ethical norms and so on. Crucially, also, they differ in the specific kinds of social goods with whose creation, distribution and enjoyment they are primarily concerned - goods which are themselves qualitatively distinct from, and incommensurable with, one another.

But Walzer also emphasised that there was no guarantee that this desirable separation of spheres will be maintained: to prevent any one sphere coming to dominate others there is always a potential need to establish or maintain effective boundaries. Of particular concern was the possibility of dominance by the *market*, the sphere of money and commodities, and he noted how this may at least partly be prevented through a series of 'blocked exchanges', prohibitions on the sale or purchase of various items. Admittedly, Walzer's own use of this boundaries framework was to deal with questions of distributive justice, which I had already decided to set aside: for him, what was primarily objectionable about one sphere's dominating another was that the social goods in the dominated sphere would be distributed according to criteria that were appropriate only to those in the dominating sphere. But it seemed that this framework might be adapted to serve a somewhat different purpose: instead of seeing boundary-maintenance devices as ensuring that the distribution of each kind of social good was governed by appropriate criteria, one might see them as serving to protect the integrity and value of the various kinds of social goods themselves.^{vi}

However, it turned out that Walzer's particular focus on blocked exchanges as the primary means of limiting the market was not especially helpful in dealing with the issues about cultural institutions with which I was concerned. For example, whereas the sale and purchase of political office would run counter to the principles of liberal democracy, and rightly be seen as 'corruption', nothing analogous to this could plausibly be said about the sale and purchase of cultural goods. Or again, the buying and selling of 'friendship services' might be seen as undermining the nature of friendship as a specific kind of valued relationship. But the same could hardly be argued in the case of theatre tickets or books about political theory. Further, whereas blocked exchanges are essentially prohibitions - and hence encounter standard liberal objections to the loss of individual freedom - the defence of non-market cultural institutions does not imply prohibiting the activities of their commercial counterparts. Admittedly, some form of regulation for these may be required. But the main concern is to ensure adequate support for non-market institutions, and to resist attempts to make this conditional on their operating as if they were commercial enterprises.

What these various disanalogies suggested was that instead of focussing on issues about the exchange of cultural goods for money, it might be more fruitful to consider the effects of the market on the actual operation of cultural institutions and hence on the goods they 'produced'. That is, the problem was not whether the character and value of cultural goods was undermined by their status as commodities, but whether the market system might undermine the ability of cultural institutions to operate effectively. But to show that this was so would require some account of how cultural institutions and activities were best organised and conducted, and of just why it was that the market posed a threat to this.

It was in thinking about how this might be done that I found Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, published in 1981, of particular value. This was not because I was especially receptive to its central thesis, the supposedly parlous state of contemporary moral discourse consequent upon the 'failure of the Enlightenment project', and its accompanying gloom

about modern society; I found all this pretty unconvincing. But what I did find tremendously attractive was its account of what MacIntyre called *practices* - social activities which are governed by their own *standards of excellence* and conducted and organised in such a way that the *external goods* of money, power and status remain subordinate to each practice's concern with its specific *internal goods*.

Clearly, MacIntyre's concept of practices had a good deal in common with Marx's compelling depiction of 'truly human labour' in his early writings. Further, where the two differed, practices could well be seen as preferable, both in having a wider range of potential application and in their more genuinely *social* character. In particular, Marx's arguably self-expressivist account of people re-making the world in their own image, and hence recognising themselves in what they had created (albeit with others), seemed less convincing (and less environmentally friendly) than MacIntyre's emphasis on the wishes and desires of individuals being subject to socially instituted rules and judgments, so that people's satisfaction and well-being came not so much from expressing themselves as from producing and appreciating things which were judged to be 'good' in terms of their practice's standards.

In any case, it seemed to me that this conception of practices could be used to articulate what it was about the way in which cultural activities were conducted and organised in non-market institutions which made them different from those in market enterprises: intuitively at least, it captured a good deal of their distinctive character. If this were so, it might then be possible to show how their being conducted as practices was essential to their ability to 'produce' the kinds of goods with which they were concerned, and how their subjection to the market would be antithetical to their continuing to do so. In other words, this concept of practices appeared to be just what was needed in order to re-work Walzer's boundaries approach in terms of 'production' rather than 'exchange'.^{vii}

In Essay 1 I set out to explain why it is that the integrity of practices - and hence of the cultural activities I am concerned with - would be threatened by the market. Initially it seemed that this might be done simply by invoking the distinction between internal and external goods, with the market based exclusively on the latter and practices on the former. But this turned out to be unsatisfactory. For MacIntyre also emphasised that if practices were to be sustained over time they needed the support of *institutions*, which themselves relied on the use of external goods such as money and power. What had to be shown, therefore, was why the operation of the market was antithetical to the specific role of external goods required by institutionally organised practices.

I try to do this is by considering the implications of a concept closely associated with the market, that of *consumer sovereignty*. In a market economy, it is often claimed, production decisions are controlled by consumer preferences, expressed through their willingness-to-pay, and it is the differential ability profitably to satisfy these preferences which determines the outcome of competition between producers. But if this is so, the market inevitably poses a threat to activities conducted as practices, since there is no guarantee that the judgments on which consumer preferences are based will be consistent with the standards embedded in the practices concerned. If the members of any particular group of practitioners are to secure the financial resources they require, however, they may well find that they cannot afford not to respond to such preferences, especially in the face of competition from other such groups who are more willing to cater for them. So the institutional survival of the practice can be achieved only at the cost of its integrity.

A specific illustration of this argument is provided in Essay 2, through a partly hypothetical example of the possible effects on universities of students being accorded the status - and power - of sovereign consumers. But the main concern of this essay is to consider a possible objection to the position argued for in Essay 1: that to defend non-market cultural institutions in these terms is essentially *elitist*, and amounts to little more than a conservative defence of 'high' culture against the incursions of market-driven 'mass' culture.

Stated simply in these terms - as it often is - this objection is misconceived. There is nothing about the position I defend which implies the privileging of high culture: it is just as much concerned with the market's threat to soap opera as to classical opera. Nor is the position 'elitist' in the straightforward sense which this term at least used to have, until quite recently: it does not imply that only the few are able to appreciate the best things in life, nor that access to these should be denied to the supposedly incompetent majority.^{viii} However, what often underlies this objection points to some difficult but important issues about *authority*, which are the main focus of Essay 2.

The 'elitism' objection, I suggest, is often based on some form of scepticism (including postmodern versions of this) about 'value-judgments': the denial that there are any objective criteria governing these, and the claim that they should instead be seen as no more than the expression of individuals' preferences. Such scepticism has significant social implications: it delegitimises any form of social authority which rests on claims of 'objective' knowledge or judgment, since it denies that anyone's judgment is any better or worse than anyone else's. In doing so, it undermines what is arguably an essential feature of (institutionally organised) practices. It may also appear to provide a powerful rationale for the market, since this is an institution which, unlike most others, does not rely on these supposedly problematic forms of social authority. However, I try to show that the argument from scepticism to the market is far from convincing. I go on to argue that a further concept often (though wrongly) associated with scepticism, that of individual autonomy, is not essentially antithetical to the kind of social authority required by institutionally organised cultural practices - indeed, that the development of such autonomy will actually be enhanced by these.

Essay 3, which discusses Mark Sagoff's *The Economy of the Earth* (1988), might at first seem something of a diversion, since its focus is not on the protection of cultural institutions from the market but on that of the natural environment. However, it turns out that there is a good deal in common between the theoretical issues raised by these different cases. Sagoff's main

concern is to show what is wrong with the diagnosis of environmental problems offered by neo-classical economists, namely as cases of 'market failure', and hence also with the proposed treatment of these through the use of cost-benefit analysis. He is especially critical of a particular form of this, in which attempts are made to 'put a price' on how much people value (some aspect of) the environment by asking them how much they are willing to pay to keep it in the condition they prefer. Many respondents refuse to answer or give 'infinite value' responses. Sagoff congratulates them, both for refusing to price the unpriceable, and for detecting what he calls the 'category mistake' of treating their deeply held values as if they were merely consumer preferences. Decisions about the environment, he argues, should be made through public debate in our role as citizens, and based on our shared values about nature; they should not be based on the standpoint we adopt as consumers. The market does indeed 'fail' with respect to the environment, but this can neither be understood nor remedied within a neo-classical framework.

I agree with much of Sagoff's argument, but argue that he fails to recognise that the 'shared values' to which he refers also include that of *consumption*. He assumes that once we begin to think and argue as citizens, we will accept how important it is to protect the environment, since we are no longer thinking in terms of our 'private' interests as consumers. But the fact that, as citizens, we are concerned only with 'public' interests does not mean that the 'interest in consumption' disappears. Rather, it 're-emerges' both in our concern for one another's private interests in this, and in the shared value of consumption expressed in the collective resources devoted to supporting the institution of the market. So what Sagoff represents as a potential conflict which every individual faces between their different roles as citizens and consumers should instead, I argue, be seen as one they face as citizens, between the shared but conflicting values of 'consumption' and 'nature'.

Sagoff's argument against cost-benefit analysis - which might also be applied to decisions about the provision of cultural goods - also raises important questions about just what is meant by 'market boundaries' or 'keeping the market in its place'. Cost-benefit analysis, he

says, is a non-market procedure, but one which still conceives of people, inappropriately, as if they were consumers: the 'category-mistake' he describes involves (mis)understanding people's moral and political judgments as if they were consumer preferences. What this suggests, in more general terms, is that the market might 'transgress its boundaries' not only in the straightforward sense of its institutional form being introduced in inappropriate contexts, but also by what might be called 'illicit transfers of meanings', through which various concepts and forms of understanding associated with the market are applied where they do not belong.

In Essay 4 I explore this possibility through a discussion of Walzer's account of the social good of *recognition*. Walzer argues that although the need or desire for recognition may well be a universal human characteristic, the specific form which this takes differs markedly between modern and pre-modern societies. In the former, unlike the latter, what one finds is the competitive pursuit by individuals of what he terms *private* recognition, which is aimed primarily at gaining the favourable opinions of others. A crucial feature of such private recognition is that it does not matter what the reasons for these opinions might be, how well-founded they are, or even if there are any at all. But one knows full well that others are engaged in the same pursuit, and that the favourable opinion won today may be gone tomorrow, lost to a rival in the continuing struggle to acquire this good.

That such an understanding of recognition is at least congruent with market meanings seems clear, not only with respect to the idea of competition but also in the parallels between private recognition's dispensing with the need for justified beliefs, and the market's reliance only on the 'expressed preferences' of consumers, whatever the bases for these might be. This congruence does not by itself establish that a *transfer* of meanings has taken place; but if Walzer's historical account is correct, one knows at least that this modern form of recognition has displaced others, and the 'market-transfer' hypothesis is by means implausible. Further, this 'privatisation' of recognition might well be seen as having damaging consequences. Walzer himself suggests that it may undermine the ability of individuals to achieve genuine

self-respect, as distinct from mere 'self-esteem'. But given my own concern with the institutional conditions for the production of social goods, what seemed more important was the possibility that a predominantly private mode of recognition might also damage the social institutions through which these goods became available. Perhaps, that is, an objectively based and non-competitive mode of recognition - what Walzer refers to as *public* recognition - is essential to the effective operation of at least some such institutions.

That recognition of this kind has this important institutional function is a central claim in Warren Hagstrom's account of modern science in *The Scientific Community* (1965), where he uses an anthropological model of gift-exchange to represent the social activity of scientists as the exchange of information for recognition. Recognition is also an important element in Jerry Ravetz's analysis of scientific institutions in *Scientific Knowledge and its Social Problems* (1971). In Essay 5 I examine these two books in the context of a more general discussion of the motivational requirements of different social institutions through which human goods may be generated.

Both Hagstrom and (especially) Ravetz see recognition as a way of resolving the problem of 'harmonising individual purposes and institutional goals': given that one cannot realistically expect scientists to be motivated primarily by a self-denying 'commitment' to the advancement of scientific knowledge, how can one ensure that what they do will nonetheless generally contribute to this? Conferring recognition on those whose work meets certain requirements enables scientific institutions to deal with this problem without relying on market mechanisms and rewards. This claim is especially significant given that defenders of the market often argue that non-market institutions have to rely on a degree of altruistic commitment which goes against the grain of human nature, and will therefore fail. But if Hagstrom and Ravetz are right about science, this would seem to be a clear example of a non-market institution which does not rely on such supposedly unrealistic motivations, yet is undeniably successful in 'producing the goods' with which it is concerned.

Further, Ravetz's account of the institutional organisation of modern science provides an almost perfect illustration of what a social activity which displays the characteristics of a MacIntyrean practice would be like, of the institutional requirements for its successful conduct, and of how these requirements might be undermined by its subjection to the market. In particular, I argue, the damaging effects of what he calls the 'industrialization' of science can be at least partly understood in terms of the breakdown of appropriate institutional forms of recognition, which crucially depend on this being accorded to scientists only for work judged as competent in terms of this practice's standards.

However, neither Ravetz's nor Hagstrom's accounts of recognition are altogether convincing. I criticise Hagstrom for tending to assimilate gift exchanges to market exchanges, and I argue that both he and Ravetz are too inclined to regard the desire for recognition as itself a basic human motive. I suggest instead that one might postulate as a more fundamental human desire that of 'producing things that are good', with a related sense of satisfaction contingent upon the (justifiable) belief that one has actually done so - hence the need for (objective) recognition provided by (suitably qualified) others. On this view, the direct and competitive pursuit of recognition 'as such' is essentially pathological, and damaging both for individual well-being and the flourishing of goods-producing institutions.

So far as I can judge, both the conclusions reached in Essays 1-5, which comprise Part I of this volume, and the arguments used to arrive at these, form an internally consistent set of claims. In broad terms, what unites them is the idea that the best way to argue for the limitation of the market with respect to cultural activities is to show that it does not in fact provide the best framework for their successful conduct - that its adoption would be damaging to the institutional and motivational requirements for 'production' of this kind, which is instead better conducted in the form of MacIntyrean practices.^{ix}

However, by the time these essays were more or less completed in the early/mid- 1990s, I had become increasingly doubtful about one of their central claims: that the market is inherently incompatible with social activities being conducted as practices. In the more recently written essays in Part II I try to show why this claim is so problematic (Essay 6), and then to construct a different argument in defence of non-market cultural institutions which does not rely upon it (Essay 8). That argument draws partly on ideas developed in Essay 7 about the ways in which certain kinds of consumer goods can contribute to human well-being.

What bothered me most was the possibility that arguments for the inherent incompatibility of practices and the market might depend on taking 'at face value' how the latter was represented in orthodox neo-classical economics. That this might well be a mistake was suggested by a variety of 'less orthodox' approaches which challenged the adequacy of this theoretical representation: in particular, those developed in the work of various institutional economists, organisational theorists, economic sociologists and analysts of 'different capitalisms'.^x Of particular interest was the focus in much of this literature on the nature of the *firm* in market economies. So in Essay 6 I 'return' to MacIntyre in order to re-examine the relationship between markets and practices in the light of this. More specifically, the question I pose there is whether the *market*, as a macro-level institution or system, makes it (more or less) impossible for *firms* to possess an institutional form compatible with the conduct of economic production as a practice.

The (somewhat tentative and qualified) answer I give is 'No': the relationship between markets and practices is a good deal more open and variable than MacIntyre claims (and argues) that it is, and the extent to which production in a market economy displays at least practice-like characteristics depends on a number of factors which are not themselves essential features of, or necessarily associated with, 'the' market - which may itself take several forms. Or rather: this is the answer one should give if one excludes from MacIntyre's conception of practices the requirement that economic production should be integral to the life of particular kind of *community*. But I argue that there are good reasons for rejecting this requirement,

since it is apparently based on a questionable attachment to pre-modern forms of identity and antipathy towards 'the modern individual'.

As well as defending this (heavily guarded) optimism about the market, I argue that even if were true that the market is inherently antithetical to economic practices, this would only be an over-riding objection to it if there were no significant respects in which the market was superior to practice-based production in the contributions it could make to people's well-being. Yet this is just what defenders of the market would deny. The market, they would claim, is demonstrably superior to other ways of organizing economic production in its ability to generate goods which are of benefit to *consumers*. To which it might be added: production conducted as a practice may well be fine for 'practitioners', but there is no reason to believe it will be equally so for those on the receiving end.

How might MacIntyre respond to this objection? I conclude Essay 6 by suggesting that this is not a problem by which he is greatly concerned, since he does not regard 'modern consumption' as an especially significant source of well-being. In Essay 7 I question this response, but not through direct engagement with MacIntyre. Instead I examine some of the main arguments in Robert Lane's *The Market Experience* (1991). Admittedly, Lane's work occupies a very different conceptual universe to MacIntyre's, based as it is on the analysis of experimental data and the findings of survey research rather than 'grand theorising' about modernity. Further, Lane's conception of human well-being is specified partly in terms of 'overall subjective life-satisfaction' and partly in terms deriving from developmental and social psychology, unlike MacIntyre's Aristotelian conception of human flourishing. But despite these (and other) differences, the position for which Lane argues has a certain resonance with MacIntyre's.

Lane's central thesis is that market economies have an inbuilt tendency to prioritise consumption-benefits over production-benefits, and that in doing so they prioritise what can be shown, empirically, to be lesser goods over greater ones. For at least potentially, he argues,

the contributions to people's well-being deriving from their involvement in the *processes* of economic production are much greater than those deriving from its *outputs* - from the acquisition of income and its deployment in consumption. The market thus fails to be the great engine of human well-being its defenders claim it to be, since what it is so good at doing - generating incomes and consumer goods - is less valuable than what it tends to sacrifice in the course of doing so.

Lane then invites his readers to join in discovering how to make the market a better agent for promoting human well-being. One might think this is a doomed project, if the market inevitably prioritises lesser over greater goods. But I argue that such instant pessimism can be avoided if one takes care to formulate Lane's 'priority thesis' in a strictly hypothetical form: that the market is structured in such a way that *if and when* there is a conflict between producer-benefits and consumer-benefits, the latter will take priority over the former. What then becomes important is to identify those conditions under which such conflicts will not in fact arise. I make an attempt to do this by considering whether there are certain kinds of products which are such that their enjoyment by consumers is dependent on their producers engaging in activities that would, on Lane's criteria, contribute also to *their* well-being. I suggest that this would be so in the case of what Tibor Scitovsky terms 'creative products', a category which includes the performance of certain cultural activities.

However, I also argue in Essay 7 that Lane may anyway be wrong to think that consumer goods are lesser goods. I suggest that a more favourable view of consumption might be taken if one looks at the actual *uses* to which consumer goods may be put, especially their use in various socially constituted forms of activity which take place outwith the market sphere. In many cases, these 'uses' can be seen to involve the development and exercise of just the kinds of skills and capacities which Lane attributes to 'productive work at its best'; indeed, in some case they can be seen as enabling people to engage in MacIntyrean practices. So what is misleading about Lane's position, I conclude, is the assumption that 'production-benefits' are

available only through production, rather than also being available through the activities made possible by consumption.

In Essay 8 I return to the main theme of these essays, the justification of non-market cultural institutions. It might seem that, in light of the more positive view of the market presented in Essays 6 and 7 - in terms of its possible compatibility with practices and the value of the consumer goods it can generate - the need to defend non-market cultural institutions would be considerably diminished. But this is not so. Indeed, what I argue here is that such institutions are necessary even for the market to succeed 'in its own terms', in enhancing people's well-being through the production of consumer goods.

To show this I begin by noting that the extent to which the market can contribute to people's well-being in this way depends on the extent to which consumers are able to make sound judgments about the value for them of the various goods they might purchase. Since many such goods are purchased with a view to their use in various socially constituted forms of activity, the judgments which consumers have to make are not only about the 'fitness for purpose' of particular items, but also about the overall value to their lives of the activities which the purchase of these goods makes possible. The ability to make this latter kind of judgment, I suggest, is greatly enhanced by the availability of at least certain kinds of cultural goods, namely those which in various ways explore the nature and possibilities of human well-being. I call these 'cultural meta-goods'; they include *East Enders* as well as Aristotle's *Ethics*. Making use of a radicalised version of standard 'market failure' arguments in neo-classical economics, I then argue that there are good reasons to expect the 'underproduction' of cultural meta-goods in market economies, and hence for support by the state for their provision by non-market cultural institutions, and also for the regulation of their commercial counterparts.

So what this concluding essay tries to show is how a certain kind of justification for the market, which I call the *classical* justification, may itself be used to justify the 'limitation' of the

market. However, neither the argument itself, nor its support for such action by the state, would be accepted by *liberal* theorists, who see the chief virtue of the market as consisting, not in its generation of goods which contribute to people's well-being, but in its maximising individual liberty and minimising the state. More specifically, it would apparently not be accepted by so-called 'neutralist' liberals, who typically argue that intervention by the state to support cultural institutions runs counter to the principle of state neutrality with respect to different 'conceptions of the good' - a principle which the market, by contrast, is seen as satisfying.

However, I argue that 'leaving cultural goods to the market' is not in fact implied by the neutrality principle, since the market is itself not neutral between market and non-market goods, and the market is a social institution supported by the state. Further, given that both the natural and social conditions for different kinds of human goods often conflict with one another, political decisions based on judgments about their respective value cannot in practice be avoided. Thus both the decision to *institute* the market and the decision to *limit* it in various ways are based on essentially the same kinds of considerations: they involve collective judgments by members of a political community about the value to be given to various kinds of human goods, and the suitability or otherwise of the market as a means of securing these. And just as individuals require cultural goods to make judgments and decisions about the overall shape of their own lives, so too do political communities in making judgments and decisions about the institutional shape of theirs. In determining the limits of the market, one should not let the market determine the extent and character of those goods.

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ⁱ It might be objected that these reforms of public sector cultural institutions have involved the expansion of the *state* rather than the market, with all the hallmarks of the centralised planning which is supposedly anathema to their political proponents. However, a central objective of these state-imposed reforms has been to require these institutions to adopt commercially modelled forms of organisation, to respond to the demands of consumers through at least *quasi*-market mechanisms, and so on.

ⁱⁱ Especially Radoslav Selucky (1979), Alec Nove (1983) and - later on - David Miller (1989).

ⁱⁱⁱ This is why I have presented the issue from the outset as one about the *market* and not about *capitalism*. So when I talk in these essays about 'the market' as a form of economic organisation, I abstract from the differences between its capitalist and socialist variants, referring only to what is common to both (see Sayer 1995, ch. 4 and O'Neill 1998, ch. 1). This also means that I avoid using arguments for the protection of cultural institutions from the market which refer to specifically capitalist features of capitalist market economies.

^{iv} This is not to suggest that issues about the injustice of market-generated distributions are less important than those with which I am concerned. Indeed, in political and ethical terms quite the reverse is true, since distributive injustice of the extent and kind that currently obtains in Britain and elsewhere is a greater ill to more people than is the growing marketisation of cultural institutions.

^v Hegel 1967, Third Part, especially paragraphs 158-69. For a discussion of the relations between Hegel, Marx and Walzer with respect to the idea of 'separate spheres', see Keat 1993. I think that most of those who extol the virtues of the market at least tacitly assume that what they are supporting applies only to a specific sphere or domain, and not to 'society as a whole'. Yet in doing so they sometimes rely on arguments which leave it unclear why *everything* should not be organised on this basis: if the price-mechanism is such a brilliant device for transmitting information about individuals' preferences, why shouldn't we allow

political office and votes to be bought and sold in a political market, and likewise for marriage and friendship (see Anderson 1992)? Nor can this problem be avoided simply by saying: 'the market applies only to the *economy*', since what is now recognised and constituted as 'the economy' is itself the outcome of a historical process of social differentiation generated to a significant extent by the emergence of the market (see Polanyi 1957 and the discussion of this in Essay 6 below).

^{vi} Indeed, if one considers Walzer's list blocked exchanges (Walzer 1983, ch. 4) it seems that in some cases this may be a more obvious purpose they could serve than the distributive one. For criticism of Walzer's account of blocked exchanges, see Waldron 1995; also André 1995 for a rather different analysis. See Arneson 1995 and Gutmann 1995 for critical evaluations of his theory of justice more generally.

^{vii} Of course, this means making use of MacIntyre's concept for a purpose he would clearly oppose, since he does not accept that 'the market has its proper place': rather, that the market is always antithetical to practices is a reason for rejecting the market altogether (see Essay 6 below).

^{viii} However, although conservative defences of non-market cultural institutions tend strongly towards such elitism, the conservative tradition of political thought has a great deal more to offer those interested in market boundary problems than either its liberal or socialist counterparts. In particular, that the market both depends on non-market institutions and relationships, yet may also - if not kept in its place - tend to undermine these, is a frequent theme in conservative thought. (For an interesting variation see Bell 1976). It is, however, usually articulated in relation to conservatism's basic concern with the problem of social order, which puts it at some distance from the issues explored in these essays.

^{ix} It might be objected that talking about cultural institutions in terms of 'the production of goods' is itself a case of 'colonisation by market meanings', and concedes too much to an economic perspective. But part of my reason for talking in this way is that I think one should take seriously both the claim that the market *does* produce goods, in the sense of things which contribute to human well-being, and the possibility that it does this effectively

only with respect to certain kinds of goods, whilst others are best 'produced' (!!) through non-market institutions. So this is not matter of 'conceding too much to the market'; rather, it is intended to do quite the opposite, by rescuing the more general concept of 'producing goods' from its narrowly economic sense.

× Under each of these headings in turn, I found especially helpful Geoffrey Hodgson's *Institutional Economics* (1988), Charles Perrow's *Complex Organizations* (1986), Robert Holton's *Economy and Society* (1992) and Michel Albert's *Capitalism Against Capitalism* (1993).

NOTE: A COMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR CULTURAL GOODS AND THE LIMITS OF THE MARKET IS APPENDED TO THIS INTRODUCTION



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