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Series Editor: Anthony J. Marsella, Ph.D.

Carl Ratner

Neoliberal Psychology

 Springer

International and Cultural Psychology

Series editor

Anthony J. Marsella, Professor Emeritus, University of Hawaii

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Neoliberal Psychology

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Economics are the method [for neoliberalism], but the object is to change the soul.

Margaret Thatcher

There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.

Henry David Thoreau

It seems to me that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions, which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize and attack them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them.

This critique and this fight seem essential to me for different reasons: first, because political power goes much deeper than one suspects; there are centers and invisible, little-known points of support; its true resistance, its true solidity is perhaps where one doesn't expect it. Probably it's insufficient to say that behind the

governments, behind the apparatus of the state, there is the dominant class; one must locate the point of activity, the places and forms in which its domination is exercised. And because this domination is not simply the expression in political terms of economic exploitation, it is its instrument and, to a large extent, the condition which makes it possible; the suppression of the one is achieved through the exhaustive discernment of the other. Well, if one fails to recognize these points of support of class power, one risks allowing them to continue to exist; and to see this class power reconstitute itself even after an apparent revolutionary process.

It is only too clear that we are living under a regime of a dictatorship of class, of a power of class which imposes itself by violence, even when the instruments of this violence are institutional and constitutional (Chomsky-Foucault, 2006, pp. 41, 39).

Foucault

*To Lumei. Lemon tree very pretty and the
lemon flower is sweet*

Preface

The Reasons, Purposes, and Outcomes of This Book

This book is about the psychology of people living in neoliberal capitalist society. Their psychology is neoliberal psychology. It is infused with neoliberal form and content. These characteristics of neoliberal psychology are derived from the characteristics of neoliberal society and require a deep understanding of the latter. Neoliberal psychology is thus a vital insight into neoliberal society. Neoliberal psychology brings society into psychology, and psychology into society. It breaks down the false, artificial division between society and psychology that is practiced in academia and in everyday life.

This book has been motivated by four concerns: (1) to scientifically understand the cultural psychology of people in the neoliberal era, (2) to develop the academic discipline of cultural psychology to become adequate to comprehending neoliberal psychology, (3) to utilize neoliberal psychology to deepen our understanding of neoliberal society (which is dominant around the world), and (4) to utilize our understanding of neoliberal psychology and neoliberal society to enrich/improve our current psychology and social system. We need a coherent understanding of the present and its dialectical potential for a qualitatively improved future. The current lack of this understanding is responsible for the triple errors of current social trends: (a) ignoring or accepting the true causes of oppression, and electing economic and political oppressors as social leaders, (b) attacking innocent scapegoats such as immigrants, gender, religious groups, and race, and (c) lacking a vision of a viable, comprehensive alternative to neoliberalism. All of these errors intensify the oppression and crises that afflict the populace.

The distinctive contribution of cultural psychology to social emancipation lies in the scientific conceptualization of psychological phenomena as cultural phenomena that are elements of cultural factors and processes. It follows that enriching, fulfilling, and emancipating psychology requires enriching, fulfilling, and emancipating its cultural basis and character. No other psychological approach includes

emancipating the social system within its purview because no other approach conceptualizes psychology as elements of the system.

The political, critical, transformative, and emancipatory thrust of cultural psychology is particularly necessary in this era of cascading geopolitical, environmental, economic, and moral disasters. This book elucidates the contribution that cultural psychology can make to salvaging and advancing human civilization.

Neoliberal Psychology: The Cultural Psychology of Our Era

Neoliberal psychology is not simply certain natural reactions to neoliberal society. It is not simply that neoliberal society galvanizes our anxiety or confusion or hyperactivity or suspiciousness or defensiveness or depression or confidence, or creativity. These abstract, psychobiological reactions to neoliberalism do not capture the neoliberal form and content of our psychology. They would actually reduce neoliberal psychology to a quantitative point on a universal scale. They would reduce culture to a simple, quantitative regulator of universal, specific psychological processes. (This is the methodology of most cross-cultural psychologists who compare diverse cultures on their degree of “religiosity,” or “neuroticism.”)

Neoliberal psychology, like all psychology, is a concrete form and content of psychological processes—e.g., emotions, perception, cognition, motivation, memory, and psychological disturbance. Neoliberal psychology is not how we respond to neoliberalism on the basis of our individual (biological or personal) response mechanisms (which are outside neoliberalism). Neoliberal psychology is how neoliberalism forms our psychological responses to things, events, and people. We do not simply respond to neoliberalism; we are neoliberal responders.

The concrete, neoliberal form and content of psychology are our self, our emotion of love, our sexuality, our attention and perception, our memory, our child development, our femininity, our masculinity, our parenting, our eating, our dressing, our thinking/reasoning, our needs, and our communicating.

Our psychology is not simply situated within a neoliberal context; our psychology is infused with the features of that context. (Vygotsky 1994b, p. 348, said “The environment is a factor in the realm of personality development, and its role is to act as the source of this development ... and not its context.”) The neoliberal context is within us as well as outside. We do not simply live in neoliberal capitalism; we live neoliberal capitalism. Neoliberalism is our life, and we are the life of neoliberal capitalism; we are neoliberal subjects, we are neoliberal agents, and we have neoliberal psychology which is the subjectivity of neoliberal capitalism.

Neoliberal psychology is as much our character as being French or Italian is. Italians do not simply live in Italy; they *are* Italian, and their psyches and bodies *are* Italian in the sense that they have Italian form and content; they act and think and dress and eat “Italian.” Neoliberal psychology is our cultural psychology, just as Italian is cultural psychology. We *are* neoliberal subjects just as we are Italian or French. Our psychology has neoliberal form and content. Just as we emphasize the unique,

concrete, incomparable, untranslatable qualities of Ifaluk emotions (e.g., “fago”), Japanese *Amae*, *Yroba* mental illness, Wahhabi Islamic femininity, Victorian sexuality, and the *Kibbutzum* self-concept, so we must emphasize the concrete, incomparable, untranslatable form and content of the neoliberal self, neoliberal emotions, neoliberal perceptions, neoliberal femininity, neoliberal childhood, neoliberal motives, neoliberal needs, and neoliberal sexuality.

Our neoliberal indigenous psychology merges with and modulates our Frenchness, our Italianness, and our Chineseness. We are neoliberal Frenchmen, or French neoliberals; we are Chinese with neoliberal characteristics; just as Germans are feudal Germans or bourgeois Germans, depending upon the political-economic system they live in. Their feudal and bourgeois characters are as pronounced as their “German” character is—and modulate their Germanity. The same holds for the neoliberal features of culture and psychology—they are as pronounced as their national features are—if not more so. Contemporary Germans are neoliberal Germans just as their forebearers were medieval Germans.

Neoliberal psychology is a new cultural form, along the lines of Eric Fromm’s cultural personality types such as the receptive, exploitative, hoarding, marketing, and productive personality. In cultural terms of customs and rituals, capitalization is the central ritual of neoliberal capitalism.

It is apparent that transnational neoliberalism is becoming a more powerful cultural force than national cultural histories are. Liu (2008, p. 193) found evidence of this in her detailed ethnography of Chinese youth: “In planning their lives and attempting to achieve their life goals, the young people have adopted an individualized approach, displaying a form of the autonomous, self-authoring and individualistic neoliberal subject, with little reference to the socialist collectivist values with which the Party has been attempting to indoctrinate Chinese citizens.” (I would argue that the neoliberal self of a 20-year old Chinese girl in Shanghai is more similar to an international cohort’s self in neoliberal Berlin than to a cohort from her national Chinese culture such as the Sui Dynasty.) Of course, national cultural histories remain important factors in society and psychology. They modulate or mediate neoliberalism in each particular culture. Neoliberalism is not a singular variable (Ratner 1997a).

The rising dominance of neoliberalism in society and psychology is not surprising given the neoliberal integration of countries today. Liu (2008, p. 210) explains this neoliberal cultural conditioning of psychology in China: “The fierce competition based on the ‘jungle law,’ lack of social security, including old-age care of the parents—which constitutes emerging burdens especially for the only-child—credentialism, widespread corruption and consumerism, all seem to teach people that it is oneself and one’s family that it is the most reliable welfare agency for individual well-being, which is increasingly being defined according to the western middle-class lifestyle.”

Bhatia and Priya (2018, p. 662) report the same occurrence in India: “New forms of Indianness are also being shaped by media, transnational circuits, travel, and outsourcing. The presence of American cultural symbols and practices, the establishment of the IT industry and call centers, and the insertion of cross-cultural

psychology, psychotherapy, testing, and personality evaluation through psychological science and new-age psychology is not only impacting the work life of young Indian workers, but it is also reconstituting the very meaning of “Indianness.”

International neoliberal capitalist organizations, such as the World Trade Organization, Devos, G20, Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation, agree on common neoliberal economic agendas for all their members. National characteristics are marginalized. A shopping mall in China or Saudi Arabia or Los Angeles is indistinguishable. Educational standards are also becoming globalized and interchangeable as students shift from one country to another during their studies. In addition, professional psychology, in academia and in therapeutic interventions, is becoming globalized and neoliberalized. For example, Chinese academic psychology is identical to American, neoliberal, positivistic psychology.¹ Since professional psychology frames many psychological constructs of everyday life, it contributes to the internationalizing of neoliberal psychology in the populace. For instance,

Urban Indian workers are expected to largely follow the ideology of Western corporate culture through individual transformation, embracing a self-Orientalizing framework, acquiring new behaviors of increased emotional intelligence, assertiveness, flexibility, productivity, and self-regulation. The corporations deploy a series of personality tests to recruit, evaluate, and to assess the personality types and traits of the employees. Soft-skills psychological workshops are conducted to create assertive, confident, happy, and self-reliant workers. For instance, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Transactional Analysis inventories are two of the most commonly used instruments for training purposes in Indian corporations (Bhatia & Priya, p. 654).

Just as we can only understand Italian psychology by understanding Italian culture, so we must understand neoliberal culture, or society, in order to understand neoliberal psychology. Cultural studies must include neoliberal culture.

Because neoliberal psychology reflects and embodies neoliberal cultural factors, it can be an important window into expanding our understanding of neoliberalism. Neoliberal psychology gives life to official, structural, policies; it informs us of the manner in which they are lived by people and the effects they have on real life. Neoliberal psychology testifies to the level of development of neoliberalism in political and economic domains. The more pervasive that neoliberal love, sexuality, self-concept, childhood, parenthood, needs, and interpersonal relations are, the more dominant neoliberal political economy is, because psychology reflects such macro-cultural factors.

Psychological insights into society are valuable for designing strategies to improve society. These insights and strategies may contradict official propaganda and objectives (Ratner 2017b).

¹Actually, Chinese psychology is more conservative and neoliberal because it lacks the progressive, countervailing scholarship of theoretical psychology, sociocultural psychology, macro-cultural psychology, and critical psychology.

Psychological Theory for Neoliberal Psychology

The fact that neoliberal psychology does not exist for psychologists is a major failure of the discipline. It testifies to underlying inadequacies in the concerns, theories, and methodologies of psychologists. It is remarkable that virtually all psychologists ignore the dominant character of human psychology in the world today. This failure plagues mainstream academic psychologists (cognitive psychologists, developmental psychologists, physiological psychologists, social psychologists, health psychologists, educational psychologists), psychiatrists, psychotherapists, cross-cultural psychologists, and most cultural psychologists. Neoliberal psychology is simply not one of their constructs or topics.

A psychological theory and methodology *for* neoliberal psychology must be developed. It must incorporate the scope of neoliberal psychology—including its cultural basis, socializing mechanisms (How do emotions, perceptions, mental illness take on cultural form and content?), operating mechanisms, relation to neoliberal society—and it must include mechanisms for social and psychological improvement. These points must be built into the psychological theory and methodology so that they can be elucidated by the theory and methodology. Tools are constructed for handling specific kinds of things with particular properties.

A psychology *for* neoliberal psychology must be constructed for apprehending the psychology *of* neoliberalism. Neoliberal psychology refers to both of these. It refers to the everyday psychology of people and to the academic psychology that apprehends it (which I designate with a capital P).

The only suitable theory for researching neoliberal psychology must be a cultural–psychological theory that emanates from, and draws upon, social science research into the relationship between culture and psychology. This research has occurred in psychological anthropology, medical anthropology, sociology of emotions, history of emotions, cultural studies, cultural hermeneutics, cultural linguistics, and sociology of gender and social class. Examples of this work include research on Ifaluk emotions, or language and perception among native American Indians. The theories and methodologies of this kind of research can be expanded to study neoliberal psychology.

The cultural–psychological theory that is the most sophisticated, coherent, and suitable for neoliberal psychology is known as cultural–historical psychology. It was developed by Vygotsky and his colleagues in the wake of the Russian Revolution. Vygotsky’s followers have promoted his general concepts in fields such as child psychology, linguistics, and educational psychology. However, they (with few exceptions) have neglected (and denied, distorted, and trivialized) the “macro”-aspects of Vygotsky’s theory (Ratner 2018a, b, c, 2015, 2016a; 2019, chapter 5; Ratner & Nunes, 2017b). This leaves them incapable of applying the theory to social issues such as neoliberalism. I have developed Vygotsky’s macro-ideas under the name “macro-cultural psychology” (see Ratner 2018a, b, c, 2017a, b, 2016a, 2015, 2014c, 2013, 2012a, b). This is the theory I shall utilize to analyze neoliberal psychology.

The general theory of cultural–historical psychology/macro-cultural psychology informs us about how culture is organized and how this organization structures our psychology.

For example, the general theory of cultural–historical psychology/macro-cultural psychology postulates (from theoretical and empirical research) that psychological phenomena are most powerfully organized/influenced by the political economy of a cultural system. Vygotsky (1997b, pp. 55, 56, 348, 211–212) explained:

Since we know that each person's individual experience is conditioned by the role he plays in his environment, and that it is the class membership which defines this role, it is clear that class membership defines man's psychology and man's behavior. Social stimuli that have been established in the course of historical development...are permeated through and through with the class structure of society that generated them and serve as the class organization of production. They are responsible for all of human behavior, and in this sense we are justified in speaking of man's class behavior.

Vygotsky is saying that the class structure—which reflects political–economic power, wealth, ownership, wage labor, and principles of production—conditions the social roles of society, individual experience (in those roles), and individual psychology (in social experience). This is a cultural theory contained within his psychological theory (or vice versa). The validity of the psychological theory depends upon the validity of the culture theory. If the culture theory directs us to marginal, superficial, or fallacious cultural features, this will impede our ability to comprehend the concrete form and content of psychological phenomena.

Applying this to neoliberal psychology means that we must comprehend neoliberalism's political economy and trace its influence into the class structure, social roles, individual experience, and individual psychology. That will provide us with the most important explanatory constructs, descriptive constructs, and predictive constructs of neoliberal psychology's form and content. My presentation of neoliberal society will therefore emphasize its political economy for understanding other cultural factors and also psychology.

The theory also provides important constructs for explaining the processes by which psychology takes on cultural form and content.

While neoliberal society contains the keys to comprehending neoliberal psychology, it does not hand them to us on a platter. We need a theory to extract them.

This book is a dialectical dance between neoliberal psychology and macro-cultural–psychological theory, with each illuminating the other, and also adapting to the other. Neoliberal psychology is opened by macro-cultural theory to reveal unnoticed features which are conceptually analyzed and organized in new ways; and the theory is opened by neoliberal psychology that stimulates new theoretical concepts, distinctions, and organization. Refining the theory is as important as comprehending neoliberal psychology, because the latter requires the former.

Because macro-cultural–psychological theory is the organizing framework that selects and organizes the elements of neoliberal psychology in relation to neoliberal society, it would normally be positioned as the introduction to a book such as this. That would explain what issues and relationships we are looking for, why they are

important, and how they bear on related cultural and psychological issues. However, there are two reasons this is not the best strategy for introducing this book. One is the nature of the theory, and the other is the nature of the subject matter, neoliberal psychology. The theory is a grand, general, scientific theory of cultural psychology; it will appear abstract and distracting to the reader who is looking to comprehend concrete neoliberal psychology. This is an acute problem for this subject matter because neoliberal psychology is a new subject that is undefined. The reader will feel doubly lost reading a grand, general, abstract psychological theory that is supposed to eventually explain an undefined topic.

To avoid these two problems, I will introduce this book with some concise snapshots about neoliberal society and neoliberal psychology. The reader can interpolate these specific referents while reading the theory of macro-cultural psychology in Chap. 2. Neoliberal society shall be described in Chaps. 3, 4, and 5, which address neoliberal political economy, neoliberal education, and neoliberal ideology. These are central structures that organize neoliberal psychological phenomena. Neoliberal psychological phenomena will be selectively described in Chap. 6. The final Chap. 7 will review the relationship between cultural–historical/macro-cultural–psychological theory and neoliberal psychology. It will conclude by explaining how the scientific advances of macro-cultural–psychological theory play a progressive political role in enriching psychology and society. I explain how the macro-cultural–psychological science of neoliberal psychology exposes deep-seated, destructive features of neoliberal society, and these call for society’s reorganization in a cooperative, democratic form. This advanced form of society generates psychological phenomena which embody this fulfilling form. Cultural science leads to progressive cultural politics which are necessary for advancing society and psychology. This is the dialectical spiral of science and politics. It makes politics scientific, and science political.

Trinidad, USA

Carl Ratner

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Snapshots of Neoliberal Society and Psychology



Neoliberalism is first and foremost a political economic system. It is an intensification and extension of capitalism. It is capitalist principles developed and purified, which dominate social (and natural) domains where they were formerly muted. These include education, health care, outer space exploration, the military (i.e., military contractors), the courts, religion, national security (70% of which is privately contracted in the USA), news, and scientific research (Rabin 2018; Hertsgaard and Dowie 2018). The specific principles of neoliberal capitalism shall be elucidated in Chap. 3. I introduce them here in the form of brief examples which give the reader a good sense of them.

Neoliberalism intensifies and extends itself by displacing competing socioeconomic forms that restrict it. Neoliberalism is thus hyper-capitalism, super-capitalism, or uber-capitalism. This means that a thorough, nuanced, comprehension of capitalism is more important than ever for understanding neoliberal social life and psychology. Marx's analysis of the essence of capitalism remains unsurpassed. It must be a touchstone for any discussion of neoliberalism and its transformation. Marx's analysis will be incorporated into the macro cultural psychological theory that frames neoliberal society and neoliberal psychology. I will demonstrate that Vygotsky incorporated Marx into his cultural-historical psychological theory. Marxism comprises the macro elements of Vygotsky's theory. Macro cultural psychology rehabilitates and develops this relationship within Vygotsky's work (which his followers have generally ignored, denied, distorted, and trivialized).

My objective in this book is not to assess the degree of neoliberal penetration in particular countries. It is to identify neoliberal practices in a variety of countries. My point is to understand the form and content of psychology that neoliberal practices generate. For this purpose, it does not matter how extensive these practices are in any particular country. I can use neoliberal practices in China to study their associated psychology even if they are not hegemonic throughout the society, and even if China

is not as neoliberal as the U.S.A. [Studying neoliberal psychology in China actually helps to know how extensive neoliberalism is there; for the psychology testifies to the extent to which people have internalized neoliberalism into their consciousness and behavior. The research of Liu that I cited in the Preface indicates that neoliberalism is a popular, lived, Weltanschauung or ethos among Chinese people, which regulations on neoliberal economics do little to dampen.]

Of course, social and psychological effects of neoliberal capitalism are easiest to locate in their purest form in countries where neoliberal practices are most dominant and salient. Therefore, most of my discussion will refer to the USA.

The intensification and extension of capitalism produce qualitative changes in capitalist social life. They modify the class structure, social policies, social leadership, rights and obligations, opportunities and restrictions, the form and content of education, entertainment, recreation, work, news information, childhood, eating, self-concept, and sexuality. These social changes directly affect the concrete form and content of neoliberal psychology.

It is instructive at this point to present a few snapshots of the form and content of neoliberal social relations. They will provide a sense of what this book shall amplify as the cultural basis of neoliberal psychology. The snapshots shall also serve as targets for our psychological theory in the next chapter.

A Few Facts that Define Global Neoliberalism

Three people—Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffet—own more wealth than the bottom half of the American population combined (<https://www.alternet.org/economy/billionaire-bonanza-2017?akid=16345.152322.rR6bUs&rd=1&src=newsletter1085105&t=12>).

Between 1978 and 2016 (the period of neoliberal economic dominance in the United States), CEO pay rose by 937%, while the typical worker saw compensation growth of 11.2% over the same period. (Truthdig, July 20, 2017; http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/worker_wages_are_flat_but_since_1978_ceo_pay_has_soared_by_937_20170720).

For the past fifty years, the share of national income in America that goes to employees—rather than investors—has been steadily shrinking; by 2010, labor's share had reached the lowest point ever recorded (Lafer 2017).

While the net worth of the bottom half of American households evaporated in 2011–2014, that of the richest 1% grew by an average of \$5 million per family (Lafer 2017).

A research paper titled “Decomposing the Productivity-Wage Nexus in Selected OECD Countries, 1986–2013,” studied 11 advanced-capitalist countries and found that in eight of them median wages have not kept pace with growth in labor productivity. The 11 countries studied were Canada, the United States, Norway and eight members of the European Union—Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. The widest gap between pay and pro-

ductivity growth occurred in the USA, with Germany in second place. Spain, Norway and Ireland were the three exceptions, although in each the gain in wages over productivity is small. Only the wages of the top 1% grew faster than productivity growth. The labor share of income in the United States is the lowest it has ever been since the end of World War II. The tendency throughout the period has been for decline, but the decline has been much steeper since 2001—labor share of income in the U.S. is 15% lower in 2017 than it was in 2001. On a scale of one to five, with one representing the countries with the best ratings (merely “irregular violations of rights”) and five representing the worst (“no guarantee of rights”), Britain and the United States received rankings of four. German wages have been suppressed since 2001 in relation to inflation or productivity gains—the prosperity of German manufacturers has come at the expense of German workers (Dolack 2017).

82% of the global wealth produced last year went to the richest 1% of the world’s population. The 42 richest people now own as much wealth the poorest half of the world’s population. The richest 1% of the world’s population own more wealth than the whole of the rest of humanity. President Trump’s 15 cabinet members have a combined wealth that is greater than the 100 million poorest Americans. More than 2.78 million workers die every year because of occupational accidents or work-related diseases—one every 11 s (Oxfam Report 2018, “Reward Work Not Wealth”; https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bp-reward-work-not-wealth-220118-summm-en.pdf).

One half the children in American schools are officially classified by the federal government as low-income (Ravitch 2017).

Almost 1/3 of Americans, some 90 million people, were officially poor for two months or more between 2009–2011 (Madrack 2017).

A production operation specialist on 737 airplane fuselages at Boeing’s sprawling facilities was praised consistently, including a good performance review in 2012. Suddenly, in 2013, it laid her off along with 360 workers: “They walked us out, and wouldn’t let us go back and say goodbye”. “They drove us to an empty parking lot, and that was it.” Most of the laid off workers were over 40 years old—on the path toward receiving seniority wage increases and then pensions—with medical issues that caused the employer’s health care premiums to rise. To cut pension and health costs, the company fired these workers (Olson 2017).

Anxiety is the most common mental-health disorder in the United States, affecting nearly one-third of both adolescents and adults, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. In its annual survey of students, the American College Health Association found a significant increase—to 62% in 2016 from 50% in 2011—of undergraduates reporting “overwhelming anxiety” in the previous year (Denizet-Lewis 2017).

In 2016, San Francisco hedge fund billionaire Tom Steyer contributed \$91 million to federal political candidates and causes; Las Vegas billionaire casino owner Sheldon Adelson contributed \$83 million. (This does not include contributions to state politics.)

A research undertaking funded by the Australian Research Council with a team of researchers based at the University of Sydney and Harvard University ranks the

democratic election integrity of U.S. elections below that of all 19 North and Western European democracies. The U.S. is also below 10 other nations in the Americas (Costa Rica, Uruguay, Canada, Chile, Brazil, Jamaica, Grenada, Argentina, Barbados and Peru), 10 nations in Central and Eastern Europe, nine Asian-Pacific countries, two countries in the Middle East (Israel and Tunisia) and six African nations (<https://www.truthdig.com/articles/who-will-protect-u-s-election-integrity-from-american-oligarchs>).

Rich Chinese entrepreneurs are joining the global billionaires club at the rate of two a week (104 per year). Just 30 years after China allowed private enterprise, the country's billionaires now number 373 and account for almost one in five of the global total of 2158. (There were only 16 Chinese billionaires as recently as 2006.)

China's billionaires saw their combined wealth surge 39% last year to \$1.2tn. The U.S. billionaires club reached 585 after gaining 22 net new joiners, helping to swell their combined wealth by 12% to \$3.1tn. "China has overtaken the US as the place where exceptional wealth is created at the fastest rate" (Financial Times 2018; <https://www.ft.com/content/32e24663-a160-32ce-b748-1d005804f073>).

China has one of the world's highest levels of wealth inequality (different from income inequality), with the richest 1% of households owning a third of the country's wealth while the poorest 25% of Chinese households own just 1%, a report from Peking University's Institute of Social Science Survey has found. (Financial Times Jan. 14, 2016; <https://www.ft.com/content/3c521faa-baa6-11e5-a7cc-280dfe875e28?mhq5j=e5>).

The Chinese top 10% wealth share (67% in 2015) is getting close to that of the United States (72%) and is much higher than in a country like France (50%) (Piketty et al. 2017).

In 2016, China's "Gini Coefficient" (which measures inequality of family income) was higher than the U.S.'s (4.65 vs. 4.52) (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/250400/inequality-of-income-distribution-in-china-based-on-the-gini-index>).

The combined wealth of the 2130 richest Chinese individuals (with US\$300 million each) amounts to US\$2.6 trillion, equivalent to the U.K.'s gross domestic product, the fifth largest economy in the world.

The average wealth of China's richest has grown at 12.5% year-over-year, almost double the pace of the country's GDP growth (<https://www.mansionglobal.com/articles/77248-where-do-the-richest-chinese-live-in-china>).

The World Inequality Lab, report on world inequality, compiled by Thomas Piketty and other economists, reports that in China, the share of public property in national wealth has declined from about 70% in 1978 to 30% in 2015. The top 10% income share rose from 27% to 41% of national income between 1978 and 2015, while the bottom 50% share dropped from 27 to 15%. The top 10% income share in Europe was 37% of national income, which makes China more unequal than capitalist Europe (Piketty et al. 2017, p. 1).

The average income of the bottom 50% (a group that includes 530 million adults) is equal to 30% of the average income in China (ibid. p. 27).

"The percentage of students at Peking University from rural origins has fallen to about 10 percent in the past decade, down from around 30 percent in the 1990s. An

admissions officer at Tsinghua University told a reporter last year that the typical undergraduate was someone who grew up in cities, whose parents are civil servants and teachers, go on family trips at least once a year, and have studied abroad in high school. An applicant from Beijing is 41 times more likely to be admitted to Peking University than a comparable student from the poor and largely rural province of Anhui” (New York Times, Sept. 24, 2014).

Ideological Obfuscation: Blaming the Victim

An editorial in *Business Week* in October 1974, about neoliberal economics: “It will be a hard pill for many Americans to swallow; the idea of doing with less so that big business can have more. Nothing that this nation or any other nation has ever done compares with the selling job that will be needed to get the people to accept the new reality.”

Margaret Thatcher led this salesmanship. During her reign as Prime Minister, she formulated neoliberal policy for Britain. This resulted in poverty (defined as percentage of households earning less than sixty percent of median income) increasing from 13.4% of households in 1979 to 22.2% in 1990. Thatcher’s last year in power. Child poverty more than doubled. When Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979, unemployment was 5%. Her policies caused it to rise to 10% for most of her reign. Real GDP was at 5% when she took office, and it dropped below that for almost the entirety of her reign. In 1990 it had fallen to 0% (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/04/08/a-look-back-at-margaret-thatchers-economic-record/?utm_term=.dec8cff53a23).

Yet Thatcher publicly proclaimed: “Nowadays there really is no primary poverty left in this country... In Western countries we are left with problems that aren’t poverty. All right, there may be poverty because they don’t know how to budget, don’t know how to spend their earnings, but now you are left with the really hard fundamental character-personality defect.”

“[Downtrodden individuals] are casting their problems at society. And, you know, there’s no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look after themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then, also, to look after our neighbours” (in an interview in Women’s Own in 1987).

Neoliberal Socio-Economic-Political Activities

The Neoliberal Medical Encounter

The neoliberal medical encounter is described by Reddy (2017) in an article entitled “How to Get the Most Out of A Doctor’s Visit.” Reddy portrays a doctor’s visit as a commercial transaction in which the patient must look out for (strategize, defend, work for) her individual well-being in an impersonal, atomized, competitive, restrictive, marketplace.

The best patients make efficient use of the limited time during their doctors’ visits. Having just 15 to 20 minutes with a doctor might seem awfully short, but that’s how long most physicians’ visits last. Lani Calder, a 67-year-old retired teacher, takes the job of being a good patient pretty seriously. She charts her blood sugar, thyroid and other test results at home. She also brings in a list of questions to her doctors’ visits and takes notes on what they tell her. Her efforts are appreciated by her longtime family physician, who says her organization and follow through make his job easier.

The neoliberal medical encounter is a job for the patient to perform. As with any job, the conditions are set by an alien power (the office, and beyond that the insurance companies). The conditions favor the latter’s interests by reducing the expenditure of time and labor of the doctor so that s/he can become more “productive” in seeing more patients and generating more income. The patient must work within this alien, hostile conditions which do not allot sufficient time to cover all issues in a relaxed, thorough, personal manner. She must accept this condition and act “responsibly” and efficiently within it—just as an employee must adjust to the contingencies of work that the employer imposes. The article gives advice about how to adapt to this alien, inhospitable “job” situation. One strategy is for the patient to bring up the most important issues first in the inadequate time she is allotted by the system.

The conditions force the patient to become a neoliberal subject with neoliberal subjectivity/agency/consciousness/psychology who knows how to develop neoliberal strategies, processes, concepts to adjust to these conditions.

The behaviors/psychology that these alien, imposed conditions require of their customers/patients are articulated by neoliberals as independence, choice, and self-expression; however, that is an ideological distortion which we shall explain in Chap. 5.

Neoliberal Government and Its Social Effects

Beginning in the late 1950s, when Daley took the city council out of the game and turned over the task of planning the city’s future development to an alliance of downtown business interests and technocrats, “Boss” Daley presided over a municipal government in which key policy decisions had been moved out of the hands of the public and into corporate boardrooms. In Daley’s Chicago, a federally funded urban renewal program intended to uplift the poor, ended up subsidizing downtown development projects that reinforced the

walls around the black ghetto. It was Richard J. Daley who brokered the deals that built the John Hancock Center, the Sears Tower, and many of the other iconic skyscrapers that launched Chicago into the global age – all this while the South and West Sides were turning into depopulated hyper-ghettos. But the Daley administration's ability to push this agenda forward depended on the inability of democratizing forces to gain traction within Chicago's political culture during the interwar years. (Diamond 2017, pp. 8–9)

Neoliberal Environmental Management and Its Social Effects

McCormack (2017) explains the regulation of ocean fishing in ways that serves capital.

Socio-cultural impacts:

- Alienation and loss of individual fate control
- Increased social stratification and class barriers
- Loss of lifetime investments in homes and other infrastructure
- Outmigration and gender imbalances
- Loss of community viability.

Political-economic impacts

- Lack of fair returns to owners/stewards of the resource
- Cartelization of the fishing industry
- Barriers to new entrants in a neo-feudal setting
- Concentration of wealth and power
- Transformation of 'paper fish' into financial derivatives
- Institutional lock-in/irreversibility.

Environmental-biophysical impacts:

- Incentives for high-grading
- No rewards for low-carbon, environmentally sustainable fishing
- No focus on ecosystem-based management McCormack (2017, p. 2).

Obeng-Odoom (2016, p. 390) finds the same kinds of effects of marketizing common lands and water in Africa:

Using an institutional political economy approach and drawing on experiences in Ghana, the paper investigates the social history of marketisation of the commons and probes the effects of marketisation in terms of absolute, relative, and differential/congruent outcomes as well as the opportunity cost of the current water property rights regime. The empirical evidence shows that markets have been socially created through imposed and directed policies. Some jobs have been created through investment, but such employment is not unique to marketisation and private investment. Indeed, the private model of property rights has worsened the distribution of water resources not only within different property relations in Africa but also between diverse property relations. Water markets have been responsible for much displacement and trouble not only for communities but also nature. Overall, there is no necessary congruence between the promises made by new institutional economists and how

communities experience water markets. Tighter regulations for the use of inland and trans-boundary water sources might temporarily halt the displacement of communities sparked by marketisation of the commons, but only one fundamental change can guarantee community well-being: to regard the access to and community control of water as constitutionally sanctioned human rights and as *res communis*.

Neoliberal Scientific Research

Neoliberal capitalists are mounting a massive usurping of scientific research and medicine. The Gates Foundation alone exercises enormous control:

On February 16, 2008, the *New York Times* reported on a memo that it had obtained, written by Dr. Arata Kochi, head of the World Health Organization’s malaria programs, to WHO’s director general. Because the Gates Foundation was funding almost everyone studying malaria, Dr. Arata complained, the cornerstone of scientific research—independent review—was falling apart.

Many of the world’s leading malaria scientists are now “locked up in a ‘cartel’ with their own research funding being linked to those of others within the group,” Dr. Kochi wrote. Because “each has a vested interest to safeguard the work of the others,” he wrote, getting independent reviews of research proposals “is becoming increasingly difficult.”

The director of global health at Gates responded predictably: “We encourage a lot of external review.” But a lot of external review does not solve the problem, which is structural. It warps the work of most philanthropies to some degree but is exponentially dangerous in the case of the Gates Foundation. Again, Frederick Hess in *With the Best of Intentions*:

...[A]cademics, activists, and the policy community live in a world where philanthropists are royalty—where philanthropic support is often the ticket to tackling big projects, making a difference, and maintaining one’s livelihood.

...[E]ven if scholars themselves are insulated enough to risk being impolitic, they routinely collaborate with school districts, policy makers, and colleagues who desire philanthropic support.

...The groups convened by foundations [to advise them] tend to include, naturally enough, their friends, allies, and grantees. Such groups are less likely than outsiders to offer a radically different take on strategy or thinking.

...Researchers themselves compete fiercely for the right to evaluate high-profile reform initiatives. Almost without exception, the evaluators are hired by funders or grantees... Most evaluators are selected, at least in part, because they are perceived as being sympathetic to the reform in question (Barkan 2011).¹

Social Media

Western social media (and news) are owned and controlled by capitalists. They decide what information gets viewed. (Just six massive and global corporations—Comcast, Viacom, Time Warner, CBS, the News Corporation and Disney—together control more than 90% of the nation’s television stations, radio stations, movies, newspapers and magazines.)

45% of Americans get their news from Facebook. Facebook's decisions on news thus have widespread effects. Facebook recently announced it had partnered with the Atlantic Council in an effort to combat "fake news" on its platform. The Council which filters Facebook news is affiliated with NATO. Its board of directors consists of neo-conservative hawks, including Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Henry Kissinger and James Baker; CIA directors like Robert Gates, Leon Panetta and Michael Hayden; retired generals like Wesley Clark and David Petraeus; as well as senior tech executives.

The Council works closely with the Venezuelan opposition, donating over \$1 million to it, part of a wide-ranging effort at regime change against multiple progressive governments in the region. On August 9, 2018, the independent, reader-supported news website Venezuelanalysis had its page suspended without warning. The site offers news and views about Venezuela from a left-wing perspective.

On August 13, 2018, Facebook, citing a clause in its terms of service barring "hateful, threatening or obscene" media, deplatformed TeleSUR English, an English-language Latin American news network. TeleSUR is funded by a number of Latin American states, including Venezuela, and offers news and opinion from a progressive viewpoint. It was set up to provide an alternative to Western corporate-dominated media.

(Following an appeal and a public outcry on social media, Venezuelanalysis and TeleSUR were reinstated on Facebook. However, the social media site offered no explanation for what happened.)

Under the guise of combating fake news, media organizations like Google, Bing, Facebook, and YouTube have changed their algorithms that decide which news sites they carry. The effect has been to stifle progressive media outlets. AlterNet's Google traffic fell by 63%, Media Matters by 42%, TruthOut by 25% and The Intercept by 19%.

Yet, the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party went to Facebook headquarters in Berlin in 2017 to discuss how it could use the platform for recruitment and for micro-targeting in the German elections, as Bloomberg Businessweek (9/29/17) reported. Through Facebook and with the help of American companies, AfD nearly tripled its previous vote share, becoming the third-largest party in Germany, the far right's best showing since World War II (Truthdig, Aug. 23, 2018: <https://www.truthdig.com/articles/that-facebook-will-turn-to-censoring-the-left-isnt-a-worry-its-a-reality>).

Neoliberal Weltanschauung, Geist, Mentalité, Épistème, Ethos, Collective Representations

The neoliberal political-economic-social system of activities generates a cultural outlook, Weltanschauung, Geist, mentalité, épistème, ethos, or collective representations about things, people, behavior, and society. This is a powerful constituent

of the form and content of our psychological processes, just as the political economy is a constituent. The neoliberal épistème is “a normative order of reason” that has become “a widely and deeply disseminated economic rationality” which “transmogrifies every human domain and endeavor according to a specific image of the economic” (Brown 2015, pp. 9–10).

Neoliberal épistème makes things meaningful to us; it provides us with the meanings of things. It constitutes our schema (or psychological tools) for perceiving, feeling, thinking about, remembering, motivating, expressing, desiring, and disliking things.

Language is an important element of this épistème. The neoliberal épistème is objectified and transmitted not simply through content of language (e.g., economic vocabularies), but also its form, in the marketization of language and the commodification of language; in the stultified political language that covers important issues with benign platitudes (Holtz et al. 2017, document this in the field of cross-cultural psychology). “The vocabulary of customer, consumer choice, of markets molds both our conception of ourselves and our understanding of and relationship to the world” (Holborow 2015, p. 1).

Neoliberal semiotics frame the reporting of news. Graham and Silke (2017) studied the manner in which news reports frame the privatizing sale of public/government resources and enterprises. They found that reports were framed in terms of business success and business models. These were assumed to be the criteria of the sales. These business criteria displaced political criteria and criteria such as displacement, dispossession, public participation, common good. This builds in the neoliberal business form as the way to think about social activity, i.e., the implicit, unperceived, unquestioned, épistème for understanding things. The business form is assumed, it is not argued or defended. If a sale generated large income for the government, it was considered worthwhile, in a general, universal sense. Other social and ecological effects are simply not relevant to worthiness. Even when a privatization sale is criticized, it is criticized in terms of the business model. E.g., the sale price was too low to generate sufficient income for the government. Thus, even criticism sustains the business model (form) as the ultimate criterion of worth and success. It criticizes transactions for failing to follow the business model enough.

Neoliberal semiotics also become the épistème for education. That is, the conception of what a good university is, and how we should think about a university and its horizon of possibilities, in general. For instance “the strategic educational plan for Dublin City University singles out enterprise as the foundational theme for the university’s future development. Its objectives revolve almost exclusively around making the university entrepreneurial, as its second strategic objective says: ‘To be recognized internationally as a leading University of Enterprise’...In the 21-page plan, enterprise is used 40 times, while study is used twice, critical three times, and analyze, investigate, reading, and subject (e.g. topic of study), not at all” (ibid. p. 101). These vocabularies reclassify our roles, identities, relationships, institutions, and values, in neoliberal form.

The neoliberal épistème of university education is evident in Bothwel’s (2018) description of the ranking system for Asian universities. The primary criteria are

- Institutional Income
- Industry Income
- Research Income
- Total Publications
- Citation impact
- International co-authorship
- Teaching
- Research reputation

Again, these criteria form the epistemic criteria for defining and conceptualizing the very idea of a good university that should be constructed and maintained and honored. Of course, the people who occupy this kind of university are rewarded for internalizing and advancing these criteria, which become their cognitions, perceptions, memory, motivation, imagination, ideals, values, and emotions (pride, shame).

Teaching and research reputation are granted less importance in the neoliberal épistème than the neoliberal criteria. The first three criteria are purely monetary. They allow a high status/ranking simply by increasing funding. Ranking is now a commodity that can simply be purchased for a high fee! And this high ranking is considered to reflect quality of education, which it does not.

Bothwell tells us that not only is the total amount of investment key to ranking, but the rate of investment increase over the year is crucial as well. The emphasis here is on speed of investing. This incentivizes universities to spend ever more rapidly. It is directly analogous to the rate of profit in businesses. Small, steady increases in educational investment are not valued as much as large increases. Thus, Tsinghua University in China outranks Peking University because its annual rate of investment is higher than Peking University's, even though the latter's total investment is greater than Tsinghua's.

Publication output is also neoliberal in sense of being an abstract quantity, regardless of content (quantity). It is analogous to industrial production: sell more product to increase returns. Citation impact is equally commodified in that it is the number of times cited a publication is cited; it has nothing to do with quality/content. It is possible that all the citations critique and refute an article, yet it will be highly valued for its citation ranking. All of these indicators conflate quantity with quality. They imply that quantity of money, publications, and citations = high quality.

Agger and Shelton (2017) similarly describe how, under the commodification of 'college labor' where degreed labor and credit hours are produced, the course syllabus becomes far more than merely introducing the course subject matter and requirements; it is now a labor contract between instructor and students, that spells out precise conditions under which student work will be evaluated and credit hours awarded, and the behavioral and attitudinal expectations of students.

Newfield (2016) explains how the neoliberal university transforms, subordinates, and supersedes academics in favor of commercial interests. "The fundamental driver of college costs is the market competition that typifies private industry" (ibid. p. 26).²

This neoliberalizing of the concept and operation of a good university inevitably means that the people who populate it are defined and evaluated in these terms. This

makes them into neoliberal subjects whose psychology has this neoliberal form and content.

Although the neoliberal Weltanschauung, Geist, Mentalité, Épistème, Ethos, and collective representations are generated by neoliberal, political-economic-social activities, the mentalité, etc. do not fully express these activities. They do not express exploitation, oppression, alienation, dehumanization, impoverishment, immiseration, aggression, mystification, monopolization, stagnation, destruction, powerlessness, dislocation, discrimination, or autocracy (that are evident in the foregoing snapshots). Weltanschauung, Geist, Mentalité, Épistème, Ethos, and collective representations are ideologically contoured to be socially acceptable to dominant social interests, i.e., to present social life as prettier than it is. Thatcher's previous comment exemplifies this. This will be discussed at length in a section on ideology in Chap. 3.

Neoliberalism and Neoliberal Psychology

It is the qualitative features of social activities in capitalism that form the substance of cultural psychology and neoliberal psychology. As the social and material environment takes on capitalist forms, people change their psychology to perceive, comprehend, reason about, emote, imagine, and remember these new kinds of things. This is Darwinian, environmental psychology.

We turn now to the macro cultural psychological theory and methodology that is designed for elucidating these elements in society and psychology.

Notes

1. The capitalist form and function and value of knowledge makes critique of capitalism difficult. Critique would violate the capitalist value of knowledge, and would be rejected as unproductive and not viable on the market. Critiquing the capitalist profit motive would be rejected as: "That is not useful for individual success on the economic market; nor does it generate profit; so let's not talk about it. Even if I liked the idea, it is impractical." Market practicality and the profit motive would disqualify the capitalist critique, without considering the merits of the content.
2. China has fully bought into this commodification of education and proudly strives to excel on these neoliberal rankings. The Ministry of Education imposes these criteria on the micro level of university departments where they are the criteria for promotion of individual faculty members. This is another example of a powerful neoliberal practice in China—a practice that is universally condemned by genuine Marxists, and even progressive people, throughout the world.

Part I
A Psychological Theory for
Comprehending Neoliberal Capitalism
and Neoliberal Psychology

Chapter 2

Macro Cultural Psychology



This book develops a scientific understanding of the psychology of our era. Our era is the era of neoliberalism and our psychology is neoliberal psychology. This is not to say that every single detail of every single person's psychology has a neoliberal character. For our era is not monolithic neoliberalism; it contains numerous pre-neoliberal and anti-neoliberal elements which bear on various psychological elements of various people. Neoliberalism is the dominant form of society around most of the world, and neoliberal psychology is the dominant mode of consciousness, subjectivity, mentality, psychology. Neoliberal psychology permeates our public psychology—e.g., in the workplace, in government and politics, in school, in shopping—and our private psychology—in personal interactions with friends, family, and ourself.

It is therefore odd, to say the least, that the discipline of Psychology has manifested scarce interest in neoliberal psychology (Curran and Hill 2017, and Theory & Psychology, 2018, 28, 5 are notable exceptions). Even psychologists who call themselves social psychologists and cultural psychologists are complicit in this neglect (Ratner 2019, 2018a, 2012b, 2015). This is the continuation of Psychology's historic neglect of broad, important, cultural-political-psychological issues. (Psychologists for Social Responsibility are a notable exception. Critical psychologists also strive for social relevance, however, their lack of any coherent, concrete, constructive, adequate, psychological theory—and their seduction by fallacious theories such as psychoanalysis and populism—renders their efforts fruitless.) In contrast, other social scientists, such as sociologists, political-economists, anthropologists, and geographers have researched neoliberalism and touched on neoliberal psychology.

Eschewing the study of the most powerful and obvious and controversial (troubling) cultural force and its psychological elements (for the past half-century) is not only a major intellectual failure, it is also a major political failure that insulates neoliberalism and neoliberal psychology from critique and emancipation. In this way, Psychology is a conservative political force that blinds us and binds us to the status quo. (Psychologists' intellectual and political failure undermines their professed support for abstract human rights because these can only be realized in a social-psychological transformation of the status quo.)

Developing a psychological science of neoliberal psychology requires overcoming the theoretical and methodological and political refusals of psychologists to address essential cultural and psychological issues. We must convert the great refusal of psychologists to problematize, critique, and transform the status quo, into a great refusal to accept the status quo (which Marcuse passionately advocated). This requires that we reconceptualize psychological theory, psychological methodology, psychological interventions, and psychological politics (see Ratner 2019).

In my view, this book is as much about reframing Psychology to enable it to study cultural issues such as neoliberal psychology, as it is about explicating neoliberal psychology itself. For the former is prerequisite to the latter. Conclusions about neoliberal psychology (and any cultural psychology) are only as good as the theories and methodologies that generate them.

To pave the general way to study neoliberal psychology and related cultural-psychological issues, I shall continually explore general theoretical-methodological issues (such as cultural formation of mind, sociocultural psychological theory, role theory, ideology, psychology of oppression, culture theory, power and politics, historical materialism). Given an adequate theory and methodology, future researchers can continue probing the details of neoliberal psychology, and other cultural-psychological issues. Without an adequate theory and methodology, no adequate explication is possible, even in the unlikely event that psychologists belatedly (after wars, torture, financial collapse, political corruption, ecological calamities, the demise of the labor movement, and the collapse of socialism in China and USSR) come to their senses and meet their scientific and political responsibilities. This chapter outlines a reconceptualization of Psychology to make it adequate to comprehending and enriching its subject matter, “psychology.”

This book explores the psychology of people that has been organized by neoliberal society—its institutions, values-concepts, artifacts, structures, politics-power, social class, economics, dynamics, contradictions, and struggles. Neoliberal psychology brings together two realms that are typically studied in disparate academic fields/specialties—sociology and psychology. Researching neoliberal psychology requires a third kind of academic activity that transcends conventional boundaries between sociology and psychology. What we need is a discipline of cultural psychology. Neoliberal psychology requires a cultural psychology that apprehends the cultural character of psychology.

Existing psychological theories and methodologies have not been designed to conceptualize and investigate psychology as neoliberal psychology; nor have sociological and political science theories and methodologies been designed to conceptualize and investigate psychological dimensions of neoliberal society, politics, and economics.

These historical, and politically-generated, gaps/deficiencies cannot be overcome by simply correlating psychological phenomena with neoliberal social and political elements. This kind of “dust-bowl empiricism” simply juxtaposes disparate things without comprehending the reasons for their association or the full, logical nature of the association. Dust-bowl empiricism is the strategy that cross-cultural psychologists typically employ in correlating “collective culture” with “self-concept” and

noting a few superficial similarities. But cross-cultural psychologists have no psychological theory or cultural theory that explains why culture and psychology correlate, in the sense of the necessary co-dependence of culture and psychology. Nor do cross-cultural psychologists have a theory of the processes by which psychology is culturally formed. Nor do they have a theory of culture that explains the cultural origins of psychology and the cultural factors that must be changed in order to enrich psychology.

These theoretical lacunae of cross-cultural psychology—that it absorbs from positivistic, mainstream psychology—stunt its understanding of culture and psychology; they limit cross-cultural psychology to recording superficial, overt, fragmentary responses without comprehending the concrete cultural or psychological quality (significance) of responses (see Ratner 1997, 2012b; Vygotsky 1997b, pp. 233–238).

To apprehend and comprehend neoliberal psychology, we need a general cultural psychological theory that explains the specific, concrete features of neoliberal psychology. In other words, neoliberal psychology is a specific form of cultural psychology. To understand the specific, we must understand the general issues of cultural psychology that inform it. This will sensitize us to the features of neoliberal psychology that we need to comprehend; it will also explain those features to us when we encounter them and wonder about how they come into being and how they operate and why they persist.¹

This book is therefore an effort at bringing the theory of cultural psychology to bear on the activity of neoliberal psychology. I will review and refine cultural psychology to make it relevant to neoliberal psychology; and I will incorporate new issues that neoliberal psychology brings to its attention. This will broaden and deepen cultural psychology to make it more useful for other real-life cultural-psychological phenomena.

The general cultural psychological theory that we require has been incubating under the moniker of macro cultural psychology. I have been developing this approach, and I shall utilize it to explain, describe, predict, critique, and improve neoliberal culture and psychology. Macro cultural psychology is thus an emancipatory psychological science.

Macro cultural psychology is a comprehensive psychological theory that explains, describes, predicts, and improves the cultural organization of psychology. This is the kind of psychological theory we need to comprehend particular forms of cultural psychology, such as neoliberal psychology. Before we can comprehend the what, why, and how of neoliberal psychology, we need to know the what, why, and how of the cultural organization of psychology in general.

Macro cultural psychological theory and methodology explain why psychology has cultural origins and cultural characteristics in the first place. Why does psychology need culture as its basis, features, and organization? And why does culture need psychology to construct cultural factors and maintain them by animating culturally-necessary and culturally-appropriate behavior? These reciprocal dependencies between culture and psychology explain why psychological phenomena have cultural origins, features, and functions. The theory explains why we have to look for these when we are researching psychological phenomena.

Macro cultural psychology explains the breadth and depth of culture in psychology. It explains the relation between cultural organization and other possible determinations of psychology, such as biological and individual factors. Without this understanding, it is easy to attribute psychological phenomena to other factors which diminish the influence of culture—and diminish the importance of understanding and improving culture.

The cultural organization of psychology is real, however, it is not intuitively obvious, nor is it disclosed by conventional theories and methodologies. It is only fully comprehended if the psychologist is armed with a cultural-psychological theory. (This is the profound truth of Vygotsky's statement that "Science's subject matter is in a certain sense created by science itself from its basic abstraction, for example, the subject matter of physics, chemistry, and the world in astronomy ... The subject matter of science is a part of reality, represented in concepts ..." In Zavershneva and van der Veer 2018, p. 109. "Relativity physics," "Darwinian evolution versus Lamarckian evolution," "sociobiology," "diathesis-stress," "behaviorism," exemplify this point.) This makes theoretical psychology an essential, practical field of debate that defines and guides empirical research as well as reform efforts. Vygotsky emphasized this point: "Our shortcoming is not a shortage of facts but the inadequacy of the theory: This is the main difficulty in the analysis of our crisis and not the divergence from the facts. Thus: Salvation is not in the facts but in theory" (*ibid.* p. 273).

Macro cultural psychology is a dialectical dance between culture, psychology, and Psychology. It uses neoliberal psychology, neoliberal society, and cultural-psychological theory to illuminate one another. This draws each one out of its conventional position to relate to the demands of others.

Macro cultural psychological theory additionally explains how psychology acquires its cultural features. That is, the processes by which it embodies, crystallizes, and expresses cultural factors; and the processes by which culture permeates, organizes, structures, and socializes psychological phenomena.

Cultural psychology also articulates a theory of culture that identifies its important elements, its structure, power relations, and politics. For these all bear on the psychology of people in real life.

Finally, cultural psychology provides important insights into how psychology and society can be mutually enriched. Because psychology and society are interdependent, psychological enrichment requires social improvement, and vice versa. Moreover, the study of cultural psychology reveals social problems through (or in) the psychological phenomena that they generate and inform. This enables cultural psychology to identify ways in which social improvement can and must be directed in order to enhance the psychological functioning of people. This is a vital perspective on social improvement that complements perspectives from economics, health care, education, and political science.

Macro cultural psychology provides the same scientific direction to Psychology that Darwin's theory of natural selection provides to biology. Natural selection guides the biologist where to look, how to look, and what to look for in order to compre-

hend the why, how, and what of organisms' anatomical features. This direction, explanation, methodology, and prediction are not observable in anatomical features themselves. They are not apprehended by atheoretical, "dust-bowl empiricism" that jumps into the field of study to observe whatever catches one's attention. The scientist is always sensitized and informed by provisional theories. Darwin worked feverishly to formulate a theory that could perform these functions. He was distraught by the overwhelming, diverse, empirical details of anatomy that he encountered. He needed to make sense of them in an orderly, logical, coherent theory.

Macro cultural psychology similarly provisionally directs us where to look, and what to look for, and how to look, in order to comprehend the why, how, and what of particular cultural psychologies such as neoliberal psychology.

I am going to use macro cultural psychology as not only a way of analyzing psychology within neoliberalism, but, more ambitiously as a way to frame neoliberalism itself, in order to comprehend which of its elements are most important to understand so that we can understand neoliberal psychology. We have to know what is fundamental to neoliberalism in order to understand what is fundamental to neoliberal psychology. We have to know where to look and what to look for in neoliberalism in order to understand neoliberal psychology. We need a culture theory as well as a psychological theory.

I shall present macro cultural psychology before presenting neoliberalism, because the theory is necessary for framing the presentation of neoliberalism in a coherent, logical manner that reveals neoliberal psychology. Macro cultural psychology is both the culture theory and psychological theory that is necessary for comprehending culture and psychology, or culture in relation to psychology. A purely psychological theory will be silent about the structure of culture and which elements of this structure are most important for forming and understanding psychology. A purely psychological theory will haphazardly identify particular elements of culture that will impede a coherent, logical, systematic understanding of cultural psychology such as neoliberal psychology.

I shall summarize macro cultural psychology to elucidate its theory of culture and its theory of psychology vis a vis culture. This will frame my presentation of neoliberalism in the next chapter, and neoliberal psychology in the Chap. 4.

Macro cultural psychology draws upon the cultural-historical psychology of Vygotsky, Leontiev, and Luria, supplemented by the work of Bourdieu, Foucault, and their followers, along with important contributions from social sciences and humanities such as psychological anthropology, sociology, history, and geography (Ratner 1991, 2011a, b, c, 2012a, b, 2013, 2015, 2016a, 2017a, b, 2018a, b). Vygotsky's work is the most central to macro cultural psychology. His work has many strands. I have drawn out his macro cultural strand for guidance in my work. His macro cultural psychological thinking has generally been ignored by scholars (Ratner 2015, 2018a, b, Ratner and Nunes 2017a, b). (Lantolf's work at Penn State University is an important exception.) Consequently, my use of his work comprises a new reading (or systematization) of his cultural-psychological theory.

Luria summarized the macro cultural strand as follows: "The 'cultural' aspect of Vygotsky's theory involved the socially structured ways in which society organizes

the kinds of tasks that the growing child faces and the kinds of tools, both mental and physical, that the young child is provided to master those tasks ... It is through this interiorization of historically determined and culturally organized ways of operating on information that the social nature of people comes to be their psychological nature as well" (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/luria/works/1979/mind/ch03.htm>).

This is a comprehensive, coherent statement of the multiple issues that cultural historical psychology-macro cultural psychology must answer.

This frames our study of neoliberal psychology. I will replace the general terms "culture," "historical," and "society" with neoliberalism. This means cultural psychologists must study the social structure of neoliberalism that organizes activities and tools and information processing with concrete form and content. For these are internalized by individuals as their psychological constituents.

I will take an unusual path to introduce macro cultural psychological theory-cultural historical psychological theory. I will introduce it, not as a set of abstract concepts and principles (which can be difficult to follow and relate to concrete issues such as neoliberal psychology). I will instead present the theory at work in framing and analyzing one concrete issue of neoliberal psychology. This makes the theory immediately understandable in relation to neoliberal psychology, and vice versa. I will subsequently elucidate elements of macro cultural psychology that guide the analysis of the illustrative example. I will contextualize these elements within the culture theory and psychological theory.

The concrete neoliberal psychological issue that will illustrate the theory is linguistic styles in the neoliberal class structure. Linguistic styles affect school performance, occupational performance, and social partners. The class variation in linguistic style is an important example of neoliberal psychology. Utilizing macro cultural psychological theory to conceptualize and analyze classed, linguistic style is thus a useful illustration of the theory for neoliberal psychology.

This application of macro cultural psychology will allow us to then enumerate its abstract principles in a meaningful manner that can be utilized for deeper explication of neoliberal psychology.

Linguistic Codes

Language, in the form of sociolinguistic codes, has been extensively researched by the British sociologist Basil Bernstein, who utilized macro cultural psychological theory, or cultural-historical psychology. Bernstein was a devotee of Vygotsky's research on speech, from the late 1950s (and thereafter through Luria's lectures at the Tavistock Institute). He frequently cited Vygotsky's and Luria's works. Bernstein wrote a letter to Vygotsky's widow in 1964 expressing his appreciation of Vygotsky's work (Daniels 2012). Like Vygotsky, Bernstein was a Jewish Marxist.

Bernstein is important for cultural historical psychology and macro cultural psychology because his sociological standpoint adds specific macro cultural information to psychology. Where Vygotsky emphasized the word, in general, as the structur-

ing structure of thought, Bernstein was concerned with the specific cultural form of language that derives from the social class activities, constraints, and affordances of capitalist society. (Bernstein 1961, 1964, 1970a, b, 1971, 1973/1977, 1977, 1996, 2000).

Bernstein used cultural historical psychology to make the logic and development of class differences in sociolinguistic codes intelligible.

Bernstein (1996, p. 93) explained his approach in radical, socio-political, terms: “to explicate the process whereby a given distribution of power and principles of control are translated into specialized principles of communication differentially, and often unequally distributed to social groups/classes. And how such a differential/unequal distribution of forms of communication initially (but not necessarily terminally) shapes the formation of consciousness of members of these groups/classes in such a way as to relay both opposition and change.”

Bernstein develops a culture-centric position which commences with social structure, power, and control, that organize patterns of symbolic formation and communication—sociolinguistic codes—which extend the formative social structure, and delay and displace opposition and change. Bernstein (1960, 1973/1977, p. 474) was inspired by Durkheim who sought to derive the basic categories of thought from the structuring of the social relation. Bernstein (1964, pp. 56–57, my emphasis) explains his point of view:

This is a sociological argument, because the speech system is taken as a consequence of the form of the social relationship, or, put more generally, is a quality of the social structure. The speech system or linguistic code, itself a function of the social structure, marks out selectively for the individual what is relevant in the environment. The experience of the individual is transformed by the learning which is generated by his own apparently voluntary acts of speech ...

As the child learns his speech, or in the terms used here, learns specific codes which regulate his verbal acts, he learns the requirements of his social structure. The social structure becomes the substratum of his experience essentially through the effects of the linguistic process. The identity of the social structure, it is thought, is transmitted to the child essentially through the implications of the linguistic code which the social structure itself generates. From this point of view, every time the child speaks or listens, the social structure of which he is part is reinforced and his social identity is constrained. The social structure becomes for the developing child his psychological reality by the shaping of his acts of speech.

Bernstein explains the structure of capitalist society that provides distinctive jobs with different rights, powers, responsibilities, obligations, and social-psychological competencies, which generate distinctive sociolinguistic codes that are expressed in school and elsewhere. These linguistic codes structure individuals' competencies to engage in activities demanded and afforded by the class structure. “We can see that the class system has affected the distribution of knowledge. Historically and now, only a tiny percentage of the population has been socialized into knowledge at the level of the meta-language of control and innovation, whereas the mass of the population has been socialized into knowledge at the level of context-tied operations. A tiny percentage of the population has been given access to the principles of intellectual change, whereas the rest have been denied such access” (Bernstein, 1973/1977, p. 477).

This social structuring of activity and resources (knowledge, wealth, and power) generates ways of relating to the world, perceiving the world, interpreting the world. The owners and managers of macro cultural factors have a “universalistic” perspective that oversees all that they control or would control and figures out how to obtain and organize and control and produce and market things. The populace who works under their control and does their bidding has a “particularistic” perspective that is restricted to narrow domains of following orders with limited oversight, insight, innovation, conceptual thinking, responsibility and decision making. These objective political-economic differences among social classes become reflected in forms of thinking and communication—i.e., consciousness, psychology. Universalistic meanings and concepts are manipulated explicitly as they are fathomed, evaluated, and revised in upper class activities and discussions. Subaltern classes obey orders with little opportunity or need for reflecting on the imposed orders. Subaltern classes work in narrow occupational spaces—a spot on an assembly line, a desk in a call center, serving coffee, assisting disabled people. Their work is routine and simplified. This is reflected in their thinking and communication. It refers to objects in the immediate space of the employees which can be taken for granted and simply indicated. There is little need for complex, explicit discussion about obvious, routine, things.

Bernstein says that particularistic meanings and communication are context-dependent, in contrast to broad scales of international commerce, for example, that refer to disparate things. The scope of universalistic meanings requires detailed, explicit, description to distant interlocutors. The immediacy of particularistic meanings allows for implicit meanings that are embedded in the obvious, narrow context that is shared by the co-present interlocutors. These different forms of communication are termed “linguistic codes.”

Sociolinguistic codes are “deep structures of communication” that recapitulate qualitative differences in activity which are engendered by the class structure of social relations. Particularistic, implicit, linguistic codes recapitulate and maintain the narrowness, standardization, and subordination of the lower classes. Universalistic, explicit, linguistic codes reflect and enhance different social activities of ownership, control, innovation, conceptualization, and decision-making responsibility (Bernstein 1973/1977, pp. 477–478).

Bernstein articulates the features of universalistic vs. particularistic linguistic codes as follows:

Lower Class Restricted Codes:

- short, grammatically simple, often unfinished sentences’,
- a poor syntactical construction
- a low order of generality
- context-bound
- a reliance on implicit meaning
- a very limiting vocabulary
- its poor syntax does not facilitate the communication of ideas and relationships which require a precise formulation.

The speech of the ‘restricted code’ user ‘is likely to be concrete, descriptive and narrative rather than analytical and abstract’ (Bernstein 1977, p. 94). These linguistic characteristics are linked to a restriction in cognitive powers, individual expression and emotional response (ibid. pp. 64–69).

This impedes communicating about things that are abstract, conceptual, and distant from immediate sense perception and reference. A habitus for one social role obviously channelizes competencies away from incongruous roles. “Speakers limited to a restricted code may be unable to manage the role requirements which are necessary for the production of an elaborated code” (Bernstein 1964, p. 64).

“Elaborated, middle class codes”:

Explicit, context-independent, and ‘universalistic’

The ‘elaborated code’ is verbally explicit conceptual abstractions detached from the here-and-now.

- ‘formal language’ of the middle class
- ‘accurate grammatical order and syntax’
- ‘grammatically complex sentence structure’
- ‘language-use which points to the possibilities inherent in a complex conceptual hierarchy for the organizing of experience’ (1973/1977p. 282, fn 3).

These deep systems of thought and communication are illustrated in the narratives of schoolchildren. Let us examine two narratives that come from a single first grade classroom in the U.S. (Michaels 1986: 105, 108–109). The first includes a white (evidently middle-class) girl, Mindy, talking with her middle class teacher, the second includes a black (evidently lower-class) girl, Deena, talking with the same teacher.

(1)

Mindy: When I was in day camp we made these candles.

T: You made them?

M: And I tried it with different colors, with both of them but one just came out; this one just came out blue, and I don’t know what this color is.

T: That’s neat-o. Tell the kids how you do it from the very start. Pretend we don’t know a thing about candles. OK, What did you do first? What did you use? Flour?

M: Um,, here’s some hot wax, some real hot wax that you just take a string and tie a know in it and dip the string in the um wax.

T: What makes it have a shape?

M: Um, you just shape it.

T: Oh, you shaped it with your hand, mmm.

M: But you have, first you have to stick it into the wax and then water, and then keep doing that until it gets to the size you want it.

T: OK. Who knows what the string is for?

(2)

Deena: Um, I went to the beach Sunday and to McDonalds, and to the park, and I got this for my birthday. My mother bought it for me, and um I had um two dollars

for my birthday and I put it in here, and I went to where my friend named Gigi. I went over to my grandmother's house with her and um she was on my back and I and we was walkin around, by my house and um she was heavy. She was in the sixth or seventh grade.

T: OK I'm going to stop you. I want to talk about things that are really really very important. That's important to you but tell us things that are sort of different. Can you do that? And tell us what beach you went to.

Mindy's linguistic style of codes is the universalistic, elaborate, explicit, logical, context-free system of communication and thinking; while Deena's codes are implicit, with low level of generality that are context-bound with poor syntax that impedes detailed explication to interlocutors.

These systems of communication confirm Bernstein's point that sociolinguistic codes are generated by, and reproduce, class differences in higher education, occupations, political participation, and other activities.

Deena's expressive speech is suited to lower class work—e.g., to working as a sales clerk at McDonald's where she merely informs a customer that a Big Mac contains lettuce, tomatoes, onions, and cheese. This kind of work and speech only requires stringing words together in a list. Logic, coherence, and descriptiveness are not required from the clerks because the information is organized and displayed by management on overhead screens, and the customer knows what the words denote. The work and speech have been routinized and simplified to the point that they require little thinking, reflection, analysis, logic, creativity, or explanation by the clerks. These higher level activities have been expropriated by the corporate owners and managers—just as they have expropriated the profits. They do not want their low-level employees to possess them for their own interests and decision-making. Neoliberal management ensures this.

These requirements of adult social class participation structure life activities and conditions, including those of young children. Deena and Mindy's class differences in thinking and communicating are pronounced in children, even before entry into formal education. Education hones these differences through appropriate pedagogies and conditions.

Bernstein's macro cultural (sociological) analysis of linguistic style carries important implications for improvement. We may agree that neither of the codes is inherently more fulfilling in some absolute sense. Not everybody needs the elaborate codes to fulfill themselves. If the restricted social and physical life is rewarding, then restricted codes are fine. It may be that in a tribal community this is the case. However, we must always consider the cultural-political aspects of society. In exploitive, class-differentiated, hierarchical, neoliberal capitalism, restricted social and physical life is impoverished and oppressed. This is the basis, quality, and function of restricted linguistic codes. In this case, it is disingenuous to pretend that restricted codes are a purely cultural-ethnic resource that is as fulfilling as elaborated codes. That claim would depoliticize and dehistoricize the codes. It would expunge oppression and class structure that are embodied in linguistic codes. It would legitimate oppression

by ignoring it. In class society, restricted codes are a decided deficit that reflects and entraps lower class people in oppressive conditions.

Consequently, human fulfillment requires critiquing restricted codes and replacing them with elaborate codes. This requires explicating the macro cultural psychological basis and function of the two codes. Teachers would explain Bernstein's thesis that linguistic codes are forms of social control that entrap students in their neighborhoods and jobs. This association would galvanize students' motivation to change their codes. They would become angry at the codes that have saddled them with so many social problems.

In contrast, a technical, semantic analysis and change of grammar would be futile because it would ignore the fundamental reason for the codes' existence, as well as their social-political function. It would dehistoricize and depoliticize language. It would require that children develop new grammars and vocabulary with no social sense of what it is all about and why it is useful. Moreover, current lower class life, would continually militate against linguistic change. Elaborate codes would be dysfunctional to their real life (*Lebenswelt*).

Linguistic shift is only viable as a component of cultural-political critique and transformation. This is the radical thrust of macro cultural psychology. The cultural-politics of Bernstein's codes are the vehicle for technical improvements in grammar and vocabulary. The cultural-political aspects of the codes are the psychological tools of language. They must be the target of explanation, teaching, and improvement (see Kinginger 2016 for macro cultural psychological aspects of foreign language learning). Macro, political, economic, cultural elements of language are the basis of language, which is social communication. They constitute the political motivation for children to self-criticize their restricted habituses and replace them with expansive cognition and language. Bernstein emphasizes that elaborate codes are expansive codes; they enable individuals to reflect on their conditions and critique them and change them.

Bernstein's framing and analyzing of sociolinguistic codes is a model application of the concepts and principles of macro cultural psychology-cultural historical psychology. It enables us to explicate the general principles that he utilized. We will then be able to utilize these principles to more deeply understand neoliberal psychology, as well as other cultural forms of psychology.

Macro Cultural Psychology and Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical Psychology

The principles and concepts of macro cultural psychology-cultural historical psychology that Bernstein utilizes, and which we shall utilize to frame neoliberalism and neoliberal psychology, may be enumerated as follows (see Ratner 2018b, c for extensive discussion):

- (1) Psychology is a macro cultural phenomenon in its origin, function, and features. For instance, linguistic codes/styles are located in macro cultural space—of institutions, artifacts, cultural concepts, social systems and class structures. Bernstein said the speech system is a quality of the social structure. This endows codes with macro cultural properties (forms and content) that serve macro cultural purposes. This is why codes have features of social class.

This idea that psychological activity, or subjectivity, is an element of social systems and macro cultural factors, is a necessary guideline for researching neoliberal psychology in relation to neoliberal society. It directs attention to thoroughly comprehending society—which psychologists rarely do.

Vygotsky expressed this principle in various ways:

Environment is a factor in the realm of personality development, and its role is to act as the source of this development...and not its context. (Vygotsky 1994c, pp. 348–349)

In contrast to the maturation of instincts or innate tendencies, the motive force that ... sets in action the maturational mechanism of behavior impelling it forward along the path of further development is located not inside but outside the adolescent. The tasks that are posed for the maturing adolescent by the social environment – tasks that are associated with his entry into the cultural, professional, and social life of the adult world – are an essential functional factor in the formation of concepts. (Vygotsky 1987, p. 132)

“Higher mental functions [are] the product of the historical development of humanity.” “The structures of higher mental functions represent a cast of collective social relations between people. These [mental] structures are nothing other than a transfer into the personality of an inward relation of a social order that constitutes the basis of the social structure of the human personality” (Vygotsky 1998, pp. 34, 169–170, emphasis added). Thus, the historical social order/organization is the architecture of human psychology. Bernstein demonstrated this with linguistic codes which possess features of social class. We must apprehend the neoliberal order in order to comprehend its ordering of psychology and personality.

Another statement amplifies this:

Verbal thinking is not a natural but a socio-historical form of behavior. It is therefore characterized by a whole series of features and laws that do not apply to natural forms of thinking and speech and intellect as it occurs in the animal world and the earliest states of childhood. The most important point, however, is that this recognition of the historical nature of verbal thinking requires that in analyzing it we apply the same methodological theses that historical materialism applies to the other historical phenomena of human society. We can anticipate that the basic features of the historical development of behavior in this domain will be directly dependent on the general laws that govern the historical development of human society. (Vygotsky 1987, p. 120; see Ratner 2012a, b, pp. 204–207)

Again, he says that psychology’s essential features, operating mechanisms, dynamics, causes, functions, and relations are governed by sociohistorical principles of society, not by psychological principles of the mind.

Bernstein states that macro cultural factors, e.g., class, do psychological work in the sense of structuring and modifying psychology: “What is responsible for the simplification of the structure, the narrowing of the lexicon range, and the consequent

constraint on the verbal elaboration of unique experience? It is suggested that the code is a function of a specific form of social relation" (1964, p. 60). Individuals are not the cause of psychological features and dynamics; macro cultural factors are. This is because psychology follows social development.

"Leontiev (2009, pp. 198–199, 295, 298) similarly explains that:

individual psychic processes are actually reorganized during historical development. It is known, for instance, that the memory of the people of certain economically and culturally backward nationalities has very unique features, e.g. a capacity to fix the features of a locality with amazing accuracy (so-called topographic memory)...People living in different historical epochs and in different social conditions of course also differ in what are their processes of perception, memory, thought, etc."

Leontiev (1978) further explains this perspective in his article "Activity and Consciousness" (available online: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/leontev/works/1977/leon1977.htm>) in his book *Problems of Dialectical Materialism*: "Despite all its diversity, all its special features, the activity [Tätigkeit] of the human individual is a system that obeys the system of relations of society. Outside these relations human activity does not exist. How it exists is determined by the forms and means of material and spiritual communication that are generated by the development of production and that cannot be realised except in the activity of specific individuals. It stands to reason that the activity of every individual depends on his place in society, on his conditions of life."

Macro cultural psychology-cultural historical psychology is a Copernican shift in the way psychology is conceived. Psychology is essentially a cultural, historical phenomenon, not an individual one. Psychology depends upon social conditions, as Leontiev just said. While individuals are active inventors and performers of psychology, they do as cultural organisms who need culture for their survival and fulfillment, and who work to develop and maintain culture for the benefits it brings to them (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/leontev/works/1977/leon1977.htm>). Human activity thus supersedes its individual actors, it does not eliminate them. It creates supra-individual forms (that are super human as well) which is what we mean by culture. A school or a bank or a political party or a hospital or a transportation system or communication system or cell phone is this kind of supra-individual, cultural form of activity that individuals produce and engage in. It is objectified in supra-individual physical forms and cultural forms. This collective, objectified, strength to supra-human cultural formations is what makes them super human (Ratner 1991, 2012d). These entail collective processes, administration, decision-making, norms, and sanctions. Once formed, individuals must adapt to these collective physical and social formations in order to engage in human activities (attend school, work) and in order to become a successful individual. To succeed in school or work, you must obey the cultural norms, processes, and infrastructure. You must work hard to realize the cultural forms in your own behavior. These are not your own, personal activities, goals, or even motives. Bernstein makes this clear in describing linguistic codes that structure the psychologies of social members.

Psychology is human subjectivity; and in cultural humans, psychology must be the subjectivity of cultural forms and factors. Psychology is thus culture-centric, it is

not individual-centric or person-centric. Only cultural psychology can be neoliberal psychology. Person-centric psychology does not have cultural form; it could not be neoliberal psychology, it would only be individual psychology. Individual psychology has no social features such as are present in social roles of teacher and student, or boss and employee, or upper class and lower class.

Emphasizing culture as the form and content of psychology, Vygotsky said, “We derive individual functions from forms of collective life. Development proceeds not toward socialization, but toward individualization of social functions (transformation of social functions into psychological functions)” (Vygotsky 1989, p. 61). “The various internal contradictions which are to be found in different social systems find their expression both in the type of personality and in the structure of human psychology in that historical period” (Vygotsky 1994a, p. 176).

Bourdieu similarly said, “Structures of perception and appreciation are essentially the product of the incorporation of objective structures.” “A point of view is the principle of a view adopted from a point located in social space, a perspective which is defined in its form and contents, by the objective position from which it is adopted. The social space is indeed the first and last reality, since it still commands the representations that the social agents can have of it” (Bourdieu 1998, p. 104).

Bourdieu emphasized that habitus actively generates meanings and practices, while being culturally formed through social experience, e.g., in different social positions. Habitus is culturally organized meaning-making.

This culture-centric psychology is “out there” in the macro cultural environment of institutions, artifacts, cultural concepts, and class structure. Individuals appropriate linguistic codes from their cultural environment. Similarly, Property relations structure our relationship not only to resources necessary for life, but to life itself and even ourselves. Privatization of property is a disciplinary process that creates new kinds of subjects (both owners and workers) and objects, e.g., commodities (Ratner, 2014c).

This commands us to thoroughly comprehend contradictions in neoliberal society in order to comprehend psychology.

Culture-centric psychology, or culturally-formed psychology can be changed by changing the macro cultural factors in which psychology is objectified. This is the progressive, political telos of cultural psychology: it calls for social improvement in order to achieve psychological enrichment. Lower class individuals cannot change the code system that is based in and reinforced by the class system. They must change the class system in order to develop new semiotics.

- (2) Psychology is distributed from macro cultural space to individual psyches in accordance with the position that individuals occupy in the social system/structure. Again, individual functions are derived from forms of collective life; they are transferred from the social order to recreate that order in the psyche. Psychological phenomena are not distributed among individuals according to individual idiosyncracies. Individual differences are variations in social experiences with the social system—i.e., differential exposure to the diverse macro cultural factors. “The social moment in consciousness is primary in time as

well as in fact. The individual aspect is constructed as a derived and secondary aspect on the basis of the social aspect and exactly according to its model" (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 77). "Essential is not that the social role can be deduced from the character, but that the social role creates a number of characterological connections" (ibid. p. 106, my emphasis; see <https://www.marxists.org/archive/leontev/works/1977/leon1977.htm>).

For instance, to understand the prevalence of anxiety in neoliberal psychology, we must understand anxiety as embedded in the institutions that surround the individual; it is routinized in one's daily life. While anxieties may be experienced on a personal level, we must consider the broader sociological, historical, and geographical dimensions of anxiety, including how anxieties are culturally created, framed, mediated, and institutionalized at the macro cultural level; how they spread and are contained, and how they shift between social fields and vary across space and time (Bericat 2016; also Clay-Warner and Robinson 2008). Anxiety is really a cultural phenomenon that individuals absorb—along with the oxygen in the atmosphere that we absorb into our physiology. It is the culture that is stressful; it is work that is precarious. Stress, anxiety are not personal reactions that are constructed by individual processes. They are "out there" in the environment which impinge upon individuals. Individual experience is the subjective reflection of exposure to precarious conditions.

Cottingham (2016, p. 452) provides the same kind of explanation for the class quality of emotions:

Like economic capital, emotional capital is unequally distributed in society and is distinct from practice—i.e., the situated activation and embodiment of emotional experience, expression, and management. Within this framework, emotion is reflective of the interests of individuals within everyday interaction while, at the same time, (re) producing the broader structural and cultural conditions in which such interactions occur. As a trans-situational [and trans-individual] resource, emotional capital is inextricably linked to variations in power and privilege in contemporary society, making it a key concept for addressing the role of emotion in classic sociological concerns.

Psychological phenomena are cultural phenomena, which means they belong to the culture, they represent the culture, they maintain the culture. When a husband becomes jealous when his wife has an extra-marital affair, the emotion of jealousy serves to protect the cultural structure of monogamy. Jealousy is not the husband's creation out of his personal agency. The husband's psychology is a steward of his culture.

Vygotsky expressed this "strong form" of cultural psychology: "Each person is to some degree a measure of the society, or rather class, to which he belongs, for the whole totality of social relationships is reflected in him. We must reconquer the right for psychology to examine what is special, the individual as a social microcosm, as a type, as an expression or measure of the society" (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 317, my emphasis). The individual derives her psychology from her culture.

This Copernican reconceptualization of psychology in macro cultural space does not mean that all psychology is engineered by social leaders who control macro

cultural factors. Some psychology is “bottom-up,” or designed by ordinary people. However, in order for this psychology to become a substantial social phenomenon, its individual founders must engage it with macro cultural factors not of their own making. Innovative musical sensations/feelings must become “uploaded” into the economic system of music production and distribution. This macro level will contour those musical feelings in line with the social system. Artists need to obtain financing and technological assistance and marketing. Thus, individual, innovative, psychological phenomena must ultimately become integrated into the macro cultural system if they are to have any social presence beyond a small group of admirers. They thereby become historical-materialist phenomena. Psychology will thereby illuminate society, and contribute to improving it. The particular origin of a particular social phenomenon is not as important as the macro cultural, political economic system which ultimately gives it—controls—a public form.

With psychological phenomena being essentially and thoroughly cultural, any analysis of psychological phenomena must look deeply into their details for their cultural sources, features, and function. We look into psychology to see its cultural aspects. For they are what compose it, stimulate it, organize it, animate it, and require it. This provides the maximal identification and comprehension of neoliberal aspects of psychology. It directs us to identify and comprehend neoliberal aspects of psychology more thoroughly than other psychological theories. For other theories do not recognize the essential, thorough cultural basis and organization of psychology; they minimize these by emphasizing other bases and components of psychology.

- (3) Vygotsky developed an important conception of the cultural transmission of psychological phenomena into individual psyches. He said that individuals appropriate psychology from macro cultural factors as they participate in macro cultural factors. Cultural factors thus function as “psychological tools.” They are the mechanisms of the mind.

Psychological tools are artificial formations. By their nature they are social and not organic or individual devices. They are directed toward the mastery of [mental] processes – one’s own or someone else’s – just as technical devices are directed toward the mastery of processes of nature... The following may serve as examples of psychological tools and their complex systems: language, different forms of numeration and counting, mnemotechnic techniques, algebraic symbolism, works of art, writing, schemes, diagrams, maps, blueprints, all sorts of conventional signs, etc. (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 85)

Vygotsky (1997b, p. 238) said “the devices of behavior reorganize thinking ... If in the process of development, the child masters some language, it is interesting to see to what degree, and how, this reorganizes the whole natural process of his thinking.”

Bernstein treated linguistic codes as cultural-psychological tools. They are cultural factors that impart their semiotic style to individual speakers, thereby organizing their psychological phenomena. Speech appears to be voluntary, however, it is socially organized and expressive. Speech codes are required by the social activity (role), afforded by it, supported by it, and rewarded by it. Speech codes socialize speakers into the social system by making distinctions and relationships among things

that are necessary for the speakers' position in the system. Speech codes reproduce and maintain the social system that generates them.

Psychological tools are the "how" of cultural formation of psychology.

Another illustrative example of a psychological tool is cultural ideals of beauty. Philosophy scholar, Widdows (2018, pp. 2–7, my emphasis), explains how this macro cultural factor (concept, artifact) functions as a psychological tool that organizes the self.

The beauty ideal is a dominant and in some instances a predominant ethical ideal. It functions as an ethical ideal in that it sets ideal standards to aspire to and presents working towards such standards as a moral duty. It provides a shared value framework against which individuals judge themselves morally good or bad. It is constitutive of identity and provides meaning and structure individually and collectively. Praise, blame, and reward are apportioned in accordance with it. Engagement is virtuous, and failure is a moral vice engendering shame and disgust.

The current beauty ideal is more dominant than previous ideals to the extent that it is becoming global. As it becomes more dominant, its ethical features become more pronounced making it harder to resist and reject. As the beauty ideal becomes more dominant, the ethical pressure to conform increases. "To claim that engagement is simply individual choice is unsustainable and practices of informed consent are undermined" (ibid.).

"The beauty ideal applies for longer, starting as young as three and continuing past the menopause."

Minimal standards of beauty rise. This means that more is required just to be 'good enough,' which results in the narrowing of what is acceptable or normal and a parallel expansion of "abnormal" (ibid.).

Cultural tools organize psychology by cultivating an appropriate subjectivity, not by expunging subjectivity to impose behavior mechanically. Culture does not negate subjectivity, and subjectivity does not negate culture. This is evident in consumer marketing in capitalist society.

The political-economic pressure for marketing and advertising forces these to become intrusive, focused, and seductive in order to increase their effectiveness at generating irrational, impulsive, depleting, spending. Manufacturers and marketers make their commodities personally appealing to consumers so that people will want to make them part of their life styles. This goes far beyond mere functionality of products for efficient use. The commodity becomes tied to identity, personhood, personality, success, attractiveness. The commodity becomes a psychological tool that imbues psychological qualities with commodity form. Psychological qualities are defined as possessing commodity attributes, requiring commodity attributes. If beauty can be imbued with a commodity form, people will depend upon commodities to achieve beauty. Thus, the need for commodities becomes a commodified need. Commodified needs generate sales and profits.

"Emotional Branding is a means of creating a personal dialogue with consumers. Consumers today expect their brands to know them—intimately and individually—and to have a solid understanding of their needs and cultural orientation" (Gobe

2009, Locations 406–408). “Just take a look at the Evian waterdrop-shaped millennium bottle. It is not just about water or luxury in the traditional sense. It is about seeing water in a whole new way through groundbreaking design, taste, home decoration, and the evocation of the sensory experience of a water drop” (ibid. Locations 449–450). “Brand personalities are special. They have a charismatic character that provokes an emotional response. American Airlines has a strong identity, but Virgin Airlines has personality. AOL’s identity is recognizable, but the unique and flexible graphic expression of Google’s logo stimulates our imagination. Sensorial design is about experiences. Design is about responsible human solutions, based on innovation that presents a new set of sensory and subconscious experiences” (ibid. loc. 495–501). “Brand presence can forge a sound and permanent connection with people, especially if it is strategized as a lifestyle program” (ibid. Locations 504–505). “Simple ideas, such as computers, have morphed from ‘technology equipment’ into larger, consumer-focused concepts known as ‘lifestyle entertainment.’ Food is no longer about cooking or chores but about home and lifestyle design and ‘sensory experience.’” (loc. 237). “Consumption becomes meaning-based, and brands are often used as symbolic resources for the construction and maintenance of identity” (ibid. p. 155).

Neoliberal psychological tools are much more effective than previous tools because they have assumed this personal, subjective, social quality that generates immediate, subjective, psychological resonance. The tool feels like part of oneself because of its personal, subjective, social quality. It is communicating with you, it knows you, it is your companion. Neoliberal tools are cultural artifacts that are deliberately invested with meaning by their manufacturers and marketers. They are prepared meanings that are delivered to us, which we consume. We do not invent them. They are not ours; on the contrary, we become theirs. Schroeder and Morling (2006, pp. 178) admit that “meanings seem to arise constructed by consumers, [but are] based on behaviors exhibited by personified brands or brand characters.” Gobe acknowledges that “In order to succeed, brands must carefully craft psychic identities as well as the more concrete qualities quantified in Consumer Reports” (Gobe 2009 Locations 662–663).

Subjectifying the product objectifies subjectivity in that product. The more that products are subjectified, the more they permeate psychology and make it objectified in the image of commodities. The more that products are personalized, the more that psychology is depersonalized in the form of manufactured commodities.²

The general fact that neoliberalism shapes psychology is not objectionable. All cultural systems shape the psychology of their members. This general fact is what makes human psychology advanced and potentially fulfilling. We should not oppose the general cultural shaping of psychology as oppressive. We should oppose particular cultural forms and content of psychology which are oppressive, and replace these with other cultural forms and content that are fulfilling and enriching. Cultural formation of psychology is not the problem; only the specific cultural formation of psychology is the problem, and it can be corrected by devising other cultural forms of psychology, not be repudiating all cultural formation of psychology.

Branding is an interesting psychological tool because it demonstrates the complete organization of psychology by a macro cultural factor. Branding prioritizes irrationality and emotional impulsiveness over cognition. The objective of neoliberal marketing is to entice irrational, unnecessary, insatiable, impoverishing consumption of products. This objective forms the method of marketing. Marketing must utilize impulsive, sensationalistic, irrational innuendos, images, associations, and hidden persuaders in order to elicit insatiable, impulsive, infinite needs that will animate insatiable, impulsive, infinite, consumerist behavior. (This, of course, is the definition of addiction. It is no wonder that various desires are uncontrollable and take the form of addiction.) Marketing-branding cannot be a logical, empirically based, rational process because that would sensitize consumers to the objective irrationality of insatiable consumerism—just as religious faith cannot be socialized through logical, empirical, rational, objective, scientific methods and thinking, for that process would contradict the ontology and epistemology of religious faith, and it would prevent students from accepting faith.

Branding is a concrete, capitalist, cultural-psychological tool. It embodies capitalist interests, requirements, and objectives, which it transmits to psychological phenomena. Branding is not a generic psychological tool that can be utilized for the individual's purposes. It forms those purposes. (We shall see that education is similarly a concrete, cultural-psychological tool rather than a generic one.)

Ailon (2018, forthcoming) provides an example of a neoliberal psychological tool that organizes psychology and interpersonal relations. It is the form that electronic media plays in financial trading.

It is hard to imagine an economic context of action that encourages relational disregard as resolutely as the online financial markets that await independent traders. The online financial markets they face have to a great extent been digitally designed according to atomistic economic ideals. These markets presuppose and encourage a relational dissociation from the partners to exchange and from the people, organizations and nations who are affected by the transactions. Epitomizing society's vision of itself as individualized, fragmented and competitive, the online markets remove from display anything that can give rise to a sense of attachment or empathy – signs of joint identity, facial expressions, human voice, and so forth. The exchange partners appear to online traders as anonymous, faceless and voiceless strangers; they lack a physical co-presence; and encounters with them are short and fleeting.

Financial markets presuppose and encourage a narrow, 'asocial' pursuit of self-interest.

Independent traders are pre-occupied with 'bourgeois [i.e., neoliberal] freedoms' and perceive trading as a means of seeking economic independence in the comfort of the home and of asserting identity within the family.

This description illuminates how the technology was designed to truncate social relations in accordance with capitalist political-economic principles. Technology/technique builds in, objectifies, and extends neoliberal social relations and psychology. These determine the nature of the technology. Technology is political and cultural in this way. (The same is true for the technology of the assembly line. It was designed to objectify and reproduce social relations and psychology. Henry Ford hired "scientific management" founder Frederick Winslow Taylor to incorporate forms of discipline, fragmentation, alienation, powerlessness, and exploitation

in the physical design of his automobile assembly line.) This makes technology relevant to cultural psychology. Focusing on purely technical aspects of technology—e.g., eye movements, response time, and speed of data transmission—distracts from its social-political-psychological character. (This is true for all kinds of technical preoccupation.) Because electronic, financial transactions are normative among the populace, the neoliberal, social relations, meanings, emotions and self that Ailon identifies in these transactions are normative.

Ailon conducted ethnographical research to document these social-psychological elements of the neoliberal financial instruments.

Trading teachers often underscore the point that there is no place for empathy in the market. For example, ‘Pain for Them, Gain for Us’ is the title of an online video by trading teacher Eitan Rotem who explains that traders can identify signs of the general public’s ‘pain’ of loss on price charts, and that the ‘signal of pain can help us find stockpiles of profits in a systematic way’. Another teacher said in a lecture, ‘You don’t come to the bourse in order to help the world, but in order to make money! Do you agree?’ People in the audience answered: ‘Yes!’ And Meir Barak, the owner of trading schools, wrote in his book *The Stock Whisperer* that after one of his lectures a young religious woman expressed discomfort with the notion of short selling – a strategy wherein traders bet against the market, looking to profit from what is perceived as ‘the mis- fortune of others’. ‘The market is not socialist’, Barak answered. ‘The market is not intended to help anyone and no short trader ever thinks about the good of the public, only about his own good.’

Traders internalize these percepts in their own attitudes and actions. Even when they express reluctance about the crude, self-centered, materialism of their participation, they continue to rationalize their participation in terms of neoliberal, market forces, and social relations. The primary way to express economic responsibility to oneself and family, and to avoid malicious others (leeches), is through market performance. Indeed, aggressive egocentrism is continually encouraged by neoliberal concepts/representations that social “others” are rapacious, blood-thirsty, uncaring, aggressive devils whose competition requires renewed self-protection, self-concern, self-reliance, social dis-trust, atomistic dissociation, and self-empowerment and self-enrichment in order to prevent destruction by the social world.

This case study exemplifies the way in which neoliberal psychology (self, perception, cognition, emotion, motivation, imagination, attention) is stimulated, supported, and organized, and encouraged by neoliberal, financial instruments that include trading teachers and writers, financial firms and institutions, governmental agencies. Economic atomism is embedded in a complex sense-making process regarding social and economic conditions.

Culturally organized tools organize psychological operations by stipulating requirements, motives, procedures, and objectives, rewards, and punishments for behavior. This association is known as activity theory (see Wertsch 1981, 1985a, b; Ratner 1996, 1997b, 2018b). Cultural-psychological tools and activities are similar to the mental equipment identified by the *Annales* historians of mentalities. They have been variously termed “schemata” or “templates” or “collective representations” which overlay and organize psychological functions such as perception, cognition, emotion, desire, and sexuality. The classical sonata form exemplifies the manner in

which cultural forms take up sensory (auditory) impressions and elevate them into beautiful, sensitive music.

Cultural psychology is therefore essentially the study of cultural-psychological tools which constitute cultural psychology. Cultural-psychological tools are the explanatory constructs and the operating mechanisms of psychology, the psyche, the mind. These replace conventional constructs and mechanisms such as neurotransmitters, genes, cortical localization, the id. Instead, psychological explanatory constructs and operating mechanisms are news programs, advertising, religious dogmas, private equity companies, privatization, ideology, video games, tax policies, and occupational structure. This is how psychology follows the principles and dynamics of society, which Vygotsky emphasized.

Intra-personal or interpersonal psychological processes do not follow social principles. They are incompatible with cultural psychology. They reduce the social environment to a context, rather than the source, of psychology. Only when psychology is reconceptualized and reconstituted as macro cultural material, can psychology be truly cultural as Vygotsky desired (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/leontev/works/1977/leon1977.htm>).

This means that we must understand cultural-psychological tools of neoliberal society in order to comprehend neoliberal psychology.

From the descriptions and the examples of psychological tools, we can see that they are mechanisms which organize psychology in particular forms and contents. This makes psychological tools radically different from tool artifacts such as hammers. These tools are means by which individuals realize their desires. We use a hammer to make any size and shape object, or to break an object. The hammer does not structure our product, it obeys our will. In contrast, psychological tools do impart a structure to our psychology/behavior. Consequently, it is misleading to call them tools; because that implies that they are voluntary means when they are imposed, coercive structures on our acts.

(4) Culture theory; politics

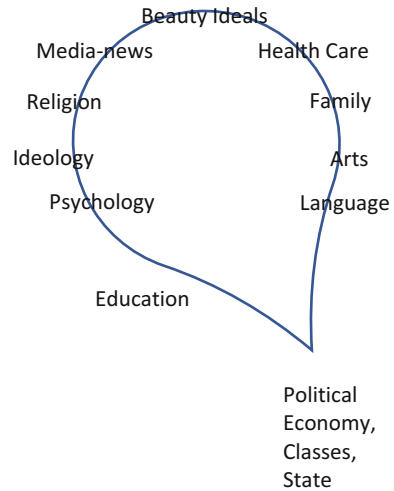
Articulating the cultural constituents and consequences of psychology (e.g., neoliberal psychology) requires a sophisticated theory of what culture is, how it is organized, and what its main determinations are. Failing to enumerate culture theory leaves cultural psychology adrift from its moorings and prevents serious cultural explanation and description of behavior.

Culture theory is necessary for avoiding empiricism, which is the mere description of particular events. Understanding culture is not equivalent to simply noting various events such as customs. We must comprehend how these customs are constructed and organized, who leads this process, which interests the customs reflect, which interests have been excluded—i.e., the power and politics of culture. This includes the class structure into which customs are demographically distributed and differentiated.

Vygotsky articulated a theory of culture. I have depicted it as organized in the form of a cone like Fig. 2.1.

This cultural model is a general model that has been developed in macro cultural psychology (Ratner 2018a, b, c). It was formulated by Karl Marx under the

Fig. 2.1 Conical cultural model of macro cultural psychology



name “materialist conception of history,” or “historical materialism.” Marx (1962, pp. 857, 772) said, “it is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers—a relation always naturally corresponding to a definite stage in the development of the methods of labor and thereby its social productivity—which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and with it ... the corresponding specific form of the state.” “The whole internal structure of the nation depends on the stage of development reached by its production and its internal and external intercourse” (Marx and Engels 1964, p. 32). Marx and Engels define stage of production as “different forms of ownership” of property and resources (ibid. p. 32). Even objects bear this stamp: “the mode of production imposes on the product a character which is social and is firmly bound up with the social context” (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1864/economic/ch01.htm>).

Engels explained this in a letter to Borgius, Jan. 25, 1894: What we understand by the economic conditions, which we regard as the determining basis of the history of society, are the methods by which human beings in a given society produce their means of subsistence and exchange the products among themselves (in so far as division of labour exists)...Under economic conditions are further included the geographical basis on which they operate and those remnants of earlier stages of economic development which have actually been transmitted and have survived—often only through tradition or the force of inertia; also of course the external milieu which surrounds this form of society. We regard economic conditions as the factor which ultimately determines historical development. But race is itself an economic factor. Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic base. It is not that the economic position is the cause and alone active, while everything else only has a passive effect. There is, rather, interaction on the

basis of the economic necessity, which ultimately always asserts itself. The state, for instance, exercises an influence by tariffs, free trade, good or bad fiscal system. So it is not, as people try here and there conveniently to imagine, that the economic position produces an automatic effect. Men make their history themselves, only in given surroundings which condition it and on the basis of actual relations already existing, among which the economic relations, however much they may be influenced by the other political and ideological ones, are still ultimately the decisive ones, forming the red thread which runs through them and alone leads to understanding (cited in Ratner 2014). Foucault elegantly expressed the essence of this cultural model:

It seems to me that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions, which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize and attack them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them.

This critique and this fight seem essential to me for different reasons: first, because political power goes much deeper than one suspects; there are centers and invisible, little-known points of support; its true resistance, its true solidity is perhaps where one doesn't expect it. Probably it's insufficient to say that behind the governments, behind the apparatus of the state, there is the dominant class; one must locate the point of activity, the places and forms in which its domination is exercised. And because this domination is not simply the expression in political terms of economic exploitation, it is its instrument and, to a large extent, the condition which makes it possible; the suppression of the one is achieved through the exhaustive discernment of the other. Well, if one fails to recognize these points of support of class power, one risks allowing them to continue to exist; and to see this class power reconstitute itself even after an apparent revolutionary process.

It is only too clear that we are living under a regime of a dictatorship of class, of a power of class which imposes itself by violence, even when the instruments of this violence are institutional and constitutional. (Chomsky-Foucault 2006, pp. 41, 39)

Foucault is arguing that the range of macro cultural factors is not neutral or fragmented (independent); rather they are unified by political violence that works through all of them. Political power does not simply reside in the state; is it deeper and broader than that. All the macro cultural factors support it. And state power emanates from the dominant social class. He says it does not only reside there. He does not deny a ruling class dominates the government; he simply says there is more to domination and exploitation than this. It is "insufficient." In addition, the ruling class exercises its domination in diverse places and forms, which are not simply economic exploitation. These are diverse instruments of economic exploitation by the dominant class and its political apparatus. They are points of support of class power/state power. They must be uprooted, or else this class power will reconstitute itself even after an apparent revolutionary process. This is a perfect description of the conical cultural model of society.

Vygotsky used historical materialism as his cultural theory for all cultures and psychological phenomena (see Ratner 2018b, c). In his book Educational Psychology (1997, p. 348), Vygotsky said: "Pedagogics is never, and was never, politically indifferent, since, willingly or unwillingly, through its own work on the psyche, it has always adopted a particular social pattern, i.e., political line, in accordance with the

dominant social class that has guided its interests.” “The life of society does not represent a single and uniform whole; society is subdivided into different classes” (Vygotsky 1994a, p. 176).

The political economic core of society introduces important features such as the mode of production, social classes, power and politics, oppression, alienation, mystification, ideology, commodification, dispossession, social emancipation, conscientization, class consciousness. These features add to, and concretize, the macro cultural factors in the cultural system; they also explain the origin of these factors; they explain their unity/congruence; and they explain why/how they should be improved and can be improved.

Martin Luther King sensed the conical cultural model as the explanatory model of racism. He recognized the dependence of racism on economic exploitation, materialism, and militarism: “When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered” (speech at Riverside Church in 1967). King also recognized the radical, emancipatory, political implications of the conical cultural model: “You can’t talk about ending the slums without first saying profit must be taken out of slums,” he warned in 1966. “You’re really tampering and getting on dangerous ground because you are messing with folk then. You are messing with captains of industry. Now this means that we are treading in difficult water, because it really means that we are saying that something is wrong with capitalism. There must be a better distribution of wealth, and maybe America must move toward a democratic socialism.”³

This conical model of culture maps perfectly onto neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is fundamentally a political economic revolution which reorganizes all the social domains (macro cultural factors) in its image.

Holborow (pp. 123, 105–106) explains how the neoliberal university (and its episteme) is grounded in neoliberal political economy (of the cultural cone) that is promoted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which promotes the capitalist political economy:

The entrepreneurial university should be seen as the condensation of class strategies related to the imperatives of hegemony in a period of capitalist restructuring.

Based in Paris, but led from Washington, the OECD has established itself as an influential policy maker...In higher education, its role in implementing the [neoliberal] “reform agenda” is pivotal...It demanded the universities needed to fully embrace the enterprise agenda...OECD policy was that universities now needed to be steered by their governments towards the commodification of knowledge or the packaging of knowledge to be sold on the market and aligning the activities of universities directly towards the idea that government, industry, and university should coalesce to drive the free market agenda in education...Its outcome is to replicate one neoliberal-inspired education policy across its 34 member states and its associate members (one of which is China). The policy is articulated with an extraordinary lack of local variation...Completely disregarding local traditions and culture, the neoliberal language of the OECD cemented a highly centralized and cohesive neoliberal message. It made a unified linguistic neoliberalism a reality.

Holborow (2015, p. 122) explains how neoliberalism has created its semiotics or vocabulary that reframes mundane events in commercial terms. Neoliberal linguis-

tic symbols form a narrative or schema or template for perceiving, understanding, anticipating, remembering, and reasoning about events.

The uniformity and spread of neoliberal semiotics is evidence of a concerted discourse strategy devised on the part of power social actors and which seeks to convey a certain ideology in language interactions throughout the university. It is a top-down process. It is the official language of the university, used in documents and in formal meetings and constitutes a management-speak.

Neoliberalism articulates the 'marketization of language' and 'linguistic neoliberalism' or, what I would call 'neoliberal semiotics.' Calling hospital patients, and bus riders 'customers' emphasizes that the activity is a commercial, economic one, rather than a service to heal wounds and transport people to where they wish to go. The widespread application of commercial terms such as investment and expenditure to school, family, communication, the self, and love, similarly recasts these human relationships in commercial, bourgeois terms (ibid. pp. 1–2; see Chun 2017).

This is all part of the neoliberal conical cultural system.

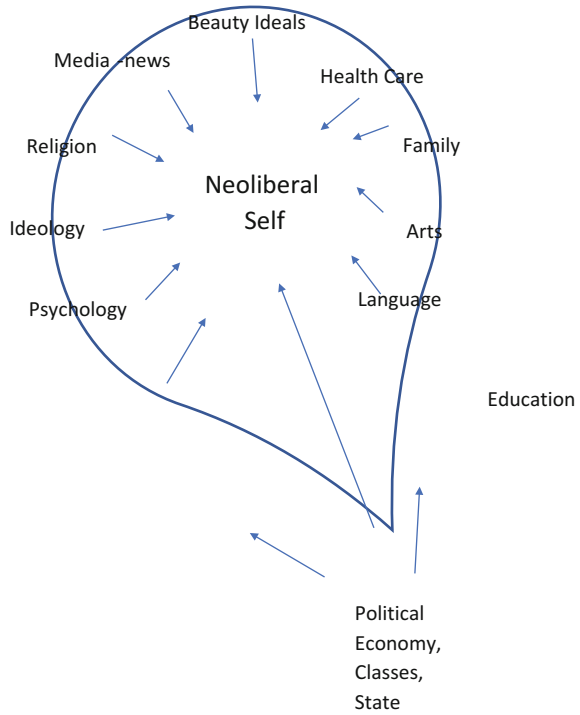
The conical (historical-materialist) model of culture encompasses the Psychology industry: academic Psychology, along with psychiatry and psychotherapy. These are components (moments, nodes) of the cultural system that are grounded in the political economy, reflect it, and reproduce it. Zhang (2018, p. 48) explains how "psychological care and well-being in managing diverse situations as China is undergoing massive and rapid socioeconomic transformations ... Psychological intervention, often in the name of *guanai* (care), has gradually become a critical tool of managing the population and governing society in postsocialist China. Psychological counselors and experts are becoming a new form of authority, an indispensable part of creating and managing knowable, stable, and governable subjects for the military, the police, schools, and enterprises" (see also, Yang 2015; Zhu et al. 2018). By reflecting the political economy, the Psychology industry promulgates it in its practices. Psychology is thus a form of governance, just as all cultural elements are in their role of reproducing the political economy in their treatment of people.

Psychology and the Conical Cultural System

Because psychology is culturally formed and functional for cultural factors, psychological phenomena are mapped onto, and isomorphic with, the cultural system of macro cultural factors. That is the conical model of cultural psychology. It is the model we shall use to explain, describe, and critique/transform neoliberal psychology.

Bernstein's work on sociolinguistics reveal that linguistic codes are political because they are based in social class divisions. All psychological phenomena are political. Their technical features contain political dimensions that serve political purposes—such as social position in a social structure of work, economics, and education.

Fig. 2.2 The historical-materialist formation of psychological phenomena



Bernstein confirms Bourdieu’s (1991, pp. 66, 68) position that linguistic “utterances are not only (save in exceptional circumstances) signs to be understood and deciphered; they are also signs of wealth, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and signs of authority, intended to be believed and obeyed ... It is rare in everyday life for language to function as a pure instrument of communication [in]pursuit of maximum information efficiency ...” Linguistic competence is more a socio-political competence than a cognitive one. Focusing on the latter “can lead one to miss a ‘reality’ that lies in structures transcending the interaction which they inform.”

This isomorphism is depicted in Fig. 2.2.

Figure 2.2 shows a psychological phenomenon, the neoliberal self, as formed within the conical cultural system. The phenomenon is impacted directly by the political economy, and also by the political economy as it is mediated by the macro cultural factors which it organizes.

Psychological anthropologist, Lutz (1988, pp. 5–6, 152) says

emotional meaning is fundamentally structured by particular cultural systems and particular social and material environments...The concepts of emotion can more profitably be viewed as serving complex communicative, moral, and cultural purposes rather than simply as labels for internal states whose nature or essence is presumed to be universal...Emotion is culturally defined, socially enacted, and personally articulated. Talk about emotions is simultaneously talk about society – about power and politics, about kinship and marriage, about normality

and deviance...A people's most basic assumptions about the nature of the self can be seen as the ideological products of particular social structures and political economies.

Anthropologist Mauss (1925/1966, p. 49) articulated this in his concept of "total social facts" that are "at once legal, economic, religious, aesthetic, morphological and so on." Sartre (1991, pp. 17–50) develops this concept most brilliantly under the terminology of totalization.

Vygotsky expressed the systemic character of human psychology in his statement that "Each person is to some degree a measure of the society, or rather class, to which he belongs, for the whole totality of social relationships is reflected in him" (1997a, p. 317).

Thatcher denoted this in her candid statement that "Economics are the method [for neoliberalism], but the object is to change the soul."

In the forgoing example of university entrepreneurship, OECD candidly acknowledged the need to promulgate a neoliberal psychology that coheres with, and extends, capitalist entrepreneurship throughout society's domains:

An overarching goal becomes that of fostering the development of a mind-set which is conducive to entrepreneurship and to entrepreneurial behavior. This broadens our perspective on what "entrepreneurial" behavior is about. It is not restricted to starting a business or running one's own enterprise. Individuals can act entrepreneurially within a wide range of roles...Moreover, they can do so outside the working environment – in non-work activities, such as voluntary work or the organization of sports clubs, and in the domestic and social spheres. (Holborow 2015, p. 109)

This is an exemplary confirmation of macro cultural psychology. OECD is stating that it has a political-economic agenda of promoting the neoliberal political economy of capitalist commercialism, i.e., entrepreneurship, and that this political economy requires a congruent psychology—mind set—and that this neoliberal psychology must become general to all social spheres and activities. Exactly as macro cultural psychology explains, the political economic psychology is central to the other social domains. This is necessary to provide a coherent cultural psychology that supports and extends the political economic base of culture to the panoply of human activity.

Food taste and consumption crystalize/totalize a wealth of social domains in the cultural system, as depicted in Fig. 2.2. Best (2017, pp. 16, 19, 23, 35) explains that

"As much as food provides endless opportunity for play for youth, food is also bundled up with a broader set of economic and social relations that structure the everyday landscape of modern life, often providing context for the specific form play takes." "The dynamics of food scarcity and food abundance, under-nutrition and over-nutrition, that mark today's food landscape express deepening economic inequalities locally and globally and are grafted along complex gender, national, class, ethno-racial, and spatial lines." "I hope to show how the entanglements of class, social context, and cultural meaning shape the ways youth relate to food as both symbol and material object, as both public and private good, while also accounting for the set of broader economic and political forces that have reshaped the current food landscape where young people eat." "Food scholarship encompasses studies in the political economy of food and the way food meaning and practice is structured along race-ethnic, national, gender, and class lines in adult society."

“Food and beverage industries spent \$175 million between 2009-2011 to lobby against tougher nutritional standards for food marketed to children to ensure that French fries remain on the menu in public schools as part of the Nutritional School Lunch Program”

Various macro cultural factors within the neoliberal capitalist system contribute to the consumption of junk food-neoliberalism. The family is one such cultural factor. It has become fragmented under neoliberal economic and social pressures. “The 2009 American Community Survey of the U.S. Census reveals that less than 60% of parents reported having dinner with their 12–17-year-old children daily during a typical week” (Best 2017, p. 34). This opens the door, and the need, for children to eat commercial, junk food.

This can be depicted in Fig. 2.2, with junk food being the behavior that replaces the neoliberal self. The arrow from political economy represents the financial and political efforts to encourage junk food; this is complemented by the right side of the system which passes from political economy to family and then over to junk food.

Luria (1934, p. 255) took this perspective as the basis of his second expedition to central Asia in 1932:

The fundamental aim was to study those peculiarities of the psyche which are the result of various historical conditions and to trace out the fundamental laws of development of psychological processes. In this respect, central Asia is of exceptional interest on account of the residuals of primitive economic conditions which are now undergoing tremendous industrial, political, and cultural transformation. This change gives opportunity for studying not only the peculiarities of psychological processes under various conditions, but, what is more important, the very dynamics of the transition from the more elementary psychological laws to the more complex processes.

The aim was in pointing out those changes which thinking undergoes in social and cultural transformation connected with socialistic growth.

With the change of economic conditions, situational thinking very quickly becomes changed, giving place to other more complex forms of thought. It was the aim of the second expedition to study in more detail the characteristics of the structure of the ‘situational’ thinking and its various functions as well as to study those paths along which the transformation of the situational thinking takes place by the development of thought into concepts under the influence of such new molding forces as collectivization, cultural development, literature, etc. (my emphasis)

These are powerful statements. They say that psychological phenomena are not governed by natural mechanisms/laws, or personal processes; but rather by principles of historical materialism that govern political-economic phenomena. The reason that psychology follows political-economic-sociological laws and dynamics is because psychology is constituted by macro cultural factors. As Marx and Engels (1964, p. 32) explained, “What individuals are coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.”

Psychology follows the laws of society because psychology is an element of material production and its macro cultural factors. On its own, individual subjectivity is not historical materialist. It only becomes so when it participates in cultural activities—i.e., when it operates within social institutions that are grounded in the

political-economic system; or when it must gain financial support from the banking industry; or when it must purchase materials and offices on the economic market, or sell products on the commodity market which is affected by global production and consumption. Only when activity is swept into cultural systems and factors and dynamics does it fit into historical materialist processes and become truly cultural and culture-centric.

Bourdieu described the political-economic core of society in his volume, *On The State* (2014) where he described the state as not only the seat of political power, but also as a concentration of symbolic resources which the society utilizes. “The state is defined by possession of the monopoly of legitimate physical and symbolic violence” “The state is the principle of the organization of consent as adhesion to the social order.” “The state is the foundation of both the logical and moral conformity of the social world. Logical conformity, in Durkheim’s sense, consists in the fact that the agents of the social world have the same logical perceptions ... the same categories of thought, of perception, of construction of reality” (ibid. p. 4). Bourdieu endorses the Marxist view of the state: “the state is not an apparatus oriented to the common good, it is an apparatus of constraint, of maintenance of public order but to the benefit of the dominant ... It fulfills, as I see it, certain of the functions that the Marxist tradition ascribes to it” (ibid. pp. 5–6).

Bourdieu presents an important example of how psychology is rooted in culture which is rooted in the political-economy and State.

Our perception of temporality is organized as a function of the structures of public time [the calendar]. Here is a fine example of the public at the very heart of the private: at the very heart of our memory, we find the state, the civic festivals, secular or religious, and we find different categories of specific calendars, the school calendar or the religious calendar. ... All this is completely bound up with the state. Revolutions revise the official calendars – ‘official’ meaning [that is] universal within the limits of a definite society... We can have private calendars, but these are themselves situated in relation to the universal calendars; they are notches in the intervals marked by the universal calendar, within the limits of a society. (ibid. p. 7, my emphasis)

This is how psychology is a historical materialist phenomenon.

Informal Behavior

Leontiev (1978) explained: “Despite all its diversity, all its special features, the activity [*Tätigkeit*] of the human individual is a system that obeys the system of relations of society.”

This means that even behavior that occurs outside structured macro cultural factors conforms to norms that occur within them. The reason is that cultural psychology which derives from macro cultural factors is the subjectivity that individuals enact in informal, unstructured settings.

This is exemplified by the way that school children racially segregate themselves in school cafeterias during lunch. A vast literature exists on this topic because during

lunch the students are not mandated by school authorities about where to sit. Yet, given a “free choice,” students overwhelmingly socialize with same-race, same-class others. (Sociologists call this “homogamy.”) A representative book on this is Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? This demonstrates that class and racial factors have been internalized into individual psyches, and guide individual choices. Best (2017, pp. 92, 96) found this in her ethnography of school children’s eating habits:

Since academic spaces are stratified by race and class, we can also expect a stratified arrangement in other school settings, such as the cafeteria. Given that friendship groups are formed with classmates, a majority of school-aged kids will form friendships with kids in the same academic track. If a school has academic tracks sorted by race and class, then we can also expect other school spaces to be sorted by the same logic. It is in this context that the interactional and cognitive processes through which symbolic distinctions, often called “boundary work,” create “traditional islands of group identity. Spatial boundaries, stylistic boundaries, and interactional boundaries were easy to see at Thurgood high school – which enrolls 2200 students, 43% black, 27% Hispanic, 21% white, and 7% Asian/Pacific and American Indian. Thurgood students...often have limited contact with each other across racial groups. (see also Bettie, 2003)

Best identifies a class and racial, structural logic (*telos*) that runs throughout the school activities, from classroom to sports to cognitions to styles (in clothes and music and food) to identity, and choices in the cafeteria and personal interactions.

This makes macro cultural psychology a coherent, comprehensive psychology that is inescapable. The only way to change it is by changing its macro cultural basis in the political economic, cultural system of macro cultural factors.

(5) Emancipation

Vygotsky’s consuming interest in cultural-historical psychology was both scientific and political-emancipatory. He believed that a thorough, cultural understanding of psychology would reveal a good deal about society’s structure and principles, including their costs and benefits. This would lead to deep social critiques and reorganization. It would contribute to social emancipation and psychological fulfillment.

Vygotsky utilized the conical, Marxist, historical-materialist structure of society to explain the deep social transformation of the political economic class structure that is necessary to improve the educational macro cultural factor. “the source of the degradation of the personality in the capitalist form of manufacturing ... cannot be resolved without the destruction of the capitalist system organization of industry ... by the socialist revolution ... Alongside this process, a change in the human personality and an alteration of man himself must inevitably take place” (Vygotsky 1994a, pp. 180–181). This is the political emancipation that is called for and guided by historical materialism and cultural historical psychology.

Macro Cultural Psychology and Neoliberal Psychology

Macro cultural psychology will be our theoretical and methodological guide for explaining, describing, predicting, and critiquing/transforming neoliberal psychology and neoliberal society. Macro cultural psychology will explain the origins of neoliberal psychology as well as its form and content, its operating mechanisms, its dynamics and contradictions, its function and the possibilities of overcoming its debilities. Reciprocally, neoliberal psychology extends macro cultural psychology theory and methodology to encompass its distinctive features. Macro cultural psychology becomes more sophisticated, nuanced, and complete as a result.

Macro cultural psychology directs us to approach neoliberal psychology according to the following (descriptive and explanatory) principles:

- (1) Neoliberal psychology is rooted in the macro cultural system of neoliberalism. This is what makes it neoliberal psychology. Its features consist of neoliberal form and content. They are organized by neoliberal macro cultural factors. Neoliberal psychology is not simply a particular combination and degree of natural, universal psychological processes that are stimulated by neoliberal cultural factors—e.g., attention, reaction-time, episodic memory, frustration-aggression, fight or flight, attachment, anxiety, depression, conformity, religiosity, neuroticism, etc. Neoliberal psychology is only explainable in cultural terms of neoliberal macro cultural factors that comprise its form and content. The task of macro cultural psychology is to elucidate the specific macro cultural origins, features, and function of particular psychological phenomena.

We follow Vygotsky's conception of psychological tools, and Foucault's conception of techniques of subjectivation, which utilize macro cultural factors as the tools and techniques that construct psychological phenomena. They bring culture directly into psychology as its constituents, determinations, operating mechanisms. Recall Vygotsky's detailed statement, that meanings are culturally constructed and objectified in cultural factors such as signs and words, which bring cultural meanings into the individual psyche to form and complete psychological processes. Vygotsky concretized this point in his statement about class organizing psychology: "Social stimuli that have been established in the course of historical development ... are permeated through and through with the class structure of society that generated them and serve as the class organization of production. They are responsible for all of human behavior, and in this sense we are justified in speaking of man's class behavior" (Vygotsky 1997b, pp. 55, 56, 348, 211–212). Social stimuli bear the class structure and transmit it to behavior. Social stimuli are not individual, personal, subjective constructs.

This is what we will study with regard to neoliberal psychology.

- (2) Macro cultural psychology directs us to thoroughly comprehend concrete, neoliberal society in order to understand neoliberal psychology. We will search to recognize "a commodified self," or "commodified body," or "the entrepreneurial self." We will not stop at abstractions such as "high self-esteem"

that is devoid of concrete, neoliberal, cultural content. We will search for neoliberal, “cognitive capital,” or “commodity signs,” or the “ideological codes that inform an advertising message,” or “the consuming of signs” (Goldman 1992). We will not rest with abstractions such as “sign-signifier relation,” “degree of attention,” or “attentional shifts.”

- (3) Neoliberal society/culture will be construed in the pattern of the conical cultural model. Its political economy will be emphasized as the core of the social system which permeates and organizes the other macro cultural factors. Exploration of these factors emphasizes their core political economic basis and function (role), as well as their distinctive features and forms which modulate (mediate) their political economic features. All macro cultural factors are neoliberal because they possess capitalist form, class structural demographics, and ideological content.
- (4) Psychological phenomena are cultivated in each macro cultural factor. This means that they bear the complex of features described in the previous point. This is what constitutes neoliberal psychology. Neoliberal psychology may be said to map onto the neoliberal cultural system’s conical shape. We shall discuss four psychological phenomena from this perspective: the ideological, entrepreneurial self; the emotional reaction to the personal space of the self; the class structure of selected psychological phenomena; and the neoliberal form of sexuality.
- (5) Interventions to enrich psychological phenomena call for Improvements in the social system as the primary means of improving psychology. Since culture is the basis of psychology, cultural change is the basis of psychological change. Less-cultural conceptions of psychology lead to less-cultural changes to improve psychology.
- (6) The discipline of Psychology (academic, therapeutic) will be conceptualized as reflecting neoliberal culture. The theories, methodologies, and therapeutics of Psychology will be recognized as neoliberal Psychology. Neoliberal Psychology will be construed as a macro cultural factor akin to other institutions and concepts. It will have a political-economic basis, features, and function. It will cultivate psychological phenomena in accordance with its cultural position and function in neoliberal society—as all macro cultural factors generate psychology.

Notes

1. This is the advance that Darwin's theory of natural selection brought to biology. Natural selection brought empirical cases to life, made them intelligible and sensible, infused them with meaning, logic/telos, and predictability. Theory guides us in our encounters with novel data, for where to look to describe the data most accurately, and where to look to discover explanatory factors. Natural selection guides us to look at ecological conditions, resources, opportunities, and constraints for the reasons of an organism's bio-anatomy. Natural selection also drove science to discover the nature and causes of individual differences in diverse environments. That science became genetics. We need a cultural-psychological theory to accomplish these same purposes in understanding neoliberal psychology.
2. It is important to emphasize that commodified personalities internalize and then externalize commodified psychology to their social contacts. Commodified personalities extend commodification to others; they are agents of commodification, not simply recipients of it.
 For example, as women present themselves as commodities, commodified by cosmetics to be superficially and physically alluring on the social marketplace, they entice men to treat them as alluring commodities. This draws men into the commodity cycle. Ordinary women are not selling products to men, they are selling their commoditized selves and bodies to men. And in so doing, they are inducing men to desire commoditized selves and bodies in their partners. Women are inducing men to acquire commodified desires and perceptions and thoughts and imaginations and motivation, just as all advertising inducing consumers to acquire commodified tastes in order to desire commoditized products.
 Of course, women are not acting on their own; they are part of the commodity production system that works on commodifying men in other ways. However, women cannot deny their own complicity in the commodifying system. They are commodifiers just as much as they are commodified. To blame men alone for objectifying and commodifying women is to neglect the full social genealogy of these acts.
3. This anti-capitalist speech was a microcosm of politics in America. It was denounced by the mainstream media—including the New York Times—as well as King's black allies and followers, and even his personal staff. The NAACP and Southern Christian Leadership Conference all rejected his broadening of Civil Rights to include a critique of capitalism. This confirms King's insight that anti-capitalism is dangerous to the status quo—including black citizens and social activists—because it challenges the core of capitalist society. In contrast, the politics of Civil Rights are acceptable to the status quo because they do not link with the capitalist political economy which causes racism and myriad other social problems. This is why radical elements of the civil rights movement have been exorcised from it (Theoharis 2018).

Part II
Neoliberal Capitalism: The Source of
Neoliberal Psychology

Chapter 3

The Neoliberal Political Economy



This chapter and Chaps. 4 and 5 are elucidate key macro cultural elements of neoliberal society. These are the political economy, the educational institution, and ideology. These are powerful cornerstones of neoliberal society. They are also powerful tools that form neoliberal psychology. They are essential cultural factors for explaining, describing, and predicting neoliberal psychological phenomena.

These three elements of neoliberalism reveal the character of neoliberalism, its ethos, as well as its telos, its logic, its operations, its structure, its conditions, its contradictions and dynamics, its objectives and requirements, its social relations, its ownership of resources, its power and politics, its effects on social life and on psychology. These neoliberal elements direct our attention for where to explain neoliberal psychology, how to describe it, how to predict it, how to form and reform it.

Origins of the Neoliberal Movement

To understand the movement for neoliberal (intensified, expanded) capitalism, it is necessary to begin with its actual practices, not its self-description by ideologists. Most analysts of neoliberalism begin with the latter. They review the self-description that was presented in 1947 at the founding meeting of the “Mount Pelerin Society.” Analysts continue on with statements of principles from these MPS members and followers. This is as unacceptable as describing slavery in the words of slave owners (i.e., to civilize and control unruly, primitive, people). We shall see that self-descriptions by neoliberals are largely ideological obfuscations of the true ideals and practices of neoliberalists. I therefore pay no attention to them until later in the book where I discuss ideology. I begin with the political-economic origin of neoliberalism. This accords with our conical cultural model. With the basis and origin of culture lying in the political economy, this is the most accurate and penetrating, and comprehensive starting point for understanding neoliberalism and neoliberal psychology.

The movement for neoliberal (intensified, expanded) capitalism arose by capitalists after World War II as a reaction to the New Deal. The New Deal had corrected and regulated unrestrained capitalism that had caused the Great Depression. Although the New Deal had salvaged capitalism and made it viable, though with reduced profitability, the greed for insatiable wealth and power led capitalists to rebel against restraints on their profit-driven activities. This was partly motivated by economic problems and political uprisings, that I shall describe momentarily. Post-World War capitalists sought to restore unregulated capitalism that had been known as classical liberalism (Kotz 2002; Demartino 2002). Restoring this former liberalism is reflected in the name “neo-liberalism.” Understanding neoliberalism requires understanding this dynamic of American corporate capitalism. (Springer et al. 667 page edited tome, Handbook of Neoliberalism is a comprehensive, contemporary, overview of relevant scholarship.)

Economist David Kotz succinctly explains the emergence of neoliberalism as unregulated capitalism in the 1970s. In an interview in Truthout, Aug. 1, 2017, he said:

In the 1970s, regulated capitalism entered a period of economic crisis indicated by a long decline in the rate of profit in the US and Western Europe. The capitalist classes of the developed countries responded by abandoning the capital-labor compromise, attacking the trade union movement, lifting state regulation of business and banking, and making drastic cuts in the welfare state and in the various forms of social provision. This gave us the neoliberal form of capitalism.

The neoliberal transformation resolved the economic crisis of the 1970s from the viewpoint of capital, as profits began to rise again. That transformation freed the banks from state regulation, setting off the process of financialization. It rewrote the rules of the global system, promoting an increasingly globally integrated world economy.

Every form of capitalism eventually enters a phase of structural crisis, and in 2008 the superficial stability of neoliberal capitalism gave way to severe economic and financial crisis.

Neoliberal capitalism gave rise to some 25 years of relatively stable economic conditions after 1980, although economic growth was slower than it had been in the preceding period. Capitalists became much richer, but the promised benefits for the majority never emerged. After 1980, working people’s wages and job conditions steadily worsened through 2007. However, as long as the economy expanded at a reasonable rate, it was difficult to challenge neoliberalism. Every form of capitalism eventually enters a phase of structural crisis, and in 2008 the superficial stability of neoliberal capitalism gave way to severe economic and financial crisis, followed by stagnation (<http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/41458-is-capitalism-in-crisis-latest-trends-of-a-system-run-amok>).

Volscho (2017, p. 249) articulates this explanation of neoliberalism: “In the 1970s, US capitalism suffered a legitimacy crisis as the economy was mired in high inflation, unemployment, and slower growth. The rate of profit had been decreasing since the late 1960s and by the mid-1970s Wall Street was in poor shape. Capitalists politically mobilized in the 1970s to restore the rate of profit and to restore power to economic elites.” This is the essence of neoliberal capitalism in Western countries. It is the succinct explanation and definition of Western neoliberalism.

What likely troubled the capitalist class most, was the fall in the rate of profit after 1966. Thus, not only were events of civil disorder and other uprisings all around, but the rate of profit began a decline during this time. In the first quarter of 1966 the pre-tax rate of profit (for the non-financial sector) peaked at 20.4% and fell to about 15% by the third quarter of 1970. The 1960s was a time of mostly increasing profit rates. By 1963, the after-tax rate of profit was above 7% and continued to grow until 1965–1966 peaking at 9.2% in the first quarter of 1966. The fall to 5.5% in 1970 and the low point of 4.4% in 1974 signaled a great crisis for capitalism as the rate of profit was halved from its postwar peak. Outside of falling rates of profit, capitalists' other greatest fear was the rise of government regulatory power (and likely the protest wave). Consider the 1971 memo written by corporate lawyer, corporate board member, and future Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr to the then director of the US Chamber of Commerce: "No thoughtful person can question that the American economic system is under broad attack . . . We are not dealing with sporadic or isolated attacks from a relatively few extremists or even from the minority socialist cadre. Rather the assault on the enterprise system is broadly based and consistently pursued . . . The most disquieting voices joining the chorus of the criticism come from perfectly respectable elements of society: from the college campus, the pulpit, the media, the intellectual and literary journals, the arts and sciences, and from politicians . . . American business is 'plainly in trouble'; the response to the wide range of critics has been ineffective, and has included appeasement: the time has come – indeed, it is long overdue – for the wisdom, ingenuity, and resources of American business to be marshaled against those who would destroy it. . . There should be no hesitation to attack the Naders, the Marcuses and others who openly seek destruction of the system. There should not be the slightest hesitation to press vigorously in all political arenas for support of the enterprise system. Nor should there be reluctance to penalize politically those who oppose it.

The capitalist class mobilized politically in the 1970s. The laws regulating corporate political donations were changed in the mid-1970s. In 1974, amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act allowed business and corporations to donate vast sums to federal candidates (*ibid.* pp. 249-257; see also Kliman 2012).

These analyses of neoliberalism's origins make an important point. It is that the Keynesian rescue of capitalism from Presidents Roosevelt to Johnson had unraveled by the mid 1970s. It was this failure that galvanized capitalists to find new ways to control the economy. This contradicts the popular story that Keynesianism was a solid solution to capitalism's problems, and a viable alternative to neoliberalism. Keynesianism is not a viable fix for capitalism and neoliberalism.

The neoliberal capitalist resurgence of the 1970s sought to enrich and empower the capitalist class by extending their control over the economy and society in general. This entailed intensifying capitalist social relations, and extending them to social domains (and foreign countries). This was not a purely economic program. Both Kotz and Powell, above, from their left wing and right wing positions, emphasize that neoliberalism required a strong political program to provide policies that would legalize and encourage the capitalist economic resurgence.

Because capitalism is economically autocratic—private capitalist investors own and control resources, workplaces, and the labor that is means of production, while workers and the public have no direct ownership, control, or input into the major economic institutions (workers in Apple's computer factories, or MacDonalds' restaurants have no input into financial or work decisions)—the neoliberal political agenda

had to be equally autocratic in legalizing and promoting the capitalists' domination of the economy and society. Kotz and Volscho document this above.

In other words, neoliberalism is essentially autocratic both economically and politically. This is the essence that underlies and belies the rhetoric of individual freedom and consumer relations that neoliberals spout. In her history of the Koch brothers' neoliberal political-economic empire, Mayer (2016) explains that their standard operating procedure for implementing their unpopular policies has been to fund alternative, private, secretive, organizations that could influence academic institutions, think tanks, the courts, state legislatures, and the presidency.

MacLean's Book Similarly

observes that many liberals have missed the point of strategies like privatization. Efforts to "reform" public education and Social Security are not just about a preference for the private sector over the public sector, she argues. Instead, MacLean contends, the goal of these strategies is to radically alter power relations, weakening pro-public forces and enhancing the lobbying power and commitment of the corporations that take over public services and resources, thus advancing the plans to dismantle democracy and make way for a return to oligarchy. The majority will be held captive so that the wealthy can finally be free to do as they please, no matter how destructive (<https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/meet-the-economist-behind-the-one-percents-stealth-takeover-of-america>).

The main architect of this autocratic tendency in neoliberalism was James Buchanan, an economist in the Mont Pelerin Society (MacLean 2017). He led the neoliberal charge to destroy environmentalism public health, welfare, Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare as well as public education because it tended to foster community values. Feminism had to go because he considered it a socialist project. Buchanan advised the Chilean Junta in the 1970s, and he wrote that "Despotism may be the only organizational alternative to the political structure that we observe" (<https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/meet-the-economist-behind-the-one-percents-stealth-takeover-of-america>).

Buchanan's aggressive destruction of liberal, public, communal, features of capitalism, and his support for military dictatorship, earned him the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1986, amidst his tenure as president of the reactionary, Mont Pelerin Society!

Neoliberal Political-Economic Cornerstones and Strategies

Intensifying capitalist social relations (including the capitalist class structure), and extending them to social domains (and foreign countries). has involved three maneuvers.

- (1) Intensifying and extending the capitalist form of macro cultural factors.
- (2) Intensifying and extending the class structure.
- (3) Intensifying and extending the ideological obfuscation of capitalist destructiveness.

They are interdependent and blend into each other. The class structure is a demography of qualitatively different kinds/forms of competencies. They reflect different positions, obligations, rights, affordances, constraints, and opportunities in the neoliberal political economy forms of capital. And, ideology is always present to mystify the demographics of these different competencies. However, it is useful to conceptually highlight the particular features of these neoliberal cornerstones. Chapter three will illustrate the effects these three neoliberal cornerstones have on psychology.

- (1) Intensifying and extending the capitalist form of macro cultural factors. The capitalist form consists of:
 - (a) capitalist ownership/control for profit
 - (b) profit comes from converting and expanding the form of social activities and social products into commodities that are bought and sold on the capitalist market economy
 - (c) commodities which are produced by the capitalist form of labor that Marx called “productive labor”.

Because neoliberalism is the intensification and expansion of capitalism’s essential principles, which were most thoroughly and critically explained by Marx, it is necessary to utilize his analyses to comprehend neoliberalism. Indeed, neoliberalism is the consummate confirmation of Marx’s analysis—which is the primary reason neoliberals eschew it!

Marx identified labor as the basis of human life and society. Therefore, capitalism is essentially a form of labor, a mode of production. This is the key to comprehending it. “The entire so-called history of the world is nothing but the creation of man through human labor.” “The mode of production must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather, it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce.”

Marx explains the distinctive capitalist form of labor in The Process of Production of Capital, Draft Chapter 6 of Capital (1864) (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1864/economic/index.htm>). (This chapter was a lost manuscript for many years and was not included in the original Marx works.)

“*The same kind* of labour (e.g. gardening, tailoring, etc.) can be performed by the same working man in the service of an industrial capitalist, or of the immediate consumer. In both cases the worker is a wage labourer or a day labourer, but in the first case he is a *productive worker*, in the second an *unproductive* one, because in the first case he produces capital, in the second case he does not; because in the first case his labour forms a moment in capital’s process of self-valorisation, in the second case it does not.” “A schoolmaster who educates others is not a productive worker. But a schoolmaster who is engaged as a wage labourer in an institution along with others, in order through his labour to valorise the money of the entrepreneur of the knowledge-

mongering institution, is a productive worker” (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1864/economic/ch02b.htm#484>).

This is the key to neoliberalism: it seeks to convert all labor to labor for capitalist profit. This requires that the worker works for a capitalist, he does not work for himself as an independent entrepreneur who has a direct relation with the consumer for whom he produces use value (e.g., educating him, curing his diseases, fixing his cars, building his houses and gardens). Thus, you no longer hire a doctor; you visit a clinic that is owned by a hospital or capitalist, in which the doctor is essentially an employee. You pay the clinic, and the clinic pays the doctor, though less than you pay the clinic. The surplus is surplus value that the doctor has produced, which is profit for the business owner. This commercial quality of the employer-employee-customer relation carries over into the entire medical encounter. This was illustrated in the Introduction. The entire encounter is structured in business terms that include allotting time, and preparing for these time constraints, and communicating medical results electronically. The wage labor of the capitalist economic relation subjects the worker to competing demands. One is the demand of the customer for good use value/service/product. The doctor wants to cure your problem. However, she is additionally subject to the demand of the company for its surplus, which demands precise allocation of limited time for the treatment, so that the doctor’s salary does not exceed the value of what she produces. The independent worker, who stands in a personal, direct relationship with the customer, is not subject to this second demand. She simply charges the customer the value of the labor she expends to produce the use value the customer wants.

Similarly, teachers must be productive employees in the capitalist sense of generating profit for the enterprise. This is why professors are evaluated more for their research which brings in external funding (or patents) to the university, of which the university garners a portion. Neoliberalism transitions teachers from providing a professional service (education) for a wage (which does not generate capital for the university) into profit-generating employees who bring capital into the university via their research (funding and sales), which the university can expropriate in part. The more funds the teacher brings into the university, the more the university treats it as capital to exploit and expropriate. Mere teaching has no potential for accomplishing this objective. Teachers are transition away from simply commodity markets (teaching for a fee) to the capitalist market that subordinates the labor to the requirements of capital accumulation. This is the basis of neoliberal privatizing of public services. Governments typically pay employees for their labor without earning profit from them. Privatizing government enables this labor to be exploited by investors/managers in order to generate and accumulate capital. This leads to treating the employees differently. Former respect for their skill (use value) is replaced by intensifying their productivity to generate capital (exchange value). Human capabilities are capitalized and instrumentalized into mere means of generating profit. Morality and truth become subordinated to profit. It no longer matters what is moral and true, it only matters how much profit activities generate.

University products and activities are commodified, so they can be sold at a profit. This is what makes sports so attractive; because they earn money for the school via

ticket sales. This is why schools value sports and coaches over brilliant professors, whose publications do not generate profit for the school (or the professors).¹

Commodification of activities and social relations not only generates capitalist surplus value that enriches and empowers the capitalist owners; it also creates a capitalist ethos, and a capitalist habitus in participants that accepts and craves commodification and privatization throughout society, rather than opposing it. The populace sees commodification as the only game in town, the end of history; this makes them support it when capitalists intensify and extend it.

The neoliberal habitus is intensified by commoditizing the self and the body. This occurs by defining oneself and one's body in terms of consumer products. These become the accepted, psychological tools of the self and the body. A woman is modern or fashionable or attractive or feminine because of the commodities she displays. The attributes of the commodity are taken as her own. She consumes femininity, attractiveness, pleasantness, studiousness, and even trustworthiness, by purchasing appropriate products which encompass her within themselves to bestow their qualities on her.

This is cultural capital. It is cultural competencies—including physical beauty, style, taste, perception, emotionality, skills, language, and identity—that are commoditized in the sense of taking the form of capitalist commodities. Cultural capital is a psychological tool that is informed by capitalist assumptions and values which it transmits to concrete cultural psychology, e.g., neoliberal psychology. Cultural capital is not a neutral resource to accomplish one's desires (Ratner 2018a).

Because profit is the key to capitalism and neoliberal capitalism, we must explain how it comes about. Marx discovered that capital, or profit, is generated by wage labor that is purchased by the capitalist. Capitalist wage labor requires the worker to produce more value than the value of his wage. This excess value is surplus value. It is unpaid labor, or free labor, that is expropriated by the capitalist as profit. Thus, productive labor is defined by the capitalist as unpaid labor performed by the worker, that is expropriated by the capitalist for free, without working for it. Thus, free profit for the capitalist defines productive labor, while labor that is paid for by consumers is construed as unproductive.

Profit is maximized by converting more domains of social production into capitalist, wage labor, enterprises. Education, medicine, scientific research, news and entertainment, social media (Facebook), religion, art, etc. all become transformed into capitalist form. Commodification becomes universal. This is both the intensification and the extension of the capitalist, commodity form of activities and things. Marx explained it as follows:

it is only on the basis of capitalist production that the commodity becomes *the general form of the product*, that every product must take on the commodity form, that sale and purchase seize control not only of the surplus of production but of its very substance, and that the various conditions of production themselves emerge in their totality as *commodities* which go into the production process from circulation. Hence the commodity is the *universal elementary form of the product*. At earlier stages of production, products assume the commodity form *in part*. Capital, in contrast, necessarily produces its product as a *commodity*.

Only when the working population has entered the market as a producer of commodities, selling its labour itself — or more precisely its labour capacity — instead of the product of its labour, does production become the *production of commodities* to its complete extent, over the whole of its length and breadth. Only then are all products converted into commodities, and only then do the objective conditions of each individual sphere of production enter into production as commodities themselves. Only on the basis of capitalist production does the commodity in fact become the *universal elementary form of wealth*. (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1864/economic/ch01.htm>; p. 441).

Because commodities are produced by labor, the capitalist form of labor transforms the character of commodities from previous economies devoid of surplus value. “The capitalist production process is not merely a process of the production of commodities. It is a process which absorbs unpaid labour, making the means of production into means for the absorption of unpaid labour” (ibid. p. 483, my emphasis). “Capitalist production annihilates the [original] basis of commodity production, isolated, independent production and exchange between the owners of commodities, or the exchange of equivalents” (ibid.). “The [capitalist] *commodity* appears as essentially the product and result of the capitalist production process.” Capitalist commodities have a capitalist form that involves exploitation, surplus profit, the dominance of exchange value over use value, monetary greed, competition for market share and more wealth. “Commodities are now the repositories of capital; they are capital itself, valorised, pregnant with surplus value” (ibid. p. 458). “It is only on the basis of capitalist production, hence also of the *capitalist division of labour* within the workshop, that all products necessarily assume the commodity form, and all producers are therefore necessarily commodity producers (ibid).”

“Here, it is apparent how even economic categories which belong to earlier epochs of production take on a specifically different, historical, character on the basis of the capitalist mode of production” (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1864/economic/ch01.htm>, my emphasis).

When neoliberalism is described as commodification or market exchange, it fails to include the specific kind of commodification that capitalism desires, namely commodification that generates unpaid profit. Failing to make this distinction creates the illusion that capitalism is a kind of simple commodity production and exchange, like a farmer’s market: “it gives the apologists [of capitalism] an opportunity to convert the productive worker, because he is a wage labourer, into a worker who merely exchanges his *services* (i.e. his labour as a use value) for *money*. This makes it easy to pass over in silence the *differentia specifica* of this ‘productive worker’, and of capitalist production—as the production of surplus value, as the process of the self-valorisation of capital, which incorporates living labour as merely its AGENCY. A soldier is a wage labourer, a mercenary, but he is not for that reason a productive worker” [who produces surplus value] (ibid. p. 482).

This ontogeny of the capitalist form of artifacts, humans, labor, institutions, concepts, and natural resources, means that exploitation is built into them. They are political in this sense of embodying their capitalist ontogeny. This must be reflected in semiotic terms that denote commodification.

This whole process of capitalist labor and commodification is only possible if capitalists own and control macro cultural factors. Only then can they constitute themselves as employers who are in a position to require surplus labor from workers which they expropriate for their own wealth and power. Public, communal, popular, collective ownership and control of things impedes exploitation, for a public, collective, communal body is not going to exploit itself. It must be dissolved and converted into atomized individuals who can be bought up by capitalists as commodified laborers who can be exploited for their profit. This is what neoliberalism is all about: privatizing, commodifying, buying and selling, and exploiting.

- (1) Another neoliberal strategy for intensifying and expanding the capitalist political economy is to solidify the class structure with the capitalists at the top. The class structure is based in the exploitive relation between capitalists and laborers. However, the class structure requires maintenance, development, and protection. Social class must be broadened from purely economic exploitation, to a cultural system that institutionalizes it in life-styles (ways of life), customs, habits, ideals, norms, eating, dressing, health, perception, interpretation, meanings, emotionality, thinking, and interpersonal relations. Neoliberal strategies adjust people to their class position, and prepare people for their class position, through engineering these activities and conditions. This includes creating neighborhoods, housing, policing, education, and advertisements that objectify, institutionalize, and promote class divisions (Bourdieu 1985, 1987; Serre and Wagner 2015), researched this topic quite profoundly.
- (2) Another neoliberal strategy for intensifying and expanding the capitalist political economy is to intensify and extend the ideological obfuscation of capitalist destructiveness. Thatcher expressed this in her comments in the Preface. Capitalists need to obfuscate the full reality of the system in order to insulate it from full exposure, critique, and opposition. They have invented an ingenious bevy of techniques which comprise ideology. An important technique for insulating the system is to reduce social issues to non-social acts (e.g., individual acts, natural acts, supernatural acts).

While ideology is a false explanation, description, and prediction of social life, it is a powerful macro cultural factor that generates real psychology and behavior. False beliefs are real beliefs and motivate real behavior.

Ideology is a macro cultural factor that forms psychology; it is a psychological tool in Vygotsky's sense; a technique of subjectification in Foucault's sense; an episteme; an element of the habitus in Bourdieu's sense; it is a schema or template for perceiving, interpreting, sensing, feeling, remembering, and motivating social activity. Ideology forms experience. Ideology will occupy a good deal of our attention in understanding neoliberalism in this chapter, and in understanding neoliberal psychology in the next.

These three categories comprise the fundamentals of neoliberal capitalism. They are what neoliberals strive to institute and develop in order to maintain the capitalist form of society. Neoliberals infuse things, people, nature, institutions, artifacts, social events, and social relations with capitalist form, capitalist class structure (distribu-

tion), and capitalist ideology. Any objective, valid, analysis of neoliberalism must emphasize these three categories. They comprise the cornerstones of the material in this book regarding neoliberal macro cultural factors and psychology.

The neoliberal capitalist form of macro cultural factors will be described with examples concerning sports, government, labor, and economic policies/trends. The neoliberal class structure will also be described through economic policies/trends, as well as through the education system that is firmly structured into class divisions. Ideology will be described in terms of political-economic concepts, and also in terms of psychiatric constructs.

To explain, describe, and predict neoliberal psychology, it is necessary to explain, describe, and predict the social relations of neoliberal capitalism. That is, how does neoliberalism work, what are its principles and objectives, what is its structure, how does it treat its people, what requirements and opportunities does it offer its people, what kind of people does neoliberalism seek to cultivate, what is its *ethos*? It is evident that neoliberal capitalism is a rapacious system that lives off social and economic oppression, alienation, and mystification of the populace, as well as exploitation of the natural environment. This is reflected in neoliberal psychology.

Intensifying and Extending the Capitalist Form of Macro Cultural Factors

Commodifying Sports in China

Neoliberalism intensifies and extends the capitalist socioeconomic form of macro cultural factors—institutions, artifacts, concepts. An example of this process is professional sports in China. Because the neoliberal form is developing in real time—whereas it is complete in Western countries which initiated it earlier—it offers an inside view of the process/genesis of intensifying and extending the neoliberal business form.²

Until recently, Chinese professional sports were under the control of provincial government bureaus. Each province had a team in all the different sports: basketball, soccer, gymnastics, ping pong, etc. Provincial coaches recruited players to the teams and the provincial government paid modest salaries to athletes. Athletes were government workers, like a city planner is, or a city landscaper is, or a city accountant is. Athletes played under motivation to enhance the province's success. Viewers' interest was in their provincial team as a representative of their province. The team was a social institution of the province and its people.

In 2009, CCP decided to privatize sports. They never consulted the people to see if they wanted this or how it should proceed. They encouraged provincial governments to sell their teams to capitalists! This applied to different sports at different times. Volleyball has not yet been privatized—perhaps because the condition of privatization

was that the team must win the Olympics or else a new owner would be responsible for the failure. Soccer is the most privatized, and basketball is catching up now.

Perhaps the most dramatic case is the Guangzhou soccer team. It was sold to a consortium of capitalists that included Alibaba and HengDa real estate company. They paid 100,000,000 Yuan. The capitalists “improved” the team by using their immense wealth to pay high salaries to good foreign and Chinese players to play for Guangzhou-HengDa. For instance, the team captain in 2007 was paid about 200,000 Yuan annually, which was raised to 12,000,000 Euros (93,179,561 Yuan) in 2009 under neoliberal reorganization. This is the same salary as top European players receive. It also hired 22 foreign coaches.

This dynamic is leading to the destruction of the sports organization in China. For Guangzhou-HengDa is cannibalizing the best players from all the other Chinese teams. This immediately catapults it to the best team. It has recently won the Asia cup for soccer—simply because of its monetary wealth. Even more significantly, it forces all the other teams to privatize in order to obtain capital to attract top players and coaches. So, one privatization forces general privatization. The entire former system is destroyed by a single privatization.

Athletes now play for capitalist teams and capitalist owners, and for high salaries. They do not play for local social entities that they belong to and represent. Neoliberal commodification of athletes also replaces the social relationships of long-term training with immediate buying of accomplished athletes who require little training. This guarantees immediate success (return on investment) compared to the unpredictable success and expense of long-term training of novice athletes. Glory now accrues to the capitalist owners for organizing the team. It does not accrue to a social body such as a province, with all its citizens and representatives.

Capitalists attempt to conflate their self-interest with the social body. As in the USA, capitalist teams pretend to be teams of and for a city. They encourage citizens to transfer their social identity with the social body to the capitalist team which has no organic connection to the community. The bureaucrat in charge of Guangdong sports told my economist informants that the HengDa team kept the Gugngzhou name as its own precisely as a brand name that would attract community identification. People fall for this ruse; they embrace this alien, exploitive, business venture as their own. “WE are going to be good this year,” people say about “their” team; which is not theirs and does not include or represent them in any way. This is false consciousness. For the people of the social body have zero control over the capitalist business. Capitalists make all the decisions about the team, which players it recruits, how much it pays them, etc. Capitalist owners get local governments to join their pretense of community by arranging for local governments to sponsor community parades after championships that are won by capitalist teams.

This pretense is dissolved whenever the capitalist owners find more lucrative sites for the teams, and they summarily move them. There is some pseudo expression of remorse and love and gratitude for the previous social body (“the great fans of New York”), but the surplus value is all that really matters.

Guangzhou-HengDa purchased a large piece of land on which it has erected a stadium and also training facilities. It also constructed a school that includes athletic

training along with academics. This is a private high school with incomparable wealth and resources. The tuition is high, which means that poor people are excluded from both the athletic and academic resources that wealthy students can attend. This is creating a class structure in athletics and academics.

The high school recruited a former government official as its head. And it cannibalized excellent academic teachers from Renmin University's affiliated high school in Peking. These teachers now work in the private high school for incomparable salaries. This depletes the talent pool of teachers at public schools such as Renmin University's.

Finally, Guangzhou-HengDa raised its ticket prices in order to increase its profit and pay for its lavish activities. The cheapest ticket is 600 Yuan, while the most expensive is 39,000 Yuan for private boxes in the stadium. This makes attending games unaffordable for most people; and this creates a class structure in the attendance as well as in all other aspects of the privatized sports and education.

Sports privatization also depletes military teams which are among the best in China. The military has its own basketball and soccer teams which recruit athletes in their early teens. Privatization wrecks all this because skilled athletes will prefer the fabulous wages and training resources of capitalist teams over the military. Military teams will be reduced to dust, just as the provincial teams are. Fans will lose interest. Military teams may be disbanded just as provincial teams are. This process is already in full swing. The Chinese military soccer team is named Ba Yi (August First, which is a general term that refers to Chinese military). It is composed of soldiers and cannot pay foreigners because it is a military team. It has traditionally been among the best of Chinese soccer teams. However, it cannot compete with the corporate teams that recruit top foreign players at exorbitant players. Consequently, Ba Yi is currently the worst of Chinese soccer teams. And it is currently being sold to private companies. So, the flagship Chinese icon has been reduced to a private commodity.

The privatized, capitalist teams are financially inefficient. They lose money! They are subsidized by the external businesses of the capitalist firms. Hengda has enormous wealth from real estate which is what subsidizes its soccer team's enormous expenses. It's soccer team is no more financially efficient (leaner) than any State team.

Chinese neoliberal sports limit ordinary peoples' attendance in accordance with their wealth that can purchase certain priced tickets. Attendance is thus commodified and made into a function of money.

Neoliberalized sports in China also removes sports from government administration; and since government is the vehicle by which people potentially have input into relevant policies, this policy reduces peoples' input into policy, and reduces democracy. People have no input into corporate athletics.

This vignette of neoliberal sports in China illuminates how neoliberalism is a sociological remaking/restructuring of social relations—from the top down, political economy (i.e., initiated by the Chinese Communist Party). Neoliberalism creates capital, capitalism, and capitalists. It creates kinds of social relations which did not formerly exist (sports, public utilities, education, national security, science), and it invigorates them where they were languishing or stagnating. Neoliberalism converts the form of social activity—and society—into a capitalist/commodity form. It is

not a simple, neutral technical device for increasing efficiency in production and distribution.

Chinese sports now has a different form from when it was a public institution. This new social form is what makes neoliberalism relevant to psychology. Athletes, coaches, managers, and spectators now have different motives, objectives, and standards of success and happiness. Neoliberalization displaces the community character of sports—with athletes from the local area, known to the local populace, and employed by the local public (government) at a community-based wage, which invites community identification with its team, and invites community attendance at an affordable event. Neoliberalism converts athletes into commodified, individual, superstars on the world labor market of athletes who compete to sell their labor for the highest, exorbitant price to a private, capitalist firm whose primary interest is to make a profit from them for itself.

Neoliberal sports, which operate according to commercial interests rather than communities of people, then have to be sold to the people as if they were genuine community in order to attract their identification with it, attendance, and sales of paraphernalia.

This cognitive shift reconfigures emotional attachment/identification to encompass corporations-cum-community. People love corporations (e.g., sports teams) as they love their towns. Corporations are loved because they have become cognitively included in the category of phenomena that are love-able. (Just as unhealthy, junk food is desired and consumed because it is cognitively accepted as “food.”)

If a team were defined, and constituted, by its players’ own diligent efforts at self-improvement over time in the community that nurtured them, then people would only feel pride in their team if these conditions had been met. They would not feel pride in their team if these conditions had not been met, and if its players were purchased on the market. This is an important example of how psychology is organized by cultural-economic-political forms of social life.³

The Neoliberal, Capitalist Business Form/Model

Private equity firms provide deeper insight into the neoliberal capitalist form of business. Private equity firms have shifted the business orientation away from producing socially useful products, toward stark profitability for investors, regardless of social usefulness of the product: “The shareholder-value model of business organization and management emerged and prospered during the 1970s and 1980s owing to transformative changes in the governance of the American corporation. Declines in financial and labor market regulations created a new regulatory regime. Private equity’s business model represents an extreme form of the shareholder value model of the firm, substantially different from the business model of public corporations” (Appelbaum and Batt 2014, pp. 28, 12, 39). This shareholder model converts the enterprise itself into a commodity to be bought and sold at a profit. It is not simply that enterprises produce more commodity products, rather, enterprises have become

commodity products themselves, to be ravaged for profit. The commodified (the commodity producer) has been the commodity (commodified). The exploitive company that preys on people and nature as fodder for its profit, becomes the fodder for other rapacious companies. The producer has become the product; the subject has become the object.

The most rigorous econometric studies show that job destruction is greater than job creation in PE-owned companies compared to their publicly traded counterparts. Moreover, job destruction is particularly steep for buyouts of public corporations that are taken private. These findings are contrary to the claims of private equity advocates that PE firms often buy up financially distressed companies, turn them around, and are an important source of job growth for the U.S. economy. In fact, the econometric evidence shows that compared to comparable public companies, those acquired by private equity have higher employment growth in the five years prior to acquisition and the acquisition year. Prior to the 2008 financial crisis, distressed investing accounted for only about 2% of PE acquisitions. As in the leveraged buyouts of the 1980s, private equity today targets companies with strong fundamentals. The quantitative research also shows that PE-owned companies have higher productivity than comparable public companies in the acquisition year, and increase productivity primarily through downsizing, plant closings, divestitures and acquisitions, and production shifts to consolidated units—not to improvements in productivity in existing or “brownfield” sites. Finally, compared to companies not taken over by private equity, wages are higher in the acquisition year in companies purchased by private equity, but post-buyout, wages fall. Thus, the productivity-wage gap increases after private equity acquires a company. These findings of higher job and income loss for employees in PE-owned companies indicate that private equity contributes in important ways to the growing inequality in the U.S. economy. Private equity depresses the wages of employed workers, and those who are laid off—particularly blue-collar workers—typically do not find new employment with wages and benefits as high as their prior jobs. But PE partners make outsized returns from these strategies (Rasmus 2016, pp. 193–194).

The dominance of the neoliberal, investor-oriented economics is revealed in data: “Cumulatively, private equity firms invested a total of about \$3.4 trillion in leveraged buyouts of approximately 18,300 companies between 2000 and 2012. For the period 2000–2010, private equity’s industry association, PEGCC, estimated that PE-owned companies employed a total of about 7.5 million people” (Appelbaum and Batt 2014, p. 37).

The rapaciousness of private equity firms is exemplified in their control of news media. For example, private equity firm, Alden Global Capital, owns a number of papers including *The Denver Post*. Since acquiring Digital First Media, AGC has eliminated two out of every three staff positions at its media properties. While cutting positions, Alden has loaded up many of its newspapers with debt that it uses to finance other projects. It also ‘borrowed’ \$248.5 million from newspaper workers’ pension funds, and had the newspapers take on \$200 million in debt to finance its own investments.

Executives at the company, meanwhile, have reaped the profits. They have purchased expensive real estate in New York and Florida. The papers that Alden bought were profitable. However, Alden set extravagant profit targets, which, when coupled with the debt that these papers have been saddled with, forced massive shrinkage of operations (expenses), which destroyed these businesses—so its capitalist owners could buy houses in the Hamptons—not invigorate the economy and society.

Private equity firms lead the social destruction of business itself! They decimate the very competencies and benefits that business is supposed to produce. They tear apart well-functioning businesses and profit off their destruction. This is an incredible social phenomenon whereby the dominant, respected, rewarded, business model destroys/cannibalizes business and all the people and resources that are associated with business. Neoliberal, private equity firms are more of a danger to capitalism than any external threat is.

Neoliberalism is an anti-cultural culture. It is an organized culture that is destroying organized, functioning culture. This has momentous social and psychological consequences.

Neoliberal Governments

Neoliberalism intensifies and extends capitalism by subjugating public government to its rule. This transformation of government intensified greatly in the mid 1970s emergence of neoliberal capitalism—e.g., in addressing New York City's insolvency in 1975 from the economic recession at that time (Davidson and Ward 2018).

The strategy and scope of neoliberal governance is evident in its nation-wide appearance in 2008 during the Great Recession. The recession caused enormous reductions in peoples' property and income, which reduced the taxes and fees that local and state governments could collect. The federal government, representing the capitalist class, forced state and local governments to starve for money, and to induce austerity cutbacks in personnel and social welfare and infrastructure projects from roads to schools. This occurred in 90% of cities in 2010 (Davidson and Ward 2018). Federal spending in the midst of the 2008 recession was far lower than it had been during previous recessions. Whereas the federal government had increased spending 7–10% to recover from previous recessions, Obama reduced spending by 7% during the Great Recession—which was more severe than the previous ones (ibid. p. 5).

Starving the local governments forced them to rely on private companies to provide services, which were more expensive because of the profit that was added to expenses. Again, this strategy was not confined to a circumscribed natural disaster. It was implemented nation-wide in 90% of American cities. Neoliberal strategy was to deliberately starve the entire public sector in order to create space for expanded capitalist control over the economy. Neoliberalism redistributed money from the public sector to the capitalist sector. And the latter only invested in profitable projects for its own well-being, it did not absorb all the displaced government employees, the infrastructure, and the populace who had been deprived of government support. The

capitalists thus cannibalized the public sector by impoverishing its beneficiaries. It did not improve services that local governments had previously provided.

The capitalists benefitted in another way. They encouraged local governments to continue some of their services by borrowing money from the financiers at high interest rates. This changed the character of governments as it forced them to become financial institutions who had expertise to raise money on financial markets with an expertise in interest rates. Governments thus took on the character of businesses—they took on the capitalist form which corrupted their previous form of public servant and public service. In 2014, the municipal bond market was worth \$3.5 trillion, compared to \$400 billion in 1980 (*ibid.* p. 17).

Financialization of public services made them more expensive for consumers than they had been when funded by government taxes without interest payments and fees that went into corporate profit. In addition, loans also gave financiers power over governments to ensure credit-worthiness of their borrowers by making further public service reductions (*ibid.* p. 16).

The point of neoliberal austerity is *not* to curb wasteful spending on irresponsible, unnecessary projects, services, and personnel. The point of austerity cuts is to shift funding and operations from public government to the capitalist sector for the enrichment and empowerment of that sector. Within the expanded spaces of neoliberal capitalism, capitalism is profligate in raising costs, prices, and indebtedness to maximize its profit. Every neoliberal attempt at “streamlining” government services is fraught with waste, mismanagement, overruns, disappearing funds, and little help to the public (see Appelbaum and Batt 2014). The case of the \$300 million Whitefish contract to restore Puerto Rico’s electrical system after Hurricane Maria, Sept. 2017, is a telling example. A Congressional investigation found that Whitefish Energy ended up charging Puerto Rico more than double the regular wages for utility crew line workers and higher-than-normal daily meal rates, and included clauses making it hard for Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority to enforce a timeline.

The more that public government is depleted and defamed and demoralized, the more space is created for the capitalist sector to expand into and profit from. The shift from public money to private money, mentioned in the Preface, is a key indicator of this political-economic transformation. This is the antagonism that neoliberalism has for public government. Neoliberalism takes over government functions (to enrich and empower the capitalist class) by either eliminating/reducing/replacing them, or working within them as consultants, and even as appointed officials with direct, governmental power.

Giving corporations access to public, government operations greatly enhances their power to govern the public sector in addition to their control over the private sector. Corporations are given access to secret government information such as security, as 70% of American government intelligence is now in private hands. Corporations have access to government information concerning anti-corporate protests and movements, and corporations have input into government constricting protests and movements.

Far from increasing efficiency and reducing costs, capitalist corruption makes public-private partnerships (P3) more expensive than purely public projects which

avoid the most egregious capitalist corruption. “British Parliament’s spending watchdog agency, the National Audit Office, found that privately financing public projects costs as much as 40% more than projects relying solely on government money” (Dolack 2018). “For example, water prices in Paris doubled over 25 years before the city took back its water system, saving €35 million in the first year and cutting rates. The German city of Bergkamen reduced costs by as much as 30% after returning its basic utilities to the public sector” (ibid). This, of course, is the real objective of neoliberal governance—namely, the upward redistribution of wealth, not real economic improvement for people.

Governments protect corporations when they fail. “Nine privatized toll roads in Spain will cost taxpayers there €5 billion because the roads are being nationalized in the wake of the private operators’ failures” (ibid).

The structural adjustment of governments overwhelms individual politicians. It prevents them from serving the populace even if they desire to.

Neoliberalizing government also excludes the public from governing. This reduces political participation of the populace. It reduces them to bystander status. It constricts their interest in politics because they have no influence on what happens. It changes the nature of citizenship; it reduces democracy. It leaves people to fend for themselves and take matters in their own hands, since the government does not work for them.

Neoliberal Labor

The essence of neoliberal economic penetration is to organize society’s life-activity around the profit motive and its attendant contortion of all human behavior. This retrofitting of every second of humanity for profitable production is commenced in capitalist socioeconomic relations beginning in the 1980s:

The American standard of 45-52 seconds of actual work per minute in automobile assembly was to be replaced by [the] fifty-seven-second minute, thereby “filling up the pores of the working day.” What began in the auto industry rapidly spread to other manufacturers and beyond. A recent study of work intensification in the United States, based on time-use diaries of more than 43,000 people employed mostly in routine ‘middling’ goods- and service-producing jobs, found that from the 1980s to the 2000s the total break time went from 13% of the work day to 8%, which is to say that, within the average eight-hour day, capital gained approximately twenty-four minutes — almost half an hour of extra work at no extra cost in wages, benefits, or employment taxes! The push to “fill up the pores” continues. The 2015 contract agreement between Ford and the United Auto Workers grants the company one minute less in break time for each hour worked each day by each of Ford’s 53,000 unionized workers. That amounts to more than 7,000 extra hours work per day for the entire workforce, the equivalent of almost four years for the company at no extra cost.

More recently, supplementing or even supplanting the various innovations in lean production have come electronic forms of surveillance, work measurement, and monitoring, such as radio frequency identification (RFID), global positioning systems (GPS), and biometric measurements that drive Just In Time norms within production processes and along supply

chains, maintaining “management-by-stress” all along the line. It is precisely this sort of monitoring that allows employers to seek and measure a reduction of rest time per minute beyond even the shrinking of official break time, and to calculate the impact on the productivity of the workday.

These changes – in work reorganization, measuring and monitoring, new technology, and of course the undermining of unions – have led to one of the biggest job-destroying intensifications of labor in the history of capitalism.

The lean norms that began in manufacturing spread throughout the economy as capital sought, in the face of competition and endangered profit rates, to reduce labor time and costs everywhere. This meant, among other things, that working conditions in industries and occupations previously assumed to be very different were, in fact, becoming more similar. Monitoring and measuring was reducing all labor, even highly skilled labor such as that of nurses, to abstract labor. Work was changing in ways that were often disorienting to workers and their organizations, where they existed.

The compression of working-class incomes is the other side of the coin of increased profitability and the enormous increase in the incomes and wealth of the capitalist class and their immediate associates. One measure of declining living standards is the fall in both hourly and weekly real wages, which — despite some ups and downs — remain below their 1973 levels. By 2011, 28 percent of all workers earned less than the official poverty-level wages of \$11.06 an hour. So stagnant has been the income of the working-class majority that 30 percent of the workforce now relies on public assistance to get by (Moody 2017, pp. 47–48, 50–51, 53–54).

Parker (2017) describes another tactic for continually squeezing more productivity out of workers. As an activist in the auto industry, he observes that management continually increases stressors at various points in the production process to ascertain how much more productivity the workers can accommodate. If some parts of the system withstand the increased stress (of more intense work with fewer employees), then it is incorporated into normal production. If workers cannot work efficiently under the increased stressors, strategies are devised to facilitate this—by retraining or replacing employees.

The objective of these new conditions is to control workers and subjugate their bodies and minds to the implacable, rigid, mechanical, standardized, operation—managerialism—of the assembly line. Not a moment is available for innovation or exploration or self-expression or social interaction or negotiation or resistance. Everything unrelated to efficient, standardized productivity is “wasteful” and eliminated in “lean production.” The worker is reduced to a standardized, regulated, dependable cog in the machine—analogue to animals (and farmed fish) that are industrially raised in small containers with precise amounts of food and little free time outside the controlling box, and genetically controlled, so that their final weight will conform to the production plan. The worker is always on duty (or “on”) just as the line is continuously on. The skill level of jobs is increasingly lowered and standardized to become more inexpensive, and controllable in line with production requirements. Skilled, complex jobs are far less controllable and allow for worker thinking, discretion, and resisting managerial demands (Parker 2017).

Storage warehouses are inefficient in terms of time and space because products are not being exchanged for profit. Consequently, warehouses have been converted into

distribution centers for exchange immediately as products enter them. Production is precisely calculated and regulated in relation to demand so that surpluses and deficits are avoided, because both are money losers (Parker 2017).

Workers are forced into this mode of production. Their work hours are timed precisely to match production requirements. In a 2014 study conducted by University of Chicago researchers, only 62% of young adults (ages twenty-six to thirty-two) reported that they know their work schedule more than a week in advance. In addition, the researchers found that nearly three-quarters of those surveyed experience fluctuating work hours each month, in some cases significantly—roughly eight hours of variation on average. In the UK and New Zealand, employers have instituted “zero-hours contracts,” meaning the employer has no obligation to provide any work time at all. Instead, the employer schedules work according to weekly needs, which can vary from no time to full-time. “Increasingly, employers use software to break work into fifteen-minute segments [paid for and administered as separate units], making it possible to send employees home fifteen minutes early if the customer flow slows down. Fifteen minutes adds up for multinational retailers and franchises with thousands of stores” (<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/07/luce-eight-hour-day-obama-overtime>).

This redefining of work as 15-min segments is a new, neoliberal form of work. It becomes a qualitatively new phenomenon, with new features, new definitions of work, new regulations/requirements/standards, new definitions, new units (of what a work unit is), new calculations/negotiations, new expectations, new cognitions, new self-definitions, new interpretations, new measures of need and satisfaction (how many 15-min segments do you need?), new social relations, and new social activities inside and outside work.

Of course, this squeezing of humanity out of workers has disastrous consequences for their physical and mental health, as well as their social relations. Huge numbers of workers are adjusting their schedules on a weekly basis or less, making it difficult or impossible to plan care work, school, and other family and social commitments.

Consumers are also packaged and processed for the capitalist market. “Just in Time” production requires that demand be precisely calculated and regulated. The consumer is thus made into a cog of the productive process whose demand can be assured and will not disrupt the production by causing surpluses or deficits. Consumer demand is adjusted by massive, and demographically targeted, marketing and monitoring through web sites. Indeed, this is economic priority informs the social and entertainment services that they provide. Television programs are designed to attract specific, demographic audiences that will be attracted to the advertising for specific products. The point of television is not information or entertainment, it is a medium for soliciting consumers to increase sales for particular products.⁴

The objective of these work conditions is to extract more profit from workers—i.e., to increase the rate of exploitation in order to enrich capitalists. This is achieved by reducing wages and increasing profits (by productivity increases and by increasing unremunerated working time by cutting rest periods, as above). One strategy for reducing wages is proliferating low-wage jobs. The Bureau of Labor Studies projects that from 2014 to 2024, 70% of all gains in non-managerial and nonprofessional jobs

will fall into the official low-income range, which is below \$32,390 a year, and over a third of those jobs will fall in the very low range below \$21,590 (ibid. p. 54).

Low-wage jobs are not normal jobs that are poorly remunerated. They have been qualitatively transformed in addition to the quantitative immiseration.

Neoliberalism with Chinese Characteristics

Neoliberalism is a global form of capitalism. It is not confined to particular countries. I will now use an example from China to illustrate the mechanics of neoliberal employment practices. I am concerned to identify neoliberal practices and their psychological effects. I am not drawing conclusions about the extent of neoliberalism in China or any other country. My example from China is mandated by the highest level of the Communist Party, which indicates that neoliberal practices could be systemic.

China's management of a Greek sea port, Piraeus, exemplifies neoliberal labor practices. China has purchased a long-term lease to run this port and reap the profits. The sale itself is a component of neoliberalism in Greece. Neoliberalism was imposed by the European Community, European Central Bank, and IMF as a condition of bailing Greece out from massive debts it had incurred. As a condition of a \$440 billion loan, this Troika required Greece to sell off its government owned utilities, ports, and transport systems at below market prices. (This is an important case of how neoliberal structural adjustment does not operate on free market principles. The Troika demands privatization at low prices in order to benefit the capitalists who buy these assets.)

The receipts from privatizing government assets are placed in a fund that mostly goes to support international capitalists. "More than 95% initial Troika loans to Greece went to pay principal and interest on prior Troika loans, or to bailout Greek private banks (owned by other Euro banks or indebted to them), or to pay off European private investors and speculators" (<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/08/24/greek-debt-and-the-new-financial-imperialism/>).

China swept into devastated Greece as a vulture capitalist. It leased Piraeus Port in 2009 for 35 years from the Greek government. The purchase was made by a state-owned enterprise (SOE) named Cosco. Cosco is an iconic representation of Chinese official neoliberalism because it is owned by an office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which selects its CEO and leaders.

CCP required the concession agreement to stipulate that no other new container facilities shall be constructed around a 200 km radius near Piraeus by any other company. Thus, China insisted on monopoly status that prohibited free market, entrepreneurial, competition around Piraeus.

China/Cosco/CCP then implemented another neoliberal capitalist practice, regarding labor. It expelled the union and outsourced most jobs to a company, Diakinisi, which hired workers for low wages and part-time status. "Cosco was allowed to operate its part of the container terminal unfettered by the union wage scales. Most of Cosco's workers are now hired through a third-party, nonunionized employment

agency. They earn around €1200 a month, a better-than-average wage in Greece, but roughly a third of what unionized dockworkers earned five years ago, and less than what workers still earn at the established PPA-controlled wharf abutting the Cosco docks” (Wall St. Journal Nov. 20, 2014).

The Greek government has sued Cosco over its dangerous, illegal working conditions. “Around 150 workers went on strike at the China Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco) facilities at the port of Piraeus, early on Friday, July 18, 2014. Among their demands were an end to 16-h shifts, an increase in pay and settlement of unpaid wages due, breaks during shifts, an increase in manning levels at bridge cranes and for worker accidents to be officially recorded.” (<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2014/07/23/dock-j23.html>). The Chinese CEO rejects unions and union organizing.

This is confirmed in a report that says: “The Greek longshoremen’s unions—forbidden on Cosco docks—are complaining about too much work, not enough pay and too many straddle carrier accidents at the Cosco-run pier at the Port of Piraeus near Athens.” (<http://www.shippingonline.cn/news/newsContent.asp?id=19881>).

The Chinese espouse a neoliberal criticism of worker benefits as promoting laziness, in order to justify the Chinese profit-taking through harsh working conditions for Greek laborers: Fu, the Cosco general director in Greece, says “The Chinese want to make money with work.” “Too many Europeans have pursued a comfortable, protected existence since the end of World War II. They wanted a good life, more holidays and less work,” he said. “And they spent money before they had it. Now they have many debts.” (<http://www.africametro.com/world-news/china-says-greece-will-thrive-if-managed-by-us>). No mention is made of the capitalist financial pressures that caused the Greek depression and the requirement that public assets be sold to investors such as Cosco. Fu expresses no sympathy to the Greek workers about the catastrophe that was imposed upon them by financiers. Instead he mocks the Greek workers for their plight, blaming it on expensive worker benefits.

National Public Radio, June 8, 2011 (<http://www.npr.org/2011/06/08/137035251/in-greek-port-storm-breeds-over-chinese-run-labor>) reports that Greek unions and the Greek government had documented labor violations by Cosco at Piraeus.

Cosco does not allow unions or collective bargaining among its 500-plus Greek workers. The unions report that Cosco workers are largely unskilled and working on a temporary basis, with no benefits.

NPR reports that last August, in response to a parliamentary question, the local department of labor inspection for Piraeus said it had discovered one Cosco worker’s schedule had changed 14 times in one month.

His contract was signed by a subcontractor, not by Cosco itself. It says no money will be paid for overtime, unless there was a prior written agreement with the company. He says he accepted these conditions because there was no other work available. But when he demanded his overtime pay, he was fired.

During two visits last year—in August and October—the labor inspection department noted four separate labor violations at Cosco’s Piraeus pier. In August, the agency fined Cosco 3000 euros after discovering dockworkers working on their rest days. In October, it found the same again, as well as discovering an untrained worker operating a lifting vehicle and a worker with no employment papers.

Cosco turned down repeated requests for an interview, both in Greece and in Beijing. The Chinese Foreign Ministry and the Commerce Ministry also declined to be interviewed for this story.

Cosco's ownership of Piraeus enriches itself with capital, but does not benefit the local community. The highest percentage of positive multiplier effect was appropriated by COSCO and ultimately, together with the opacity of its activities and bad labour relations, it functioned rather as a pocket and not as a functional part of the harbor, which is the modus operandi of Chinese businesses in Africa and Latin America (<http://www.analyzegreece.gr/topics/land-grabbing-and-urban-transformations/item/401-why-cosco-wants-all-of-piraeus-not-only-the-containers>).

Cosco has treated its Piraeus laborers according to neoliberal principles:

Cosco's subsidiary, PCT, aided by the lack of stipulations on the regulation of labour relations in the concession agreement, has opted to completely disregard the existing arrangements in Piraeus port. These were based on a labour pool system and the existing collective agreements between OLP and the existing dock worker labour unions that were in place. According to the president of the nationwide Federation of Port Employees (OMYLE), abandoning these agreements allowed PCT instantly to reduce labour costs by around 30% in comparison with those at OLP [the Greek port that was governed by earlier collective agreements with the workers].

In place of the strong, fixed labour contracts, well paid work and overtime and strictly-observed health and security standards that were in place for Piraeus dockworkers employed by OLP, in 2009, the Cosco concession signalled the institution of a new labour regime largely based on the precarisation of labour combined with practices of strict discipline of the work force. Working conditions in the PCT terminal appear increasingly to be paradigmatic of the spread of these new forms of precarisation in all the sectors of the Greek economy

Of the approximately 1,000 workers employed currently in the PCT terminals only 261 were declared as PCT employees in 2013 (as evidenced by the 2013 PCT Annual Financial Statement). The remainder are hired through a complex web of subcontractors, orchestrated by a local logistics company, Diakinisis SA. The same ex- PCT worker described the situation in these words: "Between each employee and the company [PCT] there are two or three intermediaries." These employees have only individual job contracts, work on call, have no fixed schedules and are predominantly called to work in the piers with only a few hours notice. PCT dockworkers are generally low paid and they do not get paid regular overtime. The president of OMYLE has referred, along these lines, to complaints received by his union from PCT workers about cases of fixed 35 euro wages that might correspond to day shifts lasting up to 16 hours.

The flexibility of the dockworkers' working hours is combined with the permanent existence of three eight-hour shifts that keep the terminal operations functioning 24/7, with workers just knowing a few hours in advance for how many shifts they will be required to work (none, half, one or more).

When the concession agreement with Cosco was signed in November 2008, a new series of strikes started, culminating in a one-month strike in 2009 during which the port was brought to a standstill.

On July 18, 2014, workers in the PCT container terminals realized their first ever strike, lasting for a day and a half. Their main demands included: first, the signing of a collective labour agreement; second, the recognition of their employment as hard and hazardous to their health; third, an increase in daily pay rates and payment for working holidays, weekends and

overtime; fourth, the abolition of 16-hour shifts and the establishment of breaks between shifts; fifth, the right to form a workers' committee to discuss labour issues; sixth, the recognition of labour accidents and the obligation to convey injured workers to hospital by ambulances rather than in private vehicles; seventh, the presence of five rather than three crew members in gangs; and eighth, the payment of salaries owed to them by various subcontractors. After the riot police arrived outside the port, the PCT management said it would meet their demands (Hatzopoulos et al. 2014, pp. 20–24).

Only under enormous opposition did the Cosco relent to meet basic labor demands. Cosco should have been leading worker-based labor practices, because it is a company of the Central Committee of the Communist Party which claims to be promoting socialism. Being forced to accede to workers' demands testifies to Cosco's recalcitrance to practice socialist labor. Moreover, forced agreement by Cosco to labor reforms makes it dubious that Cosco will fulfill its coerced promises. If Cosco was serious about worker-based labor, it would have implemented this when it took over the port, on the basis of socialist policy.

Cosco's neoliberal labor practices have persisted into 2018. In May-June, hundreds of Cosco workers went on strike to protest the poor working conditions that I have described. The strike was joined by thousands of other workers and their unions. Rather than negotiate with the proletariat to improve their conditions, the Chinese management threatened to have them arrested. Then management hired strike breakers to intimidate their laborers to return to work. And the Chinese Embassy in Athens filed a complaint with the Greek government, urging it to suppress the strike in order to protect China's significant investments in Greece (Saeedy 2018); (<https://www.icl-fi.org/english/wv/1137/cosoco.html>); (<http://www.ekathimerini.com/229209/article/ekathimerini/news/piraeus-port-blockade-draws-china-complaint>). Thus, the "socialist" government of China—and its state enterprise—suppressed the international proletariat in Greece in order to protect its profits.

Domestic workers are equally exploited. Taxi drivers in Peking (as of Sept. 2018), drive 70 h per week and earn \$7 USD per hour! They work for private taxi companies and have no labor rights. CEOs force drivers to work 70 h by requiring them to pay a high fixed fee weekly to the CEO, which forces drivers to work 70 h in order to earn sufficient revenue for themselves to live on.

Additional neoliberal acts by COSCO include mistreatment of American workers. The Transport Workers reported on April 20, 2016, on conditions in the port of Los Angeles/Long Beach that is run by Intermodal Bridge Transport, a subsidiary of COSCO: "The National Labor Relations Board issued a Complaint alleging the company's managers and supervisors violated the National Labor Relations Act by making unlawful threats and promises in violation of Section 8(a)(1) of the NLRA. Specifically, the Complaint alleges that:

IBT managers and supervisors interrogated employees about their support for the Union, promised more work to employees if they ceased engaging in Union activities, and threatened employees with job loss and other unspecified reprisals if they continued to support the Union; and "IBT has misclassified its employee drivers as independent contractors, thereby inhibiting them from engaging in Section 7 [union]

activity and depriving them of the protections of the Act.” The drivers, who haul containers on and off the docks for IBT’s name-brand customers, including Michael Kors, Sony, Toyota, General Electric, and Target, are participants in a myriad of class action, mass action, and individual lawsuits for misclassification and wage theft. This is their third strike in the last year (April 2015, Oct. 2015, and April 2016) (<http://www.transportworkers.org/node/2378>) (see Abi-Habib 2018, 2016 for additional examples of Chinese international, neoliberal political-economic practices).⁵

Profit from Destabilizing Work: Precarity

Accumulating capital from plunder and exploitation is exacerbated by a relatively recent strategy of making work precarious—that is, fluctuating working time and wages and even employers and work locations.

Lorey (2015) explains that in recent decades, a generalized precaritization of work and social life has taken hold. This is exemplified in the destabilizing of labor by reducing it to tenuous, insecure, variable, unplanned, unpredictable activity, fully commandeered by bosses.

This is crystalized in the fact that the conventional full-time job is disappearing. Survey research conducted by economists Lawrence Katz of Harvard University and Alan Krueger at Princeton University shows that from 2005 to 2015, the proportion of Americans workers engaged in what they refer to as “alternative work” jumped from 10.7 to 15.8%. Alternative work is characterized by being temporary or unsteady—such as work as an independent contractor or through a temporary help agency (<https://qz.com/851066/almost-all-the-10-million-jobs-created-since-2005-are-temporary/>).

“We find that 94% of net job growth in the past decade was in the alternative work category,” said Krueger. “And over 60% was due to the [the rise] of independent contractors, freelancers and contract company workers.” In other words, nearly all of the 10 million jobs created between 2005 and 2015 were not traditional nine-to-five employment (ibid.).

Katz and Krueger found that each of the common types of alternative work increased from 2005 to 2015—with the largest changes in the number of independent contractors and workers provided by contract firms, such as janitors that work full-time at a particular office, but are paid by a janitorial services firm.

The decline of conventional full-time work has impacted every demographic. Whether this change is good or bad depends on what kinds of jobs people want. “Workers seeking full-time, steady work have lost,” said Krueger. “While many of those who value flexibility and have a spouse with a steady job have probably gained.”

For graphic designers and lawyers who hate going to an office, new technology and Obamacare has made it more appealing to become an independent contractor. But for those seeking a steady administrative assistant office job, the market is grim.

Cohen (2017) reports additional details about the neoliberal economy that is central to neoliberal psychology. Income and work volatility are a major problem.

More and more employees across a growing range of industries find the number of hours they work is swinging giddily from week to week — bringing chaos not only to family scheduling, but also to family finances.

And a new wave of research shows that the main culprit is not the so-called gig economy, but shifting pay within the same job.

Since the 1970s, steady work that pays a predictable and living wage has become increasingly difficult to find,” said Jonathan Morduch, a director of the U.S. Financial Diaries project, an in-depth study of 235 low- and moderate-income households.

Instability and insecurity are increasingly a part of middle-class life, too. Middle-income households, for example, saw their monthly expenses deviate by nearly \$1,300, the equivalent of a month’s rent or mortgage payment.

The new Fed report found that 30 percent — roughly 73 million adults — say they are finding it difficult to get by financially, or are just getting by.

The latest data shows that 41 percent of all hourly workers say they are not given more than a week’s notice of their schedule; nearly half have little or no say on their work hours.

To Morduch and Schneider, the rise in income volatility is an indication of how businesses in an era of advancing technology and global competition have shifted risk onto employees. Consider the cost of saving for retirement and medical care. When health insurance premiums for employers soared between 2003 and 2013 (before the Affordable Care Act went into effect), workers picked up 93 percent of the extra cost.

Neoliberalism brings to fruition Lukacs’ (1923, p. 62) observation that “capitalism is the first system of production able to achieve a total economic penetration of society.”

Neoliberalism is a road to serfdom, to paraphrase Hayek’s book.

These principles, motives, objectives, processes, dynamics and effects of neoliberal social relations are the psychological tools of neoliberal psychology. For psychology is shaped by macro cultural practices. Consequently, more detail about them is necessary for preparing a psychology for (fully comprehending) neoliberal psychology.

Conclusions About the Neoliberal Political Economy

Western neoliberalism is a politics of decline, the politics of dispossession, the politics of expropriation, the politics of plunder, the politics of ruination. It accepts decline and simply seeks to cannibalize it for the benefit of the capitalists, which exacerbates the decline of the population (Lafer 2017; Harvey 2005).⁶

Kotz and McDonough (2010), and Rosenberg (2010, pp. 200–201), explain that Western neoliberalism of the 1970s and 80s was not concerned with growing the American economy, or making it more productive, or creating more jobs for people that would raise the standard of living for the populace. Neoliberalism was rather a strategy for maintaining and increasing the wealth and power of the capitalist

ruling class by exploiting the populace. This is called raising the rate of exploitation, which is profit divided by wages. The point was deliberately to crush the populace economically and politically to augment the economic and political power of the capitalist class (Ratner 2012b, pp. 294–305).

Neoliberal capitalism not only exploits disasters for its own profit and social reorganization (Naomi Klein and Mirowski 2013). Neoliberal capitalism fabricates disasters where they do not exist. Newfield (2008, 2016) says neoliberalism creates a “devolutionary spiral.” Neoliberals reduce expenditures on social services, thereby greatly limiting them and making them unreliable and unserviceable. They then complain that there is insufficient public funding for services and propose that private funding take over. They claim to be solving problems, however, it was they who created the problems, and their solutions only exacerbate them in order to expropriate funding and returns for private investors.

This politics of neoliberal ruination is evident in the separation of wages from productivity. This is a measure of exploitation: from 1948 to 1973, average wage increases tracked productivity almost exactly: productivity increased by 96.7%, and hourly compensation for production and nonsupervisory workers (80% of the workforce) rose by 91.3%. Over the past forty years, however, productivity has been divorced from wages. From 1973 to 2013, productivity increased by 74.4%, but employee compensation grew by only 9.2% (Lafer 2017, Kindle Locations 141–145).

From 1975 to 2011, the rate of exploitation increased 68%. Real profit increased 213% while real employee compensation only increased 86%. In other words, every dollar of wages generated 68% more dollars in profit in 2011 (ibid. p. 54). This increase in the rate of exploitation of workers—measured as a ratio of profit divided by compensation—through intensification of work, slow growth in employment, and the massive expansion of low-wage jobs as the primary site of employment growth, is more extensive than the rise of precarious labor, which receives far more news coverage.

In 1979, 11.7% of Americans lived below the poverty line; by 2012, 15% of the population lived in poverty, even though real GDP was 72% higher (Wall Street Journal, June 23, 2014, p. A13)! In addition, workers’ wages have declined since 1969 when the minimum hourly wage in the United States was \$1.60. That is the equivalent of \$10.49 today, when the national minimum wage is \$7.25. The neoliberal economic model deliberately cuts workers’ wages, benefits, job opportunities, and social services in order to accumulate capital for the capitalist class.

According to Federal Reserve Bank Surveys, 1/3 of Americans say they are just getting by. 38% could not pay for a \$400 emergency without selling an asset or borrowing. Work is becoming more precarious with wages fluctuating greatly within a given job. Volatility is greatest in low income jobs. Almost 1/3 of Americans, some 90 million people, were officially poor for two months or more between 2009 and 2011. Only about 1/2 of Americans have retirement savings. American mobility ranks among the lowest of rich nations just as its income inequality is now among the highest of these nations. Rates of child poverty in the U.S. are significantly higher than those of almost all rich nations (Madrack 2017).

Income is not only increasingly stratified between the capitalist class and the working class. Income is also increasingly stratified within the working class. This creates an enormous gap and division within the class, which prevents solidarity. “The Economic Policy Institute noted, “From 2000 to 2017, wage growth was strongest for the highest-wage workers, continuing the trend in rising wage inequality over the last four decades.” The strongest wage growth was for those in the top 10% of earnings, which skewed the results sufficiently that the median wage increase for 2017 was a paltry 0.2%, the EPI reports” (<https://systemicdisorder.wordpress.com/2018/06/06/real-number-of-unemployed>).

Every decade from 1970 onward has witnessed a decreasing growth rate of the economy as a whole. In Japan, economic growth plunged from 9.2% during the 1950–1973 period, to 2.7% during the neoliberal 1979–2000 period. Germany, France, and Italy all fell from around 6 to 2%. The USA fell from 4 to 3.1%. Economist Krugman tells us “business investment as a share of G.D.P. is well below its level before the financial crisis—let alone the heights it reached in the 1990s” (Krugman 2018; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/30/opinion/republican-tax-cut-workers.html?ref=collection%2Fissuecollection%2Ftodays-new-york-times&action=click&contentCollection=todayspaper®ion=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=3&pgtype=collection>); (for this pattern in Sweden, see http://www.truthdig.com/report/page2/yes_sweden_is_a_paradise_lost_but_not_due_to_immigration_20170420).

In Britain, Real wage growth of 2.9% in the 1970s and 1980s fell to 1.5% in the 1990s, 1.2% in the 2000s, and turned negative, averaging -2.2% in the five years after 2010 (<https://tribunemag.co.uk/relaunch-preview>).

Marxists argue that capitalist problems are unsolvable due to inner contradictions and conundrums of capitalism (Kliman 2012). Neoliberals prove this to be correct. Intensifying and extending the principles of capitalism leads to further decline and destruction.

This pattern is repeated with corporate tax savings. The federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017—pushed hard by the Koch Caucus in Congress—lowered the federal income tax rate from 35 to 21%. The Trump Administration promised that the cuts would cause corporations to invest, expand, and hire new workers, as well as pay bonuses or increase wages. However, many corporations laid off employees instead. Comcast, for example, said it will save \$128 million from the tax cut, and announced 500 layoffs. Caterpillar reported that it will pay 9% less in income taxes, but also announced it is closing facilities. Eli Lilly reported that it lowered its corporate income tax rate by almost one-third but announced 3500 layoffs at the end of 2017, layoffs that are still taking place. Chevron, and Marathon Petroleum, reported large tax savings as well as layoffs for the year (Wiener 2018).

These exploitive, destructive practices fueled a large turn around in the rate of profit. Profit had fallen precipitously in the U.S. and Europe from 1948 to 1981, from 22 to 13%, and then increased back to 20% by 2005 under neoliberalism (ibid.) In this period, increased profit correlated with general economic decelerating growth (Newfield 2008, p. 128; Edsall 2018).

Neoliberal rapacious, exploitive, violence against humanity and humanness generates enormous psychological, physiological, and social disturbances (<https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/08/31/trumps-fake-boom-growing-despair-amidst-insecure-economic-recovery>).

These exploitive, destructive practices also fueled enormous resistance which was met by police force. The capitalist class felt threatened by the populist rebellion, and this was a major political contributor to the repressive neoliberal agenda. This was explicitly stated in the 1975 report, “The Crisis of Democracy,” published by the Trilateral Commission, an organization of global business and political leaders who introduced neoliberal practices (http://trilateral.org/download/doc/crisis_of_democracy.pdf). The report expressed worry about, and cautioned against, the continuation of the “excess of democracy” contained in the anti-war, anti-racism, expanded unionism, and similar activism that was part of the “democratic surge of the 1960s and produced a variety of challenges to existing systems of authority.” For example, the 1970s began with only a minority of Americans thinking that the government was “run for the benefit of all people,” while a dissatisfied majority thought it was “run by a few big interests looking out for themselves.” The report also underscored that more young voters under thirty identified themselves as Independent than as Republicans and Democrats combined. Especially worrisome was the “rise in political participation” that accompanied these changes in public opinion. While such participation might be considered evidence of a flourishing democracy, the Report described the democratic upsurge as an “excess of democracy” that “contributed to a democratic distemper.”

This distemper was suppressed by massive increases in policing (using military technology) and imprisonment. Imprisonment entailed a shift from the “treatment” or “rehabilitation” or retraining model to the restraining, incapacitating, vindictive, recriminating, punishment model that isolated prisoners away from society through longer, onerous sentences, especially for lower class crimes such as drug dealing (and also isolated prisoners away from each other in solitary confinement). The reason for the shift from retraining to restraining in the 1970s was political and economic. Rehabilitation presupposes a hospitable economy that can employ former prisoners. However, the shrinking economy of the 1970s was shedding skilled, manufacturing jobs, which made retraining prisoners for release a useless endeavor. The government knew that it was not prepared to solve the political and economic problems that were generating anti-social behavior, so the only way to control it was to intimidate and incapacitate people from engaging in it. This was the motive behind mandatory life sentences, solitary confinement, brutalization, and capital sentences for a wider variety of crimes (Carlson et al. 2010, pp. 246–247; Edelman 2017).

The repressive climate of neoliberalism extends to children. Children are taught to obey autocratic social demands, and they are punished for disobeying. Psychology and psychiatry are brought into stifle children’s protest. They pathologize it “oppositional defiant disorder” (ODD). The official symptoms of ODD in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual include “often actively defies or refuses to comply with adult requests or rules” and “often argues with adults.” Since 1980, ODD has become an increasingly popular diagnosis, with an increasing number of these children and

teenagers being drugged for this “condition.” In 2012, the *Archives of General Psychiatry* (Olfson et al. 2012) reported that between 1993 and 2009, there was a seven-fold increase of children 13 years and younger being prescribed antipsychotic drugs, and that “disruptive behavior disorders”—which includes ODD—were the most common diagnoses in children medicated with antipsychotics, accounting for 63% of those medicated.

Neoliberal Social Benefits

The rapaciousness of neoliberal capitalism has generated an advanced technology that exploits nature and people in order to generate a high rate of profit for the capitalist owners. This technology has increased the quantity of material goods that is available to the world’s people. Capitalist productivity has increased food, health, longevity, and income for much of the world’s population (<https://www.vox.com/2014/11/24/7272929/global-poverty-health-crime-literacy-good-news>).

However, these goods are produced and distributed in exploitive, hierarchical social manners that contradict their technological potential for widespread advancement. The owners of resources and production expropriate most of the profit for themselves. The populace receives relatively little, compared to the productivity that it achieves. Capitalists prevent widespread social benefits in order to retain them for themselves. Much of popular distribution of material benefits is confined to uplifting the most marginalized, deprived, victims of oppression. This is a cheap fix because it does not require much expenditure to uplift a small sliver of the population a very small degree of material benefit.

For example, extreme poverty is defined today as earning less than \$1.90 (USD) per day. The percentage of the world’s population in this condition has dropped dramatically in the past 30 or 40 years because of the increased productivity of neoliberal capitalism. However, this benefits a small sliver of destitute individuals in small ways. It is sufficient to uplift peasants who make \$1.89 per day to \$1.92, in order to claim a dramatic reduction in the number of destitute people, on the path toward eradicating extreme poverty.

This improvement does not apply to the bulk of the world’s population. Individuals who may be stuck earning \$1.93 per day are not categorized as extremely indigent, and they may be no better off than 30 years ago. Yet they are desperately poor. Thus, the reduction in extreme poverty does not mean a general elevation of the standard of living of the world’s people. And even within the minimal, neoliberal definition of poverty alleviation to \$1.90 per day, almost a billion people (11% of the world) continue to live below that level in extreme poverty today.

Similarly, gains in nutrition, employment, income, and longevity are subverted by the exploitive social relations that produce the gains, and distribute them. These social relations of neoliberal capitalism result in 1 in 5 children in the US dealing with food insecurity at least one day per week. Similarly, malnutrition in all its forms, from wasting to obesity, directly affects 1 in 3 people in the world today.

The improvement in income and nutrition of the most destitute people does nothing to mitigate this malnutrition among less poor, majority, people. Moreover, there is sufficient food to eradicate all malnourishment: the earth produces 17% more food than is required for the entire global population. Consequently, no one should face malnourishment or food insecurity. Using this as the standard of a good life, the remaining widespread malnutrition throughout the world invalidates the notion that neoliberal capitalism is gradually solving food insecurity and malnourishment. Exploitation, hierarchy, and injustice cause unnecessary and unacceptable suffering alongside minor improvements.

Improved longevity exemplifies this point. Improved longevity is a valuable result of medical advances. However, increased longevity is permeated by debilitating health conditions that decrease its value: In 2016, 91% of the world's population did not breathe clean air, and more than half of urban population were exposed to outdoor air pollution levels at least 2.5 times above the safety standard set by WHO. It has been estimated that in 2016 outdoor air pollution in both cities and rural areas caused 4.2 million deaths worldwide. Taken together, indoor and outdoor air pollution caused an estimated 7 million deaths one in eight deaths globally in 2016 (<http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/272596/9789241565585-eng.pdf?ua=1>, p. 10).

Polluting the environment is profitable because it saves on the cost of controlling pollution. The neoliberal solution to pollution is to assist people in living within it and with it. This externalizes the cost of pollution to the public in the form of individuals paying for medical care that results from socioeconomic pollution. Neoliberalism's social benefit is to provide health care to the public that enables helps people adjust to its toxic environment. Neoliberalism provides an industry that palliates disease rather than preventing and eradicating it; for real cure requires increasing the cost of production and ultimately removing capitalist ownership of it. This is the neoliberal model of social benefit.

This is clear in the neoliberal approach to cancer. Cancer keeps proliferating because of environmental pollutants. However, the medical industry ignores this and confines itself to palliating its effects. The entire narrative about cancer is how to survive it and extend life after detecting it. Statistics focus upon the results of treatment, not upon the incidence of contracting cancer—which implicate the causes of cancer. The cancer industry preserves the profits of industrial capitalism while “helping” people to live with their adversity—which is a great source of profit in the capitalist medical industry. The wonders of technical treatment and survival obscure the evil socioeconomic causes of cancer. A healthy environment would reduce the need for individual medicine.⁷

Trump's economic policies during his first two years as president fit this model of social benefits possessing a neoliberal form and distribution. Trump's policies produced some improvement in employment and economic growth (GDP). But only in ways that are terribly destructive to employees, financial stability, and the environment (see Protess et al. 2018). Growth was not healthy for people, society, and nature.

Trump made labor more exploitive, and profitable to capitalists. He degenerated working conditions which cut costs of health and safety; he allowed capitalists to

classify more employees as temporary, independent, contractors, which exempted capitalists from paying health benefits, pensions, and high wages. Hourly wages today are the same as 40 years ago! (Since they should have increased, their stagnation is really a decline.) Increased employment under Trump is simply employing more individuals at low wages. This is an increase in exploitation. The more low-wage workers that capitalists employ, the more profit they make. This helps them, not the laborers who suffer under low wages. Trump also removed financial regulations on financial institutions so they could float speculative (junk) loans at high interest rates.

Trump eliminated pollution controls on industry, which made production cheaper and more attractive; and he opened millions of acres of public lands to private oil and gas exploitation.

These capitalist deregulations attracted capitalists to expand their companies and their profit, but only at the cost of diminished wages, benefits, security, health, and safety for workers, diminished financial security for the country, and increased pollution and climate disaster for the world. Economic growth was accomplished the old-fashioned, quick and dirty, capitalist way, by greater exploitation. It did not develop new, clean, healthy, well-paying jobs with improved social relations and a healthy ecology.

The major reason for GDP growth had nothing to do with business acumen by entrepreneurs. Indeed, business investment grew more slowly in the first three quarters of 2018 than it did in the same period in 2017—before the business tax cuts went into effect. In other words, the capitalist government gave huge tax breaks to capitalists that was rationalized as promoting investment that would expand the economy and increase jobs and wages. However, the capitalists have no interest in the economy; so they kept the tax cuts to enrich themselves, and invested less than they did before the tax cuts. To stimulate the moribund economy that capitalists had forsaken, the government borrowed several hundred billion dollars, to pay for military projects. This government investment is what boosted the economy. “Faster government spending, particularly on military, accounted for nearly half of acceleration in economic growth since mid-2017” (Wall Street Journal Oct. 25, 2018). The contribution to growth made by federal spending in late 2018 was stronger than any other comparable period since 2010—when spending from the Recovery Act was still at its peak.

Thus, the neoliberal Trump government resorted to Keynesian, government borrowing and investment because neoliberal, private investment failed even when the government provided financial incentives to encourage private investment. Neoliberals continue to espouse free market economics when this ideology is clearly falsified by (a) the private sector refusing to use its finances to enter free market investment, and (b) by the government filling this investment gap by Keynesian policies by directly purchasing military equipment from the defense industry.

Neoliberal material benefits to society are a charade. Benefits are always formed, contoured, and distributed in accordance with their exploitive origin, social relations, and function which serve capitalist wealth, power, and politics. Neoliberal help to the populace—e.g., reducing extreme poverty, increasing employment, providing cheap food, expanding basic education—is really helping capitalists continue exploitive,

neoliberal practices while appeasing and propping up the populace to accept these practices without rebellion.

The sociology and political economy of neoliberalism are our *Lebenswelt*, in Husserl's terms. *Lebenswelt* is the surrounding cultural life-world with its particular features. "We stand, then, within the historical horizon in which everything is historical, even though we may know very little about it in a definite way. But has its essential structure that can be revealed through methodical inquiry. This inquiry prescribes all the possible specialized questions." "We as living in wakeful world-consciousness, are constantly active on the basis of our passive having of the world; it is from there, by objects pre-given in consciousness, that we are affected; it is to this or that object that we pay attention, according to our interests" (Husserl 1970, pp. 369, 108). Husserl is saying that our extant, cultural-historical life world is a pre-given, actual world of things, events, conditions, and macro cultural factors that was created by our predecessors and which we do not necessarily understand (but can comprehend through methodical inquiry). Therefore, we currently "have them" in a passive manner, in that they exist for us and affect us without our full comprehension of them. They are "unthematized" by us. This is our naïve, "natural" attitude. We direct our attention to this background and thematize particular elements of it. The life world is thus the ground of our interests and questions. We must understand this "tacit," cultural, "a priori," background to our life in order to understand the basis of our life. This is exactly why we must understand the cultural-historical life world of neoliberal capitalism—so that it is not a pre-given environment that we passively suffer, but becomes an object of our knowledge that we can evaluate, own, and change. "Like all praxis, objective science presupposes the being of this world, but it sets itself the task of transposing knowledge which is imperfect and prescientific into perfect knowledge [of the objective world] (ibid. pp. 110–111). [Husserl held a subjective conception of culture that was far from our political-economic model, however, his general notion of culture as the a priori ground of behavior and science can be adapted to our model.]

The current, pre-given conditions of neoliberalism are passively suffered by people as the a priori ingredients of neoliberal psychology. They generate a psychology of oppression that is congruent with, and necessary for, social, political, and economic oppression. Psychology of oppression is normative and normal, it is not abnormal and exceptional (Ratner 2017c). Its abolition requires systemic, political-economic change, not piecemeal, individual change.

These conclusions are verified in the case of neoliberal education, as the next chapter explains.

Notes

1. Following Marx's example, we may denote two ways that professors can treat their scholarship. One way is to go on a lecture tour of universities which pay professors for their time disbursing knowledge to students and faculty. The knowledge remains in tact and enriches the knowledge of the audience. The use value of

the lectures remains dominant. The university earns no income from “employing” him to visit.

Alternatively, professors may turn their scholarship into a cash cow by commodifying it on the capitalist market. They may, for example, sell their name/reputation from their scholarship to a corporation to endorse a profit-generating product. This dispenses with the knowledge. The professor’s endorsement is simply an advertisement, like a movie star endorsing some clothing. It is all about branding and imaging, not enlightening. The use value of the scholarship is replaced with exchange value which generates the scholar’s small salary and much larger sales and profits for the company that employs him. (Capitalist profit always trumps employees’ salaries.)

Neoliberals prefer the second strategy.

2. The material for this section was obtained through interviews I conducted with sports economists at universities in China in Sept. 2016. As is standard in China, interview subjects insisted that their names be withheld out of fear of persecution by authorities. These professors had been punished for providing economics classes and consulting to workers.
3. Marx directly addressed this issue in his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, chapter on money. With money, “what I *am* and *am capable of* is by no means determined by my individuality. I *am* ugly, but I can buy for myself the *most beautiful* of women. Therefore, I am not *ugly*, for the effect of *ugliness*—its deterrent power—is nullified by money. I am bad, dishonest, unscrupulous, stupid; but money is honoured, and hence its possessor.” In our case of sports, money buys talent that the team does not possess. Marx explains the alternative to commodifying human activity. It is personal development of those activities so that they express your actual, humanity instead of your financial capacity to buy them: “Assume *man* to be *man* and his relationship to the world to be a human one: then, every one of your relations to man and to nature must be a *specific expression*, corresponding to the object of your will, of your *real individual* life. If you want to enjoy art, you must be an artistically cultivated person; if you want to exercise influence over other people, you must be a person with a stimulating and encouraging effect on other people” (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/preface.htm>). Similarly, a team’s will correspond to the developed talent of its players.
4. A typical example is television networks canceling programs that do not appeal to advertisers’ economic needs. In 2014, Time Warner cancelled “Longmire” on the A & E channel. It was A & E’s second most popular show, but with older viewers, over 60 years. Advertisers, who pay Time Warner to place ads on A & E, can make more money marketing products to younger audiences who have disposable incomes and buy more products than older, retired people do. The advertisers wanted A & E to run programs that would attract young viewers to watch their ads and buy their products. The profitability of young viewers leads networks to raise their price the lucrative ads. A 30-s. ad for Longmire cost \$31,300, while an ad for a younger program (“Mad Men”) generated \$69,500 for

Time Warner. Thus, Time Warner and the advertisers canceled a highly popular, profitable, entertainment show because they could earn even more from a younger demographic (“the demographics were not there”). Profitability is the neoliberal *raison d’être* of television programs (Flint 2014).

5. The Chinese government’s neoliberal accumulation of capital leads it to construct highly polluting, coal industries outside China’s borders.

In Serbia a Chinese enterprise, China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC), recently started work on a multi-million dollar project to enlarge the coal-fired Kostolac power station.

Under the terms of the US\$715m contract, the Chinese will build an additional 350 MW unit at Kostolac and expand operations at a nearby opencast mine producing lignite—the “dirtiest” coal.

Urgewald, a Berlin-based environmental group, calculates that Chinese companies are at present involved in plans to build about a fifth of new coal-fired energy capacity around the world—in countries including Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, Vietnam and Malawi.

In some of these countries there is little or no coal-powered generation at present; building coal plants is likely to prevent the development of other, less polluting energy sources and lock in high emission power structures for years to come.

Chinese state banks are estimated to have provided more than US\$40bn in loans over the past 18 years for building coal-fired power plants overseas. The majority of the funding for Serbia’s Kostolac project is being provided by China’s state-owned Export-Import Bank.

Thorough environmental impact assessments were not carried out on the project and, contrary to international regulations, Romania—whose border is less than 20 kms from the Kostolac plant—was not consulted on the impact of the facility’s expansion.

The contract between China and Serbia gives courts in China full power of arbitration in the event of any dispute; there are added concerns about the many hundreds of workers from China building the new plant, with few companies from Serbia itself involved in construction at Kostolac (Cook 2018).

Similarly, a subsidiary of power giant **China Huadian Corp.** has signed a deal to build a 1320-megawatt (MW) coal-fired power station in Bangladesh (<https://www.caixinglobal.com/2018-05-08/with-huadian-deal-bangladesh-shows-its-fired-up-about-coal-101245842.html>).

The capitalist orientation of Chinese foreign policy is critiqued by a socialist analysis of the BRICS countries, The BRICS: An anti-capitalist critique (<http://www.socialistproject.ca/leftstreamed/ls305.php>). It demonstrates how the BRICS organization, including its development bank that is headed by China, takes a capitalist approach to development, and raises no socialist alternative.

6. Chinese neoliberalism does not share this origin or objective. It was not spawned by capitalist stagnation and decline. Chinese neoliberalism is exploitive growth, whereas American neoliberalism is exploitive decline. Chinese neoliberal growth was spawned by poverty that followed upon corrupted, collective practices (that were mistakenly termed socialist). The Communist Party, under Deng Xiaoping, did not employ neoliberalism to cannibalize society and make it poorer. CCP used neoliberalism to invigorate the economy by generating capital. It did so by creating a capitalist class that exploited labor and the environment to generate

surplus value and profit; however, this profit was made off an expanding economy that enriched sectors of the populace. GDP has risen, standard of living has risen, public spending has risen. Alvaredo et al. (2017, p. 406) document this exploitive growth. “In China [from 1978 to 2015], the top experienced very high growth rates [1294% for the top 10%, and 3111% for the top 0.001%], but average growth was so large that the bottom 50 percent average income also grew markedly by 401%. This is likely to make rising inequality more acceptable.” China’s exploitive growth is further documented in the snapshot facts about class inequality in income and wealth in the Preface.

Of course, disbursing some surplus value to the populace is not socialism—for socialism eliminates surplus value, wage labor, private property, and the capitalist class.

7. This perspective on medicalizing problems leads to a radical analysis of illegal drugs. Illegal drugs perform the same social function as legal medicalization of symptoms: both medicalize individuals to make their various pains and disturbances sufferable. From the societal point of view, it does not matter what the source of medicines is. Oppressive society is grateful for any medicalization that reduces symptoms or makes them sufferable. This is preferable to overwhelming suffering that would lead to social collapse and rebellion. Since neoliberalism is intent on exploiting people, impoverishing them, disposing of them, using them, and disenfranchising them, it is comfortable with narcotizing them to enable their participation in social and personal oppression. This accounts for the epidemic of medication that pervades neoliberal society. And society is comfortable with illegal drugs that perform the same function. This is the reason that the drug problem is never seriously attacked: it is socially functional, just as oppression and stultification are socially functional. Intractable problems are necessary, functional problems. It is their functionality that makes them intractable. Society prefers that oppressed people take illicit drugs than that they study the causes of their problems and organize politically to eradicate these causes.

In a pathological society, where the normal is pathological, and pathology is normal, abnormal pathology is always an extension of normal pathology (Ratner 2017c). In our case, illegal drugs are an extension of normal medicalization or narcotization.

Chapter 4

Neoliberal Education: Enforcer of the Neoliberal Class Structure



Our conical cultural model informs us that macro cultural factors reflect the powerful political economy. Education is a key macro cultural factor that reflects and reproduces neoliberal political economy. This is important for our purposes because education is a macro cultural factor that powerfully organizes our cognitions, ideas, motivation, goals, values, attention, and perceptions. It also organizes our emotional content and expression—as when teachers regulate emotional display in the classroom in various situations. Education teaches explicitly, specifically, didactically, with particular symbols that are verbalized and articulated. Teachers carefully explain why things are as they are, and why students should behave in certain ways. Education arms students with reasons for behavior in certain ways, which makes behavior more understandable and reasonable to them. (Of course, these proffered reasons may be extraneous to real reasons for behavior—as we shall discuss in the section on ideology. I am simply stating that education provides reasons that are convincing to the students and make their behavior seem to embody reason.) The power of education on psychology means that comprehending neoliberal psychology requires comprehending neoliberal education.

Neoliberal education embodies neoliberal class structure (social roles), capitalist form and content, and ideology in order to teach students to become neoliberal in their being (Ratner 2012b, pp. 284–294).

Coles (2018, pp. 72–74) provides essential data on occupations which is the basis for educational policy. Contrary to the claims that high-skilled work is speedily becoming pervasive in the U.S. economy and education must raise competence levels to match these work requirements, the reality, according to the National Employment Law Project, is that since the 2008 Great Recession the majority of jobs created have been low-paying and medium-paying. Lower-wage jobs (\$9.48–\$13.33/h) comprise 44% of employment growth; medium-wage jobs (\$13.73–\$20.00/h) comprise 25% of employment growth; and high-wage jobs (\$20.03–\$32.62/h) account for 30% of employment growth. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics similarly reports that in 2014, as in previous years, the occupations with the largest number of workers

were not STEM jobs. The greatest number of workers were retail salespersons and cashiers, followed by food preparation and serving workers; general office clerks; customer service representatives; waiters and waitresses; laborers and freight, stock, and material movers; janitors and cleaners. Registered nurses were the only large occupation group that required advanced education. Thus, the real need for education is to prepare people to function in unskilled, low-pay work, not high-skilled, professional work. And this is precisely what the capitalist education system has been doing through neoliberal policies.

This occupational structure makes college unnecessary and wasteful. Coles explains that 51% of recent American graduates considered “themselves to be underemployed or working in jobs that don’t require a college degree”; 39% were earning \$25,000 or less, and low salary levels contributed to 42% of the graduates continuing to live at home. Moreover, less than half of the graduates (46%) had full-time jobs, down from full-time employment of 68% for graduates of just a year or two earlier. Nor were the low salary levels compensated for by good benefits, as indicated by the 52% of graduates who had to continue on their parents’ health insurance.

Overall, the trend for college graduates was toward more employment in work unrelated to college studies, less full-time employment, greater part-time employment, low pay, less personal independence, and long-term debt. The Accenture findings were buttressed by a Federal Reserve Bank of New York study, which found that “underemployment among recent graduates—a condition defined here as working in jobs that typically do not require a bachelor’s degree has continued to increase. Many recent grads feel underemployed and disillusioned. The percentage of recent grads who feel underemployed—working at a job that actually does not require their degree—has risen 10% points (41–51%) over the past three years,” from 2013 to 2016.

Education must prepare citizens to occupy this occupational structure. Education must map onto this structure to provide appropriate qualitative competencies to appropriate numbers of individuals.

As the neoliberal economy devolves into an unskilled, disenfranchised, marginalized, impoverished, lower class, education must keep apace both qualitatively and quantitatively. Education must be concentrated in the upper class, and become less available to middle and lower class students. Middle and lower class education prepares those students for an uneducated, standardized, narrow, obedient, work life. Anything more than this is actively discouraged by the powers that be. One method for reducing the availability of education to the middle and lower classes is to privatize education and make it expensive for individuals to purchase. The result is that 47% of students who attend community colleges drop out before earning their degrees, while 31% of students who attend four-year institutions drop out (<https://truthout.org/articles/unaffordable-higher-education-leads-to-low-graduation-rates/>). The primary objective of financializing, or commodifying, education is to make it isomorphic with the class structure of economic capital. Bourdieu called this isometric form and distribution of cultural factors, “cultural capital.” This class structuring and deprivation is the opposite of increasing individual choice over commodities that neoliberal ideology claims.

Education does not merely educate students about these things, education embodies these things that it is trying to educate. Education has the form of what it is educating. The process of education must be congruent with the result. Education does not merely teach children to occupy certain classes by enacting a commodity form of behavior which is mystified by ideology. Education itself has a commodity, classed, ideologically mystified form. Education is a neoliberal activity with neoliberal form and content built into its pedagogy; education is not a neutral method for teaching children about neoliberal content. (Just as news has a neoliberal form, as I explained in the Preface.)

Analogously, if you want to educate children to be scientific thinkers, scientific thinking must be built into the pedagogical process; pedagogy must itself be logical, empirical, analytical, deductive. If pedagogy were haphazard, irrational, illogical, and anti-empirical, it could never produce scientific thinking in the students. Conversely, if you want to educate children to be irrational and mystical, you must make pedagogy embody these characteristics. If you logically, and empirically, and scientifically explain irrationality to students, you will undermine their irrationality. This is why religious education is a different form of pedagogy than scientific education. If you use scientific education to teach about religion—as in history or anthropology of education—you are not teaching students to become religious. To teach them to become religious and believe in religion and embody religion—as opposed to knowing about religion—then you use a “faith-based” educational pedagogy that promotes mysticism and irrationality, not a science-based pedagogy.

Teaching students to become neoliberal subjects with neoliberal subjectivity and behavior requires neoliberal educational pedagogy which treats the students in ways that they shall reproduce, not simply know about.

Lower class pedagogy is simplified, standardized, and rote. A complex pedagogy that employs reasoning and explanation and questioning and critique would contradict the lower-class habitus that it is trying to organize. A complex pedagogy would cultivate a thoughtful, broad-ranging, planning, critical habitus that is an upper class habitus with a broader viewpoint. This is analogous to the difference between scientific and religious pedagogy.

Lower class education is not about educational enlightenment, upward social mobility, or human fulfillment. Pretending that education is primarily about enlightenment, mobility, and fulfillment is ideology that obscures the true character, motive, and objectives of education. It also elicits misplaced hope in education.

Of course, the contemporary, neoliberal, capitalist class structure requires a small upper and middle class to lead and administer the system. This requires advanced psychological competencies among the small elite class.

The first step in understanding neoliberal education—and the psychology that it cultivates—is to document the neoliberal political-economic-social interests that control it. For it is these interests that determine the form of education, the objectives of education, and the demographics of education.

The Neoliberal Capitalist Control of Education Fashions the Neoliberal Capitalist Form and Objectives of Education

An article entitled “Tech Billionaires Reinvent Schools, With Students as Beta Testers” (Singer 2017) captures the autocracy of neoliberal capitalist educational reform:

In San Francisco’s public schools, Marc Benioff, the chief executive of Salesforce, is giving middle school principals \$100,000 “innovation grants” and encouraging them to behave more like start-up founders and less like bureaucrats... School district administrators now submit an annual grant wish list to the Salesforce.org board for review. And Mr. Benioff dispenses not just money, but also management prescriptions.

In the space of just a few years, technology giants have begun remaking the very nature of schooling on a vast scale, using some of the same techniques that have made their companies linchpins of the American economy. Through their philanthropy, they are influencing the subjects that schools teach, the classroom tools that teachers choose and fundamental approaches to learning... But the philanthropic efforts are taking hold so rapidly that there has been little public scrutiny. Tech companies and their founders have been rolling out programs in America’s public schools with relatively few checks and balances... “They have the power to change policy, but no corresponding check on that power,” said Megan Tompkins-Stange, an assistant professor of public policy at the University of Michigan. “It does subvert the democratic process.”

Furthermore, there is only limited research into whether the tech giants’ programs have actually improved students’ educational results... Some tech moguls are taking a hands-on role in nearly every step of the education supply chain by financing campaigns to alter policy, building learning apps to advance their aims and subsidizing teacher training. This end-to-end influence represents an “almost monopolistic approach to education reform,” said Larry Cuban, an emeritus professor of education at Stanford University. “That is starkly different from earlier generations of philanthropists”... Many parents and educators said in interviews that they were unaware of the Silicon Valley personalities and money influencing their schools.

Curricula in primary and secondary education are shaped by corporate leaders to implant neoliberal values.

Social studies and history instructional time not only has diminished, it has often been filled with corporate-funded curricula dedicated to reinforcing a corporate-controlled world. One such curriculum comes from the Bill of Rights Institute (BRI), a project created primarily by the billionaire Koch brothers, owners of a fossil fuel empire and funders of right-wing politicians and causes. In a BRI essay contest on “Being An American,” the top winning themes expressed a Koch brothers’ definition of Americanism. Of twenty-two top essays, “individual liberty,” “private property” and “limited government” were prominent themes, while “all men are created equal” was the theme of a single winning essay.

Lauding its influence in schools, the Institute claims it has “provided a better understanding of the Constitution and Bill of Rights to more than 4.3 million students and over 50,000 teachers. Additionally, the Institute has directly trained over 22,000 teachers through its constitutional seminars.” (Coles 2018)

Neoliberal curricula enter the school system through an organized, systemic, multi-pronged, “overdetermined” strategy. It includes politicking the federal Dept. of

Education and State departments of education, which requires designing legislation and appointing/electing sympathetic officials at each level to pass and implement the legislation. For example, North Carolina's State Department of Public Instruction encouraged teachers to use a history curriculum written by BRI to fulfill an instructional requirement established in the state legislature's 2011 Founding Principles Act. The bill was based on model legislation provided by the American Legislative Exchange Council, a conservative, secret group composed of state legislators and corporate officials that is also funded by the Koch brothers and other right-wing individuals, corporations, and foundations, such as the Richard Scaife Foundation and ExxonMobil. Flowing from the BRI ideology, the curriculum emphasizes individual rights and limited government action (*ibid*).

Adding to the massive, coordinated, usurping influence of conservative, neoliberal capitalism on education is the training of school administrators and public school district managers by conservative, private, corporate foundations. This allows education officials to directly implement the foundation's agenda. One project, the Broad Superintendents Academy, pays all tuition and travel costs for top executives in their fields to go through a course of six extended weekend sessions, assignments, and site visits. Broad then helps to place them in superintendent jobs. In 2009, 43% of all large urban superintendent openings were filled by Broad Academy graduates.

Another project, the Broad Residency, places professionals with master's degrees and several years of work experience into full-time managerial jobs in school districts, charter school management organizations, and federal and state education departments. While they're working, residents get two years of "professional development" from Broad, all costs covered, including travel. The foundation also subsidizes their salaries (50% the first year, 25% the second year). It's another success story for Broad, which has placed more than two hundred residents in more than fifty education institutions.

Once Broad alumni are working inside the education system, they naturally favor hiring other Broadies, which increases the neoliberal influence in the system. A clear picture of this comes from Los Angeles. The Foundation is based there and exerts formidable influence over the LA Unified School District (LA Unified), the second largest in the nation. At the start of 2010, Broad Residency alums working at LA Unified included Matt Hill, who oversees the district's Public School Choice project that turns schools over to independent managers (Broad pays Hill's \$160,000 salary); Parker Hudnut, executive director of the district's innovation and charter division (Kathi Littmann, his predecessor, was also a Broad resident); Yumi Takahashi, the budget director; Marshall Tuck, chief executive of the nonprofit that manages schools for Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; Mark Kieger-Heine, chief operating officer of the same nonprofit; and Angela Bass, its superintendent of instruction. In June 2010, the Board of Education hired Broad Academy alumnus John Deasy as deputy superintendent of LA Unified (he's a likely candidate for the superintendent's job). At the time of hiring, Deasy was deputy director of education at the Gates Foundation.

"A \$4.4 million grant from the LA-based Wasserman Foundation, \$1.2 million from Walton, and smaller grants from Ford and Hewlett are paying the salaries of more than a dozen key senior staffers in the district. They work on projects favored

by the foundations.” The Gates Foundation also contributed to the Broad Residency project with a \$3.6 million grant. According to Broad’s press release, the money would go “to recruit and train as many as eighteen Broad Residents over the next four years to provide management support to school districts and charter management organizations addressing the issue of teacher effectiveness” (Barkan 2011).

Neoliberal, corporate control over education was exerted at the federal level where Obama’s Secretary of Education, Arnie Duncan, served on the board of directors of Broad’s education division until February 2009, as did former treasury secretary Larry Summers. All of Duncan’s education officials in DOE were neoliberal, corporate advocates.

Major universities are now funded and controlled by big business (Kotch 2017, 2018). An examination of 10 contracts between leading oil companies and major universities, worth \$883 million over 10 years revealed the following details of corporate dominance over scientific research.

- In nine of the 10 energy-research agreements, the university partners failed to retain majority academic control over the central governing body charged with directing the university-industry alliance. Four of the 10 alliances actually give the industry sponsors full governance control.
- Eight of the 10 agreements permit the corporate sponsor or sponsors to fully control both the evaluation and selection of faculty research proposals in each new grant cycle.
- None of the 10 agreements requires faculty research proposals to be evaluated and awarded funding based on independent expert peer review, the traditional method for awarding academic and scientific research grants fairly and impartially based on scientific merit.
- Eight of the 10 alliance agreements fail to specify transparently, in advance, how faculty may apply for alliance funding, and what the specific evaluation and selection criteria will be.
- Nine of the 10 agreements call for no specific management of financial conflicts of interest related to the alliance and its research functions. None of these agreements, for example, specifies that committee members charged with evaluating and selecting faculty research proposals must be impartial, and may not award corporate funding to themselves (see Jennifer Washburn, “Big Oil Goes To College,” Center for American Progress, http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/10/big_oil.html; see also G. Bowley “The Academic-Industrial Complex,” *New York Times*, Aug. 1, 2010: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/01/business/01prez.html?scp=1&sq=university%20industrial%20complex&st=cse>).

An example is BB&T bank, under the head of John Allison, an avowed fan of author and libertarian icon Ayn Rand. The US bank offered colleges and universities grants averaging \$1.1 million, usually with the stipulation that they design a new course incorporating Rand’s *Atlas Shrugged*. BB&T also demanded that grantees create faculty positions, centers, speaker series and scholarships as part of a “Moral Foundations of Capitalism” program. At least 63 schools accepted

these grants (<http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/44639-what-s-wrong-with-secret-donor-agreements-like-the-ones-george-mason-university-inked-with-the-kochs>).

The Capitalist Form of Education

Barrow (2018, p. 3) describes how university education in the U.S. has taken on a capitalist form. The corporate university is “an institution that is characterized by processes, decisional criteria, expectations, organizational culture, and operating practices that are taken from, and have their origins in, the modern business corporation.” Those processes include the role of the market in allocating resources, activities focused around value statements, productivity measures, institutional goals defined by management, conceptualization of academic departments as profit centers, customer service orientation toward students (see Engelen et al. 2014).

Ward (2012) amplifies the neoliberal restructuring of the form of knowledge and education. “Knowledge, from the neoliberalist perspective, had over the course of the twentieth century become over-socialized’ and much too public. Knowledge production, it seemed, needed a major retooling, reorganization and intensification much like other lagging industries or unresponsive state bureaucracies” (p. 4). “What was needed in the neoliberalist view was a major retooling and reorganization of knowledge production and education along the lines of a competitive business enterprise” (p. 5, my emphasis). Newfield (2008, p. 69) further explains the reason that neoliberals are compelled to transform the form of genuine knowledge: “By their very nature, universities [traditionally] were a mild affront to market values. Simply by existing, they showed that markets could not encompass all human activity.” Knowledge and education are political in the sense of supporting particular political interests and opposing others.

Neoliberals recognize this very clearly, and they have embarked upon giving knowledge and its cultivation in educational institutions a capitalist form through its production and distribution in corporate universities that had a capitalist form. Universities—and the State—had a new capitalist form in order to organize the capitalist form of knowledge as a commodity. “In this rethinking of education, the role of state was to shift from being a purveyor of collective well-being, equality and general social welfare to an information conduit who was responsible for making sure that entrepreneurs and consumers were informed of their options in the marketplace” (Ward 2012, p. 6). Knowledge, education, and the State acquired the new cultural form of commodities that could enhance the graduate’s personal success on the competitive market.

A new field, called Knowledge Management, arose during the 1990s to administer neoliberal knowledge. It redefined cognitive competencies such as uniqueness and innovation:

Uniqueness did not mean unique genius or originality. Uniqueness was not an intellectual quality at all. It was a property category; uniqueness meant sole ownership [of a concept or patent]. Knowledge by itself did not produce profits in the New Economy. Proprietary

knowledge produced big profits. Proprietary knowledge was the only really valuable (though not the only necessary) knowledge for a simple reason. Because of the ease with which high-tech products could be commodified, firms thrive not through niche maintenance, but through control. Be first or second in every market or get out, said General Electric's CEO Jack Welch, and he sold even profitable GE divisions that could not make that cut... The really big money came from managing not for market innovation but for market domination. Only proprietary knowledge offered real capital and security... Business was looking to knowledge to turn a worker's ideas into a proprietary product that would return a rent-sized profit. [This required controlling and owning – i.e., expropriating – workers' knowledge, like other forms of labor.] (Newfield 2008, pp. 125–141)

Ward reiterates the importance of “neoliberalized knowledge”: “The commodification, rationalization and privatization of knowledge (found in such current practices as the patenting of genetic materials, the general privatization of cultural artifacts, the technology transfer activities of universities, the digitization (or Googlization) of information and the privatization of public domain knowledge) have far-reaching implication for not only what knowledge is, who controls it and how it is created but also the manner in which knowledge is passed on to others” (Ward 2012, p. 12, my emphasis).

Arendt explained the necessary corruption of truth and morality by the commercial marketplace: “Philosophical truth, when it enters the market place, changes its nature and becomes opinion, because a veritable shifting not merely from one kind of reasoning to another but from one way of human existence to another, has taken place” (p. 301) (<https://idanlandau.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/arendt-truth-and-politics.pdf>).

The Class Basis, and Class Function, of Neoliberal, Educational System

The capitalist form of education varies with students' social position in the social system/class structure. This means that education reflects and promotes the social class system. This is known as the “reproductive thesis” or the “transmission thesis” because education transmits social class characteristics to students' psychology/behavior. This reproductive relationship and function is actively organized by social leaders. It is not mechanistic, reified, passive, or static.

Primary and secondary education in the United States currently consists of three streams: (1) public schools, (2) private, expensive schools—from middle school to university, (3) charter schools and voucher schools.

Charter schools are largely financed by public educational funds that are diverted from public schools to charter schools which are privately managed. Their school boards and administrators are not democratically elected as public schools are. Charter schools are usually constructed by private companies (increasingly equity companies) and administered by them, while subsidized by public vouchers from gov-

ernment educational funds. Many charter schools are administered by religious organizations which use public education funds that are given as vouchers.

Neoliberal charter schools have primarily replaced public schools in poor neighborhoods. One reason is that neoliberal governments treat the poor as a drag on the system, who are not needed by the neoliberal political economy. There is no point spending public money to try and upgrade the poor because the political economy is shrinking and reducing middle class opportunities. Thus, the poor are turned over to corporate management, to “warehouse,” with minimum expense and support. The discarded poor are also useful, powerless, instruments to be exploited for the profit of corporate accumulation of capital and upper class enrichment. This is all handled by corporate charter schools. They degrade the educational services and extract profit from the poor. These socio-economic interests lead to inevitable inferior educational achievements for these exploited students. Privatizing schools is a crucial element of the primitive accumulation of symbolic power in the neoliberal system. Controlling these new forms of pedagogy generate control over the production, unification, codification, and dissemination of knowledge (what Bourdieu terms “informational capital”) that is central to the state’s routine exercise of symbolic power (Loveman 2005, p. 1660).

Public schools remain active in middle class districts, however, corporate interests have formed many “partnerships” with public schools. Companies pay for numerous programs, including curricula and professorships, and departments, which they control. Neoliberal investors—e.g., Gates—and politicians are moving to privatize public schools and bring them under corporate financial, ideological, and pedagogical control.

Private schools educate the upper class who fund them in order to escape from the depleted public school sector. Private schools charge exorbitant tuition, however, they do not adopt most neoliberal educational practices. The reason is that neoliberalism impoverishes education and is mainly a technique for oppressing poor students. The elite pay for good education that escapes neoliberalism. It is interesting that capitalists do not apply their neoliberal education to members of their own class. This proves how destructive those practices are, that they are not suitable for educating capitalists.

Lower Class Education

Lower class, neoliberal education is a form of colonial education that imperialist countries impose upon their colonies. The objectives of neo/colonial education for subaltern people within developed countries are twofold:

- (1) Adjust/prepare lower class students, and middle class students who are being pushed down into the lower class, to the neoliberal class structure. These pupils are deemed unsuitable for middle class training in middle class competencies for middle class social activities. The lower class form and content of information is degraded to simple, routine material that befits exploited, powerless, routine,

deskilled activities for subaltern subjects. This is reinforced by a lower-class pedagogy that trains students to passively accept simple information.

Educational degradation additionally serves to deprive lower class students of educational competencies that could challenge or escape from their lower class shackles.

- (2) Exploit education for profit and power to the upper class. This requires degrading expensive educational excellence, and diverting the savings to corporate profits.

As A.J. Angulo outlines in his detailed history of the for-profit sector, *Diploma Mills*, such schools spend a large majority of their budgets not on teaching but on raising money and distributing it to investors. In 2009, for example, thirty leading FPCUs spent 17 percent of their budget on instruction and 42 percent on marketing to new students and paying out existing investors. Is it any wonder, then, that investigations into the industry from 2010 to 2012 found that while it represented only 12 percent of the post-secondary student population, it received a quarter of all federal aid disbursements and was responsible for 44 percent of all loan defaults, many of them by working-class students who either couldn't afford to graduate or, once they did, found their degrees were largely useless in the marketplace? (Ferozhar 2016, p. 28)

These are the twin objectives of colonial education. Both objectives are fulfilled in this description of subaltern schools: "Schools filled with students of color receive less funding, but employ more inexperienced teachers. Accelerated programs and classes remain less accessible for black and Latino students—just 1/3 of public schools with high black and Latino enrollment offer calculus" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/08/magazine/education-by-the-numbers.html>). Many are 90/90/90 charter schools—schools with 90% students of color, 90% students who fall below federal poverty levels and 90% failing to meet educational standards (Rooks 2017).

These charters are not promoted in wealthy districts. Wealthy families would never stand for the cheap, degraded education that employs untrained, low-wage teachers (Teach for America), in schools that are located in office buildings in strip malls, that often use virtual education instead of personal instruction, and whose curriculum is dummed down to impoverished facts and tests.

Corporatized, privatized, neoliberal education cannibalizes society in the same ways that neoliberal economics does. Rooks (2017, pp. 59–60) explains this:

Since the 1980s, organizations, philanthropies, and corporations have shown an increased interest in schools that educate poor children who are not white.

According to a 2011 *New York Times* article, five Pennsylvania cyber charters received \$200 million in tax money in 2010–2011, and Agora Cyber Charter, which is run by the for-profit company K12, took in \$31.6 million in 2013 alone from state taxpayers in Philadelphia. By 2015, cyber schools received over \$60 million in per-student payments from the chronically starved and often bankrupt school districts. To make matters worse, the companies who run online and virtual schools are also consistently accused of financial impropriety. In 2011, the *New York Times* conducted a months-long investigation into virtual schools. By way of summing up its overall findings, the article begins by showing how, in the realm of education, what is good for business is not necessarily good for the students those businesses claim to educate:

By almost every educational measure, the Agora Cyber Charter School is failing. Nearly 60 percent of its students are behind grade level in math. Nearly 50 percent trail in reading. A third do not graduate on time. And hundreds of children, from kindergartners to

seniors, withdraw within months after they enroll. By Wall Street standards, though, Agora is a remarkable success that has helped enrich K12 Inc., the publicly traded company that manages the school. And the entire enterprise is paid for by taxpayers.

The amount of money involved, as well as the potential profit, is significant. One of the largest companies providing virtual education, Agora Schools, was on track to earn \$72 million in 2011, a number it has bested each succeeding year from 2011 to 2014, when out of Agora's \$849 million in profit, \$117 million came from its virtual schools division.

In Pennsylvania the district pays cyber schools as much per child as it pays to educate students in brick-and-mortar schools. In 2016, most of Pennsylvania's cyber schools had dismal results. According to the state's School Performance Profile website, only three—21st Century, PA Cyber, and PA Virtual—had a score above 60. The state considers 60 and below to be substandard. None of the cyber schools scored higher than 70, which is the state's minimum passing score for all schools, and some cyber schools in the study scored down in the 30s. Such schools are neither inexpensive nor effective, yet they continue to expand.

In addition to questions about how effective cyber schools are in terms of a return on investment for taxpayer dollars, an issue of particular concern is the sector's emphasis on serving so-called high-risk students who don't have the parental and other support structures that research shows are necessary to make the most of the model. Poor, rural, and urban districts are prime candidates, since cyber educators have explicitly stated that it is their business strategy to go after kids who—because it is believed that they do not have motivated parents—would demand the least from their educational experience. Students in foster care and Native Americans schooled on their tribal homelands are two categories of students targeted by virtual school providers in Florida. Targeting the most economically vulnerable students ultimately yields cyber education businesses increased profits resulting from the sergenomics of apartheid schools.

This same cannibalization occurs within higher educational institutions to impoverish faculty and proletarianize them, while shifting these financial savings to enrich administrators. Today there are 1.5 million university teachers in the U.S., of which 1 million are temporary, contract employees with low salaries, no benefits, no offices, and no job security. This proletarianizing of middle class instructors was not done to cut expenses; it was done to (1) easily dismiss instructors who criticize the system, and (2) raise the salaries of administrators. Administrators (including sports coaches) outnumber faculty on every American college campus; and their salaries have ballooned. President salaries went from being, in the 1970s, around \$25–30 K, to being in the hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars—which includes salary, delayed compensation, discretionary funds, free homes, or generous housing allowances, cars and drivers, memberships to expensive country clubs.

(<https://www.alternet.org/heres-how-higher-education-was-destroyed-5-basic-steps?src=newsletter1092844>)

Privatizing education requires displacing public education to eliminate public control. Neoliberals accomplish this by simply mandating the closure of lower-class schools, and also by radically defunding public schools. Both of these maneuvers force public education to become dependent upon private financial support and policy. This public-private partnership rapidly devolves into complete private control of education. The reason is that corporations take the lead in educational “reform,” and insist that public funds contribute to it as a condition of corporate “partnering.”

Corporations do not assist public programs, they divert public funds into corporate programs. Corporations force the public to undermine its own interest while supporting corporate interests and control. And public education succumbs to this corporate cooptation instead of insisting that corporations contribute to public programs for public interest.

The abject failure of neoliberal educational reforms is proven by New Orleans public schools where they have been implemented. In 2005, the state board of education of Louisiana took control of New Orleans public schools after Hurricane Katrina had devastated the poorest areas of the city. The state converted the schools into charter schools that were mostly run by operators and financiers. The schools and the State fired more than 7000 veteran teachers and school board employees, and replaced them with unqualified, cheap instructors, delivering a crushing blow to the city's Black middle class, while augmenting the profit of the school owners.

According to a report in *The New Orleans Advocate*, Nov. 26, 2017 (http://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/education/article_df3501c4-d156-11e7-aa83-db6f4e8777e7.html). In 2017, all but four of New Orleans' 86 public schools are charters, and one of those four will close imminently. State rankings for most New Orleans schools are on a three-year slide, with 65% of the schools dropping from 2014 to 2017. Corporate Charter networks KIPP New Orleans Schools, New Beginnings Schools Foundation, ReNEW Schools and Algiers Charter operate a combined 23 schools. Only one of them improved its school performance score from 2016 to 2017. Overall, New Orleans schools slid 14.2 points, from an overall B to a C. In 2017, 34 of the city's 84 schools with school performance scores (not all schools include the grades that take state tests) were rated a D or an F. Eighteen of them, including three alternative high schools, have had a D or an F three years in a row.

In 2017, about 40% of the city's schools got a D or an F, up from about 36% last year. This is after closing 30 low performing schools since 2010. Even excluding these 30 closed schools, the remaining schools suffered an overall decline. Finally, this district of charter schools declined more than the public schools in Louisiana.

In summary, 12 years of neoliberal management has led to declining educational achievements in schools.

Charter schools in other states suffered the same result. This is documented in "Charters and Consequences," researched by Network for Public Education, Nov 2017.

(https://networkforpubliceducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/NPE-Report-Charters-and-Consequences.pdf?link_id=1&can_id=28ad5115d77074e1b2f5276f558dd425&source=email-must-read-the-network-for-public-education-releases-its-investigative-report-on-charter-schools&email_referrer=email_264683&email_subject=must-read-the-network-for-public-education-releases-its-investigative-report-on-charter-schools)

One of the largest charter chains in the United States, the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), operates 209 schools with approximately 90,000 students. In neoliberal fashion, it pays lucrative salaries to administrators while short-changing teachers and students. While the foundation claimed to be operating at a \$3 million dollar loss,

it managed to pay KIPP co-founder David Levin's \$475,000, just from the foundation. Co-founder Mike Feinberg was paid \$441,057. At Success Academy in New York City, CEO Eva Moscovitz received \$600,000 in 2014 for managing 41 charter schools. Stuart J. Udell, CEO of the for-profit K-12 online charter provider has a base salary was \$650,000, and he received a performance-based bonus, equity incentives, and a sign-on bonus of \$400,000. In 2013, K12's Colorado charter chain had a four-year graduation rate of only 21.5%, so its CEO's performance bonus clearly was not based on the performance of the company's students.

NPE did an analysis of the top-performing schools on the 2017 list and found a number of surprises. The No. 1 school on the list was BASIS Charter School Phoenix. Its 2016 graduating class had only 24 students and an attrition rate of 44% from the entering ninth grade class. Since BASIS Phoenix does not have a free or reduced-price lunch program, nor does it provide students with transportation, it easily eliminated many low-income students. The school also pressures parents to make a \$1500 annual donation per child and charges high fees to participate in sports and extracurricular activities. Its financial restrictions eliminate poor students and ensure a wealthy, clientele that is backed by all the education preparation that money provides.

Further evidence that the reforms are not working is Stanford University's 2009 study of charter schools—the most comprehensive ever done. It concluded that 83% of them perform either worse or no better than traditional public schools; a 2010 Vanderbilt University study showed definitively that merit pay for teachers does not produce higher test scores for students; a National Research Council report confirmed multiple studies that show standardized test scores do not measure student learning adequately. Gates and Broad helped to shape and fund two of the nation's most extensive and aggressive school reform programs—in Chicago and New York City—but neither has produced credible improvement in student performance after years of experimentation (Barkan 2011).

An additional case of the impact of neoliberal reform efforts in Chile shows how neoliberal policy requirements in education—e.g., the standardized test-based accountability apparatus imported into the country at the insistence of the World Bank—worsen the position of lower SES students in public school. “The cost was evidenced by increased fatalism, hopelessness, disengagement from school, civic life and the dominant culture as well as students coming to view themselves, their backgrounds and home life as the cause for academic failure—as opposed to income inequality, persistent poverty, or social/cultural dislocation” (Cassell and Nelson 2013, pp. 257, 258).

The failure of lower class, privatized, education is understandable from our class analysis of neoliberal education. Of course, pedagogy by inexperienced teachers who direct students to memorize simplified, standardized information, devoid of conceptual and critical thinking, cannot cultivate intellectual, artistic, and social enrichment. (Just as analogous conditions in privatized prisons cannot possibly rehabilitate criminals.)

Its failure is inevitable given the explicit objective of degrading and exploiting lower class education. It is exactly what the neoliberal upper class wants and needs

to maintain the pyramidal class structure that enriches and empowers the upper class. This means that failure is functional; it is failure by design. The failure of lower class education is actually success for the neoliberal system and its upper class. It cements their empowerment and enrichment. The competing interests of the lower and upper classes means that failure for one is success for the other, and success for the other is failure for the one.

Privatization preserves the racial structure of capitalism as well. Researchers at the Civil Rights Project at U.C.L.A. found, in a study of 40 states and several dozen municipalities, that black students in charters are much more likely than their counterparts in traditional public schools to be educated in an intensely segregated setting.

In a 2017 analysis, data journalists at The Associated Press found that charter schools were significantly overrepresented among the country's most racially isolated schools. In other words, black and brown students have more or less resegregated within charters, the very institutions that promised to equalize education (New York Times, Aug 14, 2018, p. A23).

Neoliberals do everything possible to expand and protect their educational policy. They supplement their educational programs with political support for politicians who will implement them. The California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) and its politically influential political action committee spent almost \$2.3 million in 2016 to influence the Los Angeles school board election.

Corporate charter schools exemplify the neoliberal elitism that concentrates information and decision-making in the hands of the capitalist class, and excludes the populace from democratically monitoring and influencing the education of their children. CCSA and its non-profit proxy (affiliate), CCSA Advocates, work together to thwart legislative efforts that would increase charter oversight, such as AB 709 that would make charter board meetings public, allow the public to inspect charter school records, and prohibit charter school officials from having a financial interest in contracts that they enter into in their official capacity. All of the above are expected of public schools. The California Charter Schools Association also fought SB322, which would give charter school students the same reasonable, due process rights afforded students who attend public schools, and SB 739 which would put some restrictions on the ability of a district to open up "resource center" charters in other counties, which led to the abuses described in the report ("Charters and Consequences," p. 5). Progressive Gov. Jerry Brown vetoed legislation in 2016 that would have made charter schools more accountable.

Occasionally, neoliberal educators are surprisingly candid about neoliberal educational failures.

When Wisconsin's voucher schools were shown to perform more poorly than their public counterparts, the Walker administration's response was to exempt voucher schools from future testing requirements. Vouchers are valuable because they create choice, the governor's spokesman insisted, regardless of their performance.

The education policy director at the corporate-funded American Enterprise Institute likewise explains that "20 years in, it's hard to argue that the nation's biggest and most established voucher experiment has 'worked' if the measure is whether vouchers lead to higher reading and math scores. Happily, that's never been my preferred metric for structural reforms...."

Choice-based reform shouldn't be understood as that kind of intervention. Rather, choice-based reform should be embraced as an opportunity for educators to create more focused and effective schools and for reformers to solve problems in smarter ways". (Lafer 2017; Kindle Location 3028)

These spokesmen are saying that they want education to serve political ends, not academic ends. Education is to wean people from government services and plans and onto self-reliance, individualism, personal responsibility and choice—all of which subject people to the capitalist market and the ideology of individual freedom. This political-economic goal, not educational enlightenment, is the purpose and objective of neoliberal education.

Actually, even this admission is disingenuous. It does not explain the deliberate degradation of pedagogy in neoliberal schools—i.e., the teaching of simple, standardized information that is routinely tested by standardized tests. This form of knowledge and this form of pedagogy are an important emphasis in neoliberal education that has nothing to do with encouraging individual choice. It is an element of the socioeconomic exploitation and stagnation within capitalist society that dispossesses and displaces and de-skills masses of people, and relegates them to an unsupported, uneducated, lower class. Neoliberal education prepares people for this condition by cultivating a lower class habitus that adapts to subservience and lack of opportunity, and is deprived of cognitive and motivational and social competencies that could transform it. Educational failure is a necessary element of neoliberalism that is deliberately cultivated and administered—just as all colonial mentality is a necessary, cultivated, administered habitus. This is what standardized testing monitors. It monitors the extent to which pupils have acquired the lower class habitus that is necessary for adapting to the stagnating, exploitive, capitalist economy. Success on these tests indicates that the lower class habitus has been successfully groomed and contoured, and that the class structure is holding together!

Additional evidence that neoliberal education is a race to the bottom for oppressive, mystifying, and stultifying education, is the embrace of conservative, extremist religious schools into this movement. A chilling report describes this:

Rebecca Klein: I found that just over 7,000 schools around the country participated in a voucher or a tax credit program, that three quarters of the schools were religious and that about 30 percent were using a curriculum provided by either Abeka, Accelerated Christian Education or Bob Jones. In the vast majority of states that have these programs there is zero oversight over what schools and voucher and tax credit programs are teaching. Quite literally zero.

Klein: Abeka is affiliated with Pensacola Christian College is a really far right evangelical school in Florida. Bob Jones University Press was developed from professors at Bob Jones University, which famously lost its tax exempt status a few decades ago because it had banned interracial dating on campus. Accelerated Christian Education or ACE is probably the most extreme provider of curriculum of the three.

Its classrooms are really radical. There's no teacher providing lesson plans or having any type of back and forth with students. Instead, ACE students sit in cubicles where they're separated from the nearest peer. All day they're expected to sift silently through workbooks. There's no active teaching going on. And if a child has a question they have either an American flag or a

Christian flag that they'll raise to get the attention of the class supervisor. And the supervisors don't need to have college degrees. In fact it's considered a detriment for supervisors to have a background in education. Instead ACE prefers that they have a background in religion.

Klein: It only takes a few pages to see that these textbooks are extremely pro free-market and anti-union. Unions are equated with laziness. The textbooks also take an extremely favorable view of public leaders like Ronald Reagan and extremely negative view of presidents like Bill Clinton. For example, one textbook I looked at connected some of the obstacles that Bill Clinton faced to his support for pro-choice causes. So not only are these schools pushing a specific view of the world with regards to science, they're also pushing a very specific worldview politically. It's clear that these schools want students to have very specific types of families and that they expect them to engage in specific kinds of political activities. (<https://www.alternet.org/voucher-schools-are-teaching-kids-right-wing-propaganda?akid=16642.152322.Ck6QZ6&rd=1&src=newsletter1087848&t=6>)

An ACE textbook reads: "It was considered God's will that this vastly superior American culture should spread to all corners of the North American continent." "The benighted Indians would be among the many beneficiaries of God's provision."

(https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/school-voucher-evangelical-education-betsy-devos_us_5a021962e4b04e96f0c6093c).

This is welcomed in the charter school movement for lower class education. It reinforces the education that mystifies and stupefies the lower class to prepare them to adjust to extreme neoliberal oppression.

These features of neoliberal education are psychological tools which directly form the form, content, function, and operating mechanisms of neoliberal psychological phenomena.

Chapter 5

Ideology: Culture Obscuring Itself to Its People



The wealth of evidence about neoliberal society documents that neoliberal capitalism is oppressive at its core. This oppressive core is deliberately extended throughout the system of diverse cultural factors. This oppression is systemic, intentional, necessary, planned, routine, administered, ubiquitous, essential, functional, and profitable. It is neither accidental, nor coincidental, nor occasional, nor anomalous/abnormal, nor undesirable, nor dysfunctional (see Ratner 2017c).

This social-psychological oppression is complex and insidious. It is not simple and transparent. The reason is that it is obfuscated. Oppression is best maintained by obscuring it, so that people cannot rebel against its fundamental causes, extent, features, and effects. Instead, they will rebel against superficial symptoms. Ideology is the main force that obfuscates and preserves oppression. Ideology is an element of oppression that denies, minimizes, and misrepresents oppression. It is a cultural element that denies, minimizes, and misrepresents culture. Ideology is obviously crucial for forming psychology. It distorts psychology so that it cannot perceive, sense, comprehend, and analyze neoliberal society. It is critical to recognize that psychology in neoliberal society is deliberately and systematically mystified in order to preserve its social oppression. In other words, psychology is oppressed, and part of its oppression is not knowing that it is oppressed. Psychology does not know itself or its society because its society wants to hide the social oppression of social life and mental life. This is central to understanding and predicting neoliberal psychology.

Ideology casts a beneficent patina over oppression. This includes at least five techniques:

1. Deny the truth of oppressive features of society. I.e., “deny true negative features.”
2. Fabricate false positive features of society. Present capitalist social relations as fulfilling.
3. Acknowledge certain injurious effects of oppression with the caveat that they are sacrifices that ultimately lead to improvement and fulfillment. These sacrifices include economic disruption—as when public, social support programs are eliminated, which plunges masses of people into poverty and destabilization, but which are rationalized as temporary disruptions that are necessary to

correct waste and inefficiency and external threats (see IMF economists, Ostry et al. 2016). Thus, even bad is ultimately, and essentially good. Capitalism can be improved by intensifying capitalist principles and practices.

In fact, ideology rationalizes a higher, centralized, political, bad, not a higher good. Ideology protects institutionalized bad by calling it good, and then labelling opposition as bad—when opposition is actually good.

4. Acknowledge certain injurious effects of oppression while attributing them to extraneous factors—e.g., mistakes, human frailty, psychobiological factors—that ignore the real causes of problems in the political economy.

An example is the popular outcry at gun violence in the United States that is involved in 12,000 homicides and 67,000 assaults annually. This widespread social problem is never attacked at its roots, which include violent tendencies of neoliberalism that we have documented, and the prevalent media models that glamorize violence as a solution to problems. This glamorization rests upon the neoliberal notion of the autonomous individual who heroically defends his autonomy against social intrusions. This massive social problem is narrowed to a concern with mass shootings, which is killing at least 3 individuals at one time. Only a few hundred people are killed in mass shootings. Yet all the concern over gun violence is focused on this rare, extreme, sensationalistic even. The remaining tens of thousands of victims of gun violence are ignored. This is not a personal issue of ignoring unfortunate individuals. It is a social-political issue of ignoring the broad social causes of this massive social problem. The whole point of focusing upon rare, extreme, sensational cases is to narrow attention to individual causes of bizarre events, rather than to comprehend social causes of social problems. The relatively few cases of extreme, bizarre, sensational gun violence are packaged in a way that makes them appear unrelated to neoliberalism in general. They appear to be caused by a few disturbed individuals. Mass media spends days of news coverage tracing every personal flaw in mass shooters' background. Broad social causes of violence are never mentioned because that would incite critique of the social system. The entire solution to gun violence is similarly ideological in focusing reforms on restricting access to guns by dangerous people, and also restricting access to high powered guns that can kill many people quickly. This focus upon individuals and gun technology ignores the massive social causes of massive gun violence. This is ideology. It ignores the social psychology of why people want and use guns. Without transforming these macro issues, individuals will feel the threat of violence, and the thrill of heroically defending themselves with weapons. This is why Americans strongly defend their right to own and use guns (Ratner 2017c).

5. Obfuscate viable alternatives to the status quo to appear as oppressive and ineffective and unnecessary. E.g., neoliberals distort universal health care, or genuine socialism, in order to forestall alternatives to capitalism.

Of course, ideological obfuscation of oppression is not perfect, and some of the reality may become visible. This is dangerous to social stability. Ideology requires reinforcement by medicalization that narcotizes people to cement their ignorance,

and by militaristic, materialistic control of social behavior. This includes pre-emptive as well as post hoc censorship of information that would expose social oppression.

It is not necessary to suppress revelations about specific oppression. For these are always attributable to “rogue, bad apples,” and mistakes and ignorance, and lack of quality control that can be addressed by superficial reforms. What ideology must suppress is the systemic, deliberate, necessary, planned, routine, ubiquitous, administered, essential, functional, profitable oppression that characterizes a social system and its governance. If this is revealed, it will generate animus against the system and its entire structure, as well as leading to organized political struggle toward transforming it comprehensively into a non-oppressive conical social system. This is what ideology serves to prevent. (It is also what censorship prevents in China, for example. Censors allow people to complain about lower level problems but not about the top leaders and systemic policies.) As long as this is obscured and maintained, the system survives, albeit with minor reforms. The vast and sundry strategies of ideology all have this common objective as their essence.

To obfuscate oppression, ideology must isomorphically match the breadth and depth of oppression. Since oppression is systemic, deliberate, necessary, planned, routine, ubiquitous, administered, essential, functional, and profitable, ideology must be equally systemic, deliberate, necessary, planned, routine, ubiquitous, administered, essential, functional, and profitable. It originates in the political economy and dovetails macro cultural factors—where it adopts particular forms that are appropriate to each of them (Loveman 2005). Anything less than this will fail to obfuscate the full depth and breadth of oppression. As capitalism implodes, it becomes more oppressive by cannibalizing society. Increased oppression requires expanded ideology, to the point that current neoliberalism is a fantasyland of ubiquitous distortion and distraction from reality and science. Trump only epitomizes this as its product. He is not its originator or sole representative.¹

Ideology is the most dominant single macro cultural factor after the fundamental political economy because it must police the entire social system to obfuscate all indications of oppression. Althusser explained this “the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class (<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>).

Other cultural factors are not ubiquitous as ideology is. Religion does not permeate every cultural factor, science does not permeate every cultural factor, the family does not permeate every cultural factor, theater does not occupy every cultural factor. Given this dominance, ideology must be a central research topic of cultural studies and cultural psychology. I shall therefore introduce it at length in this section. Overlooking it is to overlook a cornerstone of contemporary culture, and to misunderstand how culture affects behavior and psychology.

Ideology seeks to mystify and stultify consciousness. Ideology obfuscates culture, and it obfuscates its obfuscation of culture. This makes false consciousness a central

element of neoliberal psychology. It must be comprehended and deconstructed by a critical, independent, cultural psychology that is knowledgeable about, and free from, ideological mystification. Macro cultural psychology is the only approach that qualifies.

Peck (2010) explicates and debunks some of the ideology of neoliberal capitalism:

Neoliberalization is not the antithesis of regulation, it is a self-contradictory form of regulation-in-denial ... Certainly, it cannot be reduced to the high-church pronouncements of Hayek and his followers, or to the parsimonious logic of Chicago School economics ... This was not about “rolling back the frontiers of the state,” as Thatcher once characterized her program, but about restructuring and retasking the state, about new forms of intervention and regulation based on new strategic goals. (Preface, location 86, 104, 121 out of 7762).

Neoliberal capitalism did not invent ideology. Ideology obfuscates any and all social oppression. Its origin is the origin of social oppression. And this origin is social class. All class societies invoke ideology to beautify themselves (Holborow 2015; Larrain 1979). Even slave societies rationalized their oppression with an ideological construct that slaves were naturally a lower, incompetent race who needed, and benefited from, slave owners’ management of their lives. All oppressive, class societies devise particular forms of ideological beautification/legitimation which they contribute to the historical mix of other forms. All such societies also draw on historical forms to supplement its own.

For example, Western neoliberalism creates individualistic forms of ideology (such as entrepreneurialism) that it employs in conjunction with pre-capitalist ideologies such as Christianity. Chinese neoliberal ideology incorporates strands of neoliberal individualism and psychologism, along with Chinese constructs, and even Marxism (which we shall discuss momentarily) to cloak its neoliberal economic practices in a patina of people-oriented, community-oriented images.

The oppressive, political basis and function of ideology means that it does not exist in free, democratic, collective, classless, societies which are controlled by the people to maximize their fulfillment. In these societies, ignorance and error exist, however, the mystifying and stultifying of people to unwittingly accept oppression by a ruling class, does not exist. Because oppressive regimes use ideology to legitimize themselves, the existence of ideology in a society is an indicator of its oppressiveness.

Ideology is a major psychological tool, or technique of subjectification, that organizes psychological phenomena in neoliberal capitalism (and other class societies) (Loveman 2005). Ideology must occupy psychologists’ scientific understanding of culture and psychology, as well as our political understanding, goals, and strategies. Ideology should comprise an entire specialty within psychology, including research, publications, and courses. I will introduce this field here and in the next chapter. This exposition extends initial analyses of ideology in psychology that has been developed within the work of macro cultural psychology (Ratner 2011, 2014a, b, 2015, 2016a, 2017a, b, c, 2018b, c, 2019). A few critical psychologists have discussed ideology, as well (Billig et al. 1988; Wetherell and Potter 1992).

Ideology interacts with other macro cultural factors to shape psychological phenomena. That is its importance for neoliberal psychology that we shall examine in the next chapter.

When we are laid off from work, it is experienced according to the cultural meanings that we apply to it. We might interpret it as a tragedy, or as an opportunity for advancement to a more fulfilling job. Ideology is this kind of meaning-giving mechanism. It explains, describes, predicts events and it directs one's reaction to them. For this reason, ideology is more important for our psychology than the fact of unemployment, *per se*. Ideology determines whether we become angry or hurt or joyful or optimistic or pessimistic or violent or resigned; it determines our motivation for alternative activities; it determines our predictions for our future; it determines our self-concept that results from the event.²

There are three vital reasons we must study ideology.

- (1) To understand—explain, describe, and predict—human psychology (in oppressive societies), particularly neoliberal psychology. Ideology complicates psychology. For the subject is exposed to the influence of neoliberal reality as well as its ideological obfuscation. This makes neoliberal psychology full of contradictions, unarticulated, incomplete senses of social reality that have been denied and stunted by ideology. Vygotsky described this situation in the following words: “The various internal contradictions which are to be found in different social systems find their expression both in the type of personality and in the structure of human psychology in that historical period” (Vygotsky 1994b, p. 176).
- (2) To understand neoliberalism and oppressive societies that require ideology and are sustained by ideology.
- (3) To understand emancipation from oppressive society and psychology. This requires that we develop effective strategies to counter ideology along with the oppressions that generate it and are sustained by it.

An objective, concentrated, analysis of ideology is necessary because ideology is difficult to apprehend; it is not transparent; it is not self-affirming. It does not announce itself as an obfuscating mechanism of oppression. To do so would be to delegitimize itself (nobody would believe it once it is known to obscure things). Without ideology to conceal it, oppression would be exposed and challenged. Ideology must be self-denying in order to perform its obscurantist function of protecting the status quo from challenge.

Ideology is a double obfuscation, a compound obfuscation. It denies itself as well as the reality it denies. Ideology disguises oppressive reality, and it disguises the fact that oppressive reality is being disguised by ideology as beneficent. This makes oppression appear to really be beneficent.

Ideology is a convoluted phenomenon. It is an element of (oppressive) social reality, required by it, and functional for it; while simultaneously obscuring and contradicting that social reality which spawns and requires ideology. Ideology's obfuscation of reality is a vital component of that reality that enables the reality to exist. This self-obscuring obfuscation is a component of peoples' cultural psychology. In a trenchant statement Bourdieu said, “misrecognition of the reality of class relations is an integral part of the reality of those relations” (Bourdieu 1980/1990, p. 136).

Ideology is the explanatory construct of what psychologists call the unconscious (Ratner 1994). Ideology is what makes us unaware of things that exist and influence us (negatively). Just 8% of American high school seniors can identify slavery as the cause of the Civil War. (<https://www.splcenter.org/20180131/teaching-hard-history>; <https://www.alternet.org/news-and-politics/you-wont-believe-what-american-high-schools-are-teaching-their-students-about?akid=16689.152322.NsSzQI&rd=1&src=newsletter1088312&t=8>). And only 42% of American Republicans know that most scientists believe global warming is occurring, and that percentage is falling (Rich 2018).

Ideology also makes us unaware of negative, oppressive aspects of our own behavior because it has been colored positively. This is “the banality of evil” which is doing evil without intending to be evil.

Sources of Ideology

Ideology has two social sources. One is the deliberate, intentional obfuscating of oppressive social reality by social leaders who benefit from oppression of others and need to obscure this condition. Margaret Thatcher’s ideological comments that deny her own oppressive policies exemplify this. We may call this kind of ideology, “intentional ideology” which is deliberate mystification.

Ideology also originates from a second source. This second source of ideology lies in the opaque or contradictory or superficial character of certain macro cultural factors themselves. Their opaqueness, contradictoriness, and appearance make their oppressiveness difficult to discern and easy to mistake. I call this “intrinsic ideology.” It is inherent in certain conditions rather being deliberately fabricated for political objectives of enrichment and empowerment.

An example of intrinsic ideology is a labor contract. Marx explains that the labor contract is (in part) an individual negotiation between the worker and employer that is agreeable to both. There is a market exchange of labor power for a wage. This element makes capitalist wage labor appear to be fairly compensated and voluntary. However, there are also oppressive elements of this labor contract which are opaque. One element is the unequal bargaining position of the two parties. The job seeker has limited wealth with which to support himself while he searches for work. He is compelled by his economic position to accept wages that are not satisfactory. The employer, on the other hand, has substantial wealth that can tide her over until she encounters a job seeker who will accept her wage. The unequal power of two sides is not directly visible in the circumscribed, interpersonal, negotiation process.

Intentional Ideology

In this book, I shall primarily discuss intentional ideology or deliberate mystification. For it has the most complex effects on our psychology because it is cunningly crafted to deceive by manipulating our consciousness. Intentional ideology is much more pervasive because it can be imposed upon any oppressive act or condition or principle, even where intrinsic ideology is lacking. For example, imperialist overthrowing of elected governments to install dictators is ideologically called fighting for peoples' freedom. George Bush, for example, said that god told him to invade Iraq, in order to rationalize his political-economic decision. There is no semblance of freedom that explains this nomenclature. It is simply a bald lie that obfuscates oppression. The same is true for financial imperialism under the name of austerity readjustment (see IMF economists, Ostry et al. 2016).

Intentional ideology has a socioeconomic-political, materialist basis which is to mystify oppressive reality in order to preserve the material wealth and power that it provides to social leaders.

Intrinsic and intentional ideology are mapped onto the conical cultural system. The conical theory locates oppression primarily in the political economy, which is then extended throughout macro cultural factors that are encompassed by the political economy. Ideology obfuscates oppression in all of these social nodes. Identifying ideology and its psychological effects consists in identifying how particular social concepts, constructs, values, and practices obfuscate oppressive social reality in a particular way in a particular social node.

Entrepreneurial Ideology

Neoliberalism's predominant ideological construct is known as "entrepreneurialism." It illustrates intentional and intrinsic elements of ideology. Entrepreneurialism is the main conceptual justification for neoliberal socioeconomic practices. Its function is to obfuscate neoliberalism's basic, central, necessary, profitable oppression, and to pretend that neoliberalism is actually a political economic system of freedom and choice and fulfillment that is exercised by independent entrepreneurs. Opponents of neoliberalism (i.e., neoliberal oppression) are defined as promoting oppression.

Entrepreneurial ideology is a powerful element of the neoliberal Weltanschauung, Geist, Mentalité, Épistème. It is a powerful psychological tool that organizes a range of psychological phenomena. The entrepreneurial self is a major construct of peoples' self-concept. They utilize it as an explanation of psychology/behavior, and as an ideal to be achieved. The entrepreneurial self is a capitalist form of personality and psychology. It is a major cause of false consciousness about the nature of social life and individual behavior. It leads to social conformity as well as self-destructive, and socially destructive behavior.

These social-psychological problems can only be comprehended and solved by debunking entrepreneurial ideology that obfuscates them and promises specious solutions to them. Debunking ideology is vital for exposing the true character of social life, as well as its causes, and viable alternatives.

This section engages in an extensive critique of entrepreneurial ideology.

Of course, entrepreneurialism is not the sole form of neoliberal ideology. Other forms exist, and they must be comprehensively critiqued as well. I shall critique some of these ideologies—especially as they appear in professional Psychology—after debunking entrepreneurialism.

Entrepreneurialism (*'emprendedurismo'* in Spanish) is the idea that every individual is, or can be if they so desire, an independent entrepreneur, who is his own boss not only economically, but as a human being. As such, people calculate and manage their material and social resources, their strengths and weaknesses, and then freely choose their course of action to earn the most success possible. Entrepreneurship is thus a form of capitalist individualism, which has a long history (Laski 1936). Entrepreneur has a psychological incarnation that is called “agency.” Under neoliberalism, agency has been converted from an abstract, generic notion of individual “activity,” to a concrete, neoliberal form of individualistic desire, expression, and development. Agency does not connote collective, communal activity—as in “working class agency.” It connotes an individual agent who is expressing and developing herself to achieve her goals for a suitable job, husband, education, etc.

The concept of entrepreneurship is not confined to economic interactions. It extends to the individual self as a manager of psychological resources and competencies for profit. It is expressed in the self description: “I am not a businessman; I am a business, man.” “Every interaction is a transaction.” “You can become anything that you want; if you do not become it, you do not want it enough.” The individual entrepreneur is regarded as the locus of imagination, creativity, adjustment, opportunism, and decision making. All of these qualities are based in business acumen of the individual entrepreneur. Our most valued personal attributes are therefore construed as having an intrinsic capitalist form. The entrepreneurial ideology of neoliberalism contains psychological elements that comprise neoliberal psychology. Exploring this ideology in some detail will prepare us for neoliberal psychology in the next chapter.

It is important to emphasize that entrepreneurship is ideology, whereas most commentators on neoliberalism treat this construct as the true essence of neoliberalism. Commentators base their history of neoliberalism around the history of this construct. In contrast, I have explained the actual practice of neoliberalism at the beginning of my account, and I have waited until this late place in my account to describe entrepreneurship as fictitious ideology of neoliberalism, not its essence.

The ideological construct of the entrepreneurial self was the brainchild of neoliberal intellectuals. The term was introduced in a positive sense, as Neoliberalismus, by Alexander Rüstow and other members of the Freiburg Circle in the 1930s. It signified a renewal or reform of classical or laissez-faire liberalism and called in particular for a strong state that would regulate as well as protect and expand free markets. In 1947, neoliberal intellectuals met in Mount Pelerin, Switzerland, to found a neoliberal soci-

ety that they called the Mount Pelerin Society. It later became institutionalized within the University of Chicago department of economics.

The 1947 conference was convened by Friedrich Hayek, who invited 39 scholars, mostly economists (including Milton Friedman and Gary Becker), with some historians and philosophers, to discuss the state of classical liberalism, or unregulated capitalism. They sought to abolish the regulations on free capitalism that the Keynesian New Deal had imposed. Liberalism recreated and resurrected is neoliberalism (Kotz 2002; Demartino 2002).

Mont Pelerin founders did not discuss unregulated capitalism in terms that reflect the facts I presented in the Preface, and at the beginning of this chapter. Instead, they phrased classical and neoliberal capitalism in benevolent, neutral terms about promoting freedom, expression, and fulfillment for all individuals, who participated in the free market economy. The market was said to consist of free, equal, private property holders exchanging goods and services at equal value. That is why the Society and its concepts were ideological.

Gary Becker wrote, “Human capital analysis starts with the assumption that individuals decide on their education, training, medical care, and other additions to knowledge and health by weighing the benefits and costs” (in Holborow 2015, p. 26).

Hayek similarly states that neoliberalism empowers individuals to become entrepreneurs of their economic condition, educational level, housing condition, medical care, etc.: “it is desirable that men should develop their own individual gifts and bents” (Hayek 1944). Individuals making their own choices, capacities, and results renders social systems, classes, power and politics unnecessary and unwanted in human behavior. Individuals solve their own problems with their own resources; they do not rely upon systems, governments, conditions, policies, or governance. “The recognition of his own views and tastes as supreme in his own sphere, however narrowly that may be circumscribed, and the belief that it is desirable that men should develop their own individual gifts and bents” (1944).

Individual independence is said to be based in private property that can be utilized as its owner decides: “the private property system is the most important guarantee of liberty, not only for the proprietors, but also for the proletarians. We can only decide in our personal capacity what we are to do if all the means of production are in the hands of many independent persons” (ibid.).

We must bear in mind that Hayek’s notion is abstract, in the sense that he does not bother about exactly how much property or freedom one has. No matter how narrowly it may be circumscribed, it is still valuable. This is a major internal contradiction; for Hayek admits that there are vast differences between proprietors and proletarians in the size of their own sphere—e.g., property and freedom—however, this concreteness is irrelevant. He is accepting the class system of power and wealth (proletarians and proprietors) but disregards it as irrelevant for freedom. This absurdity is the basis of neoliberalism’s self-definition by its most eminent spokesman. This absurdity is ideological because it obfuscates real, concrete features of socioeconomic relations by postulating an abstract notion of freedom and independence and fulfillment that is completely divorced from real constraints and opportunities. It concludes that everyone is free in the system of private property, even when they are not free and

own little or no property. It condones and legitimizes capitalism as free for everyone, when this is completely false. It never considers how private property is used or what its real effects are. It never considers the fact that capitalist property in the form of businesses, gives the owners autocratic rights over their employees, and also enables owners to exploit employees for profit. This is lost in the praise of private property itself, and the ability of proletarians to buy miniscule forms of property.

Neoliberal ideology postulates that everyone is free by owning any property, even the tiniest bit; and even the smallest owner is as free as the largest owner. With this fictitious assurance, neoliberals promote private property that includes vast socioeconomic class differences in wealth, power, and standard of living.

Hayek sought to distract attention from this economic stifling of freedom in the vast majority of people by favorably comparing it to autocratic government: “The power which a multiple millionaire, who may be my neighbor and perhaps my employer, has over me is very much less than that which the smallest functionaire possesses who wields the coercive power of the state, and on whose discretion it depends whether and how I am to be allowed to live or to work” (Hayek 1944). Multiple examples earlier in this book disprove Hayek’s comment. Capitalists control all the workings of capitalist society, far more so than small government functionaires; capitalists decide whether and how people are allowed to work and for what wage, far more than government functionaries do. Of course, capitalists control government functionaries as well, through lobbying and appointing bureau chiefs.

Hayek’s lie is designed to free capitalism from any and all government regulation so that it can be even more rapacious, not so that it can promote freedom for all.

The hypocrisy of the Mount Pelerin pronouncements is evident in the rapacious character of neoliberalism that we have documented. Mount Pelerin hypocrisy is additionally revealed in its own close ties to, and support for, corporate capitalism. This is brilliantly explained by Nik-Khah & Van Horn (2016). The founding meeting of the Mount Pelerin Society was financed by the stalwart capitalist icon, the Bank of England, along with the Volcer Fund that was headed by Harold Luhnow. Luhnow went on to pay F. A. Hayek’s salary at the University of Chicago; he also funded lectures that Milton and Rose Friedman delivered. From the outset, then, the neoliberal intellectuals were wedded to, dependent upon, and spokesmen for corporate capitalists, not the common man.

An early project of the Mont Pelerin Society was the Antitrust Project. The official ideology of the Society would suggest that its researchers would support antitrust policies in order to further competition of independent individuals on the free market. However, the Project concluded that vertical mergers did not enhance monopoly power, and therefore should always be legal. This conclusion reveals the true corporate interests of the Society which contradict its free market ideology. Concentration of wealth and power in massive, collective, monopolized, capitalist, institutions are acceptable.

About 30 years after the antitrust project, the Reagan administration appointed many of these economists to its Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice, where they echoed the Project’s arguments and approved waves of monopolization. “Free market” neoliberals from the Mont Pelerin Society also worked for Thatcher

to impoverish the British populace and restrict its free choices, as I have documented earlier.

Another member of the Mont Pelerin Society moved to the University of Chicago in 1958, George Stigler. Stigler's stature at Chicago was bolstered by the Walgreen Foundation, which had been established by a grant from the drugstore magnate Charles Walgreen, and was placed under Stigler's direction. Thus, another free market, private property, competitive market ideologist was actually a functionary of corporate capitalism. In addition, Stigler specialized in politics, and he used neoliberal political-economics to justify imperialism, which is the direct opposite of free market negotiation and freedom.

Nik-Khah and Van Horn (2016) explain that the individualistic ideology of the Chicago school of neoliberal economics is not a democratic ethos. It emphasized private, individual decisions to control one's own private property and life activity; the Chicago school economists did not endorse democracy which is majority rule over minority desires. Democracy binds the minority to the majority decision, and this infringes upon individual freedom. However, this rationale for eschewing democracy in favor of individual freedom is specious. For we have seen that the capitalist market crushes individual freedom in the process of empowering and enriching the capitalist class. Since neoliberals do not protect real individual freedom in practice, their individualistic rationale for opposing democracy is specious. The real reason is to justify autocratic, capitalist management over employees and the populace. Eschewing democracy legitimated autocracy, it did not preserve universal, individual freedom.

The founding of the intellectual/academic wing of neoliberalism demonstrates that from day one, the public pronouncements by neoliberal intellectuals about neoliberalism were a lie. They were an intentional ideology. They said they were seeking to preserve classical liberalism of the individual entrepreneur against collectivism and interventionism, while they actually promoted the concentration of capital in the hands of monopoly capitalists, by redistributing it from the populace. The academics, themselves, produced recommendations for policy that favored massive concentration of wealth in monopolized corporations, supported by close political ties at the highest levels of government. From the outset—and continuing until today and into the future—neoliberalism was internally duplicitous.

This example demonstrates that neoliberals know that individualism does not generate wealth and power. Collectivism does, which is what neoliberals promote for themselves. They have constructed a maze of collective institutions to promote their interests—such as the Chamber of Commerce, the American Legislative Exchange Council, Business Roundtable. Neoliberals only promote individual entrepreneurialism for the oppressed working people, as when neoliberals oppose unions as restricting workers' individual independence. Neoliberals know that this kind of individualism destroys the collective unity that is necessary for true gains for working people. The fact that neoliberals promote entrepreneurialism proves that it is oppressive, because they only promote values and policies that empower and enrich themselves by oppressing the populace. They never promote values and policies that empower and enrich the populace, because that reduces capitalist power and wealth. Neoliberals promote anti-union policies because they know that individual workers can

never resist capitalist wealth and power—just as they know that individual capitalists can never empower and enrich themselves vis a vis the workers, and need strong collective organizations to do so.

Neoliberals also contradict their anti-government ideology when they use government to impose neoliberal policies while eradicating community policies.

Thus, neoliberal entrepreneurialism uses top-down, state-imposed, laws to establish neoliberal social relations. Neoliberal entrepreneurialism does not use its own entrepreneurial procedures of market negotiation amongst individuals to establish itself.

This is illustrated in American labor contracts. Contracts in the private sector contain clauses that prohibit employees from banding together to file class action grievances against employers. They require employees to handle their grievances individually through arbitration with their employers. This “entrepreneurial procedure” of individual negotiation is imposed on employees by employers as a condition of employment. There is no negotiation about the requirement to negotiate one-on-one. Again, neoliberalism contradicts its ideology in practice. A U.S. Supreme Court decision in May, 2018 upheld this condition. The reason that employers and the State support individual arbitration over class action is that it disempowers employees and empowers employers. Individual employees do not have legal resources to defend themselves in arbitration. A class action suit enables many employees to combine their resources for a legal defense of the entire group at one time. Moreover, employee success rate in arbitration is much lower than it is in class action suits which are heard by a jury. Finally, compensation for grievances are much lower in arbitration cases than in class action cases. “A 2015 Cornell University study found workers win just 21% of arbitration cases, compared to 57% of cases in state court. Workers won in arbitration \$109,000, on average; \$575,000 in state court” (https://www.democracynow.org/2018/5/23/supreme_court_deals_blow_to_workers).

Additional demonstration of the impoverishment that individualistic, market-based, individualism causes, compared to the enrichment that public services cause is the realm of housing.

Government housing support from the 1930s through the 1960s helped equalize home ownership among classes and races—i.e., it overcame class and racial inequalities. Under neoliberal repeal of government support, class inequalities have re-emerged as individuals are dependent upon their individual incomes which are a function of their class and race: “The homeownership gap between whites and African Americans, which had been shrinking since the 1970s [because of the Fair Housing Act in 1968], has exploded since the housing bust of 2008. It is now wider than it was during the Jim Crow era.” This is true for wealth in general: “The latest figures from the U.S. Census Bureau show the median net worth for an African American family is \$9,000, compared with \$132,000 for a white family” (<https://www.revealnews.org/article/for-people-of-color-banks-are-shutting-the-door-to-homeownership/>).

Neoliberals contradict their own individualistic ideology about society. They claim that society is nothing but individuals who are free of structures and programs. Neoliberals deny the possibility of conceptualizing, studying, and administering a coherent social system. This belief stems from glorifying the free market as superior

to socialist, central planning by democratically elected leaders and communities. Holistic, public, rationally regulated political-economic systems are anathema to the free market of individual choice, and are inherently totalitarian. Hayek states that epistemology is a function of the political economic system. His opposition to socialism leads to opposing holistic, rational, comprehensive epistemology. Any attempt to know more than just a small fragment of the whole of social knowledge is a sign of dangerous intellectual hubris that is totalitarian at heart.

Yet neoliberals (including Hayek) violate their epistemology and adopt the holistic, rational, planned, epistemology that they criticize. They diligently work to organize a coherent, capitalist social system that has a unitary purpose which is planned and administered by the social elite. We have documented this in chapter two where we documented the vast, interrelated system of neoliberal organizations that permeate every sector of society to ensure their alliance and strength. Neoliberals systematically target every sector of society to impose a corporate agenda and eradicate other agendas that individuals might wish. They systematically reorganize health care, education, legislatures, the justice system, space exploration, transportation, and even science (Rabin 2018; Hertsgaard and Dowie 2018) along the lines of capitalism. Kruse (2015) explains how corporate America invented Christian America under the ideological notion of “freedom under god” in the 1950s, to dispel New Deal economic regulations on business (see also Bean 2014). Neoliberals have established think tanks that specialize in capitalizing every single social area, to unify all of them in a coherent whole. Neoliberals also financially control political representatives to promote their pro-corporate agenda in laws and policies. Neoliberals started the American Legislative Exchange Council to integrate politicians with capitalists so that capitalists could write laws that politicians introduce into state and federal legislatures in lock-step uniformity. A more tightly integrated, administered, uniform, system is difficult to imagine.

Clearly, the individualized, atomized epistemology that neoliberals espouse is pure ideology that masks their own carefully organized, systematic epistemology and the political system it creates. Neoliberal epistemology blinds people to the autocratic system of neoliberalism. It also strives to block oppressed people from formulating an alternative social system. It limits oppressed people to piecemeal understandings and social changes that never replace the organized system of neoliberalism. Neoliberals prove that epistemology is political—it has a political basis, character, and function.

Capitalists also enrich themselves by controlling the social system and, particularly, the State. The American capitalist class was enriched as a class by a tax reform law in 2017. This government policy radically redistributed wealth to the capitalist class. (The non-partisan Tax Policy Center reports that 10 years from now, 83% of the benefits in the Trump-Ryan-McConnell tax act will be flowing to the wealthiest families, while more than half of America’s middle-income and poor people will actually see their taxes rise over the next decade.) Capitalists did not increase their wealth through independent, meritocratic, sage, individual, business decisions. They did so as a group that was benefitted by a government policy that they wrote as a group together with their paid-for lobbyists and political representatives. There was no negotiation with outside, diverse interests, such as advocates for the poor, environ-

mentalists, workers, or union members. No hearings were held that solicited input from the public or even expert economists. This neoliberal act contravened every principle of neoliberal ideology. But it conformed to every principle of neoliberal political-economic practice.

Furthermore, at the very moment that neoliberals were writing their individualistic concoctions of capitalism—after World War II—capitalism had entered its monopoly stage of concentration of capital and property, driven by the very capitalists who were supposed to value individual private property and independence! Foster (2018) explains this in detail. Monopolization has increased exponentially in recent decades as neoliberal, individualistic, economic theory has become dominant. Global mergers and acquisitions in 2017 exceeded three trillion dollars for the fourth straight year. Half the world's wealth is owned by 1% of the world's population! This was all achieved under neoliberal policies. This is not a system of independent, individual entrepreneurs managing their private capital on the free market. The capitalist monopolization of scientific research was indicated with an example in the Introduction.

Indeed, under neoliberal capitalism, entrepreneurs compose a miniscule sub-set of businesses: only 9% in the neoliberal United States, and 20% in Mexico (<http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54674>).

Nor do small, entrepreneurial firms generate most of the employment in the USA. Small firms, less than 250 employees, generate 46% of employment. In contrast, 0.5% of corporations (19,454 firms) that employ over 250 employees, generate 54% of employment and provide 59% of the payroll (U.S. Census Bureau 2017). This state of affairs is the result of neoliberal political-economic policies which reversed the dominance of small firms (in employment) under the New Deal in 1933 (<https://www.bls.gov/bdm/entrepreneurship/entrepreneurship.htm>). Thus, the Keynesian, government regulations (that were abhorred by neoliberal economists for squelching smaller entrepreneurs) encouraged more employment in small businesses (relative to large firms) than the neoliberal “free market,” “entrepreneurial” policies have.

Under neoliberalism, most wealth is accumulated by the largest, monopolized, industries, not by smaller firms or by individual entrepreneurs: “From 1997 to 2012 the average revenues of the top four firms in a given industry rose from 24 to 33% of total industry revenues. Over the same period, investment returns for nonfinancial firms in the 90th percentile “grew 160%” while firms “in 25th percentile grew only 2%” (Edsall 2018).

The poster boy of neoliberalism—financialization—completely contradicts its individualistic ideology. Financialization is a growing role for financial markets, financial institutions and financial motives in the economy. This continued financialization that had developed in the late 19th century and in the 1920s.

Schieber and Casselman (2018) tell us that monopolization is one of its cornerstones: “since the 1970s the finance (including insurance) sector share of all-economy out-put, value-added and employment has grown only modestly (indeed in the case of employment, not at all), but its share of profits has grown dramatically.” “Banking in the United States has remained disproportionately profitable—indeed, has become increasingly profitable—because the increase in competition theoretically necessary

to reduce profitability has signally failed to transpire. As banking has gotten more profitable it has in fact gotten less competitive; and the two developments are causally related.” Monopolization has prevented competitors from entering the financial sector and driving down the rate of profit. Today, 6 banks dominate the entire industry in the US. This entirely contradicts the ideological fiction of neoliberalism as free market economics among competing individual producers and sellers.

Monopolization is profitable throughout the economy, because it reduces workers’ options for high wages at competing companies. Over the past 30 years, workers’ cut of companies’ revenue had fallen most in industries where concentration had increased the most (see also Christophers 2018; Edsall 2018).

In capitalist ideology, the middle class is the crux of entrepreneurs. However, the American middle class is vanishing—this began in the 1970s with the rise of neoliberalism—thus refuting the ideology of entrepreneurial growth (Temin 2017). Moreover, “The richest four hundred individuals in the United States now exercise a degree of influence over society comparable to that of the rulers of ancient Rome.” Politics refute the notion of free entrepreneurs expressing their ideals: “more than 60% of all personal campaign contributions in 2012 came from less than 0.5% of the population.” “On average, from 2000 to 2010, business typically outspent labor unions by ten to one in federal elections” (Lafer 2017, Kindle Locations 185–186, 194–195, 203–204).

Neoliberals are so duplicitous that they lie about their own anti-entrepreneurial policies in order to maintain the fiction that they practice entrepreneurialism. The Chamber of Commerce, for example, publicly lobbied Congress in support of the Obama administration’s stimulus bill for big business in 2009 but the next year hypocritically campaigned against a Senate candidate on the grounds that he voted for it and thus drove up the national debt (Lafer 2017, Kindle Locations 623–624).

All of the neoliberal labor practices we described earlier oppress workers, they do not empower or emancipate or enrich them. In fact, any opposition from labor is punished. Employees’ criticisms of working conditions that are emailed or posted online lead to termination.

Neoliberal ideology does not describe neoliberal economic reality. It is not supposed to. It is supposed to disguise the organized, centralized, systemic oppression and exploitation and commodification conducted by ever more wealthy, powerful, political, hegemonic capitalists with mythical ideology of small, independent, middle class, producers and consumers of commodities on the free market. The ideological terms “entrepreneur” and “entrepreneurship” connote adopting certain capitalist values and social relations—accepting the precarious labor and consumer market, competing with other people and instrumentalizing them, commodifying yourself as human capital that you work hard to acquire, and then market, assume responsibility for your own successes and failures while absolving social conditions for any responsibility—under the illusion that they make you an independent, successful, CEO of your life, when they actually subjugate you to oppressive capitalist practices that have been described earlier.

This is revealed by looking at what neoliberal entrepreneurs actually do. A few of them fulfill the image that the ideology connotes. A few consultants and professionals

(e.g., architects) have small businesses that fit the image. However, the vast majority of entrepreneurs do not. The term is increasingly applied to workers who have been displaced from work organizations and left to find work on their own. They work at the same kinds of jobs and conditions as previously, however deprived of organizational stability or support. This is important to comprehend because the psychology of these entrepreneurs is affected by their real socioeconomic conditions, which must be known in order to hypothesize about, research, and explain neoliberal psychology.

Uber drivers exemplify the precarity of entrepreneurial work that is mystified by neoliberal ideology. Uber drivers are private contractors who serve as taxi drivers. Uber calls its drivers transportation entrepreneurs because they are contract workers. However, Uber sets the wages it pays its drivers! It frequently lowers these wages in order to attract more customers and acquire greater market share. Thus, company interests determine drivers' income. "Entrepreneurial" drivers are exploited for company profit. A BuzzFeed investigation in 2016 estimated that Uber drivers earn low wages. Drivers in Denver earn \$13.17 per hour after expenses, Uber drivers in Houston earn \$10.75 per hour after expenses, and Uber drivers in Detroit earn \$8.77 per hour. These wages are similar to those in Walmart. The Detroit wage for transportation entrepreneurs is the level of the Michigan minimum wage (https://www.buzzfeed.com/carolineodonovan/internal-uber-driver-pay-numbers?utm_term=.vpMLzMEoz#.nhvk7K4Y7). Uber drivers receive no health care.

Meanwhile, Travis Kalanick, the former CEO of Uber and one of the founders, has a net worth of \$4.8 billion. This is generated, not by entrepreneurial market negotiations, but by exploiting employees and controlling the State to pass legislation that is favorable to Uber. "Uber and Lyft in 2016 had 370 active lobbyists in 44 states, "dwarfing some of the largest business and technology companies," according to the National Employment Law Project. "Together, Uber and Lyft lobbyists outnumbered Amazon, Microsoft, and Walmart combined." The two companies, like many lobbying firms, also hire former government regulators. The former head of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, for example, is now on the board of Uber. The companies have used their money and their lobbyists, most of whom are members of the Democratic Party, to free themselves from the regulations and oversight imposed on the taxi industry. The companies using ride-hail apps have flooded New York City with about 100,000 unregulated cars in the past two years" (<https://www.truthdig.com/articles/the-gig-economy-is-the-new-term-for-serfdom/>). Uber is uber capitalism—neoliberal capitalism—it is not free market, independent entrepreneurialism.

The basis and objective of the gig economy is to create disenfranchised, alienated laborers who are exploited by the capitalist class for their profit. Labor costs for gig workers are 25% lower than costs for employees who perform the same work. "IBM, in 2013 enhanced its profits by firing thousands of employees, using crowdsourcing as a new employment tool to "rehire the workers as contracts for specific projects as and when necessary," that is, as crowdwork freelancers, without benefits—they became "independent contractors" (Coles 2018, pp. 81–82).

Re-labeling laborers as independent contractors or entrepreneurs—akin to a baby sitter or gardener—frees them from labor regulations that require pensions and health benefits.

The reality of entrepreneurialism contradicts neoliberal ideology in another way. The ideology of neoliberal entrepreneurialism emphasizes the individualistic, free nature of free market social relations. It is the individual who is in charge of his/her own resources and choices, and this liberates the entrepreneur from social constraints. However, contemporary research on entrepreneurship reveals that entrepreneurship follows class constraints, just as traditional work did/does. The median wage for freelancers in arts and design in New York City is \$17.46 per hour; for contingent food-service workers, on the other hand, it is \$7.62. What's more, the wages of freelance artists and designers in this city *exceed* the national median by \$1.30 an hour, whereas the wages of food-prep workers are \$1.51 per hour *less* (<http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2014/12/what-we-give-up-when-we-become-entrepreneurs.html>). Thus, entrepreneurship contains socioeconomic constraints. One's choice of vocation does not liberate one from the class structure and make one an independent agent. One's choice simply positions one within the class structure and occupational hierarchy which then determine one's standard and style of living.

In an article on language as personally invested, human capital, Holborow (2018, pp. 526–527) explains similar results that falsify the ideology. Business conglomerates in South Korea, such as Samsung, “lay down the level of English required, then proceed to set the bar higher periodically, through the shrewd use of international tests. Employees are left chasing ever more distant goals in language proficiency, usually at their own cost. The only winners are the corporations as they get more and more highly skilled workers.”

Neoliberals know this. They know that entrepreneurship impoverishes the populace compared to social support programs. This is the true reason they promote entrepreneurialism. The last thing they want is a society of independent, individual, entrepreneurs competing on the free market. This would eradicate the pyramidal class structure which neoliberals rule through massive, centralized, tightly administered monopoly structures.

Neoliberals further undermine their own ideology of individual freedom, choice, and responsibility with their imperialist foreign policy. Neoliberal politicians and economists are militant interventionists in foreign countries, and cavalierly overthrow elected governments which do not submit to American economic and political demands. Chicago University neoliberal economists advised and abetted the military coup that killed democratically elected President Salvador Allende of Chile in 1971, and installed a vicious, tortuous, despotic dictator who practiced neoliberal economics under the Chicago boys' tutelage. (<https://theintercept.com/2017/08/09/atlas-network-alejandro-chafuen-libertarian-think-tank-latin-america-brazil>). One of those advisers was James Buchanan who received his Ph.D. in Friedman's Department, and went on to develop neoliberal economics at the University of Virginia and George Mason University, heavily funded by the Koch Brothers. Buchanan

wrote that “Despotism may be the only organizational alternative to the political structure that we observe” (<https://www.alternet.org/meet-economist-behind-one-percents-stealth-takeover-america?src=newsletter1092802>). This is what freedom under neoliberal economics actually amounts to.

Intentional ideology is a distortion of reality for political purposes. It is a nether world outside the realm of truth and fact that cannot be corrected through a discussion/narrative about facts. Ideology deliberately causes ignorance, error, and confusion in the service of oppression. Arendt (1967) sagely warned of the consequences of this intentional distortion of reality: “The result of a consistent and total substitution of lies for factual truth is not that the [particular] lie will now be accepted as truth and truth be defamed as a lie, but that the sense by which we take our bearings in the real world—and the category of truth versus falsehood is among the mental means to this end—is being destroyed” (p. 308).

Happiness as Entrepreneurial Ideology

In addition to freedom and fulfillment being construed as central to entrepreneurialism, happiness is another major factor. Indeed, it is a necessary associate of the other two pleasurable states. Happiness is not only the subjective condition of freedom and fulfillment, it has their same individualistic, entrepreneurial form. Binkley describes this as follows. Happiness

a life resource whose potential resides at the disposal of a sovereign, enterprising, self-interested actor. Through the lens of this new discourse, life is viewed as a dynamic field of potentials and opportunities, and happiness is presented both as a goal and a “monetary instrument,” realized through a strategic program of emotional well-being.

[Neoliberal] Happiness brings people to life, transforming objects into subjects, exhorting us to emotional self-stewardship, empowering individuals to seize the reins of their affective potentials and transform any vestige of drabness or grey routine with the sparkle of a potentially happier existence. Happiness thus becomes a figure of enterprise: it is something one pursues in a spirit of entrepreneurship and opportunity ...

There is an underlying economic logic that runs through the government of happiness that resonates with the worldview of neoliberal economics and disseminates languages and frameworks mandating a program of reflexive self-government

(Binkley 2014, Kindle Locations 77–79, 115–121, 473–474).

Binkley accepts this as reality. He believes that neoliberal treatment of happiness promotes the free, entrepreneurial subject to engage in free, self-developing behavior on the capitalist market: “happiness instances a rationality of government whereby individuals govern themselves through the cultivation and optimization of their own emotional potentials” (Kindle Locations 149–151). “It is the individual himself who is the CEO of his own happiness” (Kindle Location 383). “The effect [of neoliberal political-economic policies] is one of excitation and empowerment of subjects through the removal of the constraints imposed by hierarchical institutions, and the social commitments they claim to represent. Neoliberalism is, by this

token, a quintessentially productive power; it ‘makes live’ by drawing individuals into the competitive production and maximization of their own unique attributes” (Kindle Locations 426–429). Neoliberalism denies that any structures or powers limit individual entrepreneurialism. This ideological obfuscation of reality eradicates any social critique of it and any transformation of it. On the contrary, social change is reduced to individual, personal acts: “Acts of kindness, generosity, appreciation, caring, and love provide immense emotional returns for those that carry them out, even when those actions are not part of a lasting interchange of any sort” (Kindle Locations 3166–3168).

Nowhere does Binkley critique all this as ideological fiction that actually promotes oppression and conformity to capitalist domination, and prevents any negation of it.

On the contrary, Binkley sides with neoliberals who seek to rebut Marx’s view of alienated, exploited labor with a notion of free, entrepreneurial labor: “the Chicago School economist Gary Becker, whose aim was to rescue the agentive individual at the heart of political economy through a radical rethinking of the classic problem of the labor process itself. For Becker and others, there was a need to overcome the abstraction of Marxist and classical liberal labor theories, where labor is understood as a commodity, measured in time, and compensated for with a wage. Such accounts, argues Becker, do not acknowledge the autonomy and activity of the worker as a living, self-interested actor, who sells his labor on an open market” (Binkley, Kindle Locations 2949–2953). Binkley accepts neoliberalism’s praise of wage labor as a valid alternative to Marx’s well-documented critique of capitalist labor. He does not evaluate it against evidence that utterly refutes the ideology of entrepreneurial labor—which I have presented throughout. In the entire book, Binkley does not cite a single fact about neoliberal politics, economics, or psychology. He blithely repeats neoliberal ideology without any reference to the real world.

The truth about happiness is that it is social. It is organized by society for the financial and political happiness of social leaders. Happiness under neoliberalism is more socially constrained than ever. First of all, there is less free time to enjoy happiness, because of intensified pressures to work and train for work (education). Secondly, happiness is commercialized in the form of consumerism, marketing, and the vast increase in commercial entertainment venues. People are inundated with commercial images, ideals, values, settings, and means for being happy. Every time you want to decide how to enjoy yourself by searching available options, targeted advertising appears to influence your choice. It is extremely difficult to make your own choice about how to be happy.

Proclaiming that happiness is an individual enterprise that involves choice and freedom is fiction that obfuscates the actual social organizing of happiness. It is the illusion of choice that obscures social conformity. Spinoza recognized this in 1677 in his *Ethics* 2, Prop. 35: “Peoples’ idea of freedom is simply their ignorance of any cause for their actions” (http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary_zabel/Courses/Spinoza/Texts/Spinoza/e2e.htm).

Intrinsic Ideology of Entrepreneurship

There is some intrinsic element of entrepreneurial truth in neoliberal socioeconomic relations. This intrinsic ideology of entrepreneurship makes people more susceptible to intentional ideology. The intrinsic element of entrepreneurialism lies in the vast commodity market of capitalism, where goods and services are exchanged for equal value among independent consumers and producers. There is choice and negotiation in this domain. The consumer market of shopping (that includes shopping for jobs and spouses) includes elements of entrepreneurialism in that shoppers compare prices and qualities with their own resources, and make decisions about which sectors of their mundane life to fund at certain levels. These strategies and choices and responsibilities and consequences are the real elements on which entrepreneurial ideology builds. When neoliberal ideologues mention entrepreneurialism, it resonates with this portion of peoples' lives.

However, the neoliberal notion of the entrepreneur does not confine itself to this kind of activity; nor does it accurately describe even this activity. Entrepreneurialism connotes an independent businessman who fashions the quality and amount and price of products he sells, the workforce, the workplace. This far transcends the limited shopping choices of the simple commodity market that appears to resonate with entrepreneurialism.

We have seen that even the consumerist choices of the medical encounter are not free, independent, innovative, entrepreneurial activity. Medical consumerism is limited to keeping track of your medical records online and paying your bills on time. The patient has no control over the medical system that delivers their health care, any more than consumers have control over the airlines that transport them. Consumers simply choose among products that producers array for them.

Moreover, their consumer choices are strictly circumscribed by their production/work status.

Commodity consumption is subordinate to the production market, and it operates within its parameters—of the occupational hierarchy, social class, exploitation, alienation, dominating workers, disposing of workers, disenfranchising workers, endangering workers, and expropriating profit that workers produce.

Another intrinsic basis of neoliberal, entrepreneurial ideology is the erosion of public services to support people and unify people. People really are on their own now, in the impersonal economic market, and they are alienated from policy making as well as other individuals. However, alienation and precarity are not equivalent to entrepreneurial freedom. This equation is fabricated, duplicitous inversion of alienated social reality. The dispossessed, abandoned, precarious individual is not an autonomous, free, self-fulfilling, self-determining entrepreneur who designs his life as he chooses. He has to find his own way in a system that is designed by the ruling class and that sets his options/choices. His precarity does not remove him from the system and onto his own subjectivity. Just the opposite, the neoliberal individual is the victim of oppression that is centralized, systemic, impersonal, and inexorable. The individual is more subordinate to alien, uncontrollable political-economic forces

than before. It is more difficult to comprehend and navigate and negotiate this alien, impersonal system. She is forced to accept lower wage, precarious, strictly regulated, unskilled, jobs. Every action from her past and present is scrutinized by the enterprise's personnel from social media to evaluate her suitability to the enterprise. Nothing she does is free from this alien, autocratic scrutiny. That is precisely what neoliberal capitalism needs and wants, as I have documented.

Entrepreneurialism is therefore an ideological distortion of the shredding of choice and responsibility that people have in neoliberalism. It exaggerates and idealizes these circumscribed, alienated neoliberal activities into a phantasmagoric nirvana of absolute freedom, agency, and creativity. This is achieved by obfuscating the causes of behavior.

Foucault inverted this fictitious ideology by demonstrating that entrepreneurialism is actually a form of political governance, domination, and subjectivation. It actually makes individuals responsible for discovering and obeying the requirements of a system—instead of personally directing and instructing requisite behaviors. It may appear to be free or feel free because nobody is directly (personally) instructing you about which jobs or housing or universities are available, however, the availability and the conditions are entirely determined by the owners of the enterprises. Your involvement in locating and comprehending the system's requirements is simply a displacement of external political governance of you onto your motivation and preparation. It involves you more in comprehending and obeying the rules than if you were instructed by leaders to mechanically follow rules without thinking. Social governance penetrates you more deeply through entrepreneurialism than it does through social coercion.

The individual was to be taught to control his own life by mastering his emotions and to subordinate himself politically without resistance ... Only to the extent that such self-regulatory practices were installed in subjects did it become possible to dismantle the mass of detailed prescriptions and prohibitions concerning the minutiae of conduct, maintaining them only in limited and specialized institutions: penitentiaries, workhouses, schools, reformatories and factories. Through such practices of the self, individuals were to be subjected not by an alien gaze but through a reflexive hermeneutics.

To rule citizens democratically means ruling them through their freedoms, their choices, and their solidarities rather than despite these. It means turning subjects, their motivations and interrelations, from potential sites of resistance to rule into allies of rule. It means replacing arbitrary authority with that permitting a rational justification (Rose 1998, pp. 77, 117, my emphasis).

Rose (1998, pp. 28–29) perceptively says that “free subjectivity” must enact “productivity, conditions of trade, civil associations, ways of rearing children, and conjugal relations and financial affairs within the household to support and not oppose political objectives ... Free individuals can [must] be governed such that they enact their freedom appropriately [to the system].” Choosing is demanded by the system, framed by the system, and inculcated by techniques of subjectification from the system.

The forms of freedom we inhabit today are intrinsically bound to a regime of subjectification in which subjects are not merely “free to choose,” but obliged to be free, to understand and

enact their lives in terms of choice under conditions that systematically limit the capacities of so many to shape their own destiny. Human beings must interpret their past, and dream their future, as outcomes of personal choices ... seen as realizations of the attributes of the choosing self and reflect back upon the individual who has made them (Rose 1998, p. 17).

Althusser (2001, p. 123) similarly states, “the individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection, i.e. in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection ‘all by himself’.”

Holborow (2015, p. 77) says that “Foucault identified the generalization of the enterprise form to the individual as an extension of ‘the economic model of supply and demand and of investments-costs-profit to a form of relationship of the individual to himself and to those around him, the group, and the family’.”

Entrepreneurialism is a misnomer. It semiotically inverts alienated, oppressed, individualism into a free commander/decider of social rules. Social domains are increasingly regulated from above, with little space for individual governmentality. Jobs are increasingly regulated down to the most minute movements. For instance, the United Parcel Service (UPS) trucks are automatically monitored so that every movement of the driver is recorded: the number of times he backs up, the number of times the door is opened, his driving speed, the time for each delivery. This surveillance is used as “feedback” to control his behavior. Even the packages that are assigned to each delivery truck are pre-stamped with a number that designates their position on the storage racks within the truck. The driver has no discretion to make these minute decisions. Every institution has clear rules about admission requirements, rules of behavior, evaluation procedures. Even free, impulsive shopping is organized by personalized advertisements that continually guide us with spatially and temporally placed cues. Governmentality may now be an ideological construct that affords individuals more responsibility and choice than they really have.

Even small, independent, producers have very limited freedom and fulfillment within corporate capitalism. They are constrained and pressured by the large capitalists, and also by the unpredictable vagaries of the commodity market in which they operate. They have no control over the socioeconomic system in which they work. This is why the failure rate of small businesses is high.

Despite its obvious duplicity, entrepreneurial ideology is ubiquitous in neoliberal societies such as the United States. The New York Times purveys this ideology in its news articles. An article on Facebook’s harvesting personal data and selling it at a profit to advertisers, misleadingly claimed that this autocratic, unilateral act was actually a voluntary agreement between users and Facebook: “For consumers, the transaction has always been pretty clear: The convenience of free service in exchange for information that allowed advertisers to specifically target us.” “The trade-off has already been made: We decided long ago to give away our personal information in exchange for free content and the ability to interact seamlessly with others” (Sorkin 2018). The Times embeds this ideological fiction as the explanatory construct for corporate harvesting and selling of personal data; and this is presented as factual news. The news article claims that “we decided” in a “transaction” to “give away” our personal information “in exchange for” using Facebook. It is all a voluntary,

conscious, equitable transaction on the free market. Of course, this is an ideological disguise of the fact that the corporate media never engaged in any agreement or negotiation with the public, and we never decided to give away our data. The public has no idea of the diversity of data that Facebook collects from them, which makes it impossible to discuss or agree about collectible data. No one ever gave us the choice between having the media use our data versus funding the media by tax increases on the millionaires, or cutting the \$700 billion defense budget, or using the \$100 million that the government annually (in 2018) spends on abstinence-only sex education programs in schools. The media simply takes our data—just as capitalists simply take away our traditional, defined benefit pensions and convert them to risky 401k pensions, and just as capitalists simply outsource our jobs, and just as capitalists simply expropriate the gains in productivity instead of returning them to us working people in the form of higher wages.³

The term “austerity” is ideological. Austerity connotes entrepreneurial “living within your means,” “managing your resources,” hard work, efficiency, frugality, discipline, and fairness in distributing costs and benefits. However, the reality is that austerity is simply exploiting and disenfranchising the public to empower and enrich the capitalist class. There is nothing frugal or responsible or disciplined or efficient or fair about it. On the contrary, it is wasteful and corrupt to benefit the elite. Austerity programs include lavish contracts for private contractors (as in the cases of Haiti and Puerto Rico) and consultants (e.g., Goldman Sachs). Wasteful military spending is increased under austerity. Austerity is really designed to shift spending for the public good to spending on the elite (Evans and McBride 2017). Thus, the neoliberal Koch brothers contradicted their ideology of free market, small government, frugal, capitalism by taking maximum advantage of federal subsidies for their oil and pipeline businesses—even engaging lobbyists to ensure these perks stayed in the federal budget. The Koch brothers also supported government bailouts (TARP) of industries in Sept. 2008 during the Great Recession. Underneath complaints about budget deficits and the need to reduce spending—on social programs for the poor—President Trump has forced the Secret Service to spend at least \$137,505 to rent golf carts to protect him while playing golf in 2017, at his private clubs in New Jersey and Florida. The total cost to taxpayers for his golfing trips is in the 10 s of millions of dollars.

The inverting function of entrepreneurialism—to invert oppression into individual empowerment and freedom—is illustrated in the glorification of cancer victims as heroic, individual fighters against adversity. They are presented in the media in their wheelchairs, weak and incapacitated, but smiling with raised fist, followed by commentaries about heroic and strong they are to not give up and to keep up their spirits and their hope. All of this leads viewers to feel hopeful and optimistic that everyone can struggle against adversity by force of their will. No matter how bad things are, will power of the individual always gives us hope for success. What is never said is how disgusting it is that so many people have to endure cancer that is caused by ecological contamination in water, air, food, and plastics. Also not said is that ecological contamination is known by producers to injure health, but is produced anyway in order to generate profit. Manufacturers refuse to reduce pollution because it is costly and reduces their profit. Technology is available to reduce pollution; how-

ever, manufacturers struggle against using it. In other words, the political-economic system deliberately causes cancer that maims and kills its citizens. That is what must be said in conjunction with every case of cancer. That should enrage the public every time they see cancer patients, or even survivors. (For survivors only survive at the cost of enormous suffering—physical, personal, social, and financial.)

Viewing cancer patients should stir fury and revulsion at the socio-economic system that deliberately and knowingly maims and kills its citizens in order to enrich the ruling class. Shrouding cancer victims in the ideological veil of empowered, strong, willful individuals who energize viewers with ideological optimism and admiration and the comforting sense that they too can overcome adversity through individual courage, obscures the terrible, tragic adversity and allows it to debilitate ever more individuals. Entrepreneurialism replaces mass, organized, structural, transformation of the causes of oppression with individual strategies to cope with oppression and occasionally survive it. When cancer victims are inverted from victims to victors, and when neoliberalism is inverted from villain to validator, viewers should understand and repudiate these inversions. We should be furious at the ideological system that perpetuates death and destruction under the name of empowerment and freedom.

Entrepreneurialism also conceptually transforms the causes of adversity into individual attributes of the victim rather than characteristics of the social system. Cancer is attributed to individual's genes rather than to industrial pollution. This further removes the adversity from a social issue. Adversity is an individual problem that requires individual solutions. Society is not to blame and not to be reformed.

This extended description of entrepreneurialism has been necessary in order to ferret out its various forms, myths, distortions, duplicity, contradictions, causes, needs, and objectives. For these comprise the psychological tools that organize elements of neoliberal psychology.

There are ideologies of entrepreneurialism that range from pure fiction (the Uber driver) to mostly fiction (the consumer) to some fiction (the businessman). These have inverse degrees of intrinsic validity, from none, to little, to some. This variety of ideological forms is central background for researching neoliberal psychology. Research must assess the relative importance of these ideological forms of entrepreneurialism for the actual psychology of neoliberal subjects. We must identify and assess the degree and nature of false consciousness that they engender. This is essential for understanding mistakes that people make in understanding society, psychology, and viable alternatives.

Psychiatry as Neoliberal Ideology

Ideology is not confined to political ideologists who directly promote the capitalist political economy as Hayek, Milton Freidman, Bill Clinton, Obama, and the Chinese Communist Party do. Political economic ideology exudes throughout the social system in order to obfuscate the oppression that pervades the diverse social nodes, or macro cultural factors. It is important to identify these diverse cultural expressions

of ideology in order to expose their obscurantism and mystification that stunts consciousness about social and psychological life. Every macro cultural factor must be subjected to ideological critique in order to elucidate the reality of the macro cultural factor that ideology obfuscates.

One important macro cultural factor that expresses neoliberal ideology is the discipline of Psychology—which includes academic Psychology, psychotherapy, psychiatry, and government policies governing policies about mental health and dysfunction. Psychology always promotes the social system of which it is a component. In neoliberal society, Psychology promotes neoliberal ideology in the form of academic scientific concepts, methods, interventions, and health policy. (see Felli 2016; Gill & Orgad 2018 for the cultural politics of psychological resiliency) This psychological ideology, or ideological psychology, is an essential element that is absorbed into neoliberal psychology.

Fabrega et al. (1988, p. 155) describe how various ideologies in American Psychology personalize problems that are actually social and political. This leads to shifting socio-political problems to the individual level, which perpetuates the problems:

The phenomenological, psychoanalytic, behavioristic, and biologicistic psychiatrist all proceed as “deculturating agents.” They reduce the personalized and culturally contextualized behavioral data of personal illness to categories and rubrics that leave out the cultural colorations of the patient’s account ... Thus the phenomenologist searches for such things as changes in form and structure of experience; the psychoanalyst for expressions of unconscious conflicts, ego-defense profile, impulse control; the behaviorist for stimuli acting as reinforcers and for types of reinforcing schedule that promote maladaptive behavior; and the biologist for any of the preceding plus aspects of behavior that reflect ... brain functions.

[This ideological critique of psychiatric medicine applies to all medicine. The entire medical industry focuses upon treating symptoms of social toxicity, while ignoring the social toxicity that causes the symptoms. Cancer and respiratory diseases kill millions of individuals annually and these are largely caused by socially produced toxic pollutants in the environment. The praise for medical treatments of disease insidiously distracts from the social origins of disease. This enables those toxic origins to persist and to generate more disease that requires more treatment. Medicine deforms people to cope with social toxicity, instead of normalizing the environment—by ridding it of toxicity—so that people can lead a normal life.]

Binkley (2012, pp. 559, 561) exposes ways in which psychological theories and interventions neutralize structural issues such as the class structure and the conflict between capital and labor.

In the United States in the early decades of the twentieth century, a convergence of new plans and strategies for the regulation of intimacy drew together the efforts of progressive social workers, charities, social psychiatrists, sexologists, eugenic scientists, and activists. Their various efforts shaped the nascent fields of marriage counseling, family therapy, and sex therapy. Broadly speaking, these efforts combined the social objectives of the welfare state—centering on the enforcement of social cohesion, the reduction of conflict between labor and capital, and mobilization of labor power itself—with the biopolitical objectives of a professional, medico-institutional complex.

Through psychoanalysis, intimacy would be conceived as a space of rich intersubjectivity structured by deep psychological agencies embedded in repressed memories of early child-

hood experience, accessible through dreams, free association, and the like. (Structural issues were excluded.)

Binkley (*ibid.*, pp. 564–565, 570) goes on to describe the specifically neoliberal characteristics of the human potential movements of the 1960s and 70s, and contemporary life-coaching therapeutics. The humanistic psychologies of the 1960s and 1970s rejected structural models of psychological disturbance, e.g., as rooted in family dynamics. “Where the implicit functionalism of the family systems perspective seemed to diminish the sovereignty of the individual, a humanistic view of the family described the affirmative potentials for growth and self-realization within a family environment in which subjective uniqueness was maximized and celebrated.” The individual was exalted above social structures. “Carl Rogers [like Maslow] theorized self-actualization in the figure of the ‘fully functional individual’ who lived fully and richly in the present.” “Increasingly, it was up to the subject of intimacy herself to undertake this work in her own daily life. The belief that these feelings existed, that they were, if properly actualized, benevolent, affirming of self and other, and that they were pulsating just beneath the surface of the formalized “masks” shaped by our social roles, empowered the individual as potential entrepreneur of her own emotional life.” “In 1951, Rogers’s *Client-Centered Therapy*, for example, proposed a reconfiguration of the clinical dyad of analyst and client under the motif of client empowerment, a shift that would open new space for clients to develop and exercise their own motivational resources and potentials, with the role of the analyst shifted from director to facilitator.”

This is individualistic, entrepreneurial, neoliberal ideology, plain and simple, adopted by, and reproduced by, professional psychologists

From a neoliberal standpoint, intimacy, like all other areas of society and personal life, must be disembedded from the technologies of dependency and welfare provision, from the dependencies it incurs, and reinvented as a new medium of autonomy and self-interest. For this purpose, any surviving vestiges of welfarism, reflected in the hierarchical diffusion of expert knowledge, the designation of pathology through normative judgments, or the institutionalization of treatment in any form must be reduced and transformed. Such heavy, institutional forms for the government of intimacy foster institutional compliance and docility, and suppress the will to self-differentiation within the actor. Moreover, from the standpoint of the subject of intimate governance, one’s co-intimate must not be allowed to impose the burden of normative emotional reciprocity, through an appeal to either psychological depth or an implicit psychological life-force-strategies that extend the normative, integrationist mandate of welfarism. The intimate subject of neoliberalism would be one who views himself as entrepreneur of his own intimate life, and holds his own capacity for emotional investments as a form of human capital, valued for the potential returns of happiness it might provide (*ibid.*, pp. 566–567).

Self-help authors and life coaches deepen the neoliberal character of contemporary psychotherapeutics. In their effort to radically dis-embed the individual from social structures, and cultivate an individualistic agency, these advisors eschew all psychological theory about complex psychological dynamics in social situations. For these theories encumber the individual to work through alien psychological processes according to their own dynamics. This impedes radical, individualistic, agency to make one’s own life as one wishes—akin to making one’s enterprise as one wishes.

Neoliberal psychotherapeutics dispense with binding psychological systems as they dispense with social systems.

The field of life coaching is one that remains largely free from conventional licensing requirements. This status stems from the field's deeply rooted opposition to the tradition of psychotherapy and counseling, which labor under, the field's advocates contend, all the medicalizing, pathologizing, backward-looking, and negative views that have dogged the psychological enterprise from the beginning. An article comparing coaching with therapy marks these differences. "Therapy assumes the client needs healing... Works with people to achieve self- understanding and emotional healing ... Explores the root of problems ... Focuses on feelings and past events ... Works for internal resolution of pain and to let go of old patterns." By contrast, coaching is forward looking, concentrating not on past pains and their internal residues, but on potentials for future aspiration. Coaching "Assumes the client is whole ... Focuses on actions and the future ... Works with the conscious mind ... Works for external solutions to overcome barriers, learn new skills and implement effective choices" (ibid., p. 568).

The field of positive psychology similarly seeks to redress the pathologizing focus of traditional psychologies through the empowerment of the individual as the mediator and entrepreneur of her own psychological life (ibid., p. 569).

Positive psychologists provide advice on how to promote positive thoughts and optimistic assessments of self and situation, which are assumed to facilitate positive outcomes of our actions. Through thought interventions one learns to switch off negative thought patterns; through planned disruptions to one's routine, one learns to interrupt the downward spiral to negative emotional states.⁴

While Binkley reveals the neoliberal features of psychotherapeutics, he fails to comprehend that these features are ideological; they divert attention from political-economic reality, the class structure, and the practices of neoliberal capitalism, and its social relations that distress people and need to be reorganized. They promote the entrepreneurial ideology of individual autonomy which blinds individuals to the increasingly autocratic constriction and coercion of capitalist macro cultural factors. This blinding leaves individuals more subjugated to constricting, coercive social reality, because they cannot see it. Psychotherapeutics, like all social ideology, is complicit in social oppression, not emancipation. This is why psychotherapeutics is acceptable. Binkley does not recognize this or critique it. He speaks about entrepreneurial, therapeutic coaching as a viable practice for achieving freedom, self-actualization, and self-expression. He is therefore an ideologue, not a critic.

Chinese Neoliberal, Psychological Ideology

Anthropologist, Zhang (2018, pp. 56, 51, 50) expresses some of the ideological politics of Western psychotherapy and psychiatry in China. She says, "With the help of psy experts, Chinese people are told, it is possible to turn social problems and suffering into a technical matter of sound personal choice and self-management." "Such self-work is regarded by many Chinese experts to have the potential to contribute to broader social interventions by improving citizens' emotional outlook and

fostering a sense of satisfaction,” i.e., “reclaiming a serene and resilient self, capable of accepting life as is.” “Zhu Ling eventually returned home and found herself in a strong position to take care of her family and work responsibilities. She felt less frustrated and burnt out and gained more inner strength to handle stresses.”

Zhang (2017) endorses psychological ideology that exists in psycho-therapeutic interventions in Chinese workplaces. She reports on a large, state-owned, monopoly, tobacco company that was

under pressure to reform by adopting new production methods and management styles to improve efficiency. These changes placed greater pressure on workers to perform and compete for material resources, precipitating grassroots resistance and generating a great deal of anxiety. Discontent among workers is on the rise. At the beginning of the workshop I attended, 90% of participants reported a very low ‘happiness index’—a popular, imported well-being measurement guide frequently invoked by Chinese leaders and psychological workers in recent years. The growing culture of complaint among disgruntled workers toward the enterprise management has alarmed upper-level managers. At the last dinner of the workshop, I sat next to the head of the human resource management of the tobacco firm and asked him why he wanted to sponsor such training. Mr. Wu replied with a big sigh:

“To tell you the truth, it is extremely difficult to do employee work today. They appear to be irritable, grumpy, and defiant towards any form of authority. The old thought work method based on political persuasion does not work anymore, while the new material-based method based on monetary reward does not seem to work either. I have tried everything but only in vain. A friend suggested that I try to incorporate psychotherapeutic techniques. So, I approached Mr. Ling. After the first session, I noticed some positive changes already taking place among the participants. They became calmer, more positive, and less confrontational.”

The new depoliticized language of self-care and professional guidance for emotional well-being, provided by psychologists, appears liberating and heart-warming to those feeling trapped in their workplaces. In such training, the proper management of emotions (instead of socioeconomic problems) becomes the focus of intervention. As Mr. Wu succinctly put it, “Our goal is to instill a positive outlook on life among workers by using positive psychology, while making them realize that even if one cannot change reality, one still has control over how he decides to respond. And this realization is powerful!” He wanted workers to feel happier because that would make his job easier.

One can easily criticize such a therapeutic approach for its inherent risk of psychologizing social and economic problems and conflicts. Yet, one cannot easily discount its appeal to and impact on Chinese workers. The new therapeutic attention to emotions is a viable alternative to the political thought work to which they were subject for years. The visceral transformations they experienced personally through such workshops—feeling happier, recognized, and validated—cannot be simply dismissed as a result of ‘false consciousness.’ One worker who went through the psychologized workshops said, “I have come to realize that even if I cannot change the system, it is still possible to create happiness and retain certain control of my life” (pp. 13-14).

This is a very illuminating commentary on the nature of ideology in the form of therapeutic intervention in relation to the state of Chinese neoliberal labor practices. Zhang’s account begins with a concrete description of neoliberal economic pressures that were imposed by the managers of the state company, and oppressed and distressed the workers. The managers were unsettled by the discontent and sought to pacify the workers. They did not attempt to use the discontent as a guide for humanizing the labor conditions. On the contrary, they explicitly said that workers cannot change

“reality.” Instead, workers should respond to the fixed, imposed reality in ways that are palatable to them. This begins with redirecting their consciousness away from conditions and economics—i.e., depoliticizing their consciousness—and using “depoliticized language” and concepts of Psychology to individually manage stress to feel better. This depoliticized Psychology turned out to be effective in gaining acceptance among workers to adopt a positive view of the fixed working conditions and become less confrontational about changing the conditions to be more satisfying. This proves that ideology does “work.” It does alter consciousness, emotions, and behavior. This is why it is a crucial macro cultural factor in psychology; it is a psychological tool that warrants extensive study.

Unfortunately, Zhang seems to accept these conformist forms of psychotherapy. She never indicates that fulfillment requires critique and transformation of the “psy” industry and the political economic system it supports. This is embarrassing because she, herself, recounts a plethora of deep social problems that her interlocutors, which obviously require deep social transformation.

Zhang agrees with manager Wu’s rationalization of it as a way of accommodating neoliberal economic pressure. She says, “Chinese firms are now under double pressure: to become more efficient and profitable to survive a market economy, and to maintain the political stability and social harmony the party-state expects. It seems that the new psychological approach can help partially ease the tension between workers and managers by shifting one’s focus from structural problems to a subjective realm of personality, emotions, and social recognition” (ibid., p. 14).⁵ Zhang denies that this shift in consciousness is false consciousness. She says that the workers’ really believed the therapeutic training, even viscerally, and felt positively about their work.

However, this is false consciousness. It is false precisely because workers feel good about conditions that are bad for them. False consciousness is not realizing the truth about conditions, which is that they are bad for you. True consciousness is accurately perceiving that conditions are bad and must be changed. This is precisely what ideology seeks to prevent. It prevents true consciousness, veridical perception, realistic emotions (anger, resentment, hatred, suspicion, vigilance, rejection, struggle, uncooperativeness), and objective solutions that change objective conditions. Ideology encourages subjectivism, that is, the refiguring of consciousness to misperceive oppression and renounce objective change. Subjectivism is political and conservative (even when it is accepted by liberals such as Zhang, and postmodernists, and social constructionists, and populists, and multiculturalists).

Marcuse described false consciousness in One-Dimensional Man: the populace in capitalist society is bought off—coopted—by material rewards to subjectively feel comfortable, and to accept that political economy. Marcuse coined a pregnant term “repressive desublimation” to denote that pleasure is cultivated and expressed, not sublimated, but remains a repressive factor because it denies true fulfillment. False consciousness has this character.

Denying false consciousness under conditions of oppression, legitimates that oppression; it pretends that oppression is really fulfillment simply because workers feel happier and do not focus on their oppression.

The use of ideology (i.e., ideological Psychology) to engineer workers' false consciousness is an indictment of the system that employs ideology. For it reveals that this system is oppressive and seeks to maintain its oppression by obscuring it and pacifying the workers to conform to it. Ideology reveals that the system does not want to politicize and empower workers to understand the politics of work and to improve them. And this system is the Chinese government. It is the government that owns the tobacco company (which is a state-owned company), hires its human relations manager, approves the alienated work conditions in which workers have no democratic input, and also approves Mr. Wu's use of Psychological ideology to suppress discontent and depoliticize and pacify workers. Ideology crystalizes this entire system—it is a total social fact, just as every element of a system is.

Of course, all this contradicts genuine socialism. A democratic, collective society—in which workers owned and controlled workplaces—would have neither oppressive, alienated working conditions, nor ideology to obscure them, nor mystified (false) consciousness that misperceived them as fulfilling.

Several powerful critiques of individualistic, ideological Psychology in China explain and amplify my critique of it.

Ma (2012) reports that Chinese psychiatry has turned toward Western, neoliberal, individualistic, biomedical causes and cures for mental illness. “Contemporary psychiatrists construe schizophrenia as a disorder of the self.” “The social-psychological issues that concerned patients and families were seldom given any attention by the staff” (p. 210).

Yang (2018, pp. 1–6, 204–213) explains how individualistic, neoliberal, therapeutic, ideology is employed in Chinese Psychology to explain away the social crisis of mental illness without impugning the political economy that caused it. The incidence of mental illness has increased exponentially from the 1950s to recent years (2.2% of the population vs. 7.7% respectively). Yang argues that, “the mental health ‘crisis’ was mainly brought about by dislocation and rapid change amidst China’s economic restructuring since the mid-1990s.”

Fu et al. (2018) confirm these political-economic causes of problems such as psychological depression in China. They found that “depressive symptoms of both rural–urban migrants and rural residents are significantly higher than those of urban residents. Such differences in depressive symptoms can be attributed to socioeconomic status and proximate stressors such as unemployment, living alone, and the unaffordability of medical services.”

This restructuring is neoliberal policy in the political economy. It includes social injustice, rising housing prices, widening income gaps, the stark privilege of certain groups, poverty, employment difficulties, food safety, the exam-centered educational system, and environmental contamination. These neoliberal capitalist problems (of oppression and pathological normalcy) jar with, and even defy, the goal of China’s political project of constructing a harmonious society. “To narrow the gap between social distress and imagined social harmony, the Chinese government has taken action—but not really focusing on the structural features of life, including jobs and social support. Rather, together with psychological and psychiatric subordinates, the ruling class has made efforts to individualize, internalize, and psychologize the social,

moral, and political issues that generate conflicts, perplexities, moral confusion, and illnesses” (Yang 2018, pp. 204–213).

In other words, the government has used Psychology as ideology to obfuscate the neoliberal, political-economic, oppressive, causes of behavioral problems, which, if known, would cause resentment and rebellion: “The focus on psychological and personal care diverts attention from social and economic processes that could spark criticism of the state.” (ibid., p. 5). “Instead of revising its political vision and economic policies in ways that would soften the negative impact of rapid socioeconomic change, government programs promoting happiness and psychotherapy seek to compel individuals to become responsible for their own care...” (p. 207).

This psychological ideology is entirely intentional. Officials and managers know that social and psychological problems are creations of government policy (Pang 2018), and they simply obfuscate this reality. There are no intrinsic conditions that would make these problems appear to be caused by personal deficiencies.

This process “guides people to question their own mental capacities rather than look at social conditions when faced with a crisis.” “The neoliberal model of society and psychological discourse stresses that individuals take responsibility for the deficiencies and injustice they experience” (p. 211). “Ultimately, psychology has become a new language that speaks to people about rebuilding their identities around an emotional core that obfuscates the socioeconomic dislocation they experience” (p. 213). “The state needs psychology as a kind of prop: psychology masks the inadequacy of other social and governing resources. It obscures the possibility of more complex, responsible approaches to socioeconomic issues” (pp. 212–213).

State-sponsored psychological ideology complements its positive psychology with propaganda that condemns anger against social practices. Yang (2016, p. 101) tells us “In today’s China, the government has placed great emphasis on happiness and wellbeing, and a popular association has emerged between negative emotions and ill health. Recent community billboards include signage promoting the work of Dr. Qiao Yan, a cardiovascular surgeon at Beijing Anzhen Hospital, who has written about the role of anger in triggering heart disease. Local psychosocial workers also reference Dr. Qiao’s writing when dealing with Changping residents through anger management.” Thus, anger-management is ideological psychology that blunts opposition to neoliberalism.

And the use of psychological care enables the state to appear to be caring and helping the populace overcome its problems, while actually eliciting their conformity the conditions that generate the problems. Chinese Psychology is ideological in appearing to be helpful while obscuring the harsh maintenance of oppression (see Ratner 2018c for further discussion).

Yang insightfully observes that Chinese neoliberal ideology is not limited to individualistic ideology of bourgeois Psychology. Chinese neoliberal ideology supplements bourgeois individualism with traditional, indigenous, Chinese, psycho-philosophical-moral constructs. These perform the same ideological function as individualism, which is to distract attention from political-economic problems and solutions. Confucian social philosophy was adopted by emperors in order to obfuscate oppression and social upheavals, by appealing to proper, respectful behavior

for the masses (see El Amine 2015 for Confucian political conservatism; see Ratner 2017b for analysis of *guanxi*'s conservatism).

Yang (2016, p. 106) explains that official anger regulation strategies downplay sociopolitical factors, by invoking Confucian and Daoist constructs of anger. "Psychosocial workers in Changping, who are sponsored by the government, tend to follow eight principles to guide community-based anger management and alleviate the anger and frustration of laid-off workers. These strategies are also widely adopted by Chinese employee assistance program (EAP) practitioners. These highly individualized strategies" align with Western medicalization as well as Daoism and Confucianism, with more emphasis on Daoism.

Daoists seek to eliminate the reason for anger via cognitive reappraisal or purposeful neglect of the sources of anger. Confucians accept the reason for one's anger and encourage 'higher' (moral indignation) rather than 'lower' (physical violence) expressions of the emotion. "One must restrain one's emotions and do what is right to conform to social norms for greater unity rather than giving into passion or anger. Thus, Confucius considered the main function of poetry to be in coaching the art of expressing discontent (properly)." "Ren ming—knowing or accepting one's fate—is an important Confucian precept that works against expressions of situational anger. It refers not only to understanding one's lot in the overall cosmic scheme, but also to accepting it" (Yang 2016, pp. 105, 112).

These anger-management techniques are cultural; they are not individual reactions. They are cultural modes of handling cultural pressures. They are psychological tools that have cultural-political features, requirements, and objectives.

These examples demonstrate that the discipline of Psychology (academic theory and methodology, psychotherapy, interventions) is a macro cultural factor that participates in the conical model of culture. Psychology is informed by political-economic requirements, characteristics, and function. One of these is ideological, i.e., to obfuscate fundamental, systemic oppression that is rooted in the requirements of the political economy. Psychology contributes to neoliberal ideology by promoting neoliberal individualism along with various traditional forms of ideology such as ancient, indigenous, Chinese, psychological-philosophical-ethical concepts. All of these work in psychological forms to constrict perception, cognition, motivation, emotions, pleasure, imagination, and self-concept in ways that obfuscate and accept neoliberal features of the status quo.

Exposing ideology breaks through ideological mystification of oppression, and exposes it. This is why ideology is one of the most important macro cultural factors for leaders to promote. And ideology must be promoted as truth because if it is recognized as fiction, then its protection of oppression is dissipated. Ideology must obscure oppressive reality, and it must also obscure itself as obscurantist ideology. It must deny reality and itself. The enormous power that ideology has to enable social oppression is turned into an equally enormous power to expose oppression once ideology is perceived as what it really is. Perceiving what ideology really is, exposes what society really is. Conversely, exposing what society really is exposes ideology for what it really is.⁶

The Neoliberal Cultural System and Neoliberal Psychology

Macro cultural psychological theory has guided us to a deep analysis of neoliberalism in order to comprehend neoliberal psychology. This neoliberal system of macro cultural factors consists of three major cornerstones or categories: the neoliberal capitalist form of social activities that are structured into a class structure with the capitalist class at the head, all of which is ideologically obfuscated. This system and structure of neoliberal cornerstones constitute psychological tools, and techniques of subjectification, that organize neoliberal psychology. “The various internal contradictions which are to be found in different social systems find their expression both in the type of personality and in the structure of human psychology in that historical period” (1994a, p. 176).

I demonstrate this in the next chapter.

Notes

1. It is striking that oppression breeds—requires—error and irrationality as its modus operandi (survival mechanism). Conversely, oppression is denied by truth and rationality. Truth and rationality are thus inherently progressive and enriching and emancipatory. They expose oppression and correct it, whereas error and irrationality protect oppression and maintain it. Oppression is only maintained by specious information; true facts never present oppression as beneficial to people. This is why objectivity and truth are essential to emancipation. All attempts that deny objectivity and truth serve oppression and preclude emancipation.
2. Ideology is simply a false narrative of oppressive events that disguises their oppression. It is a straightforward, rational process of lying about oppression—pretending it is not oppressive—so that people will believe the lie and accept their oppression. It is wrong to equate this with anything unconscious. Unconscious presumes that real knowledge is present, but suppressed. Freud, for example, imagined that his women patients, who felt hatred for a man, actually, really loved him; they were simply afraid to admit it and so they repressed it in “their unconscious.” [Freud was wrong, of course. He refused to acknowledge the social facts that the men had abused the women, which generated their real hatred. Their real hatred had a real, rational basis in social fact. Freud’s assertion about real, unconscious, love was purely imaginary with no factual or logical basis whatsoever.]

Ideology involves no such suppressed knowledge of reality. Ideologists who create the ideology are perfectly cognizant of the oppression they are obfuscating. And the victims of ideology, who are taught it as truthful, accept it as such. They do not secretly possess real, truthful knowledge about society that they are afraid to express, and keep suppressed in some unconscious part of the psyche. Victims of capitalism vote for capitalist politicians because they believe the ideology that capitalist policies will benefit them. If they knew the truth, they would not vote for their oppressors.

Equating ideology with unconscious assumes that victims of capitalism are completely irrational—as Freud’s patients were made to appear, for rejecting men whom they “truly” loved. For the victims would know the truth about capitalism, but would act in opposition to their knowledge. The unconscious contorts a straightforward social issue—that people are lied to about social oppression and they believe the lie that social authorities perpetrate—into an esoteric, irrational, psychological, weakness of repressing true knowledge into the unconscious where natural mechanisms act on it to disguise it and project its opposite. It is the unconscious that makes people act contrary to their real interests; it is not society that causes this irrationality. (Just as Freud’s patients were to blame for their irrational avoidance of the men, while the male perpetrators were absolved.) The solution is psychotherapy on the victims to make their unconscious knowledge conscious and action-able.

The Marxian concept of ideology makes society responsible for individual behavior that contradicts one’s true interests. Ideology is a social lie that pretends that social exploitation does not exist, and that exploitive practices are actually beneficial to the common person—e.g., capitalists provide jobs, capitalism is open to upward mobility, imperialist invasions bring democracy to foreign people, private management is efficient and productive whereas public services are expensive and inefficient. This makes exploitive practices acceptable to people. It is not the people who are irrational, it is social ideologues who convince them to act against their own well-being. There is really no irrationality or unconscious anywhere in this pattern. It is rational for exploiters to obfuscate their exploitation so that people will accept it; and it is rational for the people to accept ideological lies because they have no alternative political economic analysis of capitalist reality. The lying and the believing are rational social processes. Unconscious converts this into individual, irrational, processes. What needs to be changed is the social exploitation and the social obfuscation of its exploitation. Individual therapy to make the unconscious conscious is a distraction from this social transformation, that traps people within exploitation. This is why psychoanalysis is antagonistic to cultural psychology and Marxism (Ratner 2017a).

3. A related element of entrepreneurial ideology is to strip corporate and political behavior of its political-economic basis, content, and function, and misconstrue it in personal terms—of an independent, individual entrepreneur trying to figure things out as an ordinary guy, who is limited by existential, human frailties such as ignorance, insensitivity, and inattention. In the April, 2018 Congressional hearings over Facebook’s mishandling of customers’ personal data, CEO Zuckerberg, claimed that he had made “a mistake” in not informing customers about the manners in which Facebook used their data. He took personal responsibility for this oversight and misjudgment; and he issued a personal apology for his mistakes. This narrative is ideological because it obfuscates the normal, corporate, calculated, administered, profitable, functional, systemic, political economic principles and pressures that demand selling communications data to generate profit. These are the real cultural reasons for Zuckerberg’s actions. They demand political analysis, critique, and transformation. This is all obfuscated by personaliz-

ing Zuckerberg's acts as acts of individual agency. "Responsibility," "mistake," "apology," "agency," and "oversight," are all ideological concepts in this kind of situation.

The entire hearing about internet privacy was an ideological charade by legislators who actively weaken privacy. They do so in favor of government surveillance that is supported by the ruling class (through their bribed politicians) in order to suppress anti-capitalist rebellions. In 2017, Republicans in Congress passed legislation repealing the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) online privacy protections that prevented internet service providers like AT&T and Comcast from harvesting and selling internet personal data without explicit permission from their customers. President Trump quietly signed it into law. Many of these same lawmakers who voted to repeal the privacy rules sought to disguise their unpopular position by pretending to abhor Zuckerberg's infringement on privacy. A case in point is Rep. Marsha Blackburn, a Tennessee Republican who introduced the legislation in the House that repealed the FCC privacy rules. Telecom companies subject to the FCC rules she helped throw out are some of her top donors. Ideologically obfuscating her corporate funded, corporate protecting political economics, Blackburn hypocritically told Zuckerberg "My constituents in Tennessee want to know that they have a right to privacy" (Ludwig 2018).

This falsification is ideological in that it is designed to protect the oppressive social system. It is not an example of lying, which is a personal act that protects an individual miscreant from punishment. Replacing "ideology" with "lying" is therefore ideological in that it personalizes an inherently political-economic act. It thereby obfuscates the political-economic system which is the reason and objective and effects of lying.

Entrepreneurial ideology is also behind other pretenses to value individuals in all forms and conditions, while simultaneously oppressing individuals. State laws, and Catholic hospitals' policy, require that miscarriages be treated as human deaths, with the remains being buried and blessed in graves. This is designed to honor all individual life, even when it takes the form of tissue that has been miscarried or aborted. Paradoxically, this pretense is contradicted by draconian, autocratic pressure, by hospital staff and Catholic chaplains, to force mothers to accept these burials. If they refuse, the hospital refuses to complete the medical procedure for miscarriages. Again, independent entrepreneurship is hollow ideology that is contradicted by coercive pressure (https://www.democracynow.org/2018/4/25/texas_mother_recalls_being_forced_to).

4. These contemporary examples of individualism, which regard individuals as fully responsible for choosing their behavior, are only the current iteration of capitalist ideology since at least Jeremy Bentham's work in the 18th century. Bentham, one of the founders of utilitarianism, sought to bring the principles of the marketplace into the mental asylum by dispensing rewards and punishments for behavior. Scull (1993, p. 110) describes this as follows.

As the market made the individual responsible for success or failure, so the environment in the lunatic asylum was designed to create a synthetic link between action and

consequences, such that the madman could not escape the recognition that he alone was responsible for the punishment he received. The insane were to be restored to reason by the system of rewards and punishments

5. Zhang's endorsement of neoliberal, ideological, psychological intervention overlooks her own report (as well as by Zhu et al. 2018) about its obvious, oppressive character in a related case that she reports:

Ms. Zhou, a police officer and a counselor in her mid-thirties. Even though she had obtained her therapist certificate only four years before I met her in 2012, she was already one of the few well-known professional psychological health educators in the Kunming police system. Zhou was a gifted public speaker with affective power. She was frequently invited to hold workshops to train new psy experts among selected police officers, and to give lectures to local police units in many city districts on how to manage stress and reduce workplace conflict. But her greatest challenge was to negotiate tensions of two sorts. The first was diverging demands from leaders and ordinary police officers. Leaders wanted to get a better sense of the 'pulse' of their police unit and to anticipate and head off problems, thus they demanded reporting from Zhou. Officers hoped to obtain personal and professional help to deal with their own problems, such as stress and conflict management. Although in principle there are confidentiality safeguards for counseling, they are often not well observed in the military context. Thus, building trust between the therapist and the officers is essential. The second tension was a slippery line between socialist thought work and therapeutic work. Zhou's dual identity as a Communist party member and a counselor were often in friction: "I often feel caught in between. I am grateful for my superiors who support me to engage in this new line of work, but at the same time, they command how things should be done and often expect me to play an old role with a new face. If I am not careful, I can easily become their instrument of control and lose the trust of the officers." Zhou was genuinely interested in helping police officers improve their quality of life through both individual counseling and collective workshops. She cared about their well-being and taught them how to manage stress, deal with trauma, and articulate their emotional problems. But beneath the lure of the new therapeutics lay sustained pressure to serve the existing power structure and its hierarchy. Her dilemma was widely echoed by other counselors I interviewed. (ibid., p. 11).

6. Chinese Psychology illustrates the complexity of ideology as a cultural factor in neoliberalism. We must understand why the Chinese Communist Party has embraced American, bourgeois, Psychology (as well as indigenous Chinese Psychologies) as an element of its ideological system.

This embrace contradicts CCP's propaganda of embracing Marxian, socialist philosophy. One would expect that CCP would encourage the development of Marxist Psychology to explain and intervene into pervasive psychological problems that are obviously caused by macro cultural factors such as government-imposed layoffs from State Owned Enterprises. A Marxist Psychology would develop Marxist consciousness in patients and their relatives, and would draw them into the struggle for socialism. None of this has happened. Marxist Psychology does not exist in China, nor do Marxist critiques of bourgeois Psychology exist. (Marxist economics is also rare in China. Chinese economics is almost entirely neoliberal economics. Even communist party schools, which educate party cadre, teach neoliberal economics rather than Marxist economics! This

makes it impossible to approach socialism since the party cadre knows little of what Marx meant by it.)

This telling choice of bourgeois Psychology over Marxist psychology reflects the character and objectives of CCP (because all Psychology in all societies reflects the political economic needs of the dominant class). CCP prefers American Psychology because it is an ideology that obfuscates neoliberal practices. It is neoliberal practices which cause psychological problems, and rather than replace these practices with Marxist, socialist practices, CCP obfuscates its neoliberal practices with the pretense that they do not exist, and that problems are caused by individual factors. This is how Psychological ideology serves neoliberal capitalism in China. (See Zhu, et al. 2018 for descriptions of psychological care that reflect Chinese society).

This reflects deeply on the Chinese State (as all Psychology does, according to our figure one and Marxist historical-materialist culture theory). In particular, bourgeois psychology is proof positive that Marxist philosophy is dead in China. For if Marxism were functioning, it would vociferously attack bourgeois psychology. Western Marxists did this in the 1930s and 1960s and 70s. The absence of Marxist critique of Western psychology proves that Marxism does not exist in any effective manner. China's embrace of bourgeois Psychology pierces the fig leaf of its Marxist ideology. This is the revolutionary social-political role that macro cultural psychology can play from its academic perch. (This is the reason that CCP does not embrace macro cultural psychology and its Marxist character.) The Marxist critique of bourgeois psychology—and economics—is not a random oversight. It is necessarily and deliberately stunted. CCP must ensure that Marxism cannot exist and critique bourgeois psychology (and society).

Marxism is a thorn in CCP's side because it contradicts neoliberalism that CCP practices. CCP is thus forced to contort Marxism into an ideological defense of neoliberalism. This is accomplished through the slogan "socialism with Chinese characteristics." This converts socialism into anything that CCP practices. Neoliberalism is ideologically disguised as a Chinese characteristic of socialism. Thus, socialism with Chinese characteristics is a neoliberal ideology.

However, this ideological slight of hand is insufficient. For anyone who reads Marxism immediately sees that Chinese neoliberalism is not socialism—and that bourgeois Psychology is not Marxist Psychology. Yet reading Marxism is necessary to maintain the official position that Marxism is the central political philosophy of socialist China. Consequently, the content of Marxism must be contorted so that it does not overtly contradict neoliberalism. CCP is more afraid of genuine Marxism than it is of capitalism. For genuine Marxism threatens to expose CCP's neoliberal orientation. Capitalism is not a threat to CCP because CCP embraces capitalism in many ways. This is true for all ideologies. They must prevent the actualization of the ideological terms that disguise their reality, while they encourage the actualization of the terms that oppose their ideology. They discourage what they avow, and they encourage what they disavow. This is a massive mystification. (The United States, squelches genuine democracy,

which it avows, while it encourages autocracy, which is disavows, in its support for dictators and capitalist autocrats.)

CCP has contorted Marxism in its vast system of “Marxist education” in universities (4 semesters of Marxism are required), Communist Party education for its members, Marxist Institutes, Marxist propaganda, and Marxist conferences. These treat Marxism as dry, abstract, formulaic, boring statements that have no relevance to real life. I recently interviewed a dozen undergraduates who had completed the mandatory 4 semesters of Marxism and they frankly stated that they have no idea what Marxism is all about; they do not understand Marxist concepts; they are not interested in Marxism. They said their teachers present Marxism as I have described, with no connection to real life events. This effectively dissuades people from pursuing Marxism, and it removes Marxism as a guide for social practice—and as a critique of non-Marxist social practices.

I had a discussion with a group of professors in a Marxist Institute, and I asked them what is their Marxist analysis of current Chinese society. They became visibly flustered, looked down at the ground, and muttered “This is a sensitive topic that we cannot discuss.” Marxist scholars in a Marxist institute are prohibited from using genuine Marxism to analyze society that claims to be Marxist. I received the same response from a colleague in his office at Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. He whispered in my ear “We should talk about this outside.” He said that Marxist publications and conferences generally restrict Marxism to abstract theoretical concepts, and historical debates in Marxism, with no application to contemporary society. This sterilizes Marxism against critiquing non-Marxist social practices.

Nor does CCP use Marxism to explain social problems. CCP cannot provide a Marxist explanation of corruption, for example, in its newspaper “People’s Daily” because that would trace corruption to the political economy that CCP commands. It would reveal that CCP is really the source of corruption! So, again, Marxism has to be expunged from social relevance—while being proclaimed to be the guiding political philosophy of China. Marxism is really hypocritical ideology that enables neoliberalism to flourish under a socially palatable banner. An important strategy for blunting Marxist critique of social policy and practice is to devote most Marxist education to studying current Party doctrines rather than Marxist classic works. This conflates neoliberal practices with Marxism, just as socialism with Chinese characteristics does. I conducted a survey of university Party members, and most of them reported that they have never read Marxist works in CP political study classes. This further removes Marxism from critiquing social practice, because Marxism is presented as social practice.

A final strategy for eradicating the contradiction between Marxism and neoliberalism is to suppress the independent study of Marxism outside CP parameters. CCP closes down independent Marxist web sites, and it intimidates independent Marxists who take action to practice Marxism. Several independent, Marxist economists told me that their universities’ Communist Party secretaries insisted that they stop participating with urban workers in strikes and stop teaching them

about Marxist economics that would justify proletariat actions and make them more effective.

My personal experience confirms this. I was invited to speak at the World Marxism Conference at Peking University in 2015. Conference officials had to approve my abstract. I presented Marx's ideas about socialism, and I left the audience with a question to consider: "Does current CCP practice conform to Marx's ideas of socialism?" I did not answer the question. I left it for them. A news reporter heard my speech and wrote a one paragraph summary that she posted online. Within 24 h, it received 2.4 million views. Then it was censored and removed from view. So, a talk on Marxism at an official conference on Marxism, in a Marxist country that is governed by a Marxist political party, is censored. Even the conference program and abstracts were never publicized. At the farewell banquet, the CCP head of Peking University exclaimed how nice it is to share common interests with colleagues around the world, and to learn from each other and respect each other!

CCP depletes and distorts Marxism in the same way that American capitalists deplete and distort democracy. They have to praise democracy in order to legitimate neoliberalism as democratic and free. They do so in grand spectacles of Presidential elections. However, these are farcical theater that is devoid of genuine democracy—because genuine democracy threatens capitalist class structure and political-economic social relations. Genuine democracy must be degraded, just as genuine Marxism is degraded in China. *Chinese Marxism is the ideological equivalent of American democracy.*

Chinese (CCP) *ideological Marxism* is tamed and timid; it has stripped out Marx's radical, deep, critical, creative, useful, transformative, emancipatory, character. CCP ideological Marxism abandons Marxism as a guide to socialism. CCP Marxism is as anti-Marxist as Stalinism was (Marcuse 1958). It does less to promote international working class solidarity and class consciousness than Stalin did. Stalin at least provided support for world wide communist organizations and Marxist publications. Xi Jinping never does this; he never visits workers' associations or poor peoples' associations, during his world travels. He meets only with capitalists and politicians.) World Marxist movements must remain antagonistic to Chinese ideological Marxism. They must not afford it any opportunity to lead or represent Marxism. Of course, this does not apply to independent Chinese Marxists.

Part III
**Neoliberal Psychology: The Subjectivity
of Neoliberal Capitalism**

Chapter 6

Neoliberal Psychology



This chapter will demonstrate that the qualities of neoliberal macro cultural factors do, in fact, generate a corresponding neoliberal psychology with homologous qualities. Environment acts as the source of this psychology and not simply its context. Neoliberal psychology thereby confirms the theory of macro cultural psychology that “The various internal contradictions which are to be found in different social systems find their expression both in the type of personality and in the structure of human psychology in that historical period” (Vygotsky 1994a, p. 176).

Psychology corresponds to Bourdieu’s “habitus”: “that system of [subjective] dispositions which acts as a mediation between structures and practices ... Structures reproduce themselves by producing agents endowed with the system of predispositions which is capable of engendering practices adapted to the structures and thereby contributing to the reproduction of these structures” (Bourdieu 1977, p. 487). “Inevitably inscribed within the dispositions of the habitus is the whole structure of the system of conditions as it presents itself in the experience of a life-condition occupying a particular position within that structure” (Bourdieu 1984, p. 172).¹

I shall present three types of neoliberal psychology that illustrate the three cornerstones of neoliberal society: (1) the capitalist form of psychology will be exemplified in developmental psychology, and also in sexuality that is practiced in hook-up, interpersonal interactions; (2) the class structure that prepares, administers, and distributes psychology will be exemplified in several psychological phenomena such as linguistic codes; (3) ideological obfuscation of neoliberal capitalism will be exemplified in the adoption of the entrepreneurial self as that generates distinctive psychological reactions. I will identify two ideological reactions.

I have previously stated that the three cornerstones of neoliberalism are interdependent in all macro cultural factors and psychological phenomena. Consequently, my examples of neoliberal psychology are one-sided in emphasizing one cornerstone for each. Each really embodies all three cornerstones and should ultimately be analyzed as such. However, it is useful to focus upon a particular neoliberal cornerstone in relation to a particular psychological phenomenon in order to illustrate its particular effect. This is particularly valuable in an introductory book on neoliberal psychology where a complete cultural analysis of a psychological phenomenon

would be complicated and difficult to follow. All science conceptually decomposes organic gestalts in order to identify and analyze specific processes.

I will demonstrate:

- That people's everyday psychology contains qualities of neoliberal society. This is what everyday psychology looks like.
- How everyday psychology acquires the form of neoliberalism's macro cultural factors.
- The social-political effects of neoliberal psychology which reproduce and reinforce neoliberal, macro cultural factors.
- The ways in which neoliberal psychology is a window into society that reveals the character of society, critiques it, and calls for its transformation.

I illustrate neoliberal psychology through a qualitative analysis of examples. I do not attempt a quantitative survey of the extensiveness (prevalence) of neoliberal psychology in neoliberal societies. That kind of quantitative documentation is important for knowing how successful neoliberalism has been in dominating everyday behavior of individuals. It reveals the relative power of neoliberalism in comparison with other cultural forces. These include vestiges of pre-neoliberal macro cultural factors, as well as current cultural factors that oppose neoliberalism—e.g., the cooperative movement, democratic socialism, the green movement. However, that kind of quantitative survey requires a foundational, prerequisite, qualitative understanding of what neoliberal psychology is and how to identify it. This chapter provides this foundation.

It utilizes a qualitative methodology known as “cultural phenomenology” or “cultural hermeneutics” (Ratner 1997a, 2002, pp. 135–140, 167–186, 2012b). Leontiev summarized it as follows: “Our general method consists in finding the structure of men's activity that is engendered by given concrete, historical conditions, and starting from that structure to bring out the essential psychological features of the structure of their consciousness” (Leontiev 2009, p. 207, my emphasis).

The concrete historical conditions of neoliberal psychology are oppressive, capitalist, and mystified. For these are the cornerstones of neoliberalism. These concrete conditions imbue psychology with oppression, capitalism, and mystification.

Psychology of Oppression

There is no question that the concrete historical conditions of neoliberalism are oppressive—alienating, mystifying, and stultifying—for the majority of the population (Varman and Al-Amoudi 2016; Varman and Vijay 2018). These oppressive macro cultural factors must be the starting point for analyzing neoliberal psychology. We must be alert to probable, oppressive features of neoliberal psychology that is formed by neoliberal macro cultural factors. Of course, empirical research must determine the actual extent of this psychology of oppression (see Ratner 2011, 2014b, 2017c, 2018b, c). This determination is the task of macro cultural psychology. It is

necessary because “The ideational, ideological, and institutional moments of neoliberalization have always been mixed up, mutually constituted” (Peck 2010, location 104), and even contradictory. “The various internal contradictions which are to be found in different social systems find their expression both in the type of personality and in the structure of human psychology in that historical period.” (Vygotsky 1994b, p. 176).

Neoliberal society is not completely, or monolithically, oppressive, and neoliberal psychology is not completely oppressed and oppressive. However, research must certainly take psychology of oppression as a central topic of concern.

Social oppression and psychology of oppression obviate neutral, apolitical descriptions of social environment and psychology. Highlighting oppression is essential for objective explanation, description, and prediction. Objectivity does not consist of political neutrality about society. Objectivity consists of identifying the actual, dominant, character of society, which in neoliberalism, is oppression. Ignoring oppression is to ignore central facts of society and psychology. Ignoring oppression is ideological. It is the antithesis of objective science and the antithesis of political and psychological emancipation.

Maintaining an oppressive social system requires a subjective element, a psychology of oppression, which complements material, social, military, and political oppression (just as all psychology is the subjective complement of social, material, and political activity).

Oppressed psychology is oppressive psychology because it oppresses the subjects who practice it and the recipients of their practice. Psychology of oppression is complicit in social oppression by reproducing it.

Oppression often takes subtle, nuanced, forms. Oppression is not evident from subjective feelings. Oppression can be experienced joyfully. Identifying with one’s oppressor brings comfort and even pride; oppressive addictions are pleasurable; stupefying sensationalism can feel good (Marcuse dubbed this “repressive desublimation”); abasing oneself to oppressive religion can feel comforting; egocentrism feels rewarding; self-commodification through consumerism feels enjoyable; and even genital mutilation is experienced by girls as a triumphant rite of passage and devotion to their faith and society. Psychology of oppression is therefore more pervasive than it seems. It requires distinctive methodologies to detect; and distinctive interventions to correct. It cannot be identified through subjective responses of enjoyment and well-being.

Psychology of oppression is qualitatively varied according to the social positions in the oppressive hierarchy that require different elements of oppressive behavior. The top positions require and generate an oppressor’s psychology of oppression that prepares them to command lower echelon occupants and obtain compliance. The populace needs a psychology of oppression that motivates and directs them to enact and accept the subservience of their class position. This is an oppressed psychology of oppression. Both are forms of psychology of oppression along the continuum of social oppression.

Oppressed psychology of oppression, as opposed to oppressor’s psychology of oppression, is what we shall explore in neoliberal psychology.

Psychology as Cultural Capital

“Cultural capital”—developed by Bourdieu—is a construct that conceptualizes psychological competencies as spawned by, organized by, supported by, operated by, expressing, and reproducing capitalist social relations. Cultural capital is not a metaphor for “cultural resource,” “cultural schema,” or “embodied knowledge,” which are generic cultural terms. Cultural capital concretizes generic cultural and psychological features in a capitalist form, organization, administration, character, distribution, and function. Bourdieu (1977, p. 186) made this point as follows: “cultural competence in its various forms cannot be constituted as cultural capital until it is inserted into the objective relations between the [specific] system of economic production and the system producing the producers.” “What is here of central interest for Bourdieu is not just the factual distribution within society of resources of differing kinds but, further, the processes through which dominant classes effectively appropriate and monopolise these resources and use them to their own exclusive benefit—above all, in preserving their position of dominance in regard to subordinate classes” (Goldthorpe 2007, p. 4). Cultural capital is what is meant by phrases “bourgeois art,” “bourgeois philosophy,” “bourgeois economics,” “bourgeois individual,” “bourgeois family,” “bourgeois house,” “bourgeois romantic love.” It is what Vygotsky meant by “bourgeois psychology.” “Bourgeois” is the essence of “cultural capital.”

Cultural capital may be the germ cell—or the essential, totalizing, unit of analysis—of psychology and culture in capitalist political economy (Ratner 2018a).

Neoliberal Ideology as a Psychological Tool: The Entrepreneurial Self

“ideological themes make their way into the individual consciousness (which as we know, is ideological through and through) and there take on the semblance of individual accents, since the individual consciousness assimilates them as its own. However, the source of these accents is not the individual consciousness...All ideological accents, despite their being produced by the individual voice, are social accents”. (Volosinov 1973, p. 22, my emphasis)

We have seen that neoliberalism propounds ideological concepts that obfuscate its oppressive reality. The question is, do people actually internalize the ideology of the entrepreneurial self as a psychological tool that organizes their self-concept and behavior.

Hormel and Mcalister (2016) describe the individualistic, entrepreneurial psychology in the consciousness of university professors. They interviewed university professors about their understanding of student debt that they and their colleagues had accumulated during their higher education. These professors believed that their colleagues’ student debt was due to their bad educational and financial choices (e.g.,

living beyond their means), not due to structural, financial, changes that reduced education financing from the federal and state governments beginning in the 1970s.

Several professors believed that students failed to correlate the size of their financial debt with their expected earnings. “You know you’re only going to make X, why would you take out so much debt if you’re not going to make enough to make that worth it?” This view blames student impulsiveness and irrationality for excessive borrowing. In the words of a professor in the human sciences, “They picked a field that’s less in demand. And those are choices we’ve made. Hopefully you’re happy with your choice.” Structural forces that precipitate student loans are never mentioned by these highly educated educators. Structural forces are obfuscated by neoliberal ideology of individual decision-making in a free market economy.

The authors conclude that neoliberal ideology has formed a powerful psychological tool, or technique of subjectification, or mentalité, or schema, which has shaped the psyche or habitus of these professors. Ideology supersedes, or covers, the social reality that causes indebtedness. Ideology is so powerful that it even distorts the perception and conception of young professors who have themselves incurred student debt in the neoliberal era. These professors have allowed ideology to frame their own personal experience—which includes their memory—as well as their interpretation of their colleagues’ experiences.

even indebted professors lacked any connection to debt prevalence. The story we build from the statistical analysis illustrates an interesting quandary that seems to repeat itself no matter how privileged or well-educated the population is. The fact that this particular population accepts and perpetuates the market ethos at this university (assessing worth through market values and individualizing public issues) demonstrates how complicated it is to challenge the prevailing neoliberal ideology, where even members of an intellectual elite find it difficult to see beyond explanations that conform to it. Professors rationalized others’ financial duress as a matter of “living beyond one’s means” or “poor career choices.” As one professor put it, “these are the choices we’ve made.” There were few channels through which to challenge these individual- level explanations. In the interviews, market ethos appeared hegemonic, since even assistant professors viewed their own debt situation as a private trouble, rather than a public issue.

The ideologically distorted false consciousness of the professors is political. For it distracts from understanding the objective economics of educational funding. This militates against political action that demands increased public financing to reduce the debt burdens. Instead, neoliberal false consciousness demands that students make more rational choices about the amount of money they can reasonably borrow and repay. Debt problems are individualized and depoliticized by neoliberal ideology and its false consciousness.

The powerful, disorienting, social and psychological effects of ideology make it imperative that social scientists become expert about the issue of ideology. They must become able to identify it and to recognize its distortion of reality. They must recognize that ideological perceptions, conceptions, memory, emotions, motivation, and imagination are false consciousness that cannot be accepted or validated, but must instead be corrected—just as every teacher recognizes and corrects errors in her students’ thinking. Perceptual psychologists contribute to this issue in their studies

of perceptual illusions that misperceive objective reality and draw false conclusions about it.

Psychologists must also comprehend the cultural basis of ideology—why it exists in certain societies and the function that it plays. Ideology disguises oppression and it therefore promotes oppression by exempting it from challenge. Of the various macro cultural factors in a cultural system, ideology is the most political. Its only basis and function is political—to promote the oppressive system. Other factors, such as education, for example, are ideological/political, however, they are additionally truly educative. Education teaches language, math, science, reading, and writing, which are fulfilling competences. Ideology is not educational, it is obfuscating and stultifying in order to prevent the recognition of social stultification.

Because ideology is political, it is only perceptible to the researcher who comprehends culture as political, as in our conical cultural model. The neutral view of culture, as quaint expressions of “human problem solving” or “human meaning-making” displaces politics from culture, and this displaces ideological obfuscations of politics and power. The political construct of ideology is a vital cultural-psychological research “tool” for rehabilitating and recognizing the politics of macro cultural phenomena, including psychological phenomena. Ideology transforms our view of cultural phenomena from quaint human meanings and shared beliefs, into political expressions of political interests, which can be oppressive, stultifying, and mystifying. Ideology makes the researcher consider whether a cultural-psychological expression is ideological and mystified or whether it is veridical, critical, and fulfilling.

Scharff (2016) found that young, female, classical musicians largely internalize the neoliberal conception of the individual as entrepreneur. This cultural concept inscribes and prescribes the psychology of the ideal self. It is a clear example of how a macro cultural factor contains psychological elements that are transferred to individuals who adopt it. They do not invent their psychological system; they internalize it from the macro culture that was created and supported by social leaders. In the case of the entrepreneur, it was created by the Pelerin ideologists with capitalist support.

The entrepreneurial self includes responsibility for one’s success and failure, and the need to engage in continual activity to improve self to its ultimate potential. Failure, whether in oneself or in others, is construed as an individual deficiency in motivation. Social factors beyond the individual are rarely considered. These points are adopted as the subjects’ self-concept and concept of other selves:

- You have to take care of your mental health, and if you’re down, you’ve got to just work through it.
- Many musicians experience health problems, yet their injuries were covered up out of fear that others would think it would develop into something chronic that one would be seen as an unreliable player and, therefore, not asked to work. Despite the acknowledgement that injuries were common, only a few subjects linked the prevalence of injuries to work conditions. Having an injury was overwhelmingly seen as an individual failure, which ‘mostly shows that your technique is wrong.’

- I put my head down and I did the applications. Nothing happens by accident. And there are so many lazy singers, and I don't have any pity for them if they are in that situation, because they are just lazy.

Scharff reports that the internalized entrepreneurial self organized subjects' cognitive and emotional responses to their precarious work conditions. Their psychological tool organized their cognitive interpretation of precarity as their own condition that reflects their decisions about their training, motivation, talents, etc. This cognition of personal responsibility generated emotional self-blame and self-doubt, it did not generate anger at social conditions.

This is what my critique of the entrepreneurial ideology (in Chap. 3, especially regarding individualistic self-constructs in Chinese psychiatry) predicts. Psychological research into the presence of this construct in everyday psychology, confirms these adverse effects.

A study of teachers found similar results:

In the group of pre-service teachers that form the focus of the present analysis, many found critical perspectives on schooling discouraging, and vociferously rejected them on those grounds. Faith in individual agency and the basic fairness of the current system was deeply ingrained. In their own narratives of schooling, these young women consistently de-emphasized the influence of ethnic, class, and historical factors... as a source of guiding values in their lives and crucial support for their professional ambitions. (Luykx and Heyman 2013, p. 353)

Liu detected entrepreneurial, individualistic themes of self in ethnographies of Chinese high school girls:

Across variations in SES and school performance, the participants invariably framed their narratives in terms of taking charge of one's own life and achieving success through hard work and 'proper' choice. There was a sense of urgency that today one's self is the most reliable source of livelihood and well-being. It would be unrealistic or too risky for a woman to rely on a man for livelihood. Therefore, a woman must be self-reliant and have a 'life of her own' – notions reminiscent of the post-Mao discourse of female independence. They thus positioned themselves as the 'autonomous modern female' eager for self-actualisation and self-expression. This is in line with research showing that urban youth tend to embrace the neoliberal notion of individual self-responsibility and keenly feel the pressure for success through personal efforts at the same time as they are eager for individual expression... The participants' life projects featured material wealth and personal freedom that would rely on personal achievement, typically involving long and painful acts of fierce competition, deferred gratification and self-denial. (Liu 2014, p. 22)

Young people's narratives display a strong belief in self-efficacy, which is the main quality enjoined by the neoliberal norms of the autonomous, self-enterprising self. Such a belief reflects a highly individualized solution in which responsibility for success or failure is placed solely on the individual. This constitutes what Furlong and Cartmel refer to as the 'epistemological fallacy,' which means that people's life chances remain highly structured in contemporary society at the same time as they increasingly seek solution on an individual, rather than a collective basis. As a result, it is no surprise that the young people in this study predominantly believed that it would be one's own fault if one fails to grasp the vastly available opportunities today. As such, they seemed to be disabled from a critical analysis of the various inter-related factors that continue to affect individuals' life chances in today's China, such as, inter alia, social class, gender, the fierce competition (which among

other things often indicates a lack of career opportunities for young people rather than otherwise), lack of social security (including that for the elderly), widespread corruption, and the various cultural norms that interact with the individuals' subjectivities. And for the university students in this study, to develop self-efficacy, or to get the *suzhi* necessary to enhance one's competitiveness, they have to keep running along the academic road on which they have been already launched. (Liu 2008, p. 200)

What Liu refers to as the epistemological fallacy of the individualistic, entrepreneurial, self is also an ontological fallacy. For it construes social life, social institutions, and social systems as actually reduced to individual acts; they are not simply perceived in individualistic terms.

These culturally-generated attributes of self are functional for reproducing and reinforcing neoliberal society that feeds off exploiting people. They produce hard-working, compulsive people who gear their lives to serving the system, all under the illusion of self-development. They take the system's requirements as their own objectives, motivation, and pride. They commodify themselves as human capital—i.e., they invest in their own training to acquire marketable competencies that will earn them maximum earnings (Holborow 2018 explains that studies investigate earnings returns from studying specific foreign languages). Of course, the harder they work, the more they are exploited because their productivity and profits are expropriated by their capitalist bosses. The percentage of economic output that goes to workers' wages has been declining since 1960; it is currently at the lowest point since then, while profit share rose from 2% of gross domestic product in 1984 to 16% in 2014. In dollars, every employee in the corporate nonfinancial sector currently generates \$17,000 annual profit for his or her capitalist owners—with more going to the largest, ruling capitalists, of course. Real wages have remained fixed from 2016 to 2018 despite massive tax cuts for the capitalist class. Even university-trained graduates do not usually find jobs and pay scales that match their training (Edsall 2018).

When neoliberal capitalism successfully keeps people in their place, the people blame themselves—individually and collectively—for their stagnation or decline. Breheny and Stephens (2009) conducted a discourse analysis of health professional's views of young mothers on welfare in New Zealand. The young mothers were found to be viewed as illegitimate citizens based on the neoliberal ethos that values self-sufficiency and paid labour (p. 265). The young mothers were seen to be lazy and socially destructive because of their inability to self-govern, which was attributed to their presumed failure to control their sexual urges and to take measures to avoid pregnancy. Young mothers on welfare were condemned as having failed to live up to cultural values of responsibility, rationality, and entrepreneurship.

The entrepreneurial self is an epistemological fallacy that generates exploitation while masking it as individual autonomy and development. This is a major socio-political-psychological problem. For it is an internalized mechanism that generates ignorance, fallacies, misplaced expectations, and misplaced perceptions-cognitions-emotions-motivations regarding self and others. The entrepreneurial self leads to fallacious critiques of, and anger toward, undeserving failure in self and others. At the same time, it leads to ignoring capitalist mistreatment of self and others, which

should generate resentment. (This is a toxic mix that readily leads to racism and classism. Blaming victims of poverty for the problem leads to attacking blacks, immigrants, and lower class people, instead of the capitalists who cause poverty.)

The entrepreneurial self is the exemplary neoliberal phenomenon: it rewards the capitalist class for exploiting the populace, which the epistemological-ontological fallacy intensifies.

Shildrick and MacDonald (2013, p. 285) found that many poor people accept neoliberal ideology as their psychological tool that generates their self-concept (identity) and their cognitive-perceptual-emotional reaction to other peoples' misfortune. One unemployed British woman said: "A lot of people round here are living in poverty but I think a lot of it's their own doing".

Luxton (2010) documented and elucidated this phenomenon in an empirical study. It is a model of cultural psychological research and deserves to be presented in detail. For it deepens our theoretical understanding of psychology. She interviewed 137 Canadians in 2000 who had suffered a calamity such as unemployment, underemployment, medical catastrophe. These were in socio-economic domains that had been attacked by neoliberal political reforms. Example, cuts in social services, imposing cumbersome procedures for applying for social benefits, forcing the participants to rely on their own devices to cope with tragedies. Luxton looked at how neoliberal ideology affected the subjects' psychological response to their individual tragedies. Her methodology is a form of "epistemic frame analysis" that examines the knowledge that community members advance and defend, their identities as portrayed within the larger sphere of political action, the underlying values revealed by such action, and how individuals legitimize those actions (Mullen et al. 2013, p. 189).

Luxton found that the victims of neoliberalism internalized the values of the neoliberal political economy that had impoverished them. These oppressive values formed the psychological tools with which they interpreted, perceived, and emotionally reacted to their plight and that of others.

Participants blamed themselves for their behavior. They directed anger at themselves. Their behavior was their own choice: "At 55 I have no income. Now I realize I should have done things differently. I should have gotten more education although there never seemed time for that. I could have saved more; found a cheaper place to live and put more money in the bank. Looking back I just see how I made so many mistakes that got me here."

Behavior was considered as part of their identity: "What else could I do? I had to be true to myself." "Maybe if I were smarter I would figure out how to do it better."

Successful individuals similarly took responsibility for success. "I did well because I worked hard. Anyone can succeed if they do that. I have no use for whiners and complainers who want government handouts because life treated them unfairly."

Participants expressed very little appreciation of the ways in which circumstances that were largely out of their control had shaped their lives. They knew that circumstances were out there but were not clear what they really were, how they affected life, or how they could be changed. The focus on individual causation, responsibility, and choice of behavior blunted social understanding.

This finding is generalized throughout the population. A British survey found that “less than one in ten of the population gives structural explanations for inequality” (Shildrick and MacDonald 2013, p. 297).

These empirical studies into cultural psychology confirm that individuals utilize the concepts and terms of entrepreneurial ideology to frame their thoughts, perceptions, emotions, motivations, and behaviors. Neoliberal values and ideology are operative in the problem of unemployment, and they are equally operative in the response to this misfortune. This makes the response an ineffective solution to the problem.

Ideological framing generates forms of psychology, and it blocks alternative forms, such as social-structural understandings, perceptions, emotions and motivation regarding experience, behavior, and social conditions. Entrepreneurial ideology blocks anger from arising at structural, political conditions; it blocks forming tight organizations to struggle against these conditions.

The studies reveal that ideology is a more powerful determinant of psychology than social reality is. Neoliberal subjects think, reason, perceive, emote, remember, expect, and hope according to the master narrative of the entrepreneurial individual, despite the fact that it contradicts what happens all around them and even what happens to themselves. Workers see capitalists closing enterprises, outsourcing labor and goods, simply for profit, not and psyches because individual employees were deficient. Workers see their own workmates being fired when they were hard working. They see themselves fired despite their hard work. Yet the ideology is so powerful that it overrides their knowledge and their experience. It causes them to blame themselves, not their bosses. Students see their schools failing because school budgets are cut, yet they blame themselves for being educationally unprepared. This is an extraordinary example of the power of cultural factors to shape psychology.

This power of ideology to distort psychology is only evident from cultural psychological research into the psychology of individuals. It is not predictable from the macro cultural level alone. The macro cultural level contains numerous factors, and it is impossible to know which is ultimately most influential on psychology. For instance, it is possible that workers would be more influenced by the control that capitalists have over social life, than by the ideological denial of this in the entrepreneurial self. The only way to determine which of these factors is a stronger social force on psychology and behavior is to examine individuals’ psychology. This is the value of cultural psychology (Ratner 2017b).

Other Psychological Reactions Generated by Entrepreneurial-Self Ideology

Self-deprecation is a mystified, self-destructive reaction to hardship. It is generated by the individualistic, self-responsible, ideological, entrepreneurial self. Self-blame

preserves the socially destructive neoliberal political economy reaction to political economic oppression.

This fictitious self-concept is an ingenious construct that generates other reactions to hardship, as well. People can strive to realize entrepreneurial, individual, agency by competing with others, or becoming more selfish and cunning, and more self-defensive.

This selection among entrepreneurial reactions is the creativity of the habitus that Bourdieu emphasized: the culturally formed habitus can introduce variations in cultural factors, while remaining within their neoliberal parameters. Selection and choice are not invented by individuals; the options reside in objective qualities and possibilities; individuals select among the given varieties of neoliberalism.

Neoliberal Class Structure as a Psychological Tool: The Social Class Demography of Psychological Phenomena

“The structures of higher mental functions represent a cast of collective social relations between people. These [mental] structures are nothing other than a transfer into the personality of an inward relation of a social order that constitutes the basis of the social structure of the human personality” (Vygotsky 1998, pp. 34, 169–170, my emphasis).

“The history of the school-age child and the youth is the history of very intensive development and formulation of class psychology and ideology” (Vygotsky 1998, p. 43).

“The working-class adolescent is not simply arrested at an earlier stage of development in comparison with the bourgeois adolescent, but is an adolescent with a different type of personality development, with a different structure and dynamics of self-consciousness. The differences here are not in the same plane as the differences between boys and girls. For this reason, the roots of these differences must be sought in the class to which the adolescent belongs, and not in one degree or another of his material well-being” (Vygotsky 1998, p. 178).

Vygotsky’s prescient comments are backed by the most robust finding in social science that human behavior/psychology is differentiated according to social class. Every single psychological function—from cognition to perception to personality to emotionality to masculinity to development to psychological disturbance—manifests sharp social class differences in quality and degree. Social class is the most powerful influence on all of these functions (Ratner 2002, pp. 19–31, 2012b, pp. 207–208; Skeggs 2015). For example, middle class Americans have 64% reduction in mortality from mental illness and drug abuse than lower class Americans (Wall St. Journal, Sept. 25, 2017; <https://www.wsj.com/articles/study-says-u-s-economic-expansion-is-unevenly-spread-1506344400>).

Educational psychology matches the class-based structure of educational institutions. Chapter three documents how educational institutions are engineered to

provide better educational outcomes for upper class students, and inferior outcomes for lower class students. Results of educational psychology conform to this structural engineering. In Berkeley high school, in California,

students at Berkeley High have very divergent academic experiences and outcomes, and the fault lines split neatly along the divisions of race and class. Among African American and Hispanic students at the school, just 20 and 25 percent, respectively, were at least proficient on a state English exam in 2004, whereas almost 80 percent of whites were proficient. In the comprehensive section of the school, 75 percent of African Americans got a D or an F during one semester, compared to only 20 percent of white students. Sixty-five percent of Hispanic students got a D or an F during the semester. 4 At the same time, Berkeley High's white students, often the sons and daughters of university professors and other highly educated professionals, are among the highest achievers in the state and the nation, with average scores of 817 on California's Academic Performance Index, compared to black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students at the school, who all averaged about 540 in 2004. An API score of about 800 is considered the mark of high-performing schools and students in California.

Advanced Placement courses are dominated by white students at Berkeley High. Although only 37 percent of the students at the school are white, 66 percent of the AP enrollees are white students. African Americans, at almost 30 percent of the student body but only 5 percent of the AP enrollees, are the least well represented of all ethnic groups in AP classes. (Sacks, pp. 65–66)

Connelly and Gale (2018) report numerous studies that demonstrate a large parental social class effect, net of parental education and gender, on cognitive ability in young children. Moreover, the gap widens over school years. This cumulative deficit testifies to the increasing power of social class on psychology as individuals mature and become socialized. Of course, race manifests the same cumulative deficit between whites and blacks.

This is illustrated in a detailed comparison of the cognitive development of children. Of children who scored in the top 25% when they were five years old, 65% remained in the top 25% when they were ten years old if they were from high SES families. However only 27% remained in the top 25% if they were from low SES families. Conversely, of 5-year olds in the bottom 25% of cognitive achievement, only 34% remained at that level when they were 10, if they came from high SES families. However, 67% remained low achievers if they came from low SES families. Social class overwhelms early cognitive competence as a determinant and predictor of 10 year old cognitive development (Ratner 2006, pp. 125–126). Social class diabolically stratifies cognitive development of children whose cognitions initially do not conform to their class position. If you are smart but poor, your soon class will soon diminish your cognitive functioning to adjust you to your oppressed lower class status; conversely, if you are rich but slow, your class will quickly enhance your cognitive functioning that is necessary for upper class performance. This social engineering is accomplished in part by the educational system that is designed for this purpose (Chap. 3).

The insidious basis of the cumulative deficit in psychology is that children who are born with relatively equal capacities, must be engineered over time to become psychologically different in accordance with political-economic-class needs. Lower

class and minority students who suffer the greatest psychological/cognitive loss to the cumulative deficit are the higher achieving children, not the lower achievers (Tomlin et al. 2013, p. 359). For they are the most class-defiant and require the most class adjustment downward. Far from neoliberalism being a meritocracy, it decimates the highest competencies among outliers to the social class that the political economy requires them to occupy. Maintaining class structure is more important than rewarding and enriching psychological competencies. This is the real purpose of the educational institution. This is a powerful insight from Psychology about the character of neoliberalism.

An important example of the psychological effects of neoliberalism is class differences in linguistic styles. We have reviewed Bernstein's analysis and predictions in chapter one. At this point, we can report empirical linguistic effects of neoliberal class structure.

Empirical Evidence About the Class Structure of Sociolinguistic Codes

Bernstein (1964, p. 67) states:

Some research specific to this thesis based upon small samples of subjects and speech does indicate that middle-class and working-class subjects aged fifteen years, male, matched for average verbal I.Q., differ in their coding orientation in the predicted direction. This research further indicates that differences in the time dimension of the planning processes inhering in the respective codes are also in the predicted direction.

Further research has shown that middle-class and working-class subjects, male, at two age levels, matched for average verbal and average nonverbal I.Q., operated with the predicted codes in a sample of representative written work. This study also showed a relation between levels of abstraction and the use of the respective codes.

There is also firm evidence showing a relative deterioration in verbal I.Q. between the ages of eight and eleven years and between eleven and fifteen years for working-class children when compared with middle-class children between the same ages. Other research shows clearly that the verbal I.Q. scores of working-class subjects, particularly lower working-class, are likely to be severely depressed in relation to their scores at the higher ranges of a nonverbal test. This deterioration in verbal I.Q., discrepancy between verbal and nonverbal I.Q. tests and failure to profit from formal education on the part of working-class children, particularly those of lower working-class origins, is thought to be closely related to the control on types of learning induced by a restricted code. The relative backwardness of some working-class children may well be a form of culturally induced backwardness transmitted to the child through the implications of the linguistic process. The code the child brings to the school symbolizes his social identity. It relates him to his kin and to his local social relations. The code orients the child progressively to a pattern of relationships which constitute for the child his psychological reality and this reality is reinforced every time he speaks.

Bernstein developed specific qualitative and quantitative metrics to assess the presence, or absence, of particular codes in linguistic specimens. These have been independently documented (Sadovnik 2001: 9–10; Anyon 1980, 1981). Freitag (1984,

p. 165) tested 206 Brazilian children (ages 6–9 and 13–16, to identify social class and maturational influences on speech) and found a strong correlation between Bernstein’s speech categories and social class. Only 7% of the upper middle class children utilized restricted or predominantly restricted codes, whereas 21% of working class children did, and 71.5% of slum children did. On the other hand, 70.4% of upper middle class children used elaborated or predominantly elaborated codes, whereas only 42.1% of working class kids used them, and none of the slum children did. Speech mode was also related to cognitive development: children who used restricted speech codes functioned at the level of concrete operations, whereas no children using elaborated codes used concrete operations; conversely, elaborated speech codes were associated with stabilized formal operations—with no children using restricted codes able to use formal operations (Freitag 1984: 168).

Bernstein’s empirical research not only validates the bare predictions and conclusions of macro cultural psychological theory about psychology reflecting neoliberal, class society. It also validates the theory’s theoretical corpus—including explanatory constructs, principles, processes, relationships, and culture theory. Bernstein reveals the what, how, and why of classed language in lived development/formation. This is a model of macro cultural psychological research. It validates macro cultural psychology as a theory for psychological research. It reveals that psychology is indeed a macro cultural factor that originates in macro cultural factors that are organized in a conical cultural system; psychology embodies their features and interests, which are directly transmitted through cultural-psychological tools (such as socially structured linguistic codes), and which prepare for and reproduce the formative cultural system. Macro cultural psychology, as Bernstein utilizes it, is a complete theory of psychology. It fully explains the form and content of linguistic styles in macro cultural terms and processes. Alternative theories are neither necessary nor useful for supplementing this theory.

Cultural Capital as a Psychological Tool that Generates Neoliberal Form to Psychology

Neoliberal Developmental Psychology

Neoliberal psychology includes stages of cognition comparable to Piaget’s stages of cognitive and moral development. Studies reveal that children collect consumer products for different reasons at different ages. First graders often compared their possessions to those of others in terms of quantity. Collecting appeared to be simply a way of getting more than someone else. Among fifth graders, however, the motivations for collecting had more social connotations. Collecting was appreciated as a way of socially expressing one’s uniqueness and attaining a sense of personal achievement by having things that others do not. Children define personal identity in terms of commodities as early as fifth grade (10 years old). The identity of other peo-

ple is similarly expressed in terms of possessions. Children have better impressions of people who own expensive products than of people with cheap ones. Sixth graders believe that the owner of Nike shoes is more popular and smarter than the owner of Kmart shoes, whereas second graders see no difference in people as a function of their possessions (Ratner 2012b, p. 563).

Further insight into neoliberal childhood stages is provided by sociologist Cook (2004). He has explained how the character of the child, as well as the character of maternal love for children has taken on a capitalist form. New emotions in parents and children were cultivated in the 1920s and 30s by clothing manufacturers and marketers in order to induce them to consume quantities of expensive clothing. This proves the cultural-political function of emotions and needs. This commodification of emotions and needs was introduced in chapter one, in the section on emotional branding as a cultural-psychological tool. Cook explicates this process in detail. He identifies the capitalist basis of neoliberal branding in 1920s marketing. This confirms my point in chapter two that all neoliberalism is an extension and intensification of capitalist relations, and must be understood as such.

The strategy and objective of commodifying children's and mothers' emotions/needs was spelled out in the trade journal *Infants' Department*, in its inaugural issue in 1927: "If mothers bought for their babies only what was absolutely required, a few yards of diaper cloth, a knitted undergarment or two, and a few dresses would be the limit of their purchases. But the maternal instinct that desires everything that will contribute to the comfort and welfare of the baby is enlisted on the side of the merchant who knows how to create desire and inspire confidence" (Cook 2004, p. 58).

Clothing merchants cultivated a distinctive new form of maternal love and maternal cognition of children, that was manifested in continuously imagining children's desires, and indulging them through consumer products. Merchants wrote quantities of articles and advertisements in trade journals and popular magazines expressing the following psychological themes that inculcated this capitalist form maternal love and children's needs emotions to be discussed momentarily:

- Mothers should express love for their children effusively.
- Children have an insatiable need for love.
- Children's needs are great and must be satisfied quickly.
- Children like new stimulation; they are dissatisfied (bored) with stable, familiar conditions.
- Children are entitled to things.
- The good life is defined as having more material possessions.
- Children's appearance is very important to their success and happiness.
- Children know themselves and are capable of making choices to make themselves happy.
- Parents do not really understand children's needs and development, and should not interfere.
- Children are impulsive, hedonistic, egotistical.
- Children identify themselves with material objects.

- Children are concerned with peers' opinions.
- Children are unique individuals who require special conditions to thrive. Ordinary things will not bring out the uniqueness of each individual.
- Children pass through distinctive stages of development in quick succession.
- Children want to grow up quickly.
- Mothers are insecure about rapidly changing social norms and how to best bring up their children.

Each one of these cultivated emotions/needs had a commercial function involving the consumption of clothes and other commodities. Children's needs were ideologically intensified and filled with material content. This required ideologically intensifying mothers' love to continuously meet children's continuous material needs by material satisfactions. Both children's and mothers' needs were to be filled by consumer products that generated capital for producers.

Mothers' love was not only to be satisfied in new ways through clothing and consumer products. The very quality of emotions, needs, and self-concept was transformed. Mothers' love was intensified and extended. It was now to be manifested continuously and effusively so that children would be constantly aware of it and never in doubt about it.

The foregoing list of emotional themes cultivated a new emotionality in children as well as mothers. In contrast to the restrained, rational, diffident emotionality of Puritan children, bourgeois children's emotions were cultivated to be intense, impulsive, insistent, irresistible, egocentric, unquestioned, overtly expressed, hedonistic, and immediately gratified through consumer products. Marketers unleashed children's desires from parental control so that children could demand more products. Children's independence and individuality had a commercial motive. "Markets and market mechanisms are inseparable from the historical process of elevating the child to more inclusive levels of personhood" (ibid. p. 68). As the advertising director of *Child Life* magazine said in 1938, "An important factor in the growth and development of the juvenile market is the trend toward stimulating greater self-expression in children" (ibid. p. 77). Marketers thus cultivated the generation gap.

Clothing merchants cultivated an additional psychological phenomenon to instigate consumption of children's clothing. They promoted the idea that biopsychological development occurs in distinctive, sequential stages of short duration, which children want to traverse rapidly. Delayed development in one stage was claimed to be emotionally frustrating and psychologically damaging. Stage psychology had the economic purpose of enabling merchants to market distinctive clothing (toys, games, and other products) to each stage (just as creating distinctive psychological disorders creates a market for new medications). Each psychological stage was converted into a market for new products. Children were said to need distinctive clothes that were appropriate to their momentary psychological stage. Outmoded clothing would retard psychological development to the next stage because peers and teachers—and the child herself—would treat the child according to the younger styles that she wore. The more stages, and the more rapidly that children traversed them, the more new, distinctive clothes (and products) could be sold.

While clothing merchants said they were simply designing clothes to meet the natural developmental stages and needs of the child, they actually cultivated the child's stages and needs to meet the economic demand for profit. For example, clothing designed for toddlers was the mechanism for instantiating the notion of toddler as a psychosocial stage of life: "In 1936 the 'toddler' as a commercial persona or construct began to take shape." "The term 'toddler' began to be used with great frequency as a size range and as a merchandising category, and soon after, as an age-stage designation" (ibid. p. 86, emphasis added). "Commercial interests and concerns coalesce and interact to essentially institutionalize a new category of person and new phase of the life course" (ibid. p. 85). Department stores also segregated age-graded products into separate departments (ibid. pp. 115–116), thereby physically objectifying and promoting the notion of distinct developmental stages.

The ontogenetic category, toddler, that parents (and psychologists) regard as natural, originated as a commercial category invented by businessmen who objectified and promulgated it through clothing products (ibid. pp. 18, 19).² Psychology became a commodity that served money. Clothing did not simply express psychological stages, clothing defined the stages; psychological stages conformed to the distinctions that were displayed in clothing styles (Cook, p. 97).

This is an important example of the macro cultural-political forming of psychology for political objectives of the ruling class. Childhood and motherhood were treated as cultural capital in order to generate economic capital for capitalists.

Neoliberalism Is A Sexually Transmitted Disease: Hook-up Sex

A prominent neoliberal form of sexuality is Hook-up Sex. It is common on university campuses, but also beyond these. I present detailed descriptions of hook-up sex that are based upon students' own reports. Then I shall elucidate neoliberal cultural themes that can be discerned within the sexual descriptions. (My point in presenting examples is to understand the neoliberal quality of certain psychological functions, not to determine its prevalence in the population. It is interesting to know that a survey, which included 24,000 students and spanned 21 universities, reported 20% of women and a quarter of men had hooked up with 10 or more people. Less than 1/3 of college students graduate without hooking up once, Wade 2017, p. 17)

Taylor (2013) writes

At 11 on a weeknight earlier this year, her work finished, a slim, pretty junior at the University of Pennsylvania did what she often does when she has a little free time. She texted her regular hookup — the guy she is sleeping with but not dating. What was he up to? He texted back: Come over. So she did. They watched a little TV, had sex and went to sleep. Their relationship, she noted, is not about the meeting of two souls. "We don't really like each other in person, sober," she said, adding that "we literally can't sit down and have coffee."

Ask her why she hasn't had a relationship at Penn, and she won't complain about the death of courtship or men who won't commit. Instead, she'll talk about "cost-benefit" analyses and the "low risk and low investment costs" of hooking up.

"I positioned myself in college in such a way that I can't have a meaningful romantic relationship, because I'm always busy and the people that I am interested in are always busy, too."

Taylor explains that elite universities are filled with driven young women, many of whom aspire to be doctors, lawyers, politicians, bankers or corporate executives. In the competitive job environment with unsure job prospects and a shaky economy, many of them approach college as a race to acquire credentials: top grades, leadership positions in student organizations, sought-after internships. Their time out of class is filled with club meetings, sports practice and community-service projects.

These women said they saw building their résumés, not finding boyfriends (never mind husbands), as their main job. They envisioned their 20s as a period of unencumbered striving, when they might work at a bank in Hong Kong one year, then go to business school, then move to a corporate job in New York. The idea of lugging a relationship through all those transitions was hard for many to imagine.

In this context, some women, seized the opportunity to have sex without relationships, preferring "hookup buddies" (regular sexual partners with little emotional commitment) to boyfriends.

For them, college is an endless series of competitions: to get into student clubs, some of which demand multiple rounds of interviews; to be selected for special research projects and the choicest internships; and, in the end, to land the most elite job offers. "We are very aware of cost-benefit issues and trading up and trading down, so no one wants to be too tied to someone that, you know, may not be the person they want to be with in a couple of months," one girl said.

Instead, she enjoyed casual sex on her terms — often late at night, after a few drinks.

"I definitely wouldn't say I've regretted any of my one-night stands," she said. "I'm a true feminist," she added. "I'm a strong woman. I know what I want."

Neoliberal, cultural themes are evident in this sensitive account. These interviews reveal how these students' sexual relations are structured by socioeconomic pressures and neoliberal values. They are not simply "casual sex for pleasure." They rather reflect concrete, capitalist pressures and values, although they are a minority of college women, at this point in time. Verbal accounts of sexual experience reflect the characteristics of neoliberal cultural factors without usually explicitly naming these factors—although sometimes they do. Indeed, the subjects are usually not aware of the specific macro cultural factors that generate and organize and sustain their psychology/behavior. Their psychology/behavior is analogous to the shadows in Plato's cave allegory, whose origins outside the cave are not comprehended. The cultural origins and character are better comprehended by external observers (cultural psychologists) who have cultural names for them. (Dilthey calls this *besserverstehen*, or better understanding than the subject has of phenomenological experience.) This is akin to a doctor who peruses a patient's verbal descriptions of symptoms, and then

employs his expertise to identify their causes, prognosis, and treatment (see Ratner 1997a, 2002, pp. 135–140, 167–186 for discussion of cultural phenomenological methodology—or cultural hermeneutics, in Dilthey’s words—that elucidates cultural themes in psychological expressions).

These women who engage in hook-up sex explain their sexual choice as a clear-sighted way of coping with neoliberal social pressures for success in school, obtaining a high-status, demanding, unstable, job after graduation, and other pressures to exercise, engage in extra-curricular activities (sports, clubs, dance), and social life. Neoliberal pressures not only form the context of their lives, they also form the response to this context. Their response takes the form of adjusting/contouring their sexual-emotional relationships to be compatible with neoliberal socioeconomic pressures, i.e., to enable the women to successfully cope with these pressures. The cognitive, decision-making process about how to cope takes the form of a business calculation. It weighs costs and benefits of personal involvements vis a vis socioeconomic requirements. The latter are judged to be more beneficial than personal entanglements, which are construed as a cost to socioeconomic success.

Then, the outcome of this business calculation is to adjust the form and content of their sexual-emotional activities to the form and content of neoliberal, socioeconomic interactions. The women remain independent, self-directed, egocentric, unencumbered, nimble, available to quickly shift into tough, competitive, socioeconomic activities when they call. In other words, because socioeconomic activities are tough and competitive and impersonal, and do not make allowances for personal entanglements, women have accommodated to this social form and adopted it for their personal-sexual relationships. They become detached, impersonal, and focused upon obtaining the service (product) they want in exchange for giving their partner a reciprocal service (product)—namely sex. This abstract buyer-seller interaction that is mediated by services of equal value, displaces concern for the human individual, just as it does in the economic marketplace. The buyer and seller do not care about each other as people, only as suppliers or consumers of a service/product.

These women have contoured their sexual-personal relationships in strict accordance of the requirements of neoliberal, capitalist success. Hook-ups are not simply casual, free sex. The girls tell us that their sex is carefully contoured to meet the demands of neoliberal material and social success. Hook-up sex, like all psychology, has a cultural objective and basis.

These hook-up women have adopted neoliberal ideals as their own ideals of success, freedom, and pleasure. They are satisfied with their cost-benefit approach to sex; indeed, they pride themselves on them because they are a measure of strength, decisiveness, autonomy, success, and competitiveness—in neoliberal terms. Detached, alienated, impersonal, calculating, self-centered, sexual relations are confabulated as feminist/emancipatory. These neoliberal women have given feminism to the neoliberal cause.

More detail about hook-up sex is provided in sociologist Wade’s (2017) report of her students’ experiences. They echo the previous idea that market relationships are liberating and should be applied to sexual relations where they displace traditional myths about romantic love.

28 percent of the women believe that romantic love brainwashes women, tricking them into investing their time and energies in someone else; another 19 percent think that it might. Almost half of female students, then, think that love might bring them something bad instead of something good. “Right now,” explained a female student at Princeton, “I have to focus on my career, getting through medical school, establishing myself.” “Based on my own experience,” wrote a Wesleyan University alum, “this new sexual paradigm has given women the freedom to focus on their own lives and careers.” “I know it sounds hyperbolic,” wrote a female senior at Northwestern: “but I mean it when I say that getting married right now would ruin my life. I want the chance to pick up and move to a new city for a new job or for adventure, without having to worry about a spouse or a family. I need to be able to stay at the office until three in the morning if I have to and not care about putting dinner on the table.”

Many of my female students feel the same. They argue that hooking up is a way to “reject oppressive sexism,” “pursue sexual liberation,” and challenge the idea “that women are supposed to be passive.” They’re not alone. The hookup is “the road to sexual emancipation,” asserted a woman at the University of Florida. “My friends and I are like sexual vultures,” bragged a woman at Syracuse. Hook-ups are described by women as sexual liberation itself. (Wade 2017, pp. 68, 67, my emphasis)

Romantic attachments are felt to be encumbrances upon market relations, which are the key to economic, social, and psychological success/fulfillment. Romance must be superseded by market social relations in personal-sexual relationships. This means impersonal, alienated, uncaring, egocentric, hedonistic, transient, personal-sexual relationships, which is hook-up sex.

Getting It on: The Neoliberal Mating Call to Neoliberal Sex

Hook-up sex is carefully prepared for. It is not suddenly and unexpectedly forced upon girls. For instance, girls prepare for hook-ups by dressing appropriately, verbally encouraging each other, and consuming alcohol/drugs in order to free themselves to participate:

The goal is to look “fuckable,” Miranda said, her voice buzzing with excitement. She and her roommate Ruby were tearing through their tiny closets, collecting a pile of “provocative” items to consider wearing to that night’s party. The theme was “burlesque,” so they were going for a classy stripper vibe. Bridget offered her two cents as she headed back to her own room: “Lacy bras, corsets, fishnet stockings— anything that hints at being sexy underwear!” Ruby pulled on tights, short shorts, and calf-high boots. On top she wore a bright yellow bra and a see-through white tank top. Miranda plumped her breasts and contemplated her outfit, a black crop top and a cherry red skirt with a zipper running down the front. She unzipped it a bit from the bottom and, then, a bit more. Ruby finished her “sleepy, drowsy, sexy eye look” with a splash of yellow to match the bra, just as Bridget walked back in balancing three shots of Smirnoff. “Let’s get some dick tonight, ladies!” she yelled. They tossed back their shots and headed out. It was approaching midnight. (Wade 2017, p. 27)

Initiating Hook-up Sex: Grinding Dancing at Parties

After getting physically and mentally prepared for hook-up sex, social interactions are cultivated to make it happen.

Ensuring that they are seen dancing and potentially hooking up with just the right person, all while super drunk, takes careful planning, consideration, and decision-making. It is a delicate ballet, a calculated grind. Men hope to approach and be welcomed by the buttocks of women who are considered to be as hot or hotter than them. Women, in response, make their own judgment call—or let their friends make one from across the circle—and respond by grinding with feeling, with indifference, or skittering away. If one or both partners seem uninterested, the dance may be short-lived. If both partners are into it, the physical contact can escalate quickly. A Stanford student observed that “men are allowed to touch women in such ways that would otherwise be deemed inappropriate.” My students said the same: it’s “a license to grope,” one woman remarked. If things get especially hot and heavy, it’s perfectly within the rules to reach underneath a woman’s clothes and even into her body. Fingering occurs with some regularity at college dance parties. It’s “a common thing,” observed one of my students, echoing several others. Accordingly, students in monogamous relationships don’t generally grind, except with each other; it’s considered cheating” (38).

At a party, “All around me,” she wrote, “I saw female friends of mine meeting guys and flirting, dancing, and then making out.” She would join the dance floor shortly and, in the midst of the throbbing crowd, end up dancing with Levi. They danced for a while, she turned around, and eventually Levi carried her piggyback the two blocks to his dorm. They fell into his bed, laughing, and “suddenly it was happening.” (p. 39).

Again, we see girls actively, deliberately, voluntarily, and excitedly planning and initiating hook-up sex. This includes a specific social psychology about selecting acceptable partners. It must be as crude as the preparations of the act in order to consummate the crude character of the hook-up itself.

The Social Psychology of Selecting Acceptable Partners for Hook-up Sex

About a guy she actually quite disliked, one of my female students said plainly, “I want to hook-up with him for the social status.” Hooking up with students who are widely considered hot was a way to get some of their status to rub off on you. “In our room,” one of my male students wrote, “sex is a commodity, which, like gold, increases a man’s social status, especially if he ‘scores’ or ‘pounds’ an especially blonde girl.” Blonde is hot.”

“The whole point of hook-ups,” wrote one girl, “is get some and then be able to point the person out to your friends and be like, ‘Yeah, that guy. That’s right. The hot one over there. I got that.’” “It’s almost bragging rights,” revealed another, “if you hook-up with a guy with a higher social status.” Athletes on certain teams and members of high-status fraternities tend to be considered hotter than other men on campus, all things being equal. As a Bowdoin student said, “He’s on the baseball team, so it doesn’t even matter who he is.” One of my students noticed that women who hook-up with certain kinds of men would make a point to emphasize it. “She will say, ‘I just hooked up with a frat guy,’ or ‘I hooked up with a guy on

the football team,” she noticed, “instead of just simply saying she hooked up with a guy.” It makes a difference, she wrote: “It automatically sounds better.” (Wade pp. 34–36)

“From a woman at Duke: “Frat stars and athletes— those are the only ones that matter. I mean, honestly.” Using indicators like hotness, blondness, fraternity membership, and athletic prowess, students form a working consensus about who is hookup-worthy, and that guides their decisions. “So many hook-ups,” confirmed one student, “are dictated by how our peers view the potential partner.” She admitted that she usually asked other people what they thought of guys before getting together with them. “I am unable to separate my opinion from those of my friends,” she wrote frankly. Let me be careful to distinguish this from the idea that people seek sexual contact with others they find attractive. Nominally, at least, this idea acknowledges that people have individual tastes. Beauty, they say, is in the eye of the beholder. In hookup culture, though, beauty is in the eyes of the beholders, plural. A body’s value is determined by collective agreement. It’s crowdsourced (pp. 36–37)

These comments reveal that the hook-up is not entirely for sex. It has an instrumental function of elevating one’s social status. Thus, the hook-up uses the partner for one’s own sexual pleasure and also for one’s own social status. Both uses are devoid of any personal consideration about the partner, which recapitulates economic market relationships, as I have explained earlier.

An example of how hook-up partners use each other for their own satisfaction is Kendra who quite enjoyed her hookup. “I had fun,” she remembered, “and it was a learning experience, and it made me feel good about myself because I felt attractive to someone.” (p. 37). Kendra basks in the abstract feeling of being attractive to someone without having had any personal interaction during the crude sexual act. The concrete individuality of the boy who found her attractive, and the reasons he found her attractive, are irrelevant to Kendra’s happiness about having been recognized by someone, i.e., anyone.

Emotionally Capping the Hook-up

Students actively use their agencies and subjectivities to keep hook-ups impersonal, casual, alienated, hedonistic. They minimize their interaction with their partner to ensure that s/he does not take it as a sign of affection which can be deepened:

Expressions of tenderness— like gentle kisses, eye contact, holding hands, cuddling, and caresses— are to be avoided. “Cuddling is for people you love,” insisted a student, adding, “if you hold hands during sex, you’re making love. If you make eye contact during sex, you’re making love.” Hooking up is not making love. It makes sense, when you think about it. If students accept the idea that casual sex is meaningless, then essentially everything else— no matter how small— carries more meaning. “That little touching definitely signifies something,” wrote a student about holding hands, “something a little more than just fucking.” (p. 136)

After it’s all over, students confirm that a hookup meant nothing by giving their relationship— whatever it was— a demotion. The rule is to be less close after a hookup than before, at least for a time. If students were good friends, they should act like acquaintances. If they were acquaintances, they should act like strangers. And if they were strangers, they shouldn’t

acknowledge each other's existence at all. "Unless at the beginning you've made it clear that you want more than a hookup," wrote a male student at Bowdoin, "then the expectation is... just to pretend it didn't happen." (p. 47). A female student snorted when asked if she would hook-up with a guy a second time. "No way," she said gruffly. She had "no feelings for him," so he was "not a viable hookup ever again." (p. 46)

"Since Ruby and Levi had been close friends before their hookup, she temporarily demoted him to acquaintance. A few days later, Ruby filled me in: I've seen and interacted with Levi a few times— definitely much less than I would have in a normal three-day span. I've only spent about ten minutes alone with him, in which we joked and made casual small talk, graciously avoiding the fact that we've had each other's genitals in our mouths." It worked. A week later, Ruby would happily report, "It's as if it [the hook-up] never happened and I am perfectly good with that." (p. 48)

Here, Ruby carefully capped Levi's perception and emotion about the hook-up so that she could maintain her former distant relationship with him.

Girls do not want attachments and they resent it when boys think they do: "I felt no attachment to him whatsoever," Netta wrote matter-of-factly. But he came by her dorm room drunk the next day anyway, sloppily blurting out that he thought she was too "attached to him." She was "completely insulted" by his assumption that she was the more "desperate" of the two." (pp. 141–142). Girls don't want boys caring if they are hurt because that is "benevolent sexism."

The alienated, impersonal quality of neoliberal, hook-up sex is depicted by Magritte's painting *The Lovers*:



Macro Cultural Psychological Analysis of Hook-up Sex

Macro cultural psychological methodology for analyzing hook-up sex follows Leontiev's formulation: "Our general method consists in finding the structure of men's activity that is engendered by given concrete, historical conditions, and starting from that structure to bring out the essential psychological features of the structure of their consciousness" (Leontiev 2009, p. 207, my emphasis).

Of course, this isomorphism is not mechanically stamped onto consciousness by social conditions. Individual subjectivity is actively involved in fashioning their psychology from macro cultural factors. Individuals organize neoliberal cultural elements in a particular manner and draw them into their sexual and personal social relations. Agency internalizes and reproduces normative cultural factors in new variants in new social-psychological fields. Individual agency is the subjective animation of this cultural-psychological process that ultimately derives from the political character of macro cultural factors and psychological tools.

This is evident in the first narrative from University of Pennsylvania girls, as I have articulated. Personal enactments of activity are moments of forming a cultural habitus, they are not moments of personal expression or agency. Hook-up sex, like all psychological phenomena, is culture-centric, not person-centric.

Wade's students confirm that wild, free, crude, oblivious, sensational sex is actually an act of social cognition, social conformity, and social reproduction. This is an important lesson of cultural psychology.

Wade's hook-up students—female and male—appropriate specific neoliberal forms of behavior into their personal, sexual encounters. These include:

- Estrangement—hook-ups reproduced economic estrangement. Boys and girls eschew personal intimacy and dependency, just as economic players eschew close personal ties to prepare for market interactions, fluctuations, and competitions. The point of market exchange is to sell and purchase the product as efficiently as possible. The hookup is impersonal from the start. The subjects are merely repositories of a product—sex—which is to be exchanged as efficiently as possible, without personal entanglements. Girls prepare to have sex with anonymous partners who are stand-ins for random consumers that producers attract on the economic market. Girls grind with boys whom they do not even see, and they use signs from their onlooking friends to decide whether to continue the grind or dispose of him for another anonymous consumer.
- Volatility/precarity/temporality of social relations.
- instrumentalism—using people for one's self-gain.
- Egocentrism—fulfilling one's own desires while not considering the other's.
- Commoditization—of one's self and body, and others' selves and bodies, to raise their exchange value on the interpersonal marketplace of status.
- Branding. Selves and bodies are packaged and marketed in terms of their superficial appearance just as consumer products are. Consumerist branding permeates the sexual relation.

- Material success of accumulating material products is more important than personal relations. This neoliberal economics is recapitulated in hook-up sex in the form of accumulating the number of physical, impersonal, sexual conquests. Conspicuous consumption of sex.
- The need for rapid, frequent, hedonic, sensational, superficial sex leads to quick satiation of this need and equally quick re-arousal. Continuous, multiple, superficial experiences replace a few, deeply satisfying experiences. Deep, psycho-sexual relationships come to feel heavy, complicated, demanding, and time-consuming. This is the pattern of junk food: it makes complex, wholesome food feel heavy and tasteless, and time consuming and effortful to prepare and consume. Junk food makes, people crave rapid, superficial, effortless, simple, spectacular, tastes (overwhelmingly sweet or salty or spicy) that continually resurface because they are not satisfying.
- Success is defined as social status that is derived from attractive products, not from personal attributes of individuals. The narratives of girls and boys about their parties emphasize the selection of partners who are attractive to one's friends and thereby elevate one's social status, even when one does not like the partner. This recapitulates the social status that dominates consumerism of brand name consumer products. Opinions of others define success more than one's own fulfillment does.
- Entrepreneurial ideology of success, independence, and strength/power. Hook-up girls accept the neoliberal entrepreneurial ideology of a free, autonomous, self-reliant, self-serving, self-defining, uninvolved, unrestrained, uncompromising, self-protective, emotionless, realistic, non-romantic businesswoman as emancipatory and powerful and successful. These behavioral/psychological attributes that are packaged in the entrepreneurial construct (by its founders in the Pelerin Society), are consumed by admirers of the ideal. This is neoliberal feminism that is promoted by neoliberals (Miller and Plencner 2018; Rottenberg 2013; Prügl 2014; Ferguson 2017; Pruchniewska 2018).

All of the neoliberal elements of hook-up sex are prevalent in the social domains that individuals traverse—school, the media, medical care, consumerism (Bauman 1999, 2003). Movies, computer games, and television programs are almost exclusively dominated by superficial, sensational, physical, impersonal sex and violence, with hardly any character development or meaningful, personal relationships. Currently, mainstream programs are populated with science fiction, animated, robots which are devoid of any humanity. The sociologist Angela McRobbie “surveys changes in British film, television, popular culture and women’s magazines and demonstrates how feminist content has disappeared from them in the last decades and has been replaced by aggressive individualism, by hedonistic female phallicism in the field of sexuality, and by obsession with consumer culture” (Oksala 2013, p. 40).

Our student subjects totalize these and extend them into their sexuality. This is modelled in Fig. 6.1 (where the dominant political economy colors other macro cultural factors).

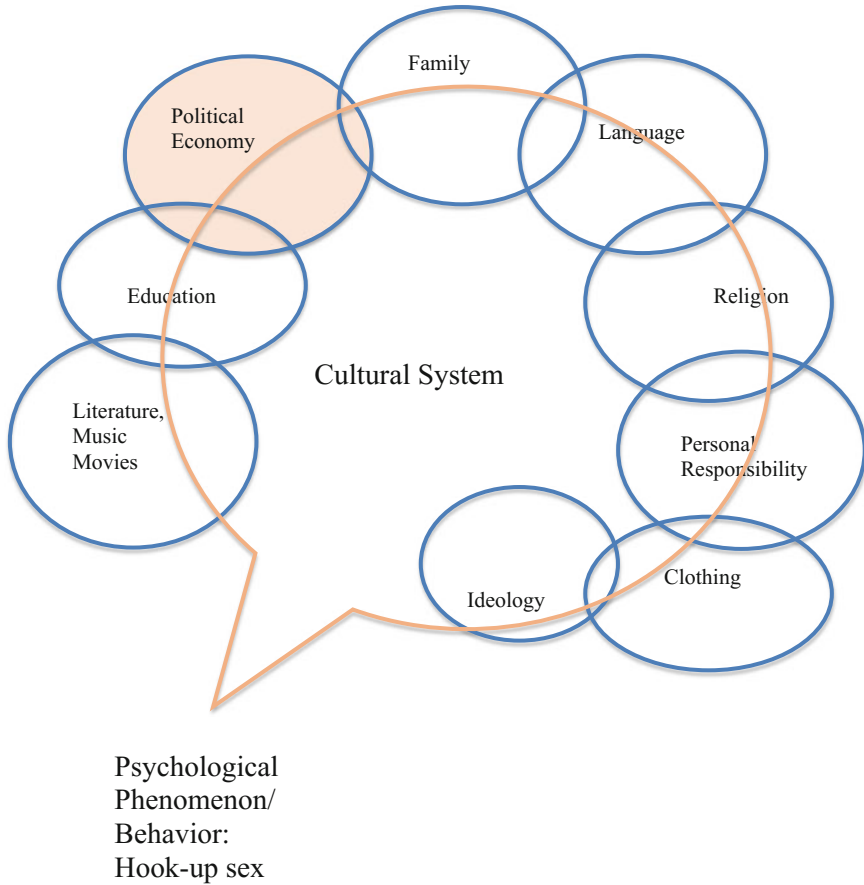


Fig. 6.1 Subjectivity totalizes macro cultural factors in innovative, culturally-congruent, behavior

Our discussion of hook-up sex in terms of Fig. 6.1 is an important formulation of cultural-historic, or historical-materialist, character of psychology. For the psychology—i.e., sexual psychology—is fashioned from macro cultural factors which are historical-materialist phenomena. It is the neoliberal, cultural-political base, features, objectives, and function of hook-up sex that constitute its features and effects.

It is important to emphasize how much effort hook-up partners spend on contouring every detail of the relationship to conform to neoliberal norms. The partners are active agents of neoliberalism.

For example, the girls who adopt the entrepreneurial, individualistic ideal of emancipation and strength, reject traditional values of intimacy and consideration of others. They disdain boys who are concerned with their feelings after a hook-up encounter. They condemn this concern as benevolent sexism. They construe personal concern as oppression! And they accept personal alienation as emancipation!

Girls who think, perceive, feel, and imagine that altruistic, considerate boys are weak and irresponsible, are simply adopting the cognitive-perceptual-emotional ideological package of entrepreneurialism as their psychological tool.

Likewise, hook-up sex requires careful emotional management of oneself and of one's partner, to ensure that social-psychological distance is maintained, and that sexual intimacy is not misconstrued as personal-psychological intimacy. The narratives reveal how girls cap the interaction after it has been consummated. This parallels the management of workers who are terminated. Terse strategies are prepared and implemented by personnel staff for summarily informing workers, outsourcing some brief counselling resources if necessary, and then calling guards to physically escort the workers off the premises before they can disturb the ongoing work or require more extensive expenditures for treatment. The terminated employees are dispensed with as rapidly and officiously and decisively and expeditiously and irreversibly and impersonally as possible. Girls admit they employ the same strategy to dispense with their disposable lovers after they have used them for their satisfaction. Ruby's happy report, "It's as if it never happened and I am perfectly good with that" is the exact sentiment that the personnel manager feels when the disgruntled, dismissed, employee walks out of her office.

This macro cultural-psychological explanation and description of neoliberal hook-up sex can be detected in the sexual narratives. Non-cultural constructs about sex are neither necessary, nor useful. Hook-up sex is neither a personal nor biological response to neoliberal cultural factors. Hook-up sex is not a pleasure principle or life force (libido, Eros) that opposes the work principle. It is neoliberal pleasure that complements and sustains neoliberal work.

Hook-up sex is neoliberal pleasure that reinforces the neoliberal system. It is not an escape from the system; it is a deeper conformity to the system by integrating personal sex within that system's character. Pleasure is a cultural phenomenon as much as work is. It takes on a cultural form that is congruent with the system's form. Hook-up sex demonstrates this lesson from macro cultural psychology.

Hook-up sex activates neoliberal sensibilities in the sexual act—including its preparation and termination. It is a practice field for developing and solidifying and habituating neoliberal competencies. It makes people more adaptable to neoliberal activities required at work, in school, in shopping, in medical encounters. For these activities resonate with the social interactions at parties and in bed. Neoliberal sex makes it easy to transition from the bedroom to the workplace. For it is all one seamless system. We have seen that the students want to be free to pivot from one to the other without contradictory encumbrances. They want sex to be congruent with, and adaptable to, study and work. Hook-up sex fits the bill. Hook-up sex thus makes lovers better employees or managers or students. It is socially functional.

Sex functions the same way that entertainment does. Neoliberal capitalism provides entertainment—movies, shows, arts, sports—that provide pleasure in a neoliberal form and content. This infuses the specific behaviors of neoliberal society with pleasure. It does not contradict them with competing forms of pleasure, for this contrast would expose them as oppressive. Infusing neoliberal behaviors with pleasure makes them agreeable and obscures their oppression.

Because sexual pleasure and personal relations are conduits for neoliberal features, it is true that neoliberalism is a sexually transmitted disease—just as it is a cognitively transmitted disease, an emotionally transmitted disease, a perceptually transmitted disease, an artistically transmitted disease, a pedagogically transmitted disease, a religiously transmitted disease, a news-transmitted disease, and a medically transmitted disease. Every domain that neoliberalism permeates becomes a domain for extending it and strengthening it.

Neoliberal Psychology and Macro Cultural Psychology

This empirical data from cultural psychological research validates macro cultural psychology for comprehending everyday psychology. The research demonstrates that the conical model of culture is valid, because the neoliberal political economy is clearly the base of neoliberal society and its class structure; neoliberal macro cultural factors such as education, sports, government, health care, research, ideology, news, arts, entertainment are imbued with neoliberal characteristics and reproduce and extend them.

Individuals do internalize cultural factors as tools for organizing the form and content of their psychological phenomena—their psychological identity, their memory (e.g., professors' memories about their student debt), their perceptions, interpretation, emotionality, sexuality, and motivation. Macro cultural psychology fully accounts for the concrete form and content of, cultural psychology. The theory is insightful, specific, deep, and comprehensive in explaining, describing, and predicting neoliberal psychology. Macro cultural psychology explains the distortions, oversights, ignorance, and self-destructiveness of psychological phenomena; it traces these to cultural mystification, ideology, and exploitation.

Tracing neoliberal psychology to macro culture explicates the deep, broad, sociopolitical basis and character and function of any psychological phenomenon. We have seen that neoliberal, hook-up sex is essentially a form/expression of neoliberal alienation. This cultural-political-economic factor admits of many particular expressions. In other words, there is not a single, specific, macro cultural factor that generates hook-up sex. Macro cultural psychology grounds hook-up sex in the political economic system of alienation, oppression, etc. This essence is more important for behavior/psychology than its particular form. It is a mistake to focus upon the particular form because that leads to overlooking the general, systemic, political-economic essence. The essence of hook-up sex is expressed in seemingly contrary sexual psychology/behavior – namely increased celibacy. Julian (2018) summarizes a great deal of documentation of this. This phenomenon is actually similar to the essence of hook-up sex. Hook-up sex is essentially individualized sex where each partner focuses upon his/her own sexual fulfillment, devoid of personal intimacy. This is not very different from pure self-stimulation which occurs in sexual celibacy. The physical instrumentality of the hook-up partner is simply replaced by truly physical instruments of stimulation. Hook-up sex maintains a deliberate psycholog-

ical distance from the partner, which is only expressed more genuinely in celibate sexual stimulation. The other matters so little in hook-up sex, that he or she is readily replaced by a true, physical object. Thus, the seeming antithesis between wild, gregarious, hook-up sex and solitary self-stimulation is revealed by macro cultural psychological analysis to be two forms of the same essential alienation, depersonalization, and self-stimulation. This deep, political-economic, essence is revealed by macro cultural psychology to be the necessary target of social-psychological enrichment/emancipation. Macro cultural psychology analyzes the cultural-psychological quality of gregarious hook-ups that is not obvious from their overt behavior.

Psychological and Cultural Assessment

The concrete neoliberal consequences of macro cultural psychology are that individuals are agents of neoliberalism, just as Milton Friedman was. Hook-up participants are neoliberal revolutionaries who tear down the ramparts of traditional society—i.e., traditional sexuality—and replace them with new, neoliberal forms of behavior.

Each woman who engages in a hook-up relation is depersonalizing, commodifying, estranging, branding, trivializing, and instrumentalizing her partner—just as any salesperson or manager does within market relations. Indeed, sex is a more effective, insidious, transmission of neoliberal practices and values than commercial salesmanship because it is disguised by intimate, personal pleasure.

Each hook-up participant is oppressed by capitalist culture, but is also an oppressive oppressor of her partners; each is a victim and victimizer. In both of these complementary roles, the individual is a cultural agent with cultural agency and cultural competencies.

There is nothing “personal” or “authentic” about this; the behavior cannot be validated as authentic personhood which expresses personal choice of behavior. Personhood, agency, femininity, physicality, and expressiveness are neoliberalized; they do not express admirable or creative, counter-cultural impulses. Their activity reproduces, intensifies, and extends normative, oppressive neoliberal society.

They must all be criticized on these grounds. Social norms cannot be utilized as ideals of fulfilling behavior. On the contrary, they must be criticized when they are oppressive and mystifying. This is pre-requisite for developing a counter-cultural subjectivity that can engage in emancipatory activity. Current forms of subjectivity, physicality, intersubjectivity, and femininity are anathema to emancipatory activity because they reproduce neoliberal behaviors.

This proves that the glorifying of indigenous psychology is oppressive. It uncritically adopts indigenous norms as culturally fulfilling and worthy of respect. Yet neoliberalism is an indigenous psychology developed within an indigenous culture of neoliberal capitalism by indigenous citizens of that culture. We have seen what this indigenous culture and psychology have done to people (socially, politically, economically, ecologically, and morally). Macro cultural psychology provides the political critique of culture by exposing its political base.

This is the subject of the next chapter.

Notes

1. “The roots of habitus are found in Aristotle’s notion of hexis, elaborated in his doctrine of virtue in the Nicomachean Ethics (c. 350 BC), meaning an acquired yet entrenched state of moral character that orients our feelings and desires, and thence our conduct. The term was translated into Latin as habitus (past participle of the verb habere, to have or hold) in the thirteenth century by Thomas Aquinas in his Summa Theologiae, written in 1269.” “Bourdieu elaborated habitus analytically at the turn of the 1970s through a dual critique of Sartre’s phenomenology and Le’vi-Strauss’s structuralism” (Wacquant 2016, pp. 65, 66).
2. Clothing merchants did not create age distinctions on their own, although they articulated these ideas in ways that specifically induced consumerism. Other macro cultural contributed as well. Schools had already divided students into age-graded classes (Cook 2004, p. 98). In addition, some of the psychological ideas of the merchants had been articulated by child psychologists such as Hall and Freud—who had articulated the notion of developmental stages and the notion that child psychology was different from adult psychology and could not be understood by ordinary parents.

Part IV
**Macro Cultural Psychological Theory and
Psychological and Cultural Emancipation**

Chapter 7

Macro Cultural Psychological Science Generates Insights for Cultural Emancipation and Psychological Emancipation



In this concluding chapter we review the scientific points of macro cultural psychology that have been extended by the practical study of neoliberal psychology. We then examine how this cultural psychological science generates insights into cultural and psychological emancipation, or fulfillment.

The Scientific Value of Macro Cultural Psychological Theory for Framing and Organizing the Study of Neoliberal Psychology

The analysis of neoliberal psychology presented in this book has been driven by a general theory of psychology and culture—namely, macro cultural psychology, which extends cultural-historical psychology that Vygotsky formulated. This theory has laid out the central points of our analysis:

- A. Neoliberal psychology is an element of neoliberal culture/society. Neoliberal psychology is the subjectivity of neoliberal society. It is the subjectivity that animates neoliberalism and maintains it. It is required by society, stimulated by society, supported by society, administered by society, organized by society, embedded in society, and extends and reproduces neoliberal society. This is the general truth of macro cultural psychology that applies to any psychology in any society.
- B. General, cultural-psychological theory has also supplied the conical model of culture as a political economic system.
- C. Psychology emanates from this system, bears its features and its organization. As such, neoliberal psychology can only be comprehended in terms of the foregoing points.
- D. Macro cultural psychology also explains how psychology is embedded in macro cultural factors. This makes them “psychological tools” that transmit their culturally-formed subjectivity to individuals who utilize them. This makes it

crucial to comprehend the cultural system that generates the form and content of the subjectivity that resides in psychological tools.

Macro cultural psychology directs us to understand that culture is political and historically oppressive. It is not quaint, shared, customs that are created by “the people.”

We must know what power is in order to identify it in society and its effects in psychology (Lukes 2005).

Similarly, social class is not merely a quantitative distribution in income that occurs because some people get better jobs than others—and that class mobility is a simple matter of finding a better job. Social class is a political-economic structure that reflects the domination and exploitation by the capitalist owners of social institutions and resources. Exploitation and domination are the central features of social class. They generate and permeate all the particular instances of class differences in psychology. They must be the target of understanding social class and eliminating it.

We must be equally well-versed in elements of neoliberalism such as ideology. We must apprehend the neoliberal form of psychological phenomena as cultural capital. We must understand the role ideology plays in society, i.e., the need for it to mask social oppression. We must know the forms ideology takes in neoliberalism. Only then can we recognize its influence in psychological phenomena, such as the entrepreneurial self. We must be able to distinguish the ideological form of the self from the capitalist reality of the self. This will enable us to help people understand their exploited, real selves as opposed to the ideologically mystified conception they have of autonomy. It will also help people to understand the social structural reasons for behavior and conditions, as opposed to fictitious individualistic explanations.

- E. Macro cultural psychology’s emphasis on social structures and systems as the explanation, description, and prediction of psychological phenomena, expands the theory of general psychology to encompass certain features of neoliberalism. The theory incorporates knowledge about different kinds of psychological tools such as advertising, and job training, and the ways in which they permeate psychology. We have learned how advertising penetrates psychological phenomena by personal and social insinuations. We have learned how manufacturers and advertisers cleverly commodified children’s and mothers’ emotions, needs, and thoughts. We have learned from neoliberal psychology the centrality of ideology as a psychological tool. We have learned how social class forms linguistic codes into a psychological tool. We have also learned from neoliberal psychology how college students actively take up neoliberalism into their personal sexual relations. And we have learned from neoliberal psychology how cultural-psychological tools thoroughly organize the relationship between psychological phenomena, e.g., advertising makes irrational, impulsive, emotions dominant over reflective reason. These concrete forms of macro cultural factors and psychology extend Vygotsky’s general statements about tools, and individuals internalizing social relations.

Macro cultural psychology's theory of neoliberalism makes it a better theory for comprehending neoliberalism and other cultural psychologies. In this reciprocal interaction, the theory and its concrete target enrich each other.

- F. Individuals use their activity to apprehend the subjective elements of macro cultural factors. Individuals also extend cultural psychology to new activities, as in hook-up sex. Individuals introduce variations within the general cultural form and content.
- G. With culture being political and economic, political and economic oppression figure prominently in culture and in psychology. This includes ideological mystification of political-economic oppression (In contrast, mainstream conceptions of culture as quaint, shared customs invented by "the people" have no place for exploitation, mystification, ideology, alienation, or commodification.).
- H. Macro cultural psychology analyzes the form and content of professional disciplines of Psychology as well as the psychology of everyday life. This has led us to identify the political, ideological content of neoliberal Psychology that reinforces the neoliberal political economy.
- I. Macro cultural psychology provides a qualitative methodology for elucidating the cultural form and content of psychology in narratives and behavior. This methodology is sensitive to mystification of social life and behavior by ideology and other cultural forces. People's psychological reactions are often based upon socially-induced misunderstandings of society, behavior, and nature. Methodology must identify these by comparing them to objective, external indicators of society, behavior, and nature.
- J. Macro cultural psychology is an emancipatory psychological science. It utilizes its scientific analysis of oppressive culture and oppressive psychology to identify viable, emancipatory, alternative, forms. This is a vital, distinctive, feature of the theory that can contribute to solving the intractable, cascading, social problems that confront the world today. This emancipatory potential of macro cultural psychology requires elaboration that will occupy the remainder of this book.

The Political Value of Macro Cultural Psychological Theory: Elucidating Emancipatory Possibilities from Neoliberal Psychology and Society

Emancipation requires comprehending the origins/causes of social-psychological problems, and then deciphering how to concretely negate these causes and transform them into social relations, conditions, structures, systems, principles, and practices that are humanly, socially, and environmentally fulfilling. The first stage comprehends what already exists—although in complex, convoluted, contradictory, forms that are difficult to comprehend. The second stage addresses a future that must be deduced as a viable, thorough, concrete alternative to the present. This deduction must be a scientific methodology that logically and necessarily follows from the first

stage analysis of problems. Future alternatives are not metaphysical wishes; they must be viable possibilities that are grounded in the present reality and comprehensively negate it. The deduction about future alternatives is necessarily tentative, because it must be adjusted to the concrete, material and subjective factors which develop in the struggle for change. The future does not automatically unfold from the present. It must be brought into existence through creative imagination, and struggle against a tenacious set of established conditions. This includes culturally formed habitus, consciousness, subjectivity, and agency that is often mystified about social reality. These tenacious, oppressive subjective and objective conditions are impossible to entirely anticipate; they must be addressed as the struggle for transformation proceeds. Individuals, groups, and even nation states that proclaim their support for anti-neoliberal transformation are often tacit allies of neoliberalism who must be combatted by true revolutionaries. Examples have been enumerated in this book. This makes the struggle for emancipation complicated and uncertain, rather than smooth and automatic.

At this point in world history, both stages of emancipation are in their infancy. We have seen that the status quo is aware of the transformative potential of radical analyses of the system, and it blunts, distorts, denies, and ignores such analyses. This is why a psychological theory for apprehending neoliberalism and neoliberal psychology has not been developed (It is also the reason that radical analyses such as Marxism are either marginalized, or else distorted and stunted as in China.). We have taken great pains to articulate such a theory because we need an adequate analysis in order to deduce an adequate alternative.

Macro cultural psychology exposes the deep, central, systemic character of neoliberalism that generates oppressed, mystified, alienated, commodified, egotistical, irrational, impulsive psychological phenomena. This reflects Vygotsky's statement that "Each person is to some degree a measure of the society, or rather class, to which he belongs, for the whole totality of social relationships is reflected in him" (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 317).

This deep, systemic cause of neoliberal psychological problems can only be eradicated by transforming the political economic base of neoliberal society. Psychological interventions are obviously inadequate because they leave the problematical cause of problems intact. It is impossible to reform neoliberalism into a humane, fulfilling system, because that is neither its character nor objective. We have seen that the capitalist ruling class enriches and empowers itself by exploiting and mystifying the populace, controlling and plundering the social good and the social fabric, and disenfranchising the public from political decision-making (see Hakim and Wines 2018). All of this makes neoliberalism increasingly unbearable for the populace and provokes rebellion. Neoliberalism is then only able to rule by military repression. Trotsky explained this in his book *Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It*; "The historic function of fascism is to smash the working class, destroy its organizations, and stifle political liberties when the capitalists find themselves unable to govern and dominate with the help of democratic machinery" (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1944/1944-fas.htm#p6>). Fascism is thus a potential that is inherent in neoliberalism.

eralism (Maclean 2017; <https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/meet-the-economist-behind-the-one-percents-stealth-takeover-of-america>). This potential is increasingly actualized today. It can only be opposed by opposing its capitalist basis. Bertold Brecht stated this eloquently during the Nazi era in his essay Writing The Truth: Five Difficulties, 1935 (<http://ada.evergreen.edu/~arunc/texts/theater/brecht/fiveDifficulties.pdf>):

Fascism is a historic phase of capitalism; in this sense it is something new and at the same time old. In Fascist countries capitalism continues to exist, but only in the form of Fascism; and Fascism can be combated as capitalism alone, as the nakedest, most shameless, most oppressive, and most treacherous form of capitalism ... Those who are against Fascism without being against capitalism, who lament over the barbarism that comes out of barbarism, are like people who wish to eat their veal without slaughtering the calf. They are willing to eat the calf, but they dislike the sight of blood. They are easily satisfied if the butcher washes his hands before weighing the meat. They are not against the property relations which engender barbarism; they are only against barbarism itself. They raise their voices against barbarism, and they do so in countries where precisely the same property relations prevail, but where the butchers wash their hands before weighing the meat.¹

The capitalist class resists humanizing, democratizing, and collectivizing social relations, ownership, decision-making, wealth, and politics which would deprive the ruling class of its wealth and power. The entire origin of neoliberalism in the 1940s through 1970s was to reverse all the humanitarian reforms that the New Deal had instituted. The neoliberal victory has only strengthened neoliberal capitalists' resolve to block any future humanitarian reforms. They have dictated that emancipation will only come from deposing them from power and reorganizing the social system under popular leadership and social relations.

The emancipatory role of psychologists is not to design psychological interventions that ameliorate neoliberal psychological problems. Their role is to incorporate psychology into historical materialist factors and dynamics. It is on this level that psychological problems can be solved because this is where problems are formed. Luria explained psychologists' role as follows: "To discover the sources of free action it is necessary to go outside the limits of the organism, not into the intimate sphere of the mind, but into the objective forms of social life; it is necessary to seek the sources of human consciousness and freedom in the social history of humanity. To find the soul it is necessary to lose it" (i.e., go beyond it to society) (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/luria/index.htm>).

Luria is saying that psychologists must transcend the psychological realm in order to emancipate people and solve their psychological problems. Psychologists must act on the cultural cone to eradicate psychological problems by eradicating social-cultural-political-economic problems that cause them. Social transformation is a historical materialist issue that is rooted in the dynamics of the political economy; it is not a psychological issue.

The social changes that are necessary to preserve our ecology, our jobs, our standard of living, our education, and our health care are the guidelines for enhancing our psychology, because psychology is a moment of culture. Psychological change occurs within the social-political dialectic of the political-economic system. Psychological

change does not emanate from subjectivity itself. It is not a matter of subjectivity imagining a more comfortable psychological and social condition. Rather, subjectivity must comprehend and work for the dialectical possibilities of the socio-political system for superseding the current system in order for subjectivity to become fulfilled/emancipated.

Vygotsky explained this in his analysis of psychological degradation: “the source of the degradation of the personality in the capitalist form of manufacturing ... cannot be resolved without the destruction of the capitalist system organization of industry ... by the socialist revolution ... Alongside this process, a change in the human personality and an alteration of man himself must inevitably take place” (Vygotsky 1994a, pp. 180–181).

Vygotsky’s solution to psychological degradation was cultural-political—socialism; it was not psychological. His cultural-psychological analysis solved the psychological problem by drawing the problem into historical materialism.

Psychologists, psychiatrists, and mental health workers additionally contribute to macro cultural, historical-materialist, change/emancipation by devising and explaining ways that psychology must be reorganized to adjust to and facilitate emancipatory, macro cultural change. This will make psychology emancipatory in Luria’s sense. Psychologists can address ways in which teaching (testing, and homework), for example, may embody emancipatory social relations, rights, and responsibilities. The same holds for family relations, friendships, dating, sex, self-development, childhood, conflict resolution, consumerism, physical beauty, academic studying (cognition, memory).

Psychologists can refine this material-historical process by contributing their scientific and political insights about psychological phenomena. Psychologists can contribute knowledge about the cognitive-interpretive forming of emotions and perception to facilitate the learning of altruistic, cooperative emotions that are necessary for cooperative behavior and sharing. Psychologists can contribute their insights about problems associated with neoliberal psychology, in order to educate people away from it. This will complement struggles in the fields of education, medicine, ecology, cooperative businesses, etc., to divest from neoliberal activities. Psychologists can additionally contribute insights about fulfilling cultural-psychology that will enhance political emancipation. We can use our cultural-psychological research to envision fulfilling cultural and psychological alternatives to neoliberalism that will overcome its problems.

Psychology is first drawn into macro cultural factors in the cultural analysis of psychological issues. Psychology must be analyzed in cultural-historical terms that reveal historical materialist causes of problems and historical materialist solutions to them. Subjectivities have to be examined in relation to governmental rationalities, political-economic needs/dynamics, maintaining social class, power relations, discursive regimes, cultural capital, ideological mystification, alienation, and juridical norms that constitute them. The journal, *Studies in the Maternal* (www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk), adopts this macro cultural perspective: *Studies in the Maternal* is an international, peer-reviewed, scholarly online journal. It aims to provide a forum for contemporary critical debates on the maternal understood as: lived experience, social

location, political and scientific practice, economic and ethical challenge, a theoretical question, and a structural dimension in human relations, politics and ethics. We are especially interested in work in the areas of: the cultural politics of reproduction, natality and birth, and the political possibilities that arise from understandings of the maternal in the context of global/local, neo-liberal, late-capitalist conditions.

Critical discourse analysis similarly tends to focus upon the ways in which the availability and localized uses of certain discursive constructions maintain and legitimate existing power relations within institutions and institutional practices.

This macro cultural psychological analysis explicates macro cultural influences, formation, and operation in psychology. This makes psychology a window into society, and sensitive to the direction that society must be changed.

Analyses that fall short of this epistemology-methodology render us ignorant of psychology's historical materialist base, which then renders us ignorant of historical materialist factors and processes that must be transformed in particular directions in order to solve the causes of psychological problems. Scientific shortcomings culminate in political shortcomings.

Because this is the crucial issue for psychological work and psychological emancipation, it warrants explication with an example. I would like to use our example of hook-up sex to demonstrate the political shortcomings that result from a flawed scientific analysis of hook-up sex. This analysis is flawed because it does not elucidate the neoliberal capitalist form of hook-up sex that is ultimately the product of the neoliberal political economic core of society.

Gender as an Explanatory and Emancipatory Psychological Construct

A non-macro cultural psychological analysis of hook-up sex frames it as an expression of male sexism. This analysis diverts hook-up sex from a general, neoliberal, phenomenon to a circumscribed, male phenomenon that is unrelated to neoliberalism. Sexist hook-up sex is a symptom of the male drive for power and privilege over females. The solution then becomes denouncing and punishing men's drive for power and sexual conquest.

A column by Koehler in Huffington Post, Feb. 14, 2008 (https://www.huffingtonpost.com/sezin-koehler/the-sociology-of-casual-sexual_b_14708518.html) articulated this analysis. It was a comment on Wade's research, which makes it particularly useful as a contrasting point of view of hook-up sex. Koehler concludes that hook-ups are:

culture with its roots in fraternity hierarchy, toxic masculinity, exclusionism, misogyny, and white privilege ...

A hookup appears to be designed and policed for the central positioning of male pleasure to the detriment of women. Because maintaining emotional distance is one of the key stages of a hookup, the focus on male pleasure can lead to verbal abuse, coercion, and rape when a woman wants to set her own boundaries.

Disturbingly, hookup culture also effectively allows sexual predators to hide in plain sight since their criminal activity might be indistinguishable from some of hookup culture's ugly but acceptable behaviors. Through Wade's students' anecdotes, they identified at least one sexual predator who was making his way across campus.

On the scientific level, this social analysis falsifies Wade's data because it fails to acknowledge the neoliberal origins, characteristics, dynamics, and function of hook up sex. Sexist origins, characteristics, and functions are not neoliberal origins, characteristics, and functions.

The narratives of the hook up girls refute the explanation and description of hook up sex as fundamentally sexist. The girls were not seduced or coerced into it unwillingly, to serve male power and privilege. Girls proudly and actively initiated the alienated, impersonal, superficial, sensational, crude sexual relations of hook up sex. They proclaimed themselves to be sexual vultures aiming to get some dick. They flaunt their bodies and engage in provocative, crude sexual advances to encourage boys to grind on them without even seeing who the boys are. Girls report enjoying hook ups on a sexual level and also on a life-style level that comports with their educational and occupational situation.

Girls have even adopted hook-up sex as their emancipatory ideal and symbol.

They actively resist psychological and social intimacy with their partners, and they resent it when boys worry about girls' feelings. Girls maintain emotional distance with boys, which refutes Koehler's false claim that emotional distance serves only boy's pleasure and leads to abuse and rape when women want to set their own limits. Wade's data demonstrate that women not only set their own emotionally distant limits; they also feel decisive and strong and independent about them. Women are quite brutal in enforcing emotional distance when their partners (male and female) intimate any sense of intimacy.

Many women on campus are so drawn to the ideal of hook ups that feel like they're failing to be liberated if they don't have them. They say things like "I really envy the women who can [participate in hookup culture]. I wish I was like them" (<http://www.alternet.org/culture/hooking-core-requirement-casual-sex-college-isnt-optional-anymore-its-imperative?akid=15201.152322.ZxHY-e&rd=1&src=newsletter1072149&t=18>) (This means that the pull of hook up sex is underestimated by statistics on participation. For many non-participants wish to do it while struggling to overcome their traditional values.).

Nor do boys use hook ups to conquer girls and force them into unwanted sex. Boys do not need to force them because the girls want unfeeling, uncaring, meaningless, crude sex. Both genders use each other for their own pleasure and social status in the eyes of their friends.

The sexism interpretation of alcohol's role in hook ups is also wrong. It assumes that alcohol renders girls weak and vulnerable to unwanted sexual abuse by boys. The truth is exactly the opposite. Wade reports that girls deliberately drink before they enter hook up situations and during them. They use alcohol to free themselves from traditional inhibitions on wild, hedonistic, impersonal sex so that they may engage in it.

The fallacy of “hook-ups as sexist” is that it narrows the encounter to male power and privilege that abuse demure females who get waylaid while looking for traditional, loving relationships. This ignores the full cultural-psychology of hook ups for both genders. It ignores the full set of neoliberal, cultural pressures and values that have permeated boys’ and girls’ desires for personal and sexual relatedness. Their social psychology affirms and reproduces and extends neoliberal practices and values. These are utilized in every step of planning, initiating, and implementing hook up sex. They are creatively brought to fruition in the participants’ psychological and social activity.

Another scientific fallacy of the gender/sexism conception of hook up sex is its interpretation of the sexual abuse that occasionally occurs. It is attributed to cunning manipulation by males to incapacitate women and assert sexual, political, power over them. Hook-up sexual abuse is even associated with sexual predators, as Koehler opines.

This is a narrow, superficial, erroneous explanation and description of sexual abuse. Hook-up sex has little to do with sexual predation. Koehler cites only one case of a sexual predator who infiltrated the hundreds of hook-ups reported by Wade’s subjects. This is clearly a dishonest association. Homosexual hook ups—which Koehler says were the first manifestation of hook-up sex—reveal that they are not a function of male-female sexism.

Macro cultural psychology explains that sexual abuse during hook ups is a function of the neoliberal character of the encounter that encompass both genders. Abuse is a function of the alienated, impersonal, hedonistic, sensationalistic, uncaring, crude physicality of the hook up encounter that facilitates abuse. With girls provoking boys sexually to grab them from behind and grind with them, and finger their genitals, without even seeing them or communicating with them, and with both parties intoxicated to free themselves from social inhibitions to better express raw (impersonal) sexual urges, it is easy to comprehend how sometimes boys act more roughly than girls expect. It is also easy to comprehend that sometimes girls would feel the tug of traditional sexual norms that lead them to feel guilty about their impersonal sexual encounter, and to deny responsibility for it by feeling coerced by their partner.

Our cultural-political analysis of sexual abuse, like hook-up sex, recognizes it as an indictment of neoliberalism that calls for transforming it. With neoliberal sex depersonalizing males and females, it unites them together in having an interest to oppose its neoliberal social roots (Hochschild 2018 documents the massive oppression that males face, which makes their objective interest aligned with emancipation of women).

Reducing hook-up sex to the social-sexual drive of one gender, removes it as a social critique of neoliberalism. It also fragments and opposes the interests of males and females. This destroys the universality of the struggle for social emancipation, and reduces it to curtailing toxic male sexuality by sensitivity training and punishment, and replacing males with women in leadership positions. These never touch the fundamentals of neoliberal capitalism, which is why they are endorsed by mainstream society.²

Failing to analyze neoliberalism and neoliberal psychology leaves discussions about gender relations vulnerable to neoliberal ideology and related mystifications. One effect of this is to invoke the ideology of the entrepreneurial self as a solution to sexual harassment. The Nobel Peace prize of 2018 was awarded to this approach. It was awarded to Nadia Murad, a survivor of sexual violence by the Islamic State, and Dr. Denis Mukwege, a gynecological surgeon who has treated rape victims in the Congo. Mukwege explained his work in entrepreneurial terms: “There is an enormous potential in women that I did not imagine. They arrive completely destroyed, and they fight, and they fight between life and death. But afterwards, they have an incredible strength. The City of Joy will give them this possibility to say what happened to them, to tell that people have tried to destroy them, but we can tell them that they are strong and can fight” (https://www.democracynow.org/2018/10/5/eve_ensler_nobel_peace_prize_for). Dr. Mukwege emphasizes that women must draw upon their inner strength, to help themselves. His organization supports their self-affirmation and self-struggle. They must “say what happened to them.” Neoliberalism seeks to give individuals their voice, with which they can describe their experience and draw on it to develop strength to individually overcome oppression and suffering.

A commentary on Mukwege by activist Eve Ensler (who authored the play *The Vagina Monologues*) reiterated this neoliberal theme. She discussed her own sexual abuse and how she overcame it by “speaking the truth that risked upending the comfort of my very carefully constructed life. But I can tell you that living a lie is living half a life. It was only after telling my story that I knew happiness and freedom” (https://www.democracynow.org/2018/10/5/eve_ensler_nobel_peace_prize_for).

Ensler proposes an individualistic, subjectivistic solution to sexual abuse: tell your story of suffering and you will know happiness and freedom! This is pure neoliberalism. Take control over your own life, overcome your adversities, express your opinions and emotions. Let your unconscious become conscious as Freud said. Remove (conquer) the social blockade to your true, inner self. No practical, societal, political analysis of the causes of violence is considered, nor are any social structural solutions considered. It is all about personal adversity, internal struggle to comprehend it and develop strategies and strength to overcome it, give vent to your true self/agency, and relish interpersonal support and love for the victim to strengthen her resolve to be heard.

The only social suggestion from Mukwege and the Nobel Committee is to prosecute the perpetrators, make reparations to women, and “protect women.” Not a single idea is mentioned about how to protect women from violence, and what it entails. (see his statements in the New York Times, Dec. 10, 2018, p. A10; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/10/world/nadia-murad-denis-mukwege-nobel-peace-prize.html>). Moreover, protecting women from violence maintains the status quo because it presumes that violence continues to exist.

The only real solution is to eradicate violence. But entrepreneurial ideology does not consider this because it requires structural change that transcends the individual victim. This is the reason that the conservative, establishment, Nobel Peace Committee (which awarded the prize to Henry Kissinger, an architect of the Vietnam invasion) rewards this ideology.

Entrepreneurial ideology and psychology infect gender studies and feminism in a second manner. They exclusively consider interpersonal, gendered oppression of women; and they fail to consider macro cultural, political-economic forms of oppression against women. The women's groups and the public who erupt into rage over an official of a company, or government agency, who touches or kisses individual female employees without their consent, remain silent when this same official decides to close the entire company or office and relocate it in China, thereby depriving thousands of women employees of their jobs, income, health insurance, and pension in one fell swoop.

The reason for this silence toward economic exploitation is twofold: (1) the official's act is not a single, women's issue, but includes male employees as well, and (2) it is not an interpersonal issue but is rather a collective, economic issue that affects thousands of individuals at once. Neoliberalism, and neoliberal psychology, do not deal with such issues because they transcend the individualistic form of neoliberal ideology.

No reaction to mass, economic exploitation compares with the fury that is generated by individual, personal harassment. This is because neoliberal psychology has structured perception, emotions, cognition, and motivation to focus upon, and control, individual, interpersonal acts, not broad, macro, cultural-political policies and practices.³

Pruchniewska (2018, p. 812) explains that feminism has contributed to the neoliberal ethos. It become neoliberalized in construing emancipation in terms of individual empowerment: "Arguably, feminism articulated as a collective political movement has somewhat morphed in recent decades into a movement about individual empowerment and choice ... limiting the conversation around wider structural influences in gender inequality." "Kate, for example, explained that feminism means that "women should be equal and they should do whatever they want, including having their sexuality any way their want, and expressing themselves however they want." Lizzie said, it basically means that women should have the choice to do what they want with their bodies, with their careers, with their home life ... I don't think it has to fit one particular mold. It has more to do with choice." "Sharing her experiences—and in the process, advising women to not waste money on beauty products, thus disrupting problematic beauty norms—fulfilled a collective feminist function" (Pruchniewska 2018, pp. 819, 821). These are all individualistic forms of feminism. Even collective feminism has been redefined in interpersonal terms of sharing experience and information and sympathy. Real, social collectivism, in the form of collectively owned and organized property, institutions, artifacts, social relations, and ethos, which are governed by collectivistic laws and principles and ethics, are dispensed with. Collective feminism is mere wishes and feelings that exist within individualistic, capitalistic, neoliberalism, and pose no threat to its social, economic, political, and military existence. These individual, subjective, acts are deemed to disrupt social norms without any mass, organized political struggle against the social core and its elements. This pseudo radicalism is to be repudiated, not glorified as emancipatory. The claim to feminism has been corrupted so that any such claim must arouse suspicion and be seriously scrutinized as to what its politics really are.

The narrow focus on individual perpetrators of gender violence, and solutions to it (in the form of individual punishment or retraining) is ideological. It leaves the social system exempt from implication, criticism, and reorganization. This is why neoliberal analysis and solution to social-psychological problems are popular. For example, The American “Violence Against Women Act” (2013) authorized \$3.1 billion to support rape crisis centers, pay for lawyers for victims of violence and provide money for transitional housing to women who are seeking to flee their abusive partners. The single greatest beneficiary of the act is the criminal legal system—courts, police and prosecutors receive 85% of the funds. All of these measures are post hoc treatments for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. No funds were allocated to discovering, eradicating, and preventing the social causes of domestic violence. In fact, criminalizing it increases its prevalence, for it imprisons perpetrators in jails which traumatizes them, brutalizes them, and reduces their chances of finding a job when they are released. All of these conditions breed anger and violence in the perpetrators.

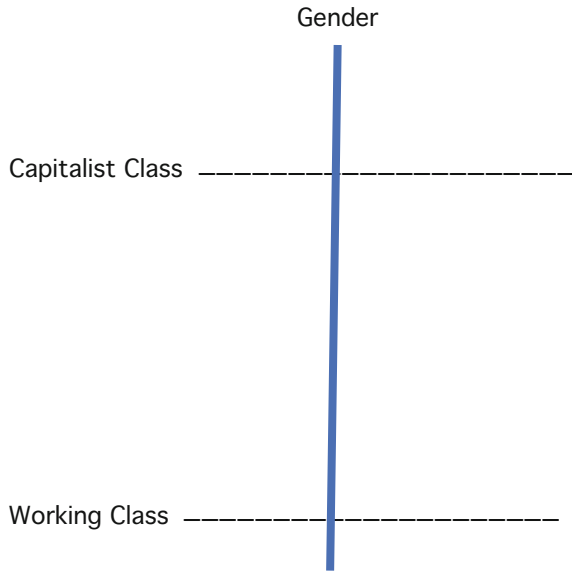
These errors in gender-centric analyses of gender relations result from treating gender as a thing in itself, divorced from the political-economic core of society. Explanations and solutions to gender issues then ignore neoliberal capitalism. This makes gender-centric analysis a protective coating on neoliberalism that obscures it and allows it to function without critique or reorganization.

One way to obscure neoliberal capitalism is to obscure its capital form of social activities and macro cultural factors. This occurs by pretending the latter as personal choices without capitalist form or content. Neoliberal feminism accomplishes this. A second way to obscure neoliberal capitalism is to obscure its class structure and domination by the capitalist class. Gender-centrism accomplishes this by construing gender as orthogonal to class, which means that it transects and transcends class rather than adhering to it and cohering with it. I depict this in Fig. 7.1.

As a woman, your identify and allegiance is with women. But women come from all classes. Consequently, your identity and your allegiance is with neoliberal capitalist women as well as poor women drug addicts. Class becomes irrelevant as it is superseded by your common gender which makes you all “sisters” who support each other. You will not perceive yourself as a proletarian because your identity is primarily “woman” which encompasses capitalist women. Social class is reduced to a point on the gender variable. You are a poor or a rich woman, and both poor and rich women are still essentially women, just women with more or less money. You will use your gender as your identity and as your tool to solve problems. You will defend your neoliberal sister because she shares your gender. You could not denounce her as a capitalist pig and struggle politically and militarily against her because she is your sister, and sisterhood is powerful, and sisterhood is cooperative with sisters, and collegial with sisters.

The sisterhood of women is touted as solving social problems. Social problems are mitigated by enlisting women to engage in their characteristic sisterhood, empathy, social concern, morality, expressiveness, and cooperation. The New York Times promotes this ideal in several articles about women governing better than men (Miller 2018; Carlse 2018).

Fig. 7.1 Gender displaces class



In government, women have been shown to be more collaborative and bipartisan, and promote more policies supporting women, children and social welfare.

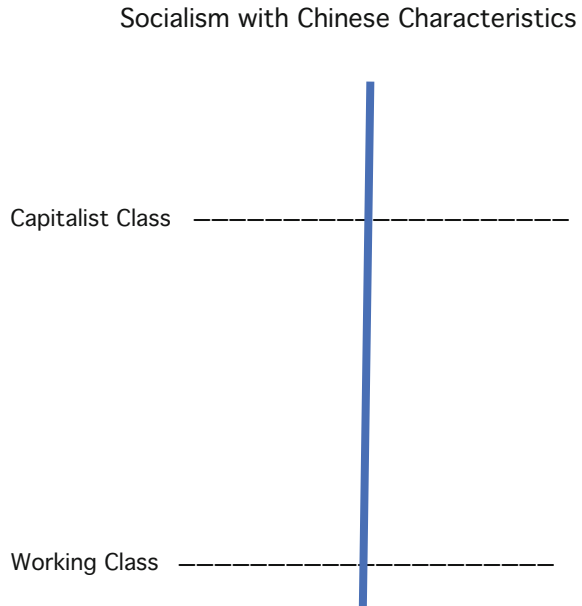
“That has been true in Congress, said Tina Smith, a Democratic senator from Minnesota. In a highly polarized Senate, women tend to be unusually collegial across party lines, she said, and the 23 female senators meet for dinner monthly.”

“I believe you’re successful and you get things done if you have relationships with people,” she said. “That’s the ground for accomplishing something, certainly in the legislative world”. (Carlse 2018)

The claim is that women have a distinctive capability to solve problems by working amicably together to find the best, common solution. Femininity/sisterhood supersedes political conflict. Femininity transects class and politics. It cuts through and dispenses with politics, conflict, social class, the profit motive, and imperialism. This is the vertical line in Fig. 7.1. Femininity/sisterhood makes political economic change unnecessary; for women already have the psychological tools for cooperating, empathizing, tolerating. Femininity transects social class so any women is well equipped to relate to other women regardless of their class. A capitalist woman is just as cooperative, empathic, and moral as a working-class woman because these are traits of womanhood. Therefore, there is no reason to oppose the capitalist class structure, because women can solve problems within it.

Of course, this gender-centrism is entirely ideological and does not describe reality. The Senate confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh for Supreme Court justice, in Nov., 2018 is a telling refutation. Every Democratic female senator voted against confirmation, while all the 6 Republican females, save one exception, voted to confirm. Clearly there was no feminine collegiality or bipartisanship in this vote. Politics overrode gender identity. Political conflicts, exploitation, war, alienation, poverty,

Fig. 7.2 Socialism with Chinese characteristics displaces class



global warming can only be solved by political-economic analysis and transformation. Gender-centrism distracts from this task, to the extent that it is believed.

Gender-centrism also obfuscate the real basis, character, and function of women's behavior which contradicts the gender stereotype. When women act selfishly, competitively, dishonestly, materialistically to accumulate capital, and oppressively toward workers, they are said to be behaving like men! They are not recognized as behaving like capitalists. Here, gender-centrism is clearly an ideology that obfuscates the capitalist quality of behavior, and shifts it to a masculine quality. This misdirects the effort at humanizing behavior to opposing masculinity instead of opposing capitalism. This is why gender-centrism is accepted by the ruling class.

Solving gender problems ultimately requires transforming their political economic basis. Capitalist women (like capitalist men) will not follow this direction because they benefit from it economically and politically, despite the problems it causes in their lives. Instead, capitalist women will seek to resolve gender issues separately, while preserving their political-economic elite position. This is what gender-centrism and gender identity accomplish, as depicted in Fig. 7.2.

In contrast, working class women have a vested interest in emphasizing the political economic basis of gender. For this relationship makes gender issues able to expose political economic oppression which they reflect. This relationship enables gender issues to radicalize working class women to comprehend and challenge broader and deeper political economic oppression. The conical model of culture expands gender issues (and all issues) to include and expose the political economy. This model calls

for expanded emancipation from the political economy and the neoliberal system, as part of gender emancipation.

This expansion from gender to political economy changes gender from a purely cultural phenomenon—i.e., a set of customs and beliefs—into a cultural element of a political economic social system (see Ghodsee 2018; Ghodsee & Mead 2018). It overcomes the division of the sexes that gender emancipation promotes. For political-economic oppression oppresses men as well as women. Consequently, drawing gender issues into the political economy makes it a unifying force that unites both genders to oppose their common enemy. This is a more powerful, unified, deeper, and broader struggle for emancipation than gender-centrism is. It ties gender emancipation to labor emancipation and class emancipation. This is essential for liberating working class people who are oppressed by labor and social class along with gender. Segregating gender from capitalism and class makes gender emancipation irrelevant to economic emancipation and vice versa. This is particularly harmful to working class people because they need economic and political emancipation. It benefits the capitalist class who does not want political-economic critique and emancipation (from capitalism) to be implicated in gender emancipation.

Martin Luther King recognized all of this in relation to race. He believed that civil rights for blacks (e.g., social justice) required an economic system that afforded and ensured economic justice among all people. He saw that abstract civil rights without a concrete economic system that could implement them were fruitless. King believed that unions were the mechanism for achieving economic justice for all working people, including blacks. Black advancement and equality was not simply a social, moral issue. Black workers needed to join unions to achieve true economic advancement and equality that unions fought for. They had to fight poverty, not simply racism, in order to achieve advancement. This recognition of broad, political-economic issues related to racism led King to recognize the political economic basis of imperialism, and he condemned the US invasion of Vietnam in the 1960s. All of this was directly relevant to improving the conditions of black people, because their oppression was based in the political economic system of capitalism; it was not a narrow racial issue. Integrating the dominant, oppressive elements of capitalism with racism led King to broaden the fight over racial justice to fight against capitalism. This drew whites and blacks together to fight their common enemy. It gave whites a vested interest in fighting racism because racism crystalized (totalized) capitalism which also oppressed white people (Reed 2018).

This explanation of emancipation and its errors by macro cultural psychological theory is enriched by including a supportive example from Chinese neoliberal ideology. The Chinese Communist Party uses its ideology of “socialism with Chinese characteristics” to destroy proletarian class consciousness in the same way that gender-centrism does. This ideology contorts socialism into a “trans-class” notion that embraces capitalists and proletarians as allies in developing socialism. CCP goes so far as to admit capitalists into Communist Party membership alongside the proletariat. This is depicted in Fig. 7.2, that has the same form as Fig. 7.1.

Both feminist ideology and socialist ideology create the sense of comradeship among class enemies that transcends their antagonistic class interests. This destroys

the possibility of the proletariat becoming a class for itself with consciousness of its historic need to eradicate the capitalist class and system.

Of course, any alliance between capitalists and workers is an unholy alliance that is always undermined by objective antagonisms in the class interests of the two groups. Being the dominant group (economically and politically), capitalists will always ensure that their interests remain normative. Socialism with Chinese characteristics becomes neoliberalism with Chinese characteristics, and gender identity and emancipation become bourgeois gender identity and emancipation.

The way to highlight class by class consciousness, so that class consciousness highlights the political economic basis of society, is to develop class consciousness as the perspective for analyzing social issues such as gender relations and socialism. This will draw women and men together to transform the political economic and class basis of gender relations. Gender will no longer transect and transcend social class; it will be an organic feature of social class that participates in its transformation, democratization, and collectivization. A class perspective will conversely activate working people to comprehend the sources of their oppression in capitalist exploitation, and to force capitalists to abide by the class interests of the majority of the people, which is the working class. This will replace the partnership between workers and capitalists which incongruously leaves the capitalists free to own and control institutions which oppress the workers.

My criticism of neoliberalism's individualistic focus is not to deny the importance of individual behavior, relations, and problems. My criticism is that neoliberalism takes these phenomena as primary, or even exclusive, problems that originate within the individual and his interpersonal relations. The truth is that individual acts are cultural, and they must be extended to cultural causes, characteristics, functions, and improvements. Interpersonal problems must be recognized as a subset of broad, macro, political-economic oppression of women and men. Imperialist invasions of countries kill, maim, displace, and traumatize far more women than interpersonal sexual harassment does. To be concerned with oppression of women, people must be concerned with macro, political, economic, military, structural, oppression, first and foremost. Interpersonal oppression must be situated within this context of macro oppression; and macro oppression must be seen to have interpersonal forms. We always want to draw micro levels of behavior into macro levels; we want to define them in macro terms with macro origins, macro features, and macro functions. We exemplified this with Bernstein's class-based, linguistic codes as the elements of language that individuals speak. These are the units of analysis of language; they are more important than individual or natural units of analysis. Stages in the commodification of concepts (chapter five) are similarly macro cultural constructs for understanding psychological development. Solutions to gender violence must deal first and foremost with its broadest, most devastating, macro forms. These forms of solution must then extend "downward" to interpersonal violence—in accordance with cultural psychology's principle that psychology has cultural origins, characteristics, and functions which are then internalized on the individual level. This makes all forms of oppression historical-materialist in essence and in solution.

Beginning with individual forms of social-psychological problems, and understanding them in individual terms, promotes the neoliberal illusion that individuals are the basis of society, and broad, macro, political-economic, structural, institutional issues are mere extensions of individual acts. This ideology is designed to insulate the true cultural causes of psychology from challenge. Neoliberals know what the true causes of social-psychological-ecological problems are; yet they seek to obfuscate this knowledge—as oil companies hid their own evidence about the industrial causes of global warming. Individualism is the primary, neoliberal strategy for obscuring social reality (although other strategies supplement it, as we have seen in the case of Chinese ideologies of Confucianism and Marxism).

Wade confirms the macro cultural psychological perspective that hook-up sex is a total social fact which is a symptom of the broad culture that encompasses males and females:

These young people are not getting their ideas about sexuality out of thin air, and they're not inventing them whole cloth when they get to college. And they certainly don't apply simply to college. And so I think that what we see on college campuses is almost a concentrated, crystallized, clear demonstration of many of the values that are driving all of our sexualities ... I think that anyone of any age, whether they went to college or not, is going to be able to recognize many of those dynamics in their own lives.

One of them is this idea that we should "play it cool" with one another to the point of stripping any potential for connection out of our encounters.

(<http://www.alternet.org/culture/looking-core-requirement-casual-sex-college-isnt-optional-anymore-its-imperative?akid=15201.152322.ZxHY-e&rd=1&src=newsletter1072149&t=18>).

"Playing it cool" is a broad value of capitalism that reflects alienation, egocentrism, instrumentalism, and intense, competitive, pressures of precarious social activities that keep individuals overworked and available for sudden demands from work and school. The fact that girls adopt a cool, unemotional, demeanor of alienated intimacy proves it is not a male, sexist phenomenon.

Wade explains the emancipatory socio-political implications of this kind of broad, deep analysis of the psychology of sex: "The corrosive elements of hookup culture are in all of our lives: in our workplaces, in our politics and the media, within our families and friendships, and, yes, in bars and bedrooms. They're even in our marriages. It makes no sense to shake our fingers at college students." Consequently, "If we want to fix hookup culture, we have to fix American culture" (Wade 2017, p. 248).

The macro cultural psychological model of culture, as well as our detailed examination of capitalism explain what this fix requires (Ratner 2019). They direct us to discover a concrete negation of the political economy of capitalism as key to social and psychological emancipation. As Vygotsky stated earlier, "this places a democratic, cooperative, communal, and centrally strong, form of socialism on the agenda".

If people lived and worked in democratic, cooperative, communities, they would have strong, altruistic social relations that would obviate the elements of neoliberal social relations that encompass gender and sexuality. Gender relations depend upon

social relations; they cannot be improved as an isolated issue within the neoliberal system.

The remaining question is “is such radical transformation possible?” It looks impossible at this moment. However, history is replete with social revolutions by oppressed people. Examples include anti-imperialist revolutions, such as the Algerian revolution against France. All the bourgeois revolutions overthrew entrenched aristocratic ruling classes and replaced them with a different class structure. Socialist revolutions in Cuba, China, and Russia victoriously overthrew existing ruling classes. They failed to implement socialist, cooperative, democratic society—primarily because of their own conditions and mistakes, which were abetted by capitalist attacks. However, the point for us is that they succeeded in transforming their existing social systems. This should be sufficient to dispel pessimistic thoughts about the impossibility of concrete, political-economic transformation.

Macro cultural psychology contributes to emancipation by adding psychology and Psychology to the struggle for emancipation from neoliberal capitalism (see Ratner 2019).

Notes

1. This political-economic, capitalist, character of fascism is displaced by cultural interpretations. Thus, German Naziism is discussed as anti-semitism. Discussions rarely mention that Naziism was primarily aimed at crushing working class and socialist forces that were active in the 1920s in Germany. Nor do discussions mention that capitalists financially support fascist movements for this reason. Prominent American capitalists such as Henry Ford supported Hitler. Fred Koch, father of the Koch brothers, built an oil refinery for Hitler in 1934, that produced high octane fuel for fighter planes which the Nazis used to conquer Europe. “In late 1938, as World War II approached and Hitler’s aims were unmistakable, he wrote admiringly about fascism in Germany, and elsewhere” (Mayer 2016, chapter one). Fred hired a nanny for his children who was “a fervent Nazi sympathizer, who frequently touted Hitler’s virtues” (ibid.).

Comprehending and opposing fascism requires focusing upon its capitalist political-economic basis.

Cultural bigotry is a scapegoat that fascists utilize to gain popular support; it is not the essence of fascism. Hitler did not invade Europe to hunt down Jews. Emphasizing the cultural bigotry of fascism is important, however, it does not comprehend the fundamental basis of fascism; nor does it attack this basis. Attacking fascism’s cultural bigotry obfuscates the capitalist basis of fascism and the autocratic potential (tendency) of capitalism. This insidiously allows fascism to develop within capitalism as people oppose its intolerant, divisive, cultural expressions.

Culturizing fascism is common in the USA and Western Europe today. Liberals react to fascism primarily because of its disrespectful rhetoric toward marginalized people. This leads to opposing fascism by validating marginalized people. However, this insulates the draconian economic policies from view and challenge.

And it does nothing to solve the material economic crises that the majority face. This leaves the majority bereft of solutions to neoliberalism, and it allows neoliberals to appeal to the desperate majority with neoliberal solutions to crime and jobs! This is why the most destitute people under neoliberalism adopt notions of individual freedom and responsibility, and reductions in government services, and reductions in environmental protections. They embrace these because liberals have not provided them with any different solutions to their problems. Instead, liberals have emphasized support for cultural issues such as transgenders using certain bathrooms, and women resisting unwanted sexual jokes and touching, and deference to Islamic hijabs, and gender identity of new-borns, and welcoming caravans of Honduran immigrants into the U.S. White factory workers or farmers in Kansas, who have just lost their jobs and cannot feed their babies look at this and think liberals are crazy. Even lower-class women feel their material needs are more important than gender issues. This is reflected in the majority white women's vote for Trump. It is also reflected in the heavy female vote for Bolsonaro in Brazil, despite his crude sexism. Many women felt he was the woman's candidate because he promised military crackdowns on crime which threatens women, their children, and their husbands. A poor Brazilian mother who is robbed on the street, or whose husband is killed by a gang, wants protection against this more than she wants protection from her boss kissing her. Yet liberals discuss the latter far more than the former.

Liberal opponents to neoliberalism fail to appreciate the conical model of society in which the political economy is dominant and must be confronted. It is the central, mainstream political economy that is collapsing and ruining people. Yet liberals shift attention to marginal issues that do not impact peoples' lives as much as political economic issues do. Liberals abandon the center and the base of social life to the neoliberals who emphasize material issues such as jobs and national security. We have seen that neoliberals cannot deliver on their promises. However, they do raise these issues, which is appealing to the populace. Liberals emphasize cultural issues which ignore the material needs of the majority populace. Given this choice, the desperate, destitute populace are more attracted to neoliberal promises than to liberal neglect and marginal issues.

Just imagine a recently unemployed woman clutching her 3-month old daughter in her arms, while the sheriff is evicting her from her house out onto the street, and she sees a news show about a woman who is accusing a man of having pushed her onto a bed to have sex, 37 years ago when they were in high school, and then sees a conservative candidate on tv who talks about expanding jobs for workers by cutting taxes on business owners so they will expand their businesses in the next six months. Which will gain the support of the destitute woman? Even objectively speaking, which issue is more relevant to her immediate, material situation? The gender show does not address her situation. She thinks it is nonsensical for this reason and resents being bothered by it when she is destitute with an infant. So she resents the liberal women who raise this issue, and she is attracted to the conservative who is at least talking to her concern, even though we know he will never resolve it. That is why the liberal cultural turn loses the majority every

time. Even though its issues may be morally important, they are failures on the political-economic level, which is what most impacts the average person. Liberals have no coherent, viable solution to average, mainstream, economic problems, which is what the average person desperately needs. After each electoral failure, liberals insist that their moral issue is important and that people must be convinced of this. “It is just wrong for any man at any time to try and force a woman to have sex.” So, they continue to raise these issues instead of taking on more central, material issues that impact ordinary people. In this way they continue to facilitate the neoliberal and conservative victories that undermine the lives of ordinary people, and also undermine the liberal issues. Liberals thus inadvertently support neoliberal victories and their own defeat.

2. The Chinese State deliberately uses gender in this political way, to deflect attention from its destructive neoliberal practices. Yang (2016, p. 104) reports that “official discourse emphasizes gender over class; such an emphasis on gender (or psychotherapy) downplays class tension intensified by privatization. Class as an analytical and political concept has been replaced by gender (and race). Also, the rise in the post-Mao era of a biologized, naturalized understanding of gender facilitates the expression of new class differences through gendered meanings.”
3. Mass shootings are treated in similar terms. These interpersonal attacks generate shock and outrage and sadness; they are attributed to individual, psychological deficiencies that are traced by news organizations in excruciating detail over the killer’s lifespan. In contrast, imperialist invasions of countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Chile, Iran, etc., generate no such interest or anger at the aggressor—despite the fact that imperialism kills far more innocent people than mass killings do. Finally, solutions to mass killings are confined to identifying and repulsing individuals who are presumed to be likely perpetrators. These solutions include checking individual backgrounds, installing surveillance devices to detect suspicious individuals, and prohibiting assault weapons that individuals may purchase. Broad, political-economic solutions to mass killings—e.g., changes in broad, cultural values or practices are never considered.

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