

What's Wrong With Being Anti-Bourgeois?

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A Talk by Deirdre McCloskey at the Civil Society Institute of Santa Clara University

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Thank you very much.

I should start with my standard introduction so that you are not shocked on too many accounts by my speech.

When I was 11 I would fall asleep at night praying for two things. The following morning I would wake up and I would not stutter and that I would be a girl. At age 53 I got half of these prayers.

I'm not Catholic. I almost am; I'm Episcopalian, and that's a pretty good percentage, I figure.

The subject is, "What's Wrong With Being Anti-Bourgeois?" I've come to think there are lots of things wrong with being anti-bourgeois but, of course, in our intellectual culture, being too - to call someone bourgeois - is an insult. If as students you haven't learned this insult, believe me, you soon will. It's part of the experience of a college student in the West to learn to sneer at her parents and in particular the middle-class characteristics of her parents - "Oh, Mom, you're so middle class! You're so . . . bourgeois!"

I would claim that there isn't anything inevitable about being anti-bourgeoisie, being hostile to the values of a commercial, an urban civilization. In fact, the bourgeois was once very popular among artists and intellectuals, those people who teach us to be hostile to the bourgeoisie.

I spent a year in Holland in 1996. Splendid place, lots of very nice people (they all speak English) - that has the worst climate on the planet - but aside from that it's a wonderful place. It's been the home of the European Bourgeoisie since the 16th Century, a long time. Those traders in the mud at the mouth of the Rhine, which is what they are, have been the most clearly

middle class country in Europe. They had a very weak aristocracy, they didn't have a king until after the Napoleonic Wars. It was the business people who ran the place. To be sure, it was the upper business people. It was the owners of the equivalent of the e-businesses of the time, but the point that I would like to stress is that into the Dutch culture, the so-called Golden Age, that is the early to mid- 17th Century, the artists and painters sold their works to the middle class; about the middle class; and were, themselves, frankly, middle class.

Rembrandt was a business man. As it happens he went bankrupt, but, so do lots of business people. It's one of the hazards of being a business person. If assets don't exceed liabilities, you're bankrupt. But if you're in a world as an artist of assets and liabilities, you're in a very different world from the world created, now hear this, created in European art in the late 19th Century, the world of the bohemian, the world of the avant-garde, where you're not supposed to be thinking about assets and liabilities; you're supposed to be thinking about art, pure art.

The idea of pure art would have been unintelligible to Vermeer or Frans Hals or any of the artists of the Golden Age. And my claim would be that that was rather typical of bourgeois Europe at the time. If you read the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, which you should all read, this guy was a gas. In the course of his life he killed something like 5 men in duels. He started as a goldsmith, ended as a sculptor and a general artist and his autobiography is very amusing because it is extremely egocentric, sort of guy-stuff, an autobiography about me, me, me; moi, moi, moi; and how marvelous I am, about how those other artists are stupid jerks and I'm the best. But as a Northern Italian, as an urbanite, he had some aristocratic qualities. The bourgeois is not well known for dying or killing in duels, but he was also a businessman and thought of himself in those terms, and measured himself in those terms. What he does is, he brags about how much the Pope will pay him for this or that object. In the 18th C. in France you have figures like Voltaire or Montesquieu, who admire the increasingly bourgeois character of England across the channel and recommend bourgeois virtues for French people and attack aristocratic virtues and peasant virtues in France itself.

As Holland was the model for the bourgeois society in the 17th C., England becomes the model in the 18th C. If you're going to understand my argument, you have to adopt for a moment a 3-term alphabet. There are the A-people, the P-people, and the B-people.

A-P-B. It's not hard to keep in mind. A for Aristocracy; P for Peasantry, or Proletariat; and B for the Bourgeoisie. A 3-class analysis of that sort is commonplace; it's ancient. You can find it in the sacred literature of India; three classes of that sort. The military aristocrats and the Church, the physical working peasantry, and the buy low-sell high bourgeoisie. There is a fourth class: the clerisy, the clerks - that's us. It's the professors, the artists, the intellectuals; the critical class you might call them. See, it's also a C. If God intends for these hypotheses to be correct, He ordinarily provides the exact alphabetical equivalence. The clerisy, what the Russians call in the 19th C. the intelligentsia, are a priestly class.

Unfortunately, that starts with P, so it gets very confusing. But for the time being, A-B-P is all you need to think about. So, that's the first point.

The bourgeoisie was, for a while, from the Renaissance to the end of the 18th C. and then even into the early 19th C., very popular, very well thought of. The chief representative of the people against the aristocracy.

A classic bourgeois figure is Defoe's Robinson Crusoe; who reproduces the arts and crafts; who is a methodical, forward-planning bourgeois person, and, in fact, in his fictional life, before he comes to the island, he's a merchant. Ummm - Daniel Defoe, his creator, was very much an early spokesman for the bourgeoisie and an admirer of the bourgeois virtues.

This popularity comes to a peak in the Scottish Enlightenment. You've all heard of the French Enlightenment, and you may think of it as a single word, "French enlightenment". You may think of it as a single word, but there's a much improved Scottish Enlightenment happening at the same time across the North Sea. The central figure of the Scottish Enlightenment is our own Adam Smith, our own "we" economists Adam Smith and we regard him as holy (that's sacrilegious, I shouldn't make such jokes) but he's the inventor of economics. Now, understand, Scotland was in the sticks. I mean, Paris was THE place in the 18th C. That was where all the swingers were, that was where all the very best clubs were, what's where, you know, that was THE PLACE to be. All in black - well, they weren't all in black, they were all in lace, but still - that was the place to be. Really cool place, Paris.

Edinburgh, I mean, really, it was San Jose, if you've heard me. It was the provinces, this is not where things are happening; and yet this curious group of provincials invented economics, invented geometry, of all things, and made very - invented what would eventually become sociology - and made very significant contributions to the invention of history as an academic field. They made enormous contributions to philosophy in various parts. Sort of gives you hope for San Jose. I mean just get your act together and you can make similar contributions. So the Scottish Enlightenment of Adam Smith and David Hume and many other people is important, as I've said in the last few minutes, and is a contribution to this project of praising the bourgeoisie. That's the important part of my argument here.

My claim is, and this is somewhat controversial, it's not obvious it's true and I hope it is, and I hope I'll be able to persuade myself in the end that it's true, is that Adam Smith's project in particular, but also his friends, was to create an ethical theory for a commercial civilization; to create an account of bourgeois virtue; because, observe, think through your philosophy class. When you come to discuss ethics, or think through your film class or your class on world literature. The virtues that are praised are those either of an aristocracy, or of a peasantry. They are either pagan virtues or Christian virtues. They are not the virtues of a bunch of grain dealers. They're not the virtues of Silicon Valley. And my claim is that Smith, and there are a number of ways of making this argument, and, in any case, even if my argument is false it can be - ah- even if it's false about Adam Smith's intentions, what he accomplished was in fact, the construction of an ethic for a commercial society. If any of you are in the English department, you may have heard of the intentional fallacy, which is the fallacy of thinking because you know a poet's purpose, therefore you have a full grasp of her poem. But that's not the case because poets can intend things. You know I can intend to write the great epic of the Western World, but if I fail I fail regardless of how much I intend, what sorts of intentions I have. So, even if Smith didn't intend this, that is what he accomplished and I would say he intended it.

So far we have a comedy, we have a happy ending. We have ways of speaking about the virtues that start by being about the aristocracy. Those are the first sets of virtues and praise in our culture. In the Odyssey, in the Iliad, in the sacred stories of South Asia, in the Icelandic Sagas, in other words, in the warrior societies of the past; the aristocratic virtues, the A virtues, most particularly the virtue of courage, is praised.

And then there comes a babe born in Bethlehem, or, in alternative traditions, a Buddha, and an alternative set of virtues focusing on love come to be praised. These virtues, the pagan ones, the aristocratic ones, the A virtues; and the peasant, the monastic, the saintly virtues on the other hand - the virtues of love - are combined in the most full analysis by St. Thomas Aquinas, whom you may have heard of, who gives a very full and persuasive analysis of the virtues and it is this tradition that Adam Smith is working with. It's not the tradition, it's not the Kantian tradition that you'll be familiar with if you've even had a course from a philosopher in the Philosophy Dept. on ethics. It's not an ethical theory based on rules, such as the Golden Rule, or what Immanuel Kant called the Categorical Imperative which is in some ways a version of the Golden Rule, but it's about individual virtues in practical circumstances and Smith, I claim, was speaking this way.

So it's a comedy. We have this old way of speaking, but we became not so much aristocrats and peasants but, townspeople, and we needed a new theory of being a townspeople and Adam Smith came up with it - Yeah!! -

But then around 1800 something started to go wrong. Something went very wrong with this splendid project. The project of constructing a set of bourgeois virtues was abandoned, rather startlingly abandoned. Why this happened is very unclear to me. If I knew, I could finish the book I'm working on bourgeois virtue. I have, as far as I've gotten on this particular historical question of why it got all screwed up around 1800, after 1800 - as far as I've got is a list. This is the first refuge of an historian. When you're trying to explain the causes of the First World War, the causes of the Industrial Revolution, something like that, you start with a list of factors, and you try to see if you can get any evidence that bears on any of the factors. Was it the excesses of the French Revolution (which was explicitly early on a bourgeois revolution). Was it a European conservative reaction to the American experiment or again to the French experiment? Did it have, did this bad thing of the project of finding a set of virtues that you all, you're all bourgeois. You aren't members of the aristocracy, forget about it, and I can just see that you aren't saints. I'm almost sure of that.

The virtues that I think you're able to handle are the bourgeois virtues, and yet the intellectuals and artists have failed you because, starting in 1800, they started to scorn the bourgeois virtues. Was it the Separation of Spheres, as it is called? An

interesting controversial development that split the realm of masculine and feminine in a new way around 1800 in places like England and America and France where the realm of prudence, and the marketplace, was for the guys, and the realm of the home and spirituality was for the gals. Was it that being a virtuous person in the marketplace was thought to be impossible - that all you could be was prudent. So the man would go out and soil himself in trade and then return to the bosom of his family, to the pure woman, the angel in the house as it's expressed, who would heal him of his market-caused pain. You see? This was a Victorian ideal. We're now speaking of 1830 and after it.

Did it have something to do with Romanticism, and German reaction to the French Enlightenment, that did not work for a balance of virtues, but sought excesses of courage and love as the ideal for human life.

Did it have to do with Evangelicalism, which again is new circa 1800? The most sophisticated folk in Protestant countries and France weren't very serious about religion in the middle of the 18th century, whereas most sophisticated folk in those same countries in the early 19th century were very serious about it. This new evangelical seriousness, perhaps this had to do with a fall in popularity of the bourgeoisie, but fall it did.

1848 is the symbolic turning point. It's the year of great revolutions in Europe, in Austro-Hungary, in parts of Germany, all over the place, in Italy blah, blah, blah. The strange thing is there wasn't an 1848, so to speak, in England. Aside from that there was this great turmoil all over the continent. There was a - once again these were viewed as largely bourgeois revolutions, and very suddenly, the high art of Protestant Europe turned against the bourgeoisie. You can find mock sympathetic portraits of one part of the bourgeoisie in Jane Austin. You can find reasonably sympathetic portraits of shopkeepers and so on in the early novels of Charles Dickens.

Hawthorne is not hostile to the middle class. Early Melville is sympathetic, etc. etc. and then rather suddenly in this culture (it's hard to make these statements about Catholic Europe, that's not so clear), but certainly there's a very sharp charge about 1848. What George Bernard Shaw called the "Great Conversion". Shaw said European people went from viewing the 19th C. in which they were participating as the greatest of all centuries to viewing the 19th C. as the worst of all centuries. The Best of Times; the Worst of Times. They moved from to the other. From a celebratory, positive attitude towards the accomplishments

of the great engineers and the economy, and, boy, it's wonderful we're all bourgeois, together - to sneering at the bourgeoisie, hating the bourgeoisie, regarding the proletariat or some new version of the aristocracy as the class of the future.

Now, I'm almost through, sort of. I could go on and on. I just love this stuff. But I think it'll be more interesting to have some back and forth where we explore some of these issues and I can turn off the overhead. It makes such an annoying noise.

I have a hint for your education. It is, if you can learn to ask, particularly when you become graduate students and then go on to that great world outside college. If you can learn to say "so what" insistently, you will plumb the depths of whatever is being talked about. The best question you can ask in an academic seminar or in a business meeting is "so, what else is new?".

I've told you about the happy rise and sad fall of this project of bourgeois virtue. So what? Well, here's what. The dispraise of the bourgeoisie in the 19th C., this attack on capitalistic culture in the 19th C., it becomes such an important part of at least high art in our shared culture, results in a very strange elevation of A and P virtues. A & P - that was a food chain in the old days. There are many examples of this. This is a, I think my argument here is powerful as historical storytelling - it fits an awful lot of stories about the 19th C. Here's an interesting one.

The bourgeoisie in the 19th C. adopted aristocratic values. Most particularly they became soldiers. The armies of 1914, the armies of the First World War would not have been possible without an officer corps drawn from the bourgeoisie who believed in military virtues - and in all kinds of ways many European powers without planning it quite this way achieved the militarization of the bourgeoisie. Here's the contrast: in 1815, at the end of the Napoleonic War, the only country in Europe that had officers that came from the middle class as against the aristocracy, right? If you're an aristocrat, that's what your job is, to fight. That's what your whole life is about - having the physical courage to be a soldier, right? In 1815, the only country that had middle class officers was France and France had to have middle class officers because they had executed all the aristocracy. It was sort of like Stalin in the second World War, who killed off his army, the high officers of the army, and then was invaded by the Germans, and suddenly had to create an officer corps. In any case, by 1914, every belligerent power had an enormous officer

corps drawn from the middle class and it was something the middle class didn't do in 1815. They were perfectly happy to be honest manufacturers and serve to supply the troops with grain at a nice healthy price and follow the army around and sell things to the army - but, me, fight? A member of the bourgeoisie? Wait, the aristocracy's supposed to do that, and the peasantry. The aristocracy, the officers; and the peasantry, the soldiers - that's what they do. I just buy low and sell high! But by 1914 that idea had died, not that there weren't profiteers in the arms manufacturers, there certainly were, but the idea that a bourgeois man could maintain his self-respect and not be an aristocratic soldier-type, had gone forever.

I mean, after all, our own American Civil War is an early example of this. Where you have the middle class officers - people who think of themselves as bourgeois, most particularly in the Union Army, as against the Confederate Army - this is an army of the middle class.

And that, I regard as a catastrophe. That these large armies were able to function, was what made 1914 possible. Here's a small part of this story, again.

I could go on and on, but let me add just one more very interesting point. For the high bourgeoisie, there were private schools - for the boys - not for the girls - all over Europe that introduced the boys to, what? Latin, to be sure, but not just Latin. Increasingly, in the 19th C., they offered them Greek. Well, that's OK, I know some Greek and I'm in favor of it. Every person needs to know some Greek. If you haven't studied ancient Greek, stop what you're doing now, and go do it. I mean honestly, I'm not making this up, you should. But, in any case, what were the boys learning? What did they read? Did they read St. Paul in Greek? No way. They read the Iliad. Iliad in particular. Not even the Odyssey, which is not quite as much of a charnel house as the Iliad is. The Iliad's vast armies fighting each other. If you ever get the chance to see the American version of All Quiet on the Western Front - it's one of the early talking pictures - and it's a very good movie. It's about the First World War from the German point of view. The opening scene is in a schoolhouse, one of these academies that I'm speaking of, and the schoolteacher is urging the boys (they're all boys, we weren't involved, just the guys). The boys are being urged by the schoolteacher to go out and volunteer. This is August, 1914. Go fight for the fatherland. What is on the board in the back? Greek from the Iliad. A passage in Greek from the Iliad.

So that's one catastrophe. That's one answer to the question, "so what?".

That we didn't continue to have a way of being bourgeois, we had to become faux aristocrats, with its consequences, as I say, in nationalism is a problem.

The other great catastrophe of the century just passed is 1917. Two great catastrophes of the 20th C. are August 1914, and October, 1917. First is the catastrophe of nationalism gone mad; and the second is the catastrophe of socialism, gone mad.

My claim would be, without a way of being bourgeois and ethical, increasingly the intelligentsia, this clerisy, adopted a peasant version of being good. To put it another way, they adopted a secularized Christianity, which, I would say, is what socialism is. Socialism is the Christian virtues in the absence of God. Faith, hope, and love, these three, but the greatest is love, said St. Paul; 1st Corinthians 13:13. Faith, hope and love are the virtues of the violent socialist movement. I'm for love, and I'm here to help you. I so passionately love the proletariat in Cambodia, that I'm prepared to kill everyone with eyeglasses. Anyone with eyeglasses can presumably read - this actually happened in Cambodia - anyone with eyeglasses can presumably read, and anyone who could read was middle class.

Middle class was the enemy. Faith, hope, love. Hope especially. One could think actually of hope, that theological virtue Aquinas would call among the three theological virtues, as the prime virtue of socialism. But, unbalanced virtues are vices. If all you are is courageous, you're a very hazardous person to have around. You don't want somebody who's courageous, but hasn't got any prudence, any love, any temperance, any justice. So, it was in the excess of hope that socialism caused so many of the catastrophes of the 20th C. Here is, still, observe, this is another way of answering the question, "so what?". What's she talking about - all these old guys? Boring old stuff.. Why did I come here this afternoon? I can watch the Oprah show. By the way, watch the Oprah show tomorrow and you'll see me on it.

But the answer is, that those ideas of the 19th C., nationalism and socialism, were tried out in the twentieth century, or, to put it more exactly, came to their excesses in the twentieth century. It's not just a form of words, that Germany in the 1930's was under the rule of the National Socialists. That was a combination of nationalism and socialism, the worst conceivable

combination for our century. So all I'm saying is what professors always say, that ideas matter, and, boy, did they matter for our century. And we've got to do something. Here's why I say all this; I think we've got to be a lot more clear minded about these excessive virtues and their consequences, because otherwise, we're going to repeat the twentieth century, and believe me, you don't want to repeat the twentieth century.

And then, to conclude, the other answer to the "so what". You're bourgeois, you're middle class. Most of you are not going to be artists, college professors, journalists, and other glorious things like that. I mean, I feel that the top thing is to be a college professor, but that is a college professor's view! I don't actually believe that the top thing is to be a college professor, and most of you are not going to be. Most of you are going to be business people. And I want our art and our philosophy to start celebrating that, instead of sneering at it. Instead of supplying you in your college experience with a bunch of doubts about your life as a business person - that's not quite the right way to put it because I do want your education to supply you with doubts about your life as a business person, but I want them to be sophisticated doubts.

Here's what I mean. I don't want them to be doubts that say, the only way you can be good is to be a hero or a saint, and you may think, wait a second, this is about the old days, the Iliad and so forth. It's not. It's in the movies, it's in rock music, right now. The average cowboy movie or the average shoot-em-up detective movie is about a hero. He might as well be a medieval knight. In fact in Star Wars, that story draws freely from the equipment of a knight. The Jedi knight. It's a retelling of a heroic story..

It's the dreams of courage that boys and men are so fascinated by. On the other side the dreams of love that the girls and women are so fascinated by have their own excesses. It's not bad to engage in trade, and yet Christianity expresses considerable doubts about capitalism. There are views of modern capitalism in, say, Catholicism that are quite hostile to bourgeois virtues. What I want you to have is my -here it goes - I don't want you to follow the model of the hero or the model of the saint. I want you to think seriously, in a serious, ethical way, not casual, not , "Hey - greed is good ! There, that's my philosophy." That's not what I'm suggesting here. What I'm trying to do is to get you to restart that conversation with the Scottish Enlightenment. That truncated conversation about being a good person in a commercial and urban society.

So, as all sermons do, I end by saying, "Go forth, and do good." Thank you.

So, we can have a few minutes of discussion:

Q: I find all your points . . . (unintelligible)

A: Well, as an historian, especially as an economic historian, I'm very quantitative, and it strikes me again and again how small the towns were from which the great achievements of our civilization sprang. I mean Jerusalem was a tiny little berg by our modern standards.

Q: Don't you think they are all locked in their own virtual reality?

A: Well, yes, but it's a global village. As a matter of fact the age of the internet is an age and the age of economic growth, they are intertwined; is going to result in a cultural, economic creativity in the next century such as we've never seen. Think of the novels that will come out of a China with an American standard of living. It's amazing to behold. What I want to do with my little flag that I'm waving is a flag for those novelists and rock musicians and film makers over the next century to understand the bourgeois virtues and to treat life in the commercial society in something other than lofty contempt.

Q: Two things. First an observation, and then a question. The observation; we're talking about courage and all this stuff, and the picture I kept getting was John McCain. It seems the perfect example. Nowadays people are voting for courage without looking at anything else.

A: You're right. The journalists always saying what a great story, but what they really mean is it's a heroic story of endurance. In fact I heard last night an interesting commentary. The senior senator from Nebraska, who's retiring from public life, I hope, forever, was even more heroic, and they were explicitly making a comparison, as though being heroic was what you need. Being heroic, by itself, is extremely dangerous.

Q: The second thing, the question, about Pol Pot killing one out of seven Cambodians having something to do with love. I kind of missed that connection. If someone is coming at me to try to kill me, the first thing I think about is not that he loves me.

A: Well, it's these horrible pathologies. Someone who's umm - there's an extraordinarily good book by a philosopher named Mary Midgley, called *Wickedness*, in which she makes the argument that evil is not some kind of juice that infects our soul, but is an unbalanced version of virtue, and I think that's a smarter account of bad behavior. So my claim would be that socialism does start with love. I mean, I was once a - That's the problem. It starts with love and then feels justifies ignoring the other virtues. It starts with love and justice and ends in the gulag.

Q: I disagree with that and I want to take you back. One of my projects over the years, as I was never really a socialist - was to understand socialists. So, over the years I've asked people and I've really gotten to where they're telling me the truth and what I've been getting is not love at all. I mean and . . . (unintelligible)

A: I mean in my own case I was a socialist. Of course, I've been most things in my life, but I was a socialist. I thought of myself as a socialist as a beginning undergraduate, until I had an economics course and it cured me. But in my case, it was this kind of (unintelligible) . . . it's all kinds of things. It's the romance of revolution, which was the self-importance of a young man, you know, who's perfectly prepared to accept that love is not the outcome of the modern socialist movement.

Q: You make it sound like, now, that we should interpret your comments that what the bourgeois virtues are me, and a balance of various virtues, but I got a sense from something you said, that you had more than that in mind, you had some particular virtues . . . (unintelligible).

A: There are a whole class of virtues that fit into the operation of a town, or of a community of business people. They don't all have to be in the same place; an industry or a corporation, and those are, I think, unusual especially the virtues of speech. There are rhetorical virtues I will walk with you, I will talk with you. "What news of the route", says Shylock. The bourgeois person is, above all, a speaking person. That's why, my dears, you're going to be business people. That's why we professors say to you - you've got to be able to write and speak. Because that's what you're going to do for the rest of your life, is write and speak in bourgeois occupations. So, there are a whole class of these virtues.

Then there are virtues that are sort of similar to virtues of the other classes; like enterprise, being the community version of

courage. It appears to be a virtue of bourgeois society to take public charity very seriously. Here's an interesting statistic. In 1617, one tenth of the population of Amsterdam was on welfare. From the very beginning of bourgeois society in Europe there was concern. You can say, oh yeah, they're only concerned cause they're afraid these people will overturn them. I don't think that's an adequate - I don't think that's a full account.

But the main bourgeois virtue is prudence. In the same way that courage is the main virtue of the aristocracy, or love (or solidarity) is the main virtue of the peasantry, the proletariat or the Church - Christianity; prudence is the main virtue of bourgeois society. Well wait a second, that's not a virtue, that's just self-interest, that's selfishness, that's greed.

Hey - no. Prudence, phrenesis (?), Aristotle called it, practical wisdom, is a virtue. How do you know prudence is a virtue? Any dog-lover can tell you prudence is a virtue. You are trying to train your kids to take care of themselves. It's a very bad idea to have people around you who can't take care of themselves. They're called children. It's very annoying. They wander in the street. They smoke pot. They are really kind of annoying. They learn prudence. It's dangerous if you look at it this way. Imagine a friend who was courageous and temperate, just and loving, hopeful and faithful, but was imprudent. It's a virtue.

So, there are three core virtues that Adam Smith focuses on. Mainly, temperance, prudence, and justice. But those aren't in Adam Smith's account, or St. Thomas'. Those aren't enough. You also need faith, hope and courage.

Q: You mentioned charity. it brought to mind some of the research Bob Frank has done. He shows empirically that the study of economics is strongly associated with a rather significant reduction in contributions to public charities.

A: That's right.

Q: So I'm curious as to how you kind of reconcile this, the balance that you're trying to establish between these different . . .

A: He's right. This is the big catastrophe. If you haven't got a really well worked out theory of bourgeois virtue, you end up with one of these, if you'll pardon me, I don't want to offend anyone here, but I'm going to, Country-Club Republicanism versions of

morality. I've got mine; to hell with you is one version. Greed is good is another version. The person who ends up life with the largest number of automobiles is another one, and that kind of selfish prisoner's dilemma of behavior is not my idea of bourgeois virtues.

What's happened is that Adam Smith is viewed as the source of the notion that greed is good, and that is the furthest from Adam Smith's mind. He says that prudence is a virtue. He specifically does not say that it is the only virtue. He specifically says that for prudence to work, to result in a good society, you need those other virtues along with it, and that's a very Aristotelian way of looking at it. So I, what Professor Field is referring to are studies that show, that the only people who won't cooperate are people who study economics. So my view is we've got to change something about how we teach economics.

Q: (unintelligible)

A: Well, yes, in fact I was over in your bookstore, and I picked up a book I meant to show you - a famous 18th C. play called, it's a horrible play, don't buy it, but I have to buy it because I have to study this stuff. I'll take care of it, I'll study it for you. It's called, "The London Merchant".

It's a favorable view of the bourgeoisie and a very important one. I also picked up two very good books by someone who's here. It says she is somewhere else, but I think she is on the faculty at this university. It was in the faculty author section of the bookstore. One is called, *The Virtuous Woman, Reflections on Christian Feminist Ethics*. It seems to be an extremely well done book, extremely clear in parts that I read, and I'm very interested in finding out about this, as a Christian, as a feminist. But her views on economics you can tell immediately are, that's a kind of dubious activity. You should be praying and taking care of people. But to trade, where does Jesus praise that? Oh, but he does. It's the attested as against added, supplemented remarks of Jesus in the Gospels are quite ambiguous about the attitude a godly person should have towards the economy. Among the more famous along these lines, "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's; and to God what is God's"., and there are good textual reasons for regarding that formulation as something that Jesus actually said. I'm sorry to inform you that there's a lot in the Gospels attributed to him that he almost certainly did not say. So it's a kind of a mixed bag of Christianity. That's not

the view of a great many late 20th C. intellectual Christians. They regard God and Mammon as opposite sides of the street.

Q: I never got, I never understood what he meant when he said, "Render to God what is God's". What is God's?

A: I can't stand here and pretend to be an expert. I'm not going to answer the question because it would be quite presumptuous of me to say, "Of course, it means the following". What is clear is that the life of the historical Jesus took place in a highly commercial society and that he freely drew on the imagery of commerce and hiring and manufacturing and so forth in his preaching.

Q: I've been working on and off in Russia in the last 5 years, and I think about the people I've been . . . (Unintelligible), and I'm really taken by this notion about bourgeois values because I think that's laid out at the beginning of the last century and also one of the reasons it's going to be very different for change to take place.

A: I agree. Perhaps because I am a professor most of my friends there are members of the intelligentsia and what they never developed, because it was not a virtue, was practicalism and being able to take care of themselves. At least in a market society. They were able to take care of themselves in a socialist society.

Q: But only by the sufferance of playing the right notes. It was not a sense of personal resourcefulness as much as walking very carefully through a fairly well-defined mine field.

A: I think that's true especially of college professors. I had a friend, a Pole, who was a mathematical economist and I asked him why he was and did he think that was how things should be done and he said no, I think most of what I have done is kind of stupid but on the other hand I was able to work in this field without being second-guessed by the man at the party, because if he thought there was something wrong, I'd just show him the 40 pages of mathematics and say, well, Comrade, I agree and perhaps you can find the deviation.

Q: But my point is I think that the work you are doing to identify the virtues is important not only in the West, but also in those countries where these virtues were actively denigrated .

A. I think so, and you would have to know much more about me than is necessary to understand how odd this is for me to say

because most of my early academic career was spent in attacking the idea of entrepreneurship. I first made my dissertation, what's critical of taking seriously the sociology of the economy. But here I am, now I am sane. For Lord's sake the first thing we need to do is take seriously the sociology of the economy.

Q: I strongly applaud the project you recommend. I have a concern that while the aristocratic virtues like courage can be passionately put forward like Star Wars or that the P virtues of love and so on can also be passionately put forward in art, the B virtues of prudence, punctuality, of trustworthiness cannot be put forward in art. Is it possible that the intellectuals forsook the bourgeoisie because they couldn't write passionate novels about them?

A: You know I think that's where Romanticism comes in or Evangelicalism, as they called it in the 18th C., Religious Enthusiasm. But as you said, it's courage and love, you can tell great stories. But think of a movie plot that hinges on prudence. Indeed, these bourgeois virtues are boring. But after all there have been treatments of - I mean it's part of my claim that before around 1800, or 1830 there were lots of artistic representations of bourgeois virtues. For example Robinson Crusoe. He does not exhibit courage. He survived on the island, he didn't go crazy and roam the sea and drown in the ocean. I mean, there was a certain level of endurance he showed. But he showed prudence to an enormous extent. He kept saying, "My God, if I'm going to survive in this place, I've gotta grow goats and maybe eventually I'll be able to eat goats and have milk." So he's thinking of the future in a very bourgeois way. In a way that wouldn't fit in a romance. All the prudential things in Star Wars, the movie, are handled off stage. You don't have to worry how these things are built, these magical space ships and so on. And again I give you an example of 17th C. Holland where bourgeois lives were held up for examination. There's a kind of coolness in Vermeer in particular. he only painted 35 paintings in his life, an amazingly small number. Coolness, quietness about the bourgeois life, almost all about women, all of his subjects are women and they're almost all reading or playing an instrument, which are middle class accomplishments in the 17th C. of a woman - so, there's a steady portrayal of bourgeois virtues, or foolishness, sometimes vice. You now, that's pretty exciting art, not exciting quite but it's wonderful stuff. If you've ever seen a Vermeer painting in the real, it's incredible.

Q: One great event that took place at the same time period when you fell out of love with the bourgeoisie is the Industrial

Revolution. How does that tie in?

A: Well, as I was saying to the class that I taught this morning on the subject, it's connected. There's a lot of complaint about the dark nuance of Satanic Melts, although it is important to understand that that phrase was coined way before there were any Satanic Melts or very few of them. And I would make the same point. I'd say that industrialization didn't really affect till the middle of the 19th C. Until quite late. We have a , I speak now as an economic historian, we did a lot of work over the last half century that's shown quite conclusively, I think most economic historians regardless of their politics or methodology would agree with me, have shown fairly conclusively that up until the middle of the 19th C., industrialization was confined to certain parts of England, Massachusetts, and it was small potatoes, I mean, probably the largest, most spectacular industrial invasion was the railway. It's not until the 1840's that it becomes commonplace for there to be trains all over the place. So it's very late that industrialization by itself is a force and it is at that very time that the intelligentsia turns against it. So I think it needs explanation.

Certainly complaints against industrialization - you know the actual economy wasn't very industrialized. You're perfectly correct on part of the complaint against the bourgeoisie. And in our time, environmentalism, which I regard as an anti-bourgeois theme in our culture, is very much a complaint against industrialization.

Well, as I say, go forth, do not multiply, it is not something you want to tell undergraduates, but be . . . bourgeois . . Thank you.