ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: FREEDOM FROM THE MARKET: ANTAGONISTIC DISRUPTIONS OF NEOLIBERAL CAPITALISM

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The 2016 U.S. presidential election showcased prominent rejections of the existing political and economic order, as many voters channeled frustrations over rising inequality and instability into support for candidates like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, who acknowledged the widespread economic struggles of the market globalization age. This recent electoral example is one of many global rejections of free market expansion, a phenomenon that my dissertation examines. While rhetorical scholars have addressed the growing prominence of the free market and its logics, my project examines how people have resisted what is often called neoliberalism.

Taking an approach to rhetoric derived from theories of articulation, in this project, I define neoliberalism as a hegemonic articulation that strings together four governing principles: freedom as primary, economics as natural, the individual as rational actor, and the free market as pure. The project examines three activist discourses that challenged neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s and that continue to resonate today: the 1986 U.S. Catholic Bishops' *Economic Justice for All* pastoral letter, the Kathy Lee

Gifford sweatshop scandal of 1996, and Seattle's 1999 World Trade Organization protests. With each case, I demonstrate how neoliberal discourses themselves fostered tensions and how people exploited these tensions to challenge neoliberal hegemony; following theories of articulation, I call these challenges "antagonisms." This project suggests that we should understand activist moments as "antagonistic disruptions" that that interrupt hegemonic discourses and evoke the possibility of their demise.

Taken together, these case studies offer three major lessons for scholars and activists. First, the project suggests that powerful discourses—like neoliberalism—are comprised of necessary tensions, and that scholars can identify those tensions and that activists can exploit them. Second, the dissertation teaches scholars and activists that existing discourses and previous antagonisms enable people to challenge powerful discourses. Thus, scholars and activists learn that antagonisms are disruptive when they participate in legible frames of reference. Third, the cases suggest that the more multi-modal and frequent the antagonistic engagement, the more forceful the disruption. This project then, recommends that scholars study multi-modal recurrence and that activists strive for multi-modal consistency.

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ANTAGONISTIC DISRUPTIONS OF NEOLIBERAL CAPITALISM

by

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The Neoliberal Articulation and its Antagonisms

The 2016 presidential race featured prominent rhetorical rejections of the political and economic status quo. As *Salon* noted of Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump, "two insurgent candidates, on the left and the right, are successfully appealing to anger over free trade."[1] From the political Left, Sanders told Democratic primary voters, "Tonight we serve notice to the political and economic establishment of this country that the American people…will not accept a rigged economy in which ordinary Americans work longer hours for lower wages while almost all new income and wealth goes to the top 1 percent."[2] Sanders characterized U.S. free trade agreements as "disastrous" policies that "have had a horrendous impact on the lives of millions of working Americans."[3] From the political Right, Trump also called the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) "a disaster" and railed against "all of these countries that are taking so much of our money away from us on a daily basis."[4] Trump offered to protect U.S. workers by building a border wall and by punishing corporations that moved job overseas.[5]

News media suggested that voters from across political spectra were channeling what *The Seattle Times* called "deep resentments over stagnant wages, rising income inequality and loss of economic mobility" into support for candidates who passionately denounced such economic insecurity.[6] *The New York Times* characterized this election as a "populist revolt" and a "backlash" that "has been building gradually among American voters for years against 'stagflation,' 'the middle-class squeeze,' cross-border trade deals and Wall Street bailouts."[7] Sanders supporter Shiva Bayat explained in *Slate* that she and "The bulk of young Bernie supporters are most drawn to his tireless commitment to taking on the big banks and Wall Street."[8] Bayat wrote that Sanders' "platform on

economic redistribution and taking on the banks is palpably exciting for my generation"—a generation of people experiencing "chronic uncertainty and insecurity" in the job market while being "shackled with debt." *USA Today* reported on Trump supporter Jesse Gonzales who had identified "a lack of economic opportunity" as his "most critical political issue."[9] As he "blamed trade policy" for this lack, Gonzales told the reporter, "It's the government's job to ensure that our economy is functional and they failed to do so. They've made sure that other countries' economies flourish."[10]

Such discourses enabled the Sanders and the Trump campaigns to garner significant momentum with their economic messages, which took aim at free trade and elite financial institutions. Sanders, a seventy-four-year-old democratic socialist Senator from Vermont, challenged Hillary Clinton in a well-publicized primary run for the Democratic nomination for president. Young primary voters overwhelmingly cast their ballots for Sanders, and forty-three percent of primary voters chose the democratic socialist over the Democratic nominee.[11] Trump, a wealthy real estate mogul with no prior political experience, handily won the Republican Party's nomination, picking off sixteen other contenders.[12] Trump went on to defy many expectations when he narrowly won the U.S. presidency in what *Time Magazine* called "one of the most shocking U.S. elections in modern political history."[13] In response to Trump's victory, Cornel West took to *The Guardian* to say "Goodbye" to "American neoliberalism."[14] Indeed, with their critical focus on economic inequality, free trade, and elite power, discourses making sense of the 2016 election disrupted the assumed inevitability of the neoliberal order.

Neoliberalism generally refers to structural and cultural changes that have become deeply entrenched since the 1970s in the United States and, increasingly, around the

world.[15] This governing logic valorizes the economic market as a pristine system that is best suited to protecting human dignity, freedom, and prosperity. Thus, neoliberalism upholds the free market as a model for all social interaction and structures all of society in the market's image. It promotes individual autonomy, deregulation, and the free flow of global capital as heralds of human progress.[16]

The discourse that promotes unfettered capitalism as the road to human fulfillment is a potent and ubiquitous discourse that currently structures human experience and public policy. Since the 1970s, people in all levels of society have exalted a free capitalist market as a guarantor of progress, freedom, and abundance for everyone.[17] Neoliberal logic has also justified numerous structural changes that reinforce the discourse of free marketism. Proponents have removed structural and cultural barriers to free trade and otherwise encouraged the spread of free market capitalism into ever-expanding social spheres.[18] Further, neoliberalism presumes that the spread of unfettered capital is not only beneficial, but is an inevitable marker of global progress. Even amidst the economic populism of the 2016 election, *The Economist* argued that free trade deals were "inevitable," and that "the projected gains of future free-trade agreements should be more than enough to compensate losers," if allocated properly.[19]

Despite discourses that uphold neoliberalism as "inevitable," economics is subject to human agency and is not a natural system. Since Deirdre McCloskey's *The Rhetoric of Economics*, scholars have demonstrated that economics is a profoundly rhetorical field, even though it rarely acknowledges its own rhetoricity.[20] The subfield of rhetoric and economics began as a challenge to the idea that human beings are rational actors who engage in mutually beneficial exchanges. The subfield has evolved into examining the

various ways that rhetoric creates, maintains, and disrupts economic realities.[21] The neoliberal turn has garnered increasing attention from scholars of economic rhetoric, as it continues to constitute a major governing logic that organizes our worlds.[22]

Aside from being rhetorical, not natural, neoliberal restructuring and its justificatory logic have been, by many counts, disastrous for most people both internationally and in the United States. In practice, neoliberal globalization, individualization, and privatization have benefitted upper and corporate classes as a whole, leading Aiwa Ong to accuse neoliberal practice of "undermin[ing] the democratic achievements of American liberalism based on ideals of equal rights."[23] In the United States, the wealth gap has been steadily rising since 1978.[24] Around the world, Oxfam reported that, between 1980 and 2012, "The richest one percent increased their share of income in 24 out of 26 countries" and that, by 2014, the "bottom half of the world's population owns the same as the richest 85 people in the world."[25] This kind of inequality does not square with the neoliberal rhetoric that promotes markets as inevitable progress for all of humankind.

The contradiction between neoliberal justification and the consequences of neoliberal policy have prompted various forms of resistance against the spread of free marketism. Amidst the ubiquity of discourses upholding the free market, my project examines how people resist the free market's dominance. Thus, in this project, I ask two interrelated research questions. First, I ask, how did the neoliberal paradigm itself create opportunities for people to resist it? Second, how did people take advantage of these opportunities to challenge neoliberalism? To answer these questions, I turn to three case studies that exemplify potent disruptions of free marketism. First, I analyze the 1986

economic treatise authored by the United States Catholic Bishops, entitled *Economic Justice for All*. Next, I analyze the 1996 revelations that celebrity Kathie Lee Gifford's clothing line at Wal-Mart used sweatshop labor to produce its garments. Finally, I analyze Seattle's 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) protests.

The rhetoric of resisting neoliberalism requires a critical approach capable of managing two important and familiar challenges. First, resistance to neoliberalism requires the critic to nuance relationships between the symbolic and the material. Second, this kind of project challenges the critic to refine relationships between ideology and agency. To answer my questions and navigate the aforementioned challenges, I turn to theories of articulation to analyze and assess both dominant discourses and liberatory rhetorics in the neoliberal milieu. Theories of articulation in communication studies help scholars navigate these challenges because they posit that rhetoric establishes relationships between elements in articulations.[26] This approach assumes that there are no natural connections, only articulated ones.[27] Further, an articulation approach takes very few foundations for granted. Instead, it demands that practices and judgments be grounded in a historical genealogy and with an eye toward contingency.[28] In this introduction, I explain how theories of articulation help me navigate the challenges posed by neoliberalism to rhetorical studies. Next, I offer an articulation-based rhetorical history of neoliberalism, showing how it rose to dominance. Finally, I describe my case studies and preview the project's findings.

An Articulation Approach to Rhetoric

Interrogating resistance to neoliberalism poses two familiar challenges to rhetorical studies: the relationships between symbolicity/materiality and ideology/agency.

The turn toward the logic of articulation offers mechanisms by which to manage each of these important challenges. In this section, I explicate each challenge and briefly explain how scholars have heretofore navigated them. I also demonstrate how an articulation approach to rhetoric deals with each tension. Ultimately, theories of articulation provide a contingent and genealogical approach to rhetoric that successfully nuances and historicizes relationships between rhetoric, materiality, ideology, and agency. This approach allows me to best answer the *how* question that drives my analyses.

Symbolicity and Materiality

Traditional humanist paradigms presume that the material world and rhetoric exist as a duality and that the humanist subject works on the material world through speech.[29] A fitting example of such a traditional approach to rhetoric is Lloyd Bitzer's account of the "Rhetorical Situation."[30] Bitzer's rhetorical situation refers to an observable, historical situation that exists outside of discourse, but invites a discursive response by a rhetor. Thus, though rhetoric mediates between world and consciousness, it is maintained as separate from the material world.

Scholars have recognized that traditional paradigms do not sufficiently explain the distinctions between "material world" and "rhetoric" that they assert.[31] For example, scholars developing the dramatistic approach have made important inroads to disrupting the strict separation of language and reality, positing that all human motivation is both symbolic and social.[32] Ernest Bormann argued that traditional approaches assume that the "word is not the thing," that "words are generated out of the social context rather than that the words *are the social context*."[33] Bormann here asserted the basic social constructionist assumption that language creates reality. Of course, that reality encounters

what Kenneth Burke called a "recalcitrance" that disciplines the symbolic actions that do not make sufficient sense with other encountered realities.[34] In re-reading Kenneth Burke's corpus, Debra Hawhee offered another important dramatistic intervention into the rhetoric-materiality duality. Hawhee argued that, for Burke, symbolic action necessarily had a physical, bodily dimension, and so all symbolic action has a material component.[35] Thus, dramatism has offered important complications for the separations of materiality and rhetoric.

Other scholars have further blurred the lines between rhetoric and world, suggesting that material objects are rhetorical and that rhetoric has material dimensions and consequences.[36] For example, Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook followed Carole Blair's conception of the "materiality of rhetoric," in which any place is a "combination of material and symbolic qualities" that has symbolic as well as "material consequences."[37] Endres and Senda-Cook illustrate their point with the example of a church, which depends on both its material and symbolic dimensions to constitute it as such.

As the preceding paragraphs have shown, an approach that separates rhetoric from material world has faced many fruitful challenges.[38] However, in many of these approaches, the material and the symbolic continue to appear as naturally separate realms, even as they are unknowable without each other. For instance, Nathan Stormer argued that dramatism asserts "the existence of a reality which is its own construction" without historicizing the processes that made one thing "material" and another "symbolic."[39] The gap between the two realms is presumed to be stable and ahistorical. Further, many rhetorical approaches give too much power to language as a force separate

from, but contingent on, the material. This critique was advanced by Michael Calvin McGee when he charged materialists with not giving enough weight to symbols and symbolists with paying insufficient attention to materiality.[40] Indeed, the assertion of a discrete and concrete difference between the material and symbolic abounds, with some scholars privileging the symbolic as the primary world-making mechanism and others privileging the material as such.[41]

The neoliberal order further prompts scholars to interrogate the traditional distinctions made between the symbolic and the material. In many ways, the propagation of free market logic and advances in technology have complicated these distinctions. Ronald Walter Greene argued that neoliberal capital "increasingly relies on the social dimensions of communication" to accumulate wealth and social power; thus, he introduced Money/Speech as a concept that drew scholarly attention to the interpenetration of communication and economics, within the context of neoliberal discourses, which transform labor into "human capital."[42] In this milieu, we must ask, what counts as symbolic or material when we consider the credit system, labor in the growing "information" sector, or money that is legally considered speech?[43]

Theories of articulation help critics navigate this challenge by taking a contingent and genealogical approach to the material and the symbolic. This approach does not assume that certain elements are material and others are symbolic prior to engaging in criticism. Instead, taking an articulation approach prompts scholars to attend to how particular distinctions between material and symbolic are made in practice and what the consequences of making those distinctions are.[44] This approach historicizes how the differences between the two are constituted through articulation, while at the same time

acknowledging that rhetorical articulation draws together what it distinguishes as the symbolic and material in various ways.[45] Thus, what Stormer calls the "mutual interaction" of material and meaning is what constitutes the very thing.[46] Further, articulatory practices are "genealogical" in that, as Stormer explains, they "emerge from myriad past arrangements" that place "limitations on the invention of new forms of rhetoric."[47] Past articulations structure which rhetorical forms are possible, though they often do so in non-linear and unpredictable ways.

For example, a critic taking an articulation approach to rhetorical criticism would map the distinctions that classical Marxism makes between base and superstructure by approaching them as historically articulated differences that have particular consequences. In the mid-nineteenth century, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels offered historical materialism as a counterweight to discourses of human history and development that, according to Marx and Engels, were increasingly weightless. These dominant discourses ignored the processes of production and instead valorized exchange value. In an effort to decenter the capitalists, Marx and Engels re-articulated political economy as a material process of production, rather than one of weightless exchange. As I explained elsewhere, "Decentering the bourgeoisie, Marx and Engels advocated focusing on the material, rather than the *idea* of the material, and thus privileged production as a counterweight to exchange."[48]

For Marx and Engels in their time, ideas and material processes were different articulations with different political commitments. The material articulation privileged the laborer, and the ideational articulation privileged the capitalist. Constructing ideology as language—the unreal—and economic structure and production as the material—the

real—worked politically for Marx and Engels. In orthodox Marxist rhetoric, the privileged position was the real one and the denigrated position is the unreal, thus inauthentic one.[49] As a political project, then, Marxism articulated a strict separation of the material and the rhetorical, as a way to decenter the bourgeoisie.[50] Scholars and activists who have been pursuing a critique of capitalism since Marx have participated in a genealogical trajectory set by Marxism, such that they have had to grapple with the distinctions between the material and symbolic that Marx and Engels set.[51]

As this example illustrates, an articulation approach is a mapping project that largely rejects what Greene refers to as the "logic of representation," which posits that rhetoric represents something that exists in the material world outside of rhetoric. If we had taken an interpretive approach to classical Marxism, we would have explained how classical Marxism describes the world as it is, beyond Marxist articulations of world. Instead, displacing "interpretation" for "mapping" allows scholars to show how the "material" meaning becomes attached to particular elements and the "symbolic" meaning becomes attached to other elements through rhetorical practice.[52]

Ideology, Hegemony, and Agentic Social Change

The traditional humanist approach to rhetoric presumes that individuals hold and enact agency, so this approach privileges individual, human agents who use rhetoric to change or preserve the world around them.[53] We can again point to Bitzer's rhetorical situation as an example of this paradigm. For Bitzer, individual speakers possess the agency to fittingly respond to a situation by managing its constraints in a creative and appropriate manner. Bitzer's model largely assumes that individuals are fully formed agents who can act to influence situations.[54]

Myriad scholars have demonstrated that this traditional approach does not sufficiently account for agency. It does not pay proper attention to collective agency, and it neglects the emergence and dissolution of particular forms of agency in specific situations. Barbara Biesecker, for example, argued that Bitzer's rhetorical situation does not account for the rhetorical, social emergence of particular subjectivities, which make possible or circumscribe the enactment of agency. At a basic level, Biesecker argued that Bitzer's model takes agency for granted.[55] Also, as James Jasinski argued, the traditional approach does not sufficiently account for inventional agency as a necessarily "social process," such that the rhetor is always embedded in and draws upon various social practices when enacting agency.[56] Further, Celeste Condit argued that the traditional approach asserts the primacy of the intentions and effects of individual rhetors, but does not take account of the multiplicity of voices embedded in any enactment of agency.[57]

What Phillip Wander termed the "ideological turn" in rhetorical studies ushered in a concerted effort to understand how rhetoric maintains and disrupts systems of social dominance.[58] The growing importance of race, gender, and class studies alongside the rise of critical/cultural studies together pushed rhetoricians to seriously consider how social power is distributed and maintained, and how it constrains and enables rhetorical invention on the part of agents. The ideological turn decentered individual rhetors by drawing attention to wider social processes that constrain individual agency.[59] McGee, for example, argued that rhetoric is a mechanism of social control, which is composed of political language.[60] Raymie McKerrow proposed that rhetorical critics engage in "critical rhetoric" rather than "rhetorical criticism," wherein rhetoricians would show how discourse legitimates certain positions and interests, enables some forms of agency

performed by certain agents, and forecloses upon the possibility of others.[61] Further, Maurice Charland argued that social subjects are always already a rhetorical effect and that, often, their constitution is beyond the realm of free and rational choice.[62] The ideological turn, then, prompted rhetorical critics to grapple with complex issues of power and agency.

The neoliberal moment further challenges scholars to conceptualize ideology and agency in novel ways. For instance, neoliberal governance diminishes the ability of once-powerful institutions, like the state, to act. How do we conceive of power when political and social institutions that once were loci of ideological force are being dismantled by increasingly powerful economic actors? Also, since neoliberalism privileges individuals while it disempowers many people, agency becomes a complex and contested term. For example, scholars have argued that the new world order dismantles organized labor's ability to act as a collective force by treating workers as free-floating individuals.[63] How do we make sense of agency when being considered primarily an individual can circumvent one's power to act?

Again, theories of articulation help rhetorical critics navigate this challenge with their contingent and genealogical approaches to subject formation and power distribution. Theories of articulation focus the critic's gaze on how elements are historically linked to form a coherent system of meaning, rather than an ideology that emanates from particular loci of power. Following Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe displace "ideology" with "discourse." "Discourse" for Laclau and Mouffe is a decipherable system of meaning that cobbles together linguistic and non-linguistic elements ways that privilege some subjectivities and actions over others. There

is no necessary "truth" that is occluded by "ideology." Rather, there are competing systems of signification that assemble meaning in competing ways.[64] An articulation approach to rhetoric does not assume that discourse *hides* relations of power, but assumes instead that discourse itself *can be* a form of social control because it positions subjects in relation to objects and other subjects.[65] Thus, an articulation approach does not assume that power exists beyond the text and is only represented by texts. Instead, the critic approaches texts as manifestations of power itself, rather than as representations of a power that exists primarily elsewhere.

In this way, an articulation approach is a postmodern approach to power, not unlike Judith Butler's performativity approach to gender. As Butler explains, postmodernism deconstructs transcendent agents that exist outside of discourse. From a postmodern perspective, the agent is produced by and functions within various discourses.[66] For Butler, "performativity" refers to the idea that the authoritative "anticipation [of an object] conjures its object."[67] So, dominant discourses anticipate a "gendered essence" that divides women from men and, in anticipating it, they produce that essence.[68] Part of the power of that essence is that it naturalizes itself as already existing, beyond the discourse that articulated it.

An articulation approach suggests that a hegemonic articulation is a powerful discourse that universalizes itself through repetition and accumulation, which means that it attaches itself to an increasing variety of elements. As an articulation, rhetoric establishes relationships between elements, changing the elements and temporarily stabilizing them in those relationships.[69] Articulating means communicating something, incarnating it, so that it is comprehensible enough to be perceived.[70] Although there are

no natural connections, articulations solidify with use, and repeating connections can normalize particular articulations into hegemonic articulations. Those normalized, universalized articulations necessarily privilege some subjectivities and social configurations over others.[71]

For example, what Barbara Welter termed the "Cult of True Womanhood" can be considered a hegemonic articulation of western womanhood, one that universalized itself through repetition and accumulation. [72] Before this particular articulation, women had been excluded from full citizenship by discourses that posited them as naturally inferior beings. As urbanization and industrialization advanced, what were once considered "natural" distinctions between male and female became more complicated. In this milieu, the "Cult of True Womanhood" articulation rose to prominence, as it provided a clear distinction between men's and women's social locations. Under the temporarily stabilized meaning of "woman," this nineteenth-century articulation established relationships between elements such as women's sex, their naturally submissive character, their proper social realm, and their restricted citizenship and mobility. This articulation managed expectations of "womanly" behavior as pious, pure, domestic, and submissive, and thus it restricted women to the private home, as property of their husbands or fathers, away from public life. Although this articulation was a bourgeois norm, it circulated widely as a set of restrictive laws and social practices that together produced "woman."

Taking an articulation approach means mapping the "Cult of True Womanhood" as more than a set of disembodied ideas. This articulation managed women's bodies: their embodied (in)ability to move in particular places, to have custody of their children, to

vote for representatives of government. The "Cult of True Womanhood" articulation was naturalized by attaching itself to countless laws that restricted women's political and social mobility, as well as to countless performances of "true" womanhood. Each law and each performance articulated "true womanhood" and made it stronger, more "natural" because the articulation that marked women as inferior beings was proven true through its own manifestation in the world. People could point to how women behaved—what they were (un)able to do in society—and say that the "true womanhood" idea simply represented life as it was. To incarnate "woman" at this time was to be submissive, in the home, and without power. To not participate in these practices was to not properly be a "woman."[73]

As the preceding example demonstrates, the naturalization of prevailing power configurations is indeed powerful. However, because people identify with multiple and often conflicting subject positions, there is always room for agency. Agency, the capacity to act, usually arises from negotiating competing, overlapping, and often contradictory subject positions available under a particular configuration of power structures.[74] Articulation suggests that any subject is a "nodal point" among many, often conflicting discourses. At any time, the subject is what Kevin Michael DeLuca calls a "performance" that negotiates a confluence of conflicting subject positions.[75] Agency, thus, is conceived of as a creative, constrained, and enacted force, instead of a capacity located primarily in a fully formed individual.[76]

For instance, activists for women's social and political advances in the nineteenth century enacted particular forms of agency that leveraged their overlapping and contradictory subject positions. "Woman" was a nodal point that intersected with other

nodal points of subjectivity, such as "(white) citizen," "mother," "worker," or "slave."[77] Each articulated and performed subjectivity came with its own set of elements that were strung together to temporarily stabilize the various subject positions. As these subjectivities intersected in "nodal point" performances, new forms of agency emerged for women. For instance, Angela G. Ray has shown how hundreds of nineteenth-century women enacted agency by negotiating the subjectivity "citizen" with the subjectivity "woman." Technically, women were citizens, though they did not have the right to vote. Hundreds of women registered and then attempted to vote in elections from 1868 to 1875. These women repeatedly enacted the role of voting citizen, and thereby forced officials and other citizens to confront the articulation that made voting a man's practice. When these women voters showed up at the polls, they articulated woman with voting. These women leveraged public rituals attached to the "citizen" subjectivity to appropriate and enact agency and authority as women.[78]

Dominant articulations, then, not only offer systems through which agency can be enacted, but they are unstable and face antagonisms that seek to tear them apart.[79] Laclau and Mouffe displaced Marxist "contradiction" with "antagonism," to point to the enacted and conflictual nature of *articulating* contradictions that have the capacity to disrupt a system. In Marxist thought specifically and in ideological thought more widely, contradictions are understood to exist within systems of power. These contradictions enable the critique and ultimate destruction of the system.[80] In theories of articulation, though, these contradictions do not exist prior to articulation; they must be articulated, in some way, into existence as conflictual "antagonisms." Antagonisms pull apart the dominant articulation by showing that it is not natural, essential, and complete. As such,

antagonisms point to the "limits" of the dominant articulation.[81] Thus, antagonisms challenge the universalization of a particular articulation. However, dominant discourses always, at some level, structure antagonisms because to have "articulatory power," rhetorics must participate in the dominant "normative frameworks" that make particular articulations intelligible.[82] Also, all discourses, whether dominant or antagonistic, necessarily participate in what Condit called a "shared understanding" that is neither individual nor universal, but, rather, is collective.[83]

Social change, then, becomes a matter of antagonistic dis-articulation and re-articulation, both of which occur within dominant frameworks of understanding.[84] Laclau expanded on Claude Lévi-Strauss's notions of the "empty signifier" and the "floating signifier" to account for how articulation changes ideas and commitments. To say that something is an empty signifier means that it does not necessarily and inherently signify anything in particular. It must attach to specific articulations to mean anything, and it matters what a signifier attaches to because those attachments change the signifier in substantial ways. Empty signifiers solidify when they are anchored in specific practices, and they harden with repeated use. At times, though, the signifiers are faced with antagonisms that challenge the coherence of the articulation. At that point, they become "floating signifiers" that attach to different articulations, so that it becomes possible that a signifier such as "freedom" means two very different things in two very different articulations.[85]

To return to our example, activists for women's equality in the nineteenth century articulated antagonisms to the dominant articulation that denied women full citizenship. They pointed to the limits of the social order that made them second-class citizens. At the

time of the bourgeoning movements for women's rights, the empty signifier "citizen" attached to white men in ways that were different from how it attached to white women. The dominant articulation of "citizen" drew together two different attachments to voting and property ownership; white male citizens could vote and own property, while white female citizens could not. Both were considered citizens, but not of the same caliber.[86] Women's equality activists articulated various forms of antagonisms to that dominant articulation.[87] One such example is the 1848 Declaration of Sentiments that activists wrote and signed in Seneca Falls. By appropriating the language of the Declaration of Independence, this document disarticulated voting citizenship and male restriction. It rearticulated citizenship as necessarily involving voice in the government. Since women were citizens, it reasoned, they were being denied their rightful voice in the state of affairs.[88] Further, with the embodied action of creating the document collectively, women and their allies disarticulated the "Cult of True Womanhood" by gathering in public and conducting public affairs. Their very public co-presence and action articulated an embodied antagonism to the dominant logic that kept women hidden and away from public affairs. Of course, this one action did not disarticulate the dominant articulation, but it was one instance of dislodging the "citizen" signifier, making it possible for it to float rather than be anchored to white male bodies. It would take seventy-two subsequent years of antagonism to dislodge the male restriction from the voting "citizen" signifier.[89]

As the extended gender example illustrates, an articulation approach helps critics navigate ideology and agency in sophisticated, contingent, and historically grounded ways. The logic of articulation takes no distinction between ideology and agency for granted. Instead, it historicizes and maps the rise of powerful discourses, the ways those

dominant discourses enable some subjectivities and constrain others, and the ways antagonistic articulations tear apart dominant discourses. Further, theories of articulation suggest that agency and power are both enacted and collective, not *held* by individuals. The articulation approach also does not *a priori* assume that only people enact agency or power. Indeed, Stormer challenges rhetorical scholars to be open to the possibility that what we have designated "things" may also articulate.[90] This approach prompts scholars to map power and agency in contingent and genealogically sensitive ways, paying attention to how discourses become subject to accumulation and disintegration.

Methodological Commitments

An articulation approach to rhetoric requires the critic to map how rhetoric arranges material and symbolic elements to create systems of meaning. Taking such an approach to my case studies leads me to several methodological commitments in answering my research questions. First, the articulation approach prompts me to look for the connections and distinctions rhetorics make between various symbolic and material elements. As Stormer argues, it is important for critics to attend to how particular texts distinguish between symbolic and material elements, as a mechanism of making meaning.[91] I thus attend to the distinctions that each text makes between material and symbolic.

Where such distinctions are unclear in my texts, I use my understandings of material and symbolic to guide my inquiries. Following such scholars as Phaedra Pezzullo and Catherine Chaput, among others, I understand rhetoric to always be both material and symbolic at the same time.[92] The material generally refers to the tangible and immediate, whereas the symbolic generally refers to that which extends beyond

itself, as a signifier-signified relationship. Rhetorical meaning always has dimensions of both, though part of the meaning-making process sometimes means privileging one over the other. With each case study, then, I attend to how its composite texts arrange tangible and immediate elements with symbolic excesses that go beyond the immediate and tangible.[93]

This commitment to the material and symbolic dimensions of rhetoric necessarily requires that I take an expansive view of what constitutes a rhetorical "text." Rhetorical scholars have been steadily expanding what counts as a "text" for decades, gradually encompassing visual, embodied, as well as emplaced texts and performances.[94] Increasingly, the critic can bring a rhetorical perspective to nearly anything that plays a role in collective, public meaning making, be that a speech, a body, a law, or a place, among other things.[95] With each of my case studies, I take a multimodal approach, interrogating each text's significant verbal, visual, embodied, emplaced, and mediated dimensions.[96] In each instance, I examine how the different dimensions together articulate a system of alternative meaning. Moreover, I draw on a variety of rhetorical approaches that best account for how these elements come together in particular moments.[97]

The articulation approach also commits me to a genealogical view of agency and ideology, recognizing that past articulations at some level structure the possibilities for present and future ones. So, as a critic, I look for how various rhetorics forge new arrangements from existing and previous ones. I explain how articulations gain power as they accumulate, and I show how novel articulations attach to already prominent articulations. Moreover, to investigate how my texts disarticulate neoliberal hegemony, I

explore which "empty signifiers" these texts disrupt, and how they dislodge them, making them into "floating signifers." Ultimately, I attend to how texts enact antagonistic agency—a form of agency that points to the limits of the existing order. I then demonstrate how each text re-articulates political economy and creates an alternative to neoliberal governance.

Neoliberalism as Hegemonic Articulation

To assess how particular rhetorics disrupt the neoliberal articulation, we must first define the neoliberal order and map its rise to hegemonic status. Neoliberalism refers to a general orientation that centers unfettered market relations as the basis for all social interaction.[98] Scholars and activists have conceived of neoliberalism as an ideological project, a policy objective, a form of state, an economic theory, a form of governmentality, and a dominant discourse.[99] For example, Professor of Anthropology and Geography David Harvey defined neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices" that treats individual property rights and entrepreneurial free trade as the guarantors of "human well-being."[100] This theory, according to Harvey, is not disinterested; rather, it is a political project that benefits very few people who accumulate the wealth of the world, depriving the vast majority of people of economic security. The activist magazine *Le Monde Diplomatique* described neoliberalism as a set of disastrous policies that include "privatization, the de-regulation of the financial sector, increasing openness to foreign trade and investment, and cuts to public welfare spending."[101] According to *Le Monde*, these policies are disastrous because, in practice, they increase economic inequality and drive the world economy into constant crisis, a state in which only a small percentage of people thrive.

Communication scholars have also approached neoliberalism in myriad ways, prompting some scholars to wonder whether "neoliberalism" continues to serve a useful analytical purpose. Many scholars concentrate on neoliberalism as a combination of structural conditions and dominant discourses that privilege private market relations.[102] Because the term is used so abundantly, some scholars doubt its utility; in 2015, the National Communication Association conference showcased a debate over whether neoliberalism is too diffuse a term to hold any meaning, during which John Sloop called on scholars to clearly describe exactly what they mean when they call a phenomenon "neoliberal."[103] In my view, neoliberalism is a potent term, one that continues to describe a particular set of economic and cultural circumstances and one that can be studied from various perspectives. Indeed, "neoliberalism" refers to the governing articulation of our times, and so we must address it in myriad ways.

My project treats neoliberalism as a dominant articulation that strings together four governing principles: freedom as primary, economics as natural, the individual as rational actor, and the free market as pure. As the following history shows, these governing principles have been articulated before, though in different ways and to different degrees, and their familiarity strengthens their contemporary manifestations. These principles authorize certain economic, social, legal, and political adjustments, and those changes, in turn, authorize the governing principles. Neoliberalism as articulation is the rhetorical stringing together of governing principles and structural adjustments so that a common sense about how to govern emerges: a common sense that privileges the free market as natural, pristine space.[104]

Development and Spread of Neoliberal Articulation

Neoliberalism's governing articulation grew out of the 1947 inaugural meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society, initiated by economists Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman, among others. Amidst the turmoil of re-assembling the world after the Second World War, the Society articulated a counterweight to all varieties of socialism, a force that they perceived as a threat to Western civilization.[105]

The society's "Statement of Aims" expressed the governing principles that would come to define the neoliberal project. [106] The statement constructed a crisis of "civilization," wherein the "essential conditions of human dignity and freedom" were in "danger" of falling under the rule of "arbitrary power." Given this crisis, the statement announced its commitment to protecting "the individual," "private property," and "the competitive market," commitments that would guarantee "freedom," "liberty," and "peace." To effectively protect these basic elements of liberty, the members of the Society vowed to create "an international order" that would establish "harmonious international economic relations," and they sought to "redefine[e] the state" so it would be more amenable to their goals. The Mont Pelerin Society concluded its statement by asserting that their commitments were not "propaganda," nor were they "orthodoxy," nor aligned with a "particular party." Instead, the Society enacted its commitment to free, individual association by claiming its project was "solely" devoted to "facilitating the exchange of views" that would "contribute to the preservation and improvement of the free society." In sum, the "Statement of Aims" asserted its commitments to freedom, individual private property, and the competitive market as guarantors of free society.

The neoliberal commitments to laissez-fair government practices and ever-expanding free markets found a comfortable home at the University of Chicago, where economists such as Friedman and Garry Becker expounded on the vitality of free trade capitalism as a model for all social interaction.[107] Following Enlightenment theorist Adam Smith, Friedman argued that the market is a natural and pristine system, and because it focuses on competition, resource allotment, and mutual self-interest, it is the best mode of individual, and therefore social, development. [108] As such, market freedom, for Friedman guarantees individual freedom. Becker was also an early proponent of the rational actor model of human relations.[109] He argued that human beings make rational choices based on cost-benefit analyses not only in economics, but in all realms of life including family, law, and politics.[110] Together with other Chicago School economists, Friedman and Becker's ideas came together as the neoliberal articulation, which sutures rational individuals with social freedom and free market capitalism. Until the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, neoliberalism lingered at the edges of economic and socio-political thought.[111]

Economic Crisis of 1970s

After World War II, the United States, Great Britain, and continental Europe turned to the constrained capitalism of Keynesianism, which took strong social welfare programs, redistributions efforts, and regulation of the market as markers of "developed societies."[112] The Keynesian system experienced growth until the 1970s, when the economy stagnated and inflation rose.

The stagflation experienced in the 1970s was one of several major economic crises that prompted a transformation of capitalism. As early as 1848, Marx argued that

such economic crises transform capitalist structures.[113] For instance, the economic crisis in the decades following the U.S. Civil War prompted a profound transformation of capitalism. As the country industrialized, capital consolidated its power in the form of corporations, prompting the growth of middle managers and finance professionals. Concurrently, labor groups began to craft collective power through unionization and strikes, attempting to push back on the consolidation of capital's power.[114] Of course, capitalism does not simply transform itself; instead, political and economic deliberation, action, and policy implementation transform capitalism. For example, during the Great Depression, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Administration took sweeping and controversial policy actions to regulate economic markets. The Administration faced fierce criticism from all over the political spectrum, with the Left arguing that it had not done enough and the Right charging the administration with socialism.[115] The economic crisis of the 1970s was one of these shocking moments that prompted a change in capitalism. Duménil and Lévy have demonstrated that this crisis began slowly in the late 1960s and became pronounced in the 1970s and 1980s. [116] This economic shock consisted of a devastating combination of inflation, wage stagnation, a drop in profits, and high unemployment.

In response to the stagflation, the Left, particularly in Europe, advocated more regulation and redistribution, while the Right advanced an unfettered market and its attendant neoliberal commitments.[117] With calls for more redistribution and regulation and a failing stock market, upper classes in the United States, Britain, and Europe experienced a threat to their survival and neoliberalization provided what Harvey called "a project to achieve the restoration of class power" by dismantling the Keynesian

system.[118] As Duménil and Lévy argued, inflation was a serious problem for everyone, but it perhaps affected wealthy people most, as their assets were worth considerably less. Unemployment and wage stagnation were the most devastating aspects of the crisis for those who were not wealthy. Duménil and Lévy argued that tackling inflation took precedence over increasing employment, and that if that had not been the case, unemployment could have been attended to more quickly. Indeed, in 1979, the unemployment and wage stagnation crisis was fueled by a sudden rise in interest rates.[119] Even if the neoliberal response was not as intentionally class-focused as Duménil and Lévy alleged, the response to the crisis ushered in structural adjustments that have, ultimately, widened the gap between the very rich and everyone else to proportions not seen since 1929.[120]

The ideal of an unfettered market gained prominence and was secured as the dominant governing articulation in response to the crisis of the 1970s. This articulation was well funded and ubiquitously circulated throughout multiple arenas of social life.[121] For example, the free-market perspective gained respectability when Hayek won the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1974, and Friedman won it in 1976. In his Nobel Prize lecture, Hayek blamed Keynesian economists for the crisis, condemning them for trying to shape the world after their "scientistic" economic models that justified state manipulation of the economy.[122] He argued that the economy could not be predicted and manipulated into compliance by economists. Milton Friedman echoed these sentiments in his Nobel Prize Lecture two years later, but unlike Hayek, he professed a sincere faith in the scientism of economics. For Friedman, Keynesianism had failed because it was not scientifically rigorous *enough.* Despite empirical evidence to the contrary, the Keynesians

had maintained their economic hypothesis that upheld steady employment and high wages as necessary to a healthy economy.[123]

In addition to undermining Keynesianism, each Nobel Prize lecture also denied that neoliberal economics had anything to do with ideological or political commitments. This kind of distancing from politics, while engaging in them, would become a hallmark of neoliberal rhetoric.[124] Hayek ended his lecture with a warning against anyone trying to "control society," through economics or politics. [125] Any effort to control, he said, made the actor "not only a tyrant over his fellows, but … may well make him the destroyer of a civilization which no brain has designed but which has grown from the free efforts of millions of individuals." For Friedman, the empirical facts of unemployment, wage stagnation, and inflation were not a matter of "ideological warfare." In his words, "brute experience proved far more potent than the strongest of political or ideological preferences." And the "brute experience" necessitated an end to Keynesianism. Friedman, then, ostensibly took the political out of the economic, placing economics squarely in the realm of science, which for him was fact-based and apolitical.[126] This kind of ostensibly apolitical language would continue to animate the neoliberal articulation.

In sum, the neoliberal articulation generally assembles four main governing principles. First, neoliberal articulation privileges individual freedom. All forms of political organization are denigrated, as they inevitably limit an individual's freedom. Also, since corporations come to be understood as individuals, their freedom is exalted as important and necessary for human development. Next, the articulation valorizes the individual rational actor. Structural inequality, then, does not exist because each citizen is considered a free-floating, rationally acting individual who pursues their own self-

interest. Any inequality is treated as a symptom of individual incompetence and a lack of individual responsibility. Third, the neoliberal articulation assumes that economics in general, and the competitive market in particular, are natural spheres governed by natural rules, unlike social-political realms, which are constructed by politics. Since the market is natural and tends toward perfection, preferred terms associated with markets emerge and devil terms associated with politics emerge; entrepreneur, consumer, and balanced budgets are hailed, while labor unions, political action, and budget deficits are denigrated.[127] Finally, neoliberalism posits the free, competitive market as a model for all social interaction. The free capitalist market comes to be equated with all individual freedom, and, eventually, with democracy. Thus, another cluster of god and devil terms emerge; efficiency, profit, market, flexibility, and choice are positioned as gleaming beacons of progress, which combat devil terms of bureaucracy, regulation, and entitlement. Further, attaching free market logic to individual actors, neoliberalism upholds a sense of democracy as individual choice, not collective action. Democratic choice is expressed when individuals choose political representatives, their jobs, and new consumer electronics: all choices that are assumed to be equally democratic, inherently liberating, and accessible to everyone.[128]

Antecedent Articulations

These main ideas have historical antecedents, which made them more prone to attach to one another and to other American ideals. Each idea—freedom, individual, economy, and market—is an "empty signifier" because that it has no inherent meaning outside of its articulation. Each has also at one point become a "floating signifier," a contested term that attaches to different articulations. As with any signifier, repeated,

similar articulations strengthen these ideas by substantiating them over and over again. These four particular signifiers have been co-articulated before, in ways that are strikingly similar to the neoliberal articulation.

One such articulation was quite pronounced during the Gilded Age, when antagonistic articulations sprung from capital and labor, as they negotiated the meaning and spread of industrialization.[129] One prominent spokesperson for capital, William Graham Sumner, articulated laissez-faire economics as the best kind of solution for a good society, one that allowed the citizen he called "The Forgotten Man" to truly thrive.[130] In 1883, Sumner argued that government interference in the economy hurt the hard-working, average American. In a scientistic tone not unlike Friedman's, Sumner offered "cold hard fact[s]" to dispel mass hysteria about rich people, positioning himself as a kind of "chemist" who dispelled the lies of the "alchemist." In Sumner's articulation, efficient business practices created jobs and kept prices low for consumers. The economy was a natural force that would re-calibrate itself if we simply left it alone, a move that would strengthen freedom and "true liberty."

The Gilded Age saw fierce antagonisms between articulations, which often took the form of brutal, physical violence. Capital and labor quite literally fought over competing articulations of freedom and economy. Moreover, communists and socialists were systematically persecuted by both the U.S. government and private corporations during the Gilded Age and World War I, when Russia Bolshevized.[131] The reforms of the Progressive Era, and the subsequent laissez-faire economy of the 1920s can largely be considered outgrowths of these fierce turn-of-the-century battles.[132]

The rhetoric of free-market capitalists during the Great Depression also historically anchors neoliberal articulations of freedom and political economy. This particular articulation of big government, unions, and communism would be very important in the development of the neoliberal order. Thus, articulations of freedom, market, and democracy from the 1930s and 1940s, along with the Cold War era, merit detailed attention.[133] In the 1930s and 1940s, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration made sweeping changes to the structure of the U.S. government, and the president argued vehemently that a strong federal government was indispensable to stabilizing an economy that had been destroyed by laissez-faire practices.[134] Emboldened by the New Deal, union activists became increasingly militant, particularly the Congress of Industrial Organizations, who split from the American Federation of Labor amidst disputes over inclusion and militancy.[135]

In response to these changes threatening capital, many voices lambasted both Roosevelt's regulation and union activity as assaults on American freedom and democracy. For example, Father Charles E. Coughlin painted Roosevelt as a dictator, not unlike the Nazi and Communist tyrants abroad. Coughlin alerted the American people to the dangers of using the war as justification to extend the government's reach into multiple sectors of life. He warned his audience that governmental overreach could amount to Bolshevism, which was both "anti-God and anti-Christ."[136] Focusing on militant unions, the National Association of Manufacturers printed and circulated a pamphlet entitled, "Join the CIO and Help Build a Soviet America," that used patriotic appeals and red threats to steer workers away from the industrial union. [137] For instance, on the second page of the pamphlet, an image depicted a mob of men beating a single

man. The caption to this image read, "Pictured here are the coercive methods by which CIO built its power."

Perhaps most reminiscent the neoliberal articulation, conservative Senator Josiah Bailey (D-NC) led a coalition to oppose the New Deal, and this group wrote and circulated the 1937 "Conservative Manifesto."[138] This Manifesto, discussed in the Senate, articulated the goals of ensuring "expanding enterprise" because "private enterprise, properly fostered, carries the indispensable element of rigor" that was needed to fight domestic economic insecurity. The Manifesto positioned private enterprise as key to "Our American competitive system," which was "superior to any form of the collectivist program," implying communism and fascism. The document pledged to "preserve and foster" the American capitalist system "as the means of employment, of livelihood, and of maintaining our standard of living." Thus, the document co-articulated "the American system of private enterprise," "initiative," "responsibility," and "our American form of government." This move sutured capitalism, self-reliance, and democracy as markers of the American system which, though not perfect, was "far superior to and infinitely to be preferred to any other so far devised" because it preserved the "priceless content of liberty and the dignity of man." The Manifesto condemned sit-down strikes and argued that the federal government should reduce taxes, balance its budget, and reduce its power in favor of increasing states' rights. It was widely circulated in both newspapers and as handbills.[139] Today, this Manifesto reads like a blueprint for neoliberalization.

The rhetoric that articulated capitalism with self-reliance and democracy intensified during the Cold War era. It was during this period, between 1945 and 1989, that democracy, individualism, and capitalism became profoundly co-articulated in a

strong and well-circulated discourse. During the early Cold War, the United States and the Soviets engaged in an ideological clash that was supplemented by armed conflicts, both actualized and threatened. The United States' discursive arsenal was replete with polemic articulations that constructed the United States and the Soviet Union as promoting diametrically opposed "way[s] of life."[140] For example, in his highly influential, anonymously published *Foreign Affairs* essay on Soviet-American relations, George Kennan established a "basic antagonism between the capitalist and Socialist worlds," so much so that there was "no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy coexistence of the Socialist and capitalist worlds."[141] Thus, American capitalism would have to destroy Soviet communism through a patient and determined strategy of containment and elimination. Similarly, both the Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower Administrations sought to attack communism with covert and overt, domestic and international propaganda that celebrated the American democratic-capitalist system.[142] In the early Cold War years, democracy, individualism, and capitalism would became an essential characteristic of the American "way of life," which was diametrically opposed to the collectivism, tyranny, and communism of the Soviets.

This discursive articulation, as with any articulation, also had material dimensions that it drew together under its "way of life" banner. For example, this "way of life" discourse celebrated the abundance of physical items and subsequent leisure that American families enjoyed, as compared to the oppressed Soviets. As a symbol of American prosperity, the suburban home became a place of fulfillment and leisure, where home goods simultaneously provided stability and showcased the wonder of a capitalist American home.[143] The consumer goods made it so that homemakers did not have to

manually work in the home.[144] These consumer housewives had more time for private leisure thanks to their material products, which were unavailable in the Soviet Union.[145] These kinds of discourses sutured capitalism, consumerism, and individual happiness and made them markers of a healthy, democratic polity.

As the Cold War carried on, decade after decade, the democracy-communism dichotomy grew stronger, and one of the consequences of this discourse was an eventual denigration of the state as a social actor. One of the most feared elements of communism was its totalitarian government, which controlled every aspect of social life. Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI) launched several investigations of "un-American" members of the U.S. government, dampening many efforts at social change—especially those opposed to business interests—by constructing them as a communist threat.[146] McCarthy contended that the government was "thoroughly infested with Communists," and his hearings and accusations were televised unedited, thus widely disseminating the idea that democracy was vulnerable to the "virile" communist threat.[147] Even though McCarthy's hearings turned out to be ineffective as he eventually lost credibility, the rhetoric of the communist "menace" continued throughout the Eisenhower Administration and beyond.[148] Michael Kazin and Laclau both argued that McCarthy's fierce accusations took on a "populist" tone that charged a corrupt elite (the federal government) with a conspiracy (communism) that was harmful to the general populace (the American people).[149] Throughout the Cold War, there circulated a palpable ambivalence toward the federal government, and a strong federal government was articulated on many fronts as an oppressive power.

This fear penetrated the United States while the New Deal logic of a strong and protective government continued to structure much of public policy, with such initiatives as the G.I. Bill and President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society.[150] Johnson extended the New Deal logic of state intervention into the 1960s, implementing such policy initiatives as Medicare and Medicaid and introducing the sweeping goal of winning a "War on Poverty." As David Zarefsky argued, the Johnson Administration faced a significant problem managing its rhetorical vision for the long term. [151] From the perspective of the administration's conservative critics, the War on Poverty had failed because it did not defeat poverty, and it encouraged dependence on the state. The lofty rhetoric of the "War on Poverty" fueled the conservative fire against it because critics could make the argument that the programs failed to "defeat" poverty, and thus government intervention was ineffectual. Of course, the Vietnam War and the Watergate Scandal deepened any lingering distrust of the government.[152]

In sum, the building blocks of American neoliberalism—individual freedom, democracy, and free market capitalism—had pronounced antecedents since at least the Gilded Age. These commitments were strongly co-articulated during the Great Depression to the mid-Cold War amidst communist and fascist threats abroad. This articulation gained strength over the decades of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. By the late Cold War in the 1970s, neoliberalism began to take hold and would gather strength, particularly as the Soviet Union crumbled and fell with the Berlin Wall after 1989.

Cultural Practices and Structural Adjustments

The neoliberal articulation was amplified when the state and corporations sought to deal with the crisis of the 1970s. Strengthened by the decades-long co-articulation of democracy, freedom, and capitalism, the U.S. populace was primed for Ronald Reagan's presidency, which ushered in significant structural and attitudinal changes. Reagan, the "Great Communicator," expertly espoused neoliberal commitments to individual freedom, democracy, and free market capitalism. For example, in his First Inaugural Address, Reagan dismantled the articulation of strong government by celebrating everyday individual enterprise and denigrating governmental intrusion into individual private lives. [153] In a populist rhetoric, Reagan constructed big government as a kind of "elite" that interfered with and thus harmed individual citizens' lives. Famously, he told the American people, "the government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem." Reagan thus dismantled the idea that government could be a useful social referee and instead constructed an active government as an "intrusion" that created "roadblocks" to being truly "free." Reagan affirmed his commitment to protecting the freedom of hard-working, individual Americans, as the "business of our nation" was restored. He hailed the individual "heroes" who upheld the "world's strongest economy," its "beacon of hope….and freedom." Among others, these individual heroes were "entrepreneurs with faith in themselves and faith in an idea, who create new jobs, new wealth and opportunity." Reagan's first inaugural stands a prime example of the neoliberal ideal, combining capitalism, freedom, and individual responsibility.

Together, as a governing articulation, these principles make coherent a world order that encourages and justifies particular structural practices and adjustments, which

Reagan and his successors would implement. Domestically, Reagan demonstrated a commitment to deregulating private enterprise, dismantling unions, and limiting federal social services.[154] Internationally, Reagan was committed to spreading the democratic-capitalist articulation everywhere it could take seed. In a 1987 speech, standing near the Berlin Wall, which physically separated democracy-capitalism from communism, Reagan implored Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev to "tear down this wall" in the name of "freedom" and "world peace."[155] When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, it seemed to many that neoliberal capitalism had won its rightful place as the system that best promoted individual freedom and dignity.[156] As such, Reagan's presidential successors and other political leaders largely continued the trends associated with the growing neoliberal order.

Since at least Reagan's election in 1980, the neoliberal articulation has motivated a series of structural and cultural changes. Three such changes have become particularly ubiquitous: the globalization of free trade capitalism, the individualization of collectives, and the privatization of public life. First, the neoliberal articulation globalizes free trade capitalism by removing structural and cultural barriers to free trade and by encouraging the spread of free market capitalism into ever-expanding social spheres.[157] When President Bill Clinton signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) into law in 1993, he asserted that free trade would "promote more growth, more equality, better preservation of the environment, and a greater possibility of world peace." [158] Opening trade borders between the United States, Mexico, and Canada was thus constructed not only as an economic opportunity, but also as a "force for social progress."

In this model, "growth" is always a preferred term, one that ensures widespread prosperity and social harmony.

The logic favoring the free market has made its way into other realms of social life beyond trade—war, education, public space, and housing, among others.[159] Wendy Brown and Christine Harold have demonstrated that neoliberal articulation converts all social spaces into markets and promises that social fulfillment can come from privileging soaring profits, even in arenas of life that were not previously linked to "profit," such as government.[160] This articulation, then, assumes that capital needs market-based "flexibility" to improve the social system, and anything that encumbers capital's movement impedes social progress.

Next, the neoliberal articulation individualizes collectives, particularly ones that are inimical to the accumulation of capital. The neoliberal framework celebrates individual freedom and dignity as primary political ideals, and because individual freedom is based on free-market capitalism, neoliberal practice first and foremost dismantles collectives that threaten capital. [161] For example, violent repression of labor was standard procedure in Latin America, where neoliberal policies were forcibly implemented through U.S.-backed military coups.[162] Domestically, the Reagan Administration actively dismantled labor organizations by offering benefits to individual laborers as incentives to not participate in collective action; and because the bureaucratic union structure could be debilitating, many individuals took those benefits, weakening collective power.[163] In neoliberal discourse, "flexibility" individualizes the workforce, with unemployment always functioning as discipline for not being "flexible" enough.[164]

Labor is thus converted into a commodity more easily exploited if it is not organized into collectives with agency. The individualized "disposable worker" is powerless in this short-term, flexible, "business friendly" environment.[165] As Jennifer Wingard explained, "workers are made to feel completely replaceable and dispensable. The more disposable workers become, the more anxious they feel," and this anxiety has led to the erosion of "worker" as a strong site of identity.[166] In addition, as Zygmunt Bauman argued, the temporal focus on individual *flexibility now* as opposed to, for example, collective *stability later* forecloses upon future-oriented ameliorative collective action on the part of workers.[167] Anxious workers are treated as individuals rather than as a class, thereby diverting attention from structural practices that consolidate power in the hands of the few.

This kind of individualization extends to other political identities, beyond workers. For Jodi Dean, neoliberal identities are too individual, "too fleeting and unstable to serve as sites of politicization."[168] When people see themselves as fluid individuals, they attribute success and failure to individual agency regardless of systemic barriers to success.[169] For example, Dana L. Cloud demonstrated that "the rhetoric of <family values>" popularized throughout the 1980s and 1990s "suggests that […social] problems are not structural features of capitalist society but rather are the product of personal family failures."[170] Similarly, Darrel Enck-Wanzer argued that racist attitudes have been readily attributed to personal, individual, deviant racism, not structural inequality.[171] Thus, ostensibly "apolitical" neoliberal discourses that praise personal responsibility lead to what Bradley Jones and Roopali Mukherjee called a "privatization of social

difference," wherein people attribute social difference to individuals and thus curtail collective forms of intervention.[172]

The hegemonic neoliberal articulation, then, privatizes social life, positing that the choices of private individuals, in aggregate, make up a society. In this model, market freedom guarantees individual freedom, and a neoliberal state is thus oriented toward the interests of corporations and other private owners as guarantors of its citizenry's freedoms.[173] This free association of individually-responsible citizens follows a free-market logic of unfettered interaction based on individual "economic incentives and disincentives," where self-managed choices aimed at self-interest constitute civic morality.[174] All difference, success, and failure are attributed to private individuals making private decisions.[175] As Aihwa Ong explained, the move toward an individually responsible, private citizen constitutes "a fundamental shift in the ethics of subject formation, or the ethics of citizenship."[176] Ong demonstrated how neoliberalism disarticulates civic identity from elements associated with liberal democratic citizenship such as "rights, entitlements, territoriality, a nation" and rearticulates citizenship as a market-based relationship. [177] This move changes the characteristics of valued citizens, creating a class of "preferred citizens" who are flexible, unattached individuals who associate freedom with consumer choice and engage in individual self-governance.[178]

These structural and cultural changes have, by most accounts, yielded negative consequences for most people in both the United States and the world more generally. In practice, neoliberal globalization, individualization, and privatization have benefitted upper and corporate classes as a whole.[179] This kind of inequality does not square with the neoliberal articulation that treats markets as inevitable progress for all of humankind.

However, when the powerful neoliberal articulation discourse is challenged, market apologists claim either inevitability or not enough market freedom. For example, when signing NAFTA, President Clinton said, "We cannot stop global change. We cannot repeal the international economic competition that is everywhere. We can only harness the energy to our benefit."[180] Further, many free market advocates argue that the problem is that there is not *enough* freedom, there is too much regulation, and that is why the market is not regulating itself.[181]

The neoliberal articulation is strong. It is repeated and broadcast, put into practice, then glorified, even amidst turmoil. Still, as with any articulation, neoliberalism is not consistent, and it is plagued with multiple contradictions, especially when its stated ideals are put into practice.[182] This project demonstrates how particular rhetorics antagonize this strong economic discourse, which presents itself as natural and inevitable.

Antagonizing the Neoliberal Articulation

The following chapters interrogate how three rhetorical engagements—a pastoral letter, a mediated controversy, and a street protest—antagonized this hegemonic discourse. I chose these particular disruptions because they significantly antagonized the hegemonic articulation in their times, in ways that continue to resonate today. With each case, I demonstrate how neoliberal discourses themselves fostered a particular tension in the hegemonic articulation. Then, I show how activists and mainstream news media, by exploiting these tensions, antagonized the hegemonic articulation.

Chapter two analyzes the U.S. Catholic Bishops' 1986 treatise, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (*EJA*). The chapter describes the state of the neoliberal articulation of the long 1980s, which began

with the oil crises of the 1970s and extended to the rise of Reaganite neoliberalism. I suggest that Reaganism fostered a tension between understanding economics as a technocratic science and as a moral philosophy. I then argue that *EJA* antagonized the neoliberal articulation by leveraging the Christianized political milieu to emphasize the moral-philosophical dimensions of economics. Further, I contend that the bishops harnessed the pastoral letter genre to establish their ethos as critics of neoliberalism and to pivot from a generalized Christian conception of economics to a specifically Catholic one. Ultimately, this chapter shows how *EJA* introduced Catholic Social Teaching as a counterweight to the burgeoning neoliberal articulation.

Chapter three examines the 1996 controversy over allegations that Kathie Lee Gifford used underage sweatshop labor to produce her Wal-Mart clothing line. This chapter describes the state of the neoliberal articulation in the early-to-mid 1990s, when prominent figureheads and institutions circulated what I term "free market optimism." This public emotion constructed the free market as a social good that promised to provide peaceful prosperity to the globe and self-realization to individuals. I suggest that in constructing such optimism, neoliberal messages uneasily combined market freedom and social responsibility. I then argue that the Gifford controversy antagonized the neoliberal articulation by circulating class shame and guilt about bourgeois prosperity and self-realization. I demonstrate how the controversy transformed class shame into class guilt by appropriating neoliberal attachments in ways that privileged social responsibility over free market expansion.

Chapter four considers the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle in the context of neoliberal globalization. The chapter explores how, in the mid-

to-late 1990s, prominent discourses marked democracy as a primary legitimating term for the global expansion of neoliberal policy. Proponents of economic liberalization simultaneously co-articulated and dis-articulated free markets and democracy, thus fostering a tension that the Seattle protests would engage. Various publics also constructed a similar tension around the WTO as leaders, institutions, and critics negotiated the nature and value of the institution's globalized agency. In this chapter, I argue that the 1999 protests in Seattle antagonized the neoliberal articulation by dis-articulating democracy and free trade while co-articulating free trade and violence. The chapter shows how the protests articulated a widely-circulated choice for the globalizing world: neoliberal autocracy or economic democracy.

Chapter five puts the three case studies in conversation and shows how they have reverberated in recent years. I demonstrate that each of these disruptions enacted forms of agency that enabled subsequent antagonisms. I also argue that the tensions identified in each chapter continue to animate neoliberal discourse and therefore remain ripe for amplification. Ultimately, my dissertation suggests that activists can continue to exploit each tension in multi-modal ways, and that, through accumulation and circulation, consistent antagonisms can disrupt neoliberal hegemony in significant ways.

NOTES

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[22] Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Aune,

Selling the Free Market; Dana L. Cloud, *Control and Consolation in American Culture and Politics: Rhetoric of Therapy* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1998).
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[24] E. Saez and G. Zucman, "Wealth Inequality in the United States since 1913: Evidence from Capitalized Income Tax Data," Working Paper Series (2014) (Stanford, CA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2014), /z-wcorg/.
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[26] Kevin DeLuca, "Articulation Theory: A Discursive Grounding for Rhetorical Practice," *Philosophy & Rhetoric.* 32, no. 4 (1999): 334–48; Ernesto, Laclau and Chantal. Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards A Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985); Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London; New York: Verso, 2005).
[27] Nathan Stormer, "Articulation: A Working Paper on Rhetoric and Taxis," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 3 (August 2004): 257–84, https://doi.org/10.1080/0033563042000255516.
[28] For an excellent example of articulation logic and critical contingency, see Matthew Scott May, *Soapbox Rebellion: The Hobo Orator Union and The Free Speech Fights of the Industrial Workers of the World, 1909-1916*, Rhetoric, Culture, and Social Critique (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013).
[29] Stormer, "Articulation"; Celeste Condit, "The Materiality of Coding: Rhetoric, Genetics, and the Matter of Life," in *Rhetorical Bodies*, ed. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 326–56; Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 2 (May 1987): 133–50, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638709383799; Celeste Michelle Condit, "Kenneth Burke and Linguistic Reflexivity: Reflections on the Scene of the Philosophy of Communication in the Twentieth Century," in *Kenneth Burke and Contemporary European Thought: Rhetoric in Transition*, ed. Bernard L. Brock (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995), 207–62; Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 25 (1992): 1–14.
[30] Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation."
[31] For example, Barbara Biesecker argued, following Jacques Derrida, that both rhetoric and material world constitute each in a rhetorical interaction. Barbara A. Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from within the Thematic of 'Différance,'" *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 22, no. 2 (1989): 110–30; Also, James Jasinski argued that the traditional instrumentalist approach exhibits a "flawed… mode of contextualization" because the relevant world that the text acts upon is far too narrowly conceived and is separated artificially from the text. Jasinski argued that larger "performative traditions" permeate texts and so the seemingly natural divide between text and world is considerably more nuanced than the traditional approach suggests. James Jasinski, "Instrumentalism, Contextualism, and Interpretation in Rhetorical Criticism," in *Rhetorical Hermeneutics: Invention and Interpretation in the Age of Science*, ed. Alan G. Gross and William M. Keith (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 195–224.
[32] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Kenneth Burke and Joseph R. Gusfield, *On Symbols and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Bruce E. Gronbeck, "Dramaturgical Theory and Criticism: The State of the Art (Or Science?)," *Western Journal of Speech Communication Western Journal of Speech Communication* 44, no. 4 (1980): 315–30; Ernest G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58, no. 4 (1972): 396–407; Walter R. Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument," *Communication Monographs* 51, no. 1 (March 1984): 1–22, https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758409390180; Condit, "Kenneth Burke and Linguistic Reflexivity: Reflections on the Scene of the Philosophy of Communication in the Twentieth Century."
[33] Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," 400.

[34] Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1935); Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History* (New York: The New Republic, 1937); Lawrence J. Prelli, Floyd D. Anderson, and Matthew T. Althouse, "Kenneth Burke on Recalcitrance," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (2011): 97–124.
[35] Debra. Hawhee, *Moving Bodies : Kenneth Burke at the Edges of Language* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2009).
[36] See, for example, Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott, eds., *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010); Jack. Selzer and Sharon Crowley, eds., *Rhetorical Bodies* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1999).
[37] Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook, "Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 3 (August 2011): 257–82, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2011.585167.
[38] For example, both social movement and visual rhetorical scholarship have disrupted traditional notions of rhetoric, materiality, and agency. Indeed, I use both of these scholarly trajectories in this work, but an articulation approach encompasses both of them. Brian L. Ott, "Review Essay: Assessing Rhetorics of Social Resistance," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 3 (2011): 334–47; Robert Cox and Christina R. Foust, "Social Movements Rhetoric," in *The SAGE Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*, ed. Andrea A. Lunsford, Kirt H. Wilson, and Rosa A. Eberly (Los Angeles, Calif.: SAGE, 2009), 605–27; Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, and Diane S. Hope, "Visual Rhetoric in Communication: Continuing Questions and Contemporary Issues," in *Visual Rhetoric: A Reader in Communication and American Culture*, ed. Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, and Diane S. Hope (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), 1–19; L. C. Olson, "Intellectual and Conceptual Resources for Visual Rhetoric: A Re-Examination of Scholarship Since 1950," *Review of Communication* 7, no. 1 (2007): 1–20.
[39] Stormer, "Articulation," 273–75; See also Condit's discussion of the differences between Burke and what she calls "social process perspective" which is much more about historical processes and configurations than general assertions about human behavior. Of course, any theory will necessarily make some generalizations, but some privilege historicized configurations more than others. Condit, "Kenneth Burke and Linguistic Reflexivity: Reflections on the Scene of the Philosophy of Communication in the Twentieth Century."
[40] Michael Calvin McGee, "The Ideograph: A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66, no. 1 (1980): 1–16.
[41] For a critique of scholars who privilege language and symbolic action over the material, see Dana L. Cloud, "The Materiality of Discourse as Oxymoron: A Challenge to Critical Rhetoric.," *Western Journal of Communication* 58, no. 3 (1994): 141–63; For a critique of scholars who rely on the "logic of representation," which posits that rhetoric represents something that exists in the material world outside of rhetoric, see Ronald Walter Greene, "Another Materialist Rhetoric," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15, no. 1 (March 1998): 21–40, https://doi.org/10.1080/15295039809367031.
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[43] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Greene, "Rhetorical Capital: Communicative Labor, Money/Speech, and Neo-Liberal Governance."
[44] Stormer, "Articulation."
[45] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards A Radical Democratic Politics*; DeLuca, "Articulation Theory"; Stormer, "Articulation"; Leah Ceccarelli, "Rhetorical Criticism and the Rhetoric of Science," *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 3 (2001): 314–29.
[46] Stormer, "Articulation," 264; See also Endres and Senda-Cook, "Location Matters."

[47] Stormer, "Articulation," 275; See also Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54, no. 3 (1990): 274–89.
[48] Yvonne Slosarski, "Jamming Market Rhetoric in Wisconsin's 2011 Labor Protests," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 13, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 253, https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2016.1151537.
[49] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," 1888, http://find.galegroup.com/openurl/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&url_ctx_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&res_id=info:sid/gale:MOME&ctx_enc=info:ofi:enc:UTF-8&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:unknown&rft.artnum=U112790047&req_dat=info:sid/gale:ugnid; Karl Marx, "Capital: Volume One," accessed October 21, 2013, http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/; James Arnt Aune, *Rhetoric and Marxism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).
[50] Beverley Skeggs, *Class, Self, Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 7–10.
[51] Lawrence Grossberg, "Marxist Dialectics and Rhetorical Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65, no. 3 (October 1979): 235; Richard W. Wilkie, "Karl Marx on Rhetoric," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 9, no. 4 (October 1, 1976): 232–46, https://doi.org/10.2307/40236997; Perhaps most overtly Marxist, James Arnt Aune and Dana L. Cloud preserve many Marxist assumptions and do not challenge the material/discursive split, but rather incorporate rhetoric into the Marxist schema. Both scholars largely argue that rhetoric mediates between material conditions and class-consciousness. Ideological rhetoric prevents people from acting in their material, economic interests as exploited workers, while liberatory rhetoric promotes class-consciousness by revealing the material conditions that already exist. Aune, *Rhetoric and Marxism*; Cloud, "The Materiality of Discourse as Oxymoron: A Challenge to Critical Rhetoric."; Dana L. Cloud, Steve Macek, and James Arnt Aune, "'The Limbo of Ethical Simulacra': A Reply to Ron Greene," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): 72–84, https://doi.org/10.2307/20697134.
[52] Greene, "Another Materialist Rhetoric," 21–22, 28–32.
[53] Stormer, "Articulation"; Condit, "Materiality of Coding"; Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois"; Condit, "Kenneth Burke and Linguistic Reflexivity: Reflections on the Scene of the Philosophy of Communication in the Twentieth Century."
[54] Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation."
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[56] Jasinski, "Instrumentalism, Contextualism, and Interpretation in Rhetorical Criticism."
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[60] McGee, "The Ideograph."
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[64] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards A Radical Democratic Politics*.
[65] Greene, "Another Materialist Rhetoric."

[66] Judith Butler, "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of 'Postmodernism,'" in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan Wallach Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), 3–21.
[67] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), xv.
[68] Butler, xv.
[69] DeLuca, "Articulation Theory"; Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards A Radical Democratic Politics*; Laclau, *On Populist Reason*.
[70] Stormer, "Articulation."
[71] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 68–72; DeLuca, "Articulation Theory"; Stormer, "Articulation."
[72] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (July 1, 1966): 151–74, doi:10.2307/2711179; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Femininity and Feminism: To Be or Not to Be a Woman," *Communication Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (March 1, 1983): 101–8, doi:10.1080/01463378309369493.
[73] Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860"; Campbell, "Femininity and Feminism: To Be or Not to Be a Woman"; Stormer, "Articulation."
[74] Nathan Stormer, "Articulation: A Working Paper on Rhetoric and Taxis," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 3 (August 2004): 257–84, doi:10.1080/0033563042000255516.
[75] DeLuca, "Articulation Theory," 339–41; Similarly, Stuart Hall's notion of articulation retains the Marxist commitments to historical inquiry and material experience, but lets go of the economic determinism that inaccurately simplifies social control. James Hay, Stuart Hall, and Lawrence Grossberg, "Interview with Stuart Hall," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 2013, 1–24.
[76] Biesecker, "Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric"; DeLuca, "Articulation Theory"; Stormer, "Articulation"; Cloud Dana L. and Gunn, "Introduction: W(h)ither Ideology?"; Campbell, "Agency: Promiscuous and Protean"; May, *Soapbox Rebellion*.
[77] Kristan Poirot, "(Un) Making Sex, Making Race: Nineteenth-Century Liberalism, Difference, and the Rhetoric of Elizabeth Cady Stanton," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 96, no. 2 (2010): 185–208; Amy R. Slagell, "The Rhetorical Structure of Frances E. Willard's Campaign for Woman Suffrage, 1876-1896," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 4, no. 1 (2001): 1–23, https://doi.org/10.1353/rap.2001.0013; Anne F. Mattina, "'Rights as Well as Duties': The Rhetoric of Leonora O'Reilly," *Communication Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (March 1994): 196–205, https://doi.org/10.1080/01463379409369926; Teresa C Zackodnik, "' I Don't Know How You Will Feel When I Get Through': Racial Difference, Woman's Rights, and Sojourner Truth," *Feminist Studies*, 2004, 49–73.
[78] Angela G Ray, "The Rhetorical Ritual of Citizenship: Women's Voting as Public Performance, 1868–1875," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 93, no. 1 (2007): 1–26.
[79] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards A Radical Democratic Politics*; Kevin Michael DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism* (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), 37–44.
[80] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology," accessed October 21, 2013, http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01a.htm; Grossberg, "Marxist Dialectics and Rhetorical Criticism."
[81] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards A Radical Democratic Politics*, 126.
[82] Stormer, "Articulation," 275; DeLuca, "Articulation Theory," See also; DeLuca, *Image Politics*.
[83] Celeste Condit, "Rhetorical Criticism and Audiences: The Extremes of McGee and Leff.," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54, no. 3 (1990): 330–45.

[84] DeLuca, *Image Politics*, 37–42, 45; This concept is quite similar to the "permanence and change" that Kenneth Burke asserted. Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*.
[85] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 129–56; The importance of anchoring floating signifiers is similar to Michael Calvin McGee's notion of the "ideograph." McGee, "The Ideograph"; For more on relating Articulation Theory to McGee's ideographs, see DeLuca, *Image Politics*, 34–44.
[86] Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 197–242; Of course, the history I tell in this paragraph is a generalization because, under certain circumstances and in certain places, women could own property and could even vote. See Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).
[87] Campbell, "Femininity and Feminism: To Be or Not to Be a Woman."
[88] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, ed., "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions," in *Man Cannot Speak for Her* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 33–39.
[89] Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).
[90] Stormer, "Articulation."
[91] Stormer, 260–61; See also Karen Hutchins and Nathan Stormer, "Articulating Identity in and through Maine's North Woods," *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture* 7, no. 1 (March 2013): 24–41, https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2012.749412.
[92] Phaedra C. Pezzullo, "Resisting 'National Breast Cancer Awareness Month': The Rhetoric of Counterpublics and Their Cultural Performances," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89, no. 4 (November 2003): 345–65, https://doi.org/10.1080/0033563032000160981; Phaedra C Pezzullo, *Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and Environmental Justice* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007); Catherine Chaput, "Rhetorical Circulation in Late Capitalism: Neoliberalism and the Overdetermination of Affective Energy," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 43, no. 1 (2010): 1–25, https://doi.org/10.1353/par.0.0047; See also Celeste Michelle, Condit, *Decoding Abortion Rhetoric : Communicating Social Change* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 3; Dickinson, Blair, and Ott, *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*.
[93] Brian Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: The Political," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 63–65.
[94] David Zarefsky, "Public Address Scholarship in the New Century," in *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*, ed. Shawn J Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 67–85, http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=3/book?id=g9781405178136_9781405178136; Cox and Foust, "Social Movements Rhetoric."
[95] David Zarefsky, "Reflections on Rhetorical Criticism," *Rhetoric Review* 25, no. 4 (2006): 383–87.
[96] For examples of scholars taking multimodal approaches, see Darrel Enck-Wanzer, "Trashing the System: Social Movement, Intersectional Rhetoric, and Collective Agency in the Young Lords Organization's Garbage Offensive," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92, no. 2 (May 2006): 174–201, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630600816920; Pezzullo, *Toxic Tourism*; Daniel C. Brouwer and Robert Asen, "Introduction: Public Modalities, or the Metaphors We Theorize By," in *Public Modalities: Rhetoric, Culture, Media, and the Shape of Public Life*, ed. Daniel C. Brouwer and Robert Asen (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 1–32.
[97] For example, I expect I will use some close textual analysis to pay attention to what Jasinski and Mercieca call "textual interiors" that constitute particular identities. Jasinski and Mercieca, "Analyzing Constitutive Rhetorics"; I also expect that I will use the notion of an "image event," particularly as they intersect with embodied rhetorics. DeLuca, *Image Politics*; Finally, I expect

that I will use the concept of "place-as-rhetoric" to assess how the places act rhetorically to bind particular commitments. Endres and Senda-Cook, "Location Matters."

[98] Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, 40th Anniversary Ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1–6; Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies*, 55–68.

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[117] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 11–13.
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[166] Wingard, *Branded Bodies, Rhetoric, and the Neoliberal Nation-State*, 103–7.
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Economic Justice for All: The U.S. Catholic Bishops' Antagonistic Metaphysics

At the 1980 meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Bishop Peter A. Rosazza recommended "that the Conference address the evils of capitalism."[1] The bishops had just published their *Pastoral Letter on Marxist Communism*, and Rosazza, among others, suggested that they balance their economic judgments by interrogating the moral dimensions of capitalism. The motion to write such a "correlative statement on capitalism…passed on a voice vote" at the meeting, establishing the "Christianity and Capitalism Committee," which would go on to draft the 1986 publication *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (*EJA*).[2]

This committee was comprised of five bishops, each of whom brought his own perspective on economic morality. Archbishop John Roach appointed Rembert G. Weakland as the committee's chair because Roach and his staff were fond of how Weakland "had led bishops through some more delicate liturgical issues" in the past.[3] Although he had limited technocratic economic knowledge, Weakland could pull on his "experience of living on welfare" during "the Depression."[4] The other committee members each came with his own experiences with specific sectors of the economic landscape: William K. Weigand championed the poor in Latin America, Rosazza raised concerns about immigrants in inner cities, George H. Speltz advocated for small farmers, and Thomas A. Donnellan maintained a commitment to civil rights.[5]

The Christianity and Capitalism Committee would soon narrow its scope from "capitalism" generally to the capitalist "American economic system."[6] As Weakland

explained in his report to the NCCB, the bishops wanted to limit their scope to examining "capitalism as it exists in this society" because "The United States is one of the major, possibly the major, capitalist economy in the world. This creates a responsibility for the Church in this country to apply the more general framework of papal teaching to our own socio-economic reality."[7] The committee wanted to change its name to something akin to "Christianity and the American Economy" in order "to be accurate and yet raise no ideological flags."[8] The bishops understood that any criticism of "capitalism" as a system might alarm a country actively re-engaging in the Cold War against the communist Soviet Union.

The committee's aim was public, yet ostensibly apolitical. Weakland described "The basic aim" of the letter—"to suggest moral principles that can help public officials, corporate leaders, union representatives, and other citizens to reflect on current economic questions."[9] The letter was designed to "note problems and injustices brought on by past and present economic policies" and "suggest morally sound ways of approaching the future."[10] Speaking to a *New York Times* reporter, Weakland explained that the bishops "are not writing for political reasons... The bishops aren't staking out political territory."[11] Instead, he insisted, "'We want to begin serious discussions from a moral viewpoint on the major issues of our times.' It isn't easy," he told the reporter, but "being a Catholic in this generation means that you have to think deeply about all these questions."

But, of course, the bishops' letter was political, as it publicly deliberated and adjudicated the pressing political-economic issues of Ronald Reagan's America. *EJA* insisted that God called people to live in dignity and justice and to orient themselves

toward the common good. Furthermore, the bishops called for a moral economic system that privileged the poor and opened opportunities for widespread economic participation. They also argued that the government and labor unions could act as positive economic forces. This construction of moral economics challenged burgeoning neoliberal political landscape by questioning many of its tenets and by articulating an alternative worldview. Writing and publishing the letter took nearly six years and involved dozens of hearings from Catholic and non-Catholic experts and lay people. The drafting also included two public drafts and widespread, consistent media coverage.[12] The bishops approved *EJA* in its final form, and it passed by a 225 to nine vote on November 13, 1986.[13]

This letter was certainly not the first time the Catholic Church entered the politico-economic fray. Before the rise of the modern state, the Catholic curia played political and economic roles on par with Europe's monarchs. Modern states and economic systems hastened the dissolution of the Catholic Church's widespread power, and to the Church, the liberal assertion that "Economic man" is autonomous amounted to a "heresy" that separated people from God and each other; indeed, the early bourgeoisie needed to be freed of the Church's common good requirements to create and keep their wealth.[14]

Even after its power succumbed to sweeping political and economic modernism, the Catholic Church continued to engage in political economics, developing a body of thought called Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The CST tradition has constituted a counterweight to liberal economics because, since the rise of liberalism, as R. Bruce Douglas demonstrated, "the church's teaching has taken the form of a fairly elaborate body of social and economic theory designed specifically to challenge the autonomy of

economic man."[15] CST considers both liberalism and Marxism atheistic movements that privilege the material over the spiritual.[16] This body of thought has criticized Marxism for its denigration of human dignity and religion as well as its glorification of class conflict, and it has criticized liberal capitalism for treating human beings as commodities and creating deep socio-economic divisions.[17]

EJA re-articulated CST for the 1980s' neoliberalizing context. In this chapter, I argue that *EJA* antagonized the neoliberal articulation by leveraging the Christianized political milieu to articulate economics as moral philosophy. Further, I contend that the bishops harnessed the pastoral letter genre to establish their ethos as critics of neoliberalism and to pivot from generalized Christian conception of economics to a specifically Catholic one. Ultimately, this chapter shows how *EJA* introduced CST as a counterweight to the burgeoning neoliberal articulation.

To make this argument, I first describe the state of the neoliberal articulation during what I call the long 1980s, which began with the oil crises of the 1970s and extended to the rise of a Reaganite neoliberalism. In this section, I show how the crises and Reaganism fostered a tension between understanding economics as technocratic science and as moral philosophy—a tension that *EJA* leveraged to challenge the neoliberalizing worldview. Next, I analyze the letter and its drafting process to show how contextual shifts and Catholic traditions constituted the bishops as political-economic agents and how *EJA* harnessed contextual opportunities to antagonize the growing neoliberal articulation. Finally, I offer conclusions about *EJA*'s challenge to Reaganite neoliberalism and the case study's implications for theories of articulation.

The Long 1980s: Burgeoning Neoliberal Articulation

The neoliberal articulation was just beginning to coalesce when the bishops embarked on their economic pastoral in 1980. Issued in 1986, the letter responded to Reaganite economic policies, which actively fought inflation, raised military spending, cut taxes, and limited government involvement in social welfare.[18] Although Reagan was certainly not the Jimmy Carter Administration's neoliberalizing tendencies and accentuated the tension between science and philosophy undergirding neoliberal economics.

Crisis

Although many commentators considered Reagan's 1980 electoral victory a repudiation of President Carter, some of the economic policies that Reagan championed in the 1980s were initiated by Carter to deal with the crumbling economy of the 1970s.[19] Thus, Reagan's prominent contribution to the neoliberal articulation was rooted in the economic crises of the 1970s, Carter's responses to them, and public discourses that sought to make sense of them.

The economic crises of the 1970s combined high oil prices, stagflation, and rising property taxes. Petroleum prices doubled between 1973 and 1974 as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries declared an oil embargo on allies of Israel.[20] Oil prices surged again in 1979 and 1980 because of the Iranian protests that culminated in the revolution that ousted the country's Shah.[21] Furthermore, inflation and unemployment rose simultaneously, and people found themselves in precarious employment situations with diminished purchasing power. Concurrently, house values and, along with them,

property taxes rose, prompting people across political and economic spectrums to voice discontent about soaring taxes amidst economic insecurity.[22]

This three-tiered crisis destabilized dominant economic theories on both scientific and philosophical grounds. The oil emergencies engendered an acute awareness of the interconnectedness of global economies, destabilizing the idea that national economies maintained significant autonomy from one another. [23] Furthermore, Keynesian economics endorsed the Phillips curve, which suggested that employment and inflation rates functioned in an inverse relationship, but in the 1970s, the two rose simultaneously, causing economists and politicians to doubt the empirical accuracy of economic models that framed the post-World War II boom.[24] The tax system was also thrown into doubt as people's anxieties over property taxes eventually generalized into discourses that characterized all taxes as oppressive, lumping together property taxes with even the income taxes of the very wealthy, which most publics had accepted as a social good since the Great Depression.[25] Discourses thus questioned both the empirical science and the social philosophy undergirding postwar economics, doubting the validity of the scientific models as well as the social worth of what Paul S. Nadler characterized as the imposition of "political goals on economic policies in the area of environment, affirmative action, consumerism, worker and public safety."[26]

Amidst the destabilized economic common sense, the neoliberal articulation began to take root. Carter's first impulse was to address unemployment, but public discourse and internal pressure from financing communities privileged fighting inflation.[27] By 1979, the Carter Administration, widely perceived as weak and ineffective, pivoted toward tackling inflation.[28] Prominent discourses constructed Carter's

decisions as necessities dictated by empirical realities. *The Washington Post* reported, "Some administration officials privately admit that…Carter had no alternative but to name a man like [Paul] Volcker, with impeccable conservative credentials, to manage the central bank."[29] Volcker defended his unprecedented plan to deal with inflation—shrinking the money supply to curb inflation—saying, "We have reached the point in this inflationary situation where decisive action is necessary."[30] This scientific conceptualization of economics empowered technocrats like Volcker to assess economic processes through scientific methods and adjust social policies to better accommodate already-existing economic mechanisms.[31] The neoliberal orientation toward finance-sector interests and market freedoms thus took root as an empirical response to a situation that commentators across political spectra deemed a crisis, replete with painful transformations that disrupted dominant assumptions about how economies function.

The economic crisis took center stage during the 1980 presidential contest as Carter and Reagan each articulated his vision for the American economy in technocratic and philosophical terms. For example, in an address to the National Press Club, Carter simultaneously treated economics as an empirical science and as a moral philosophy. Carter explained, "If living standards are to rise, productivity must grow – there's no way around this as an economic fact of life," thus constructing economics as unassailable, empirical conditions to which people must adjust. [32] Carter also described the economy's aims as facilitating "full employment" and "maintain[ing] a compassionate and a progressive society," thus characterizing economics as a field concerned with promoting the good life.[33] Similarly, Reagan seamlessly blended scientific and philosophical approaches, as exemplified by his speech to the International Business Council. [34] The

Republican candidate treated economics as a combination of "principles" that could be apprehended by "distinguished economists and businessmen."[35] Further, he constructed economics as "not merely a matter of lines and graphs on a chart," but also a moral realm in which "Individuals and families are being hurt and hurt badly."[36] Reagan thus called on people who shared his "economic philosophy" to help "the American people to reclaim their dream."[37]

The 1980 presidential election functioned as a referendum on the state of the economy and the future's potential. The Carter Administration became entangled with pessimistic hardship as Carter's attempts to fight inflation brought on a mid-year recession in 1980, and his approval ratings sank.[38] In contrast, Reagan presented an optimistic vision, which he showcased in mediated spectacles.[39] By promising a return to greatness, Reagan addressed largely white, working-to-middle-class Americans who had seen a better economy in their lives and who had been on top of the social hierarchy before the upheaval of the 1960s.[40] His campaign combined their aspirations with those of business leaders and evangelical Christians to form a coalition that swept him and twelve additional Republican senators into office.[41] Reagan and his allies touted their electoral "mandate" to enlist their policies in the fight against economic and social crises, and neoliberal apologists enjoyed support in many sectors for their plans, vision, and policy.[42]

The election's comingling of economic realism and reverie showcased a tension between science and philosophy that inhabits all economic discourse. Philosophical questions have undergirded economic theory since at least Adam Smith, who philosophized that exchange markets had the best ability to harness human nature to do

the most good.[43] Although technocratic economics have largely overshadowed economic philosophy as a point of discussion, assumptions about human nature, ethics, and public policy inhabit even the most technocratic economic discourses, and in the long 1980s, these assumptions made themselves known.[44]

Reaganite Freedom Economics

Reagan's administration simultaneously treated economics as a technocratic science that distributed resources and as a moralistic philosophy that emphasized freedom. The president and his technocratic allies relied on "monetarist" and "supply-side" economic theories, thus treating the economy as a force with its own natural rules that experts could ascertain and manage through policy.[45] Monetarist theories suggested "that slowing the growth of the money supply is the only true way to stop inflation," and "supply side theory" suggested that reduced taxes would spur "fast economic growth," which would "cut unemployment and whittle away the deficit" as "Growth would generate more tax revenues."[46] Famous monetarist and architect of neoliberal economics Milton Friedman advised Reagan on economic policies, and he staunchly defended the scientific economic viewpoint, largely rejecting distinctions between "natural sciences" and economics.[47]

Perhaps more powerful than the technocratic approach was Reaganites' promulgation of economic philosophies. Reagan and his allies embodied a faith in monetarist and supply-side economic theories even when their policies showed empirical cracks. *The New York Times* reported that as "Mr. Reagan has tightened his embrace of supply-side doctrine," many "Mainstream economists insist… that they have found little evidence" to support such policy.[48] Instead, these economists compiled "evidence,

including analyses of the latest tax return data," which suggested "that any significant supply-side impact of tax cuts is limited to the highest-income groups."[49] Responding to criticism of Reagan's economic policies coming even from within his administration, the president said, "I hope you'll keep in mind that economic forecasting is far from a perfect science," thereby questioning the validity of economic scientism.[50] Instead, *The Washington Post* reported that Reagan "remains a true believer in the 'supply side' theory of economics" whose "faith was not shaken in the least by the deep recession of 1981-1982, even though that event was not part of the supply siders' rosy vision."[51] When monetarist policies were similarly criticized in 1983, *The New York Times* reported Friedman responding "that the Fed used the label of monetarism as a guise for reducing inflation with high interest rates, but that…'There was no monetarist experiment and there was never an intent for a monetarist experiment.'"[52] Reaganites thus publicly defended supply-side and monetarist economic theories amidst empirical evidence undermining such positions in two ways; they either assuredly reaffirmed faith in the theories as Reagan did or, following Friedman's lead, they lambasted policies as not adequately conforming to the theory. This attitude of faith shifted their economic emphasis from empiricism to philosophy by publicly maintaining a belief in a theory of economics over empirical evidence derived through technocratic means.

Furthermore, Reaganite discourses promoted a philosophy of economics that sutured wealth and capitalism with personal and political freedom. Reagan asserted that individuals must be "free to follow their dreams" because "Freedom and incentives unleash the drive and entrepreneurial genius that are at the core of human progress."[53] Reaganism tied personal freedom and social progress to wealth, constructing economic

privilege as both a reward for making smart choices and as a resource that would eventually lift all of society, as wealthy people created opportunities for other individuals to make their own fortunes.[54] Furthermore, Reaganite discourse co-articulated individual and market freedoms with democracy; Reagan asserted that the goal of the "American Revolution" was being "reborn" in the 1980s as "Americans courageously supported the struggle for liberty, self-government, and free enterprise throughout the world."[55]

To promote such freedom economics in the United States, Reaganist domestic policies often placed responsibility on individuals to pursue success or succumb to their own failures. Reagan-era tax policy favored cutting the marginal rates on the highest tax brackets to give wealthy individuals more autonomy to invest their money as they saw fit.[56] Reagan also treated workers as individuals; when he fired the striking PATCO workers in 1981, he argued that each of them individually quit by going on strike. [57] Reaganite policies thus treated people as individuals whose personal fulfillment was fostered by a context of economic freedom.

Reaganites also sought to spread supply-side economics around the world, prompting U.S. military buildup and intervention.[58] Reagan constructed the capitalist United States as the "last and greatest bastion of freedom" in a world teetering on the brink of totalitarianism, resuscitating the tenor of pre-détente cold war rhetoric by constructing a bi-polar world in which the United States incarnated freedom, righteousness, and peace, while the Soviet Union embodied totalitarianism, treachery, and terrorism.[59] Reagan aimed to reestablish the United States' military prominence over the USSR, and he focused on discrediting state communism as a legitimate political-economic system.[60] Thus, despite their mantra of small government, Reaganites increased

funding and government oversight for the military, insisting that capitalist-democratic freedom was so virtuous that it had to be protected and promulgated with military force.[61]

The Reagan Administration took a firm stance against communism around the world, backing a series of anti-communist regimes and insurgents, even as some of them engaged in human rights abuses. The U.S. military publicly intervened in conflicts in such places as Libya and Grenada, arguing that they were staving off the mounting communist-terrorist threat.[62] In both overt and covert ways, the Reagan Administration and the CIA also supported the anti-communist regimes around the world; some of these regimes committed brutal atrocities against Leftists in their countries, supported in part by U.S. power.[63] Reagan's foreign policy, then, committed to spreading its particular freedom-capitalism-democracy amalgam around the world, which meant staunchly opposing communist or socialist regimes or movements, even when communism was instituted as a result of democratic practices.

In sum, Reaganism blended scientific and philosophical approaches to economics into a burgeoning neoliberal amalgam of supply-side capitalism, monetarist policy, and individual freedom. Furthermore, Reagan's public discourse consistently emphasized the philosophical dimensions of capitalist "freedom" economics, thus de-centering technocratic economic discourses. This emphasis opened a space for addressing the social purposes of economics, a space that *EJA* would ultimately capitalize on to challenge the growing neoliberal articulation.

Christianized Agency and Moral Economics

The bishops could enact political agency, in part, because of the Christianized socio-political milieu of the long 1980s, wherein popular and political discourses

legitimized Christian influences on governance. The bishops' letter seized on these opportunities; as Christian agents working with a Christian ontology and epistemology, the bishops further de-centered the technical dimensions of economics and emphasized the philosophical-moral dimensions.

Christianized Politics

Several prominent discourses co-articulated Christianity and governance in the long 1980s. Even before Reagan's tenure, Carter infused presidential politics with religious discourses when he took office as an avowedly "born-again Christian," who openly described his life as having "been shaped in the church."[64] The long 1980s also saw the New Religious Right (NRR) become "a surging new force in politics" as media attention catapulted the movement's "godly positions" into widespread public consciousness.[65] Christianity played a prominent public role in the 1980 election, as both the Reagan and Carter campaigns explicitly leveraged the candidates' Christianity at the same time that the Reagan campaign allied with the NRR.[66] With these widely circulated discourses merging Christianity with politics, as Andrew P. Hogue argued, "the 1980 election became one that was based in an unprecedented manner on 'religious,' 'family' and 'moral' values."[67] Both the Carter and Reagan campaigns attempted to define the political trajectory of the United States in terms of Christian values, with Reaganite discourses emphasizing traditional families, fetal life, and church-state issues and Carterite discourses emphasizing common humanity, tolerance, and human rights.[68]

Reagan's presidency also functioned as a node that articulated Christianity with the free market, as his public persona deftly acclaimed a Christianized environment in which a moral capitalism could thrive. [69] Reagan's discourse resuscitated earlier Cold

War rhetorics that constructed a "crusade for freedom" from Soviets, and some religious Cold Warriors constructed worldwide intervention on the part of U.S. style capitalism-democracy as a matter of upholding the "Judeo-Christian heritage told in the Bible."[70] As part of his call to accept this divine mission, Reagan insisted that the nation had to assert its "moral leadership in the world" and develop "a foreign policy which understands the danger we face from governments and ideologies that are at war with the very ideas of religion and freedom," thus constructing the Soviet Union and its allies as a threat to both American-style capitalism, democracy, and religion.[71]

Throughout the Reagan era, other Christianized politics abounded. For example, politicians and their constituents debated whether prayer had a place in public schools.[72] Moreover, the news media reported on polls that amplified connections between religion and public policy, with *The New York Times* reporting in 1981 that "65 percent of the public believes that religion can provide answers to modern problems."[73] One year later, the same newspaper reported on "a 1982 Gallup Poll" that showed that "85 percent of the American public sampled believes that Jesus was the divine Son of God."[74]

The widespread circulation of Christian discourses created a space primed for the sort of political-moral-religious agency that the bishops could enact. As Catherine Chaput suggested, rhetoric gains the power to constitute as it circulates, such that "the repetition of values added and exchanged through disparate communicative acts" set the boundaries for acceptable political action.[75] During the long 1980s, rhetorics that emphasized the intersections of U.S. public policy and Christian morality consistently and widely circulated, thus naturalizing politicized Christianity as a kind of political agency and inviting discourses that further Christianized politics.

EJA's *Christian Economics*

The bishops engaged this milieu by touting *EJA*'s Christianity and the bishops' Christian ethos, referring to its contents and its authors as "Christian" one hundred and eleven times.[76] The bishops identified as "followers of Christ," who called upon "the Christian community" to join them in "Challenging U.S. economic life with the Christian vision" of economics.[77] The letter further constructed its authors as moral counselors who wrote "as pastors, not public officials. We speak as moral teachers," they wrote, "not economic technicians."[78] These moral instructors noted that "the human and ethical dimensions of economic life" were "aspects too often neglected in public discussion," thus using the letter's explicit Christian identifications to construct its authors as qualified economic commentators who could supplement the existing preoccupations with technocratic dimensions of economics.[79] In these ways, *EJA* leveraged Christianized politics to assert the bishops' authority over economic morality. As Christian agents in a milieu that amplified such subjectivities, the bishops could raise questions of economic morality.

Having constructed their moral qualifications as Christians, the bishops invoked a familiar and increasingly public Christian ontology in which a Judeo-Christian God created human beings and thus claimed significant jurisdiction over human affairs. Drawing on the Bible as an epistemological authority, *EJA* proclaimed that, as beings "created in the image of God (Gn 1:27)," humans were "holy and sacred" creatures whose inherent "dignity comes from God."[80] They asserted that as dignified creatures, humans had rights that were "bestowed on human beings by God and … not created by society. Indeed," the bishops wrote, "society has a duty to secure and protect them."[81]

This Christian ontology at once elevated human beings as sacred creatures and subordinated human society to God's moral authority, proclaiming that "no dimension of human life lies beyond God's care and concern."[82] The bishops' document harnessed a milieu replete with political references to Christianity and Scripture to place human affairs within a divinely ordered moral universe. Because they claimed Christianity in such a milieu, the bishops could construct themselves as moral agents for whom it was appropriate to proclaim religious truths and engage Scripture as epistemology to address public policy.

In offering "The Christian Vision of Economic Life," the bishops' letter treated economics as a dimension of human life that, as such, was within God's moral reach.[83] The bishops declared, "The economy is a human reality" that "has been built by the labor of human hands and minds" and "can be changed by them."[84] This formulation granted people agency over the creation and maintenance of economic forces because, in the letter's view, "The economy is not a machine that operates according to its own inexorable laws, and persons are not mere objects tossed about by economic forces."[85] The bishops' account cast humans as economic agents who labored to create and manage economic production and circulation, contrasting the neoliberal conception of financial markets as natural, self-regulating systems. The letter defined economies as comprised of "men and women working together to develop and care for the whole of God's creation," thus suggesting that economies were not divinely created—indeed, they were constructed and directed by human beings. However, like all human affairs, they were subject to divine principles, and humans had the will to try to interpret and follow the divinely inspired path or ignore and stray from it.[86] Therefore, although the letter established

human agency over economics, it also placed economics under divine purview, navigating a perennial Christian tension between divine plan and human will.[87]

EJA anchored its economic analysis within a Christian epistemology of Biblical hermeneutics; the bishops explained, "we turn first to the Scriptures for guidance" so that they might "attend to the Bible's deeper vision of God, of the purpose of creation, and of the dignity of human life in society."[88] They asserted that understanding these fundamental arrangements would aid people in a "quest for an economic life worthy of divine revelation."[89] The bishops drew evidence from the Old and New Testaments to assert that people, who were "Created in God's Image," had a "Covenant" with God and were "Called to" pursue "the Reign of God" in all human affairs, including "Poverty, Riches, and the Challenges of Discipleship."[90] *EJA* elucidated three prominent Biblical narratives to show the complex ways that human affairs were subject to God's laws: the creation story, Israel's covenant, and Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.[91] For example, the bishops drew on the Book of Genesis to tell a truncated "theology of creation," wherein God created "heaven and earth (Gn 1-11)" as well as "man and woman, made in God's image (Gn 1:26-27)," who were meant to "share in the creative activity of God," such that "by their labor they are unfolding the Creator's work."[92] This creation story positioned human beings as proximate to the divine, descendent from it, helping it to flourish on earth, and subject to its rules. "One legacy of this theology," the letter explicated, "is the conviction that no dimension of human life lies beyond God's care and concern," including the economic.[93] This biblical narrative constructed human affairs as part of God's moral domain, at the same time that it granted people agency to either choose to follow God's vision or stray from it by recounting the fall of Adam and Eve

who "disrupted God's design by trying to live independently of God through a denial of their status as creatures."[94] Each of the letter's Biblical narratives constructed human affairs as subject to God's moral pull, but also granted people agency to either resist or succumb to God's call, thus crafting a complex human agency, wherein people at once had the power to shape their affairs, but in order for the affairs to be moral, they had to conform to God's vision.

As Christian agents working with a Biblical epistemology, the bishops further de-centered the technical dimensions of economics and emphasized the philosophical-moral dimensions. The authors acknowledged that people had "many partial ways to measure and debate the health of our economy: Gross National Product, per capita income, stock market prices, and so forth," highlighting the incompleteness of these technical measures.[95] They presented their aim as going "beyond purely technical issues to fundamental questions of value and human purpose."[96] As such, *EJA* suggested that its philosophical-moral inquiry was vital to the health and wellbeing of the economy because it addressed the roots of economic issues, which technicalities could only partially measure, at best, and could completely obscure, at worst. *EJA* thusly engaged the opportunities afforded by the milieu to incorporate Christian epistemologies and ontologies to craft a complex form of human economic agency that was morally subject to God's call. *EJA*, then, challenged the neoliberal impulse to treat the free market as the pinnacle of humanity by positing that God, not the market, reigned over human affairs.

U.S. Pastoral Letter Genre

Although the bishops were clearly figureheads of a Christian faith, they were also unmistakably Catholic, members of an immense international institution with traditions

dating back nearly two millennia. Throughout the letter's drafting process, press outlets identified the authors as members of "the Catholic hierarchy" who intended to offer "a set of religious reflections, or pastoral letter, on Roman Catholic social teaching and the United States economy."[97] Publicly understood as Catholic agents and members of an institutional order that linked the United States with the larger Roman Catholic world, the bishops harnessed the U.S. pastoral letter genre to challenge the burgeoning neoliberal order. This genre constituted the U.S. bishops as situationally embedded, yet morally transcendent political actors called to address the philosophical and moral dimensions of U.S. economics.

The Catholic pastoral letter is a flexible genre of episcopal discourse in which bishops interpret doctrine to guide the Catholic laity's actions in particular circumstances.[98] Rhetorical scholars have identified several generic characteristics of Catholic pastoral letters, including the use of doctrinal evidence, the tendency to assert more than to argue, and the negotiation of multiple audiences that are both within the Church and beyond it.[99] Since 1792, the U.S. subset of this genre has itself developed three dynamic characteristics that *EJA* would also manifest: collective enunciation, dual subjectivities, and publicized doctrine.

First, U.S. pastoral letters collectively enunciate an institutional position. Although the earliest pastorals were largely single-authored documents that were not tethered to a national organization, they nonetheless articulated the collective positions of Catholic bishops as members of a global religious institution.[100] The U.S. bishops nationalized their voice and institutionalized their collective agency when they formed the USCCB in 1917.[101] Since the early twentieth century, the USCCB has approved and

disseminated national pastoral letters that were largely written by single authors.[102] As John Lynch demonstrated, these bishops' letters generically function as "middle-level" documents in a hierarchical organization that strive for either the explicit or tacit approval of the upper echelons of the hierarchy.[103] The USCCB's 1983 pastoral on nuclear warfare, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*, pushed the collectivity of the U.S. pastoral into novel territory as the bishops wrote it by committee, rather than signing on to a single-authored treatise.[104] The letters' collectivity constituted the bishops as agents who could speak for the whole of the U.S. Catholic Church, granting their treatises an institutional heft.

Second, U.S. pastoral letters manifest dual subjectivities, as they carefully negotiate Americanism and Romanism. Overtly addressed to American Catholics, U.S. pastorals explain how to live a Catholic life in the context of the United States, but they have also often implicitly and explicitly addressed other audiences, including all levels of Church hierarchy as well as non-Catholic publics and institutions.[105] The earliest letters explicitly undertook Catholics' doctrinal concerns and implicitly addressed wider U.S. publics' anxieties about Catholics by pronouncing the compatibility of Catholic and American values.[106] Once the bishops formed the USCCB, the pastoral letters increasingly pivoted away from "defensive" patriotism toward openly criticizing aspects of American policy, as the bishops' institution gained legitimacy.[107] The Second Vatican Council—which convened between 1962 and 1965 and profoundly transformed the Church—further encouraged the public negotiation of multiple subjectivities by orienting the institution to the contemporary world.[108] As a post-Vatican II document, *The Challenge of Peace* pushed dual subjectivity into new terrain by breaching pastorals'

insular drafting process; the bishops consulted technical experts, debated the issue internally, and solicited input from both Catholic and non-Catholic Americans by circulating drafts in popular media outlets.[109] Pastoral letters' generic negotiation of dual subjectivities often positions bishops as both inside and beyond the dominant system, enabling them to simultaneously reify and challenge the structure.

Third, U.S. pastoral letters publicize and concretize Catholic doctrine by advocating public moral positions on specific national issues. The earliest pastorals drew on Catholic doctrine to instruct Catholics about how to keep the faith in a largely hostile, Protestant environment.[110] Toward the beginning of the twentieth century, as the bishops retreated from a defensive posture, their pastorals often applied Catholic doctrine to controversial and prominent social issues, blending Catholic teaching with messages of more generalized morality on public matters.[111] Vatican II legitimated such a move in 1965 as it urged the Catholic hierarchy to engage with the contemporary social world, pursuing the realization of its doctrine with various publics, religious and non-religious alike.[112] Again, *The Challenge of Peace* made significant contributions to the scope and form of pastorals' public and concretized doctrine. Harnessing the increasingly Christianized publicity of the 1980s, the bishops addressed the controversial nuclear arms race as public moralists, blending technical expertise with Catholic doctrine and more generalized Christian values.[113] The pastorals' public doctrine constituted the bishops as agents who were compelled by their religious genre to engage with the morality of current affairs.

EJA mobilized the genre's characteristics to establish the bishops' ethos as critics of neoliberalism and to pivot from generalized Christian conception of economics to a

specifically Catholic one in three ways. First, the pastoral letter's collective enunciation co-articulated the credibility and resources of the world's oldest institution with the document. Second, the letter's negotiation of dual subjectivities allowed the bishops to simultaneously reify and critique the U.S. economic system. Finally, the letter's publicizing of concretized Catholic doctrine offered this body of thought as a public resource for policy deliberation.

Collective Enunciation

Harnessing the pastoral genre, *EJA* embodied its collectivity in practice and embraced it in prose. The economic pastoral was written by a committee of bishops who reviewed thousands of letters from Catholics, and the USCCB deliberated on the letter's 1984 draft before approving the final letter in 1986 by a 96 percent majority.[114] Furthermore, the letter's prose pointed to the collective nature of its positions by using "we" and "our" pronouns, referring to the U.S. Catholic bishops as an institutional body. *EJA*'s prose also adopted the collective voice of the Catholic Church by calling upon their institution's "long tradition of thought and action on the moral dimensions of economic activity" that included such historical behemoths as the "Hebrew prophets," "Jesus," and "Pope John Paul II."[115] In pointing to "Catholic social and ethical traditions," the bishops constructed their letter as a collective document that announced the Catholic position on economics, thereby harnessing the power associated with a massive religious institution.[116]

The institutional and religious collectivity of the letter established the document's credibility as a worthy challenge to the neoliberal orientation. The collective and centuries-long traditions of the Catholic Church lent the letter significant force because

this institution is comprised of an extensive history, countless resources, and a metaphysical system of meaning that purports to manage people's material and spiritual lives.[117] The Church can be understood, in Michel Foucault's words, as "an institution that claims to govern men [sic] in their daily life on the grounds of leading them to eternal life in the other world."[118] Foucault demonstrated that this institution is simultaneously understood as an earthly one comprised of "laws, rules, techniques, and procedures" and a spiritual one that guides people toward bringing the "will of God" to fruition.[119] As a document affiliated with the Catholic Church, the letter took on the heft of such an institution, enabling it to function as a philosophical-moral counterweight to the burgeoning neoliberal order. *EJA* framed its economic critique as a dutiful imposition of a spiritual institution when it explained, "The Church must…stand ready to challenge practices and institutions that impede or carry us farther away from realizing this [divine] vision."[120] The letter thus enunciated a collective and institutional challenge that manifested as a traditional duty to guide people's earthly actions to match a divine morality.

Dual Subjectivities

The tradition of the pastoral genre also compelled the bishops to negotiate their Americanism and Catholicism, and *EJA*'s navigation of these subjectivities positioned the bishops as critics uniquely able to assess the neoliberalizing U.S. economy from both within and beyond it. The document's prose and its drafting process constructed the bishops as embedded members of the American democratic-capitalist system in both linguistic and embodied ways. *EJA*'s prose constructed the letter as an American document by overtly embracing prominent American narratives and values.[121] The

bishops explicitly referred to themselves "As *Americans*" who were "grateful for the gift of freedom and committed to the dream of 'liberty and justice for all.'"[122] *EJA*'s language embraced the ubiquitous discourses of American "freedom" and expressed devotion to their nation's idealized construction of itself as a "bold experiment in democracy."[123] Furthermore, *EJA* enunciated exceptionalist discourses by explicitly referring to the United States as a nation "blessed with extraordinary resources" that has "provided an unprecedented standard of living for millions of people," thus invoking a long-standing trope of American abundance wherein the United States stands above other nations as a land replete with natural resources, human talent, and consumer goods.[124] This common trope has long articulated American exceptionalism with capitalism, such that capitalist America is understood as an idealized node yoking ingenuity, freedom, and abundance.[125] In no uncertain terms, the bishops praised the United States as "among the most economically powerful nations on earth" that, as "a land of vast natural resources and fertile soil," has "encouraged citizens to undertake bold ventures" such that "Through hard work, self-sacrifice and cooperation, families have flourished; towns, cities and a powerful nation have been created."[126] By affirming these laudatory constructions of the capitalist-democratic United States, the bishops engaged as patriots committed to a dominant American ethos.

Moreover, the bishops reified the American mythos of democratic governance by opening their inquiries to public and expert deliberation and by emphasizing participation.[127] Between 1980 and 1983, the bishops held twelve hearings on the state of the U.S. economic system, inviting economists, charity workers, labor leaders, public officials, and business leaders, among others, to testify.[128] *EJA*'s committee also held a

symposium in 1983 at Notre Dame University, where "More than 250 people packed the sessions," and Archbishop Weakland testified in Congress after publishing the final draft.[129] By holding these hearings and responding to both religious and secular comments, the committee embodied a commitment to public and pluralistic dialogue, which their letter embraced as an integral component of the "American pragmatic tradition of reform" wherein "the rich plurality of social institutions" and perspectives "enhance personal freedom" and offer "opportunity for participation in community life."[130] This emphasis reified the prominent idea that symbolic "participation" and "voice" themselves make a society more "democratic," no matter how many of those diverse and often contradictory "voices" ever meaningfully influence a society's cultural, economic, and political fabric.[131] As such, the bishops constructed their pastoral as part of an American tradition of pluralistic and democratic engagement.

As members of the democratic-capitalist American system, the bishops' critique of the U.S. economy could be positioned as a self-assessment designed to more completely fulfill "The promise of the 'American dream.'"[132] The bishops thus activated what Robert L. Scott called the "conservative voice" when they reified conservative values—American freedom, pluralistic democracy, and capitalist abundance—by constructing themselves as protectors of those principles.[133] The bishops marshaled dominant epideictic discourse to construct themselves as ingroup Americans who could critique American capitalism as members of the system. As Patricia Roberts-Miller explained, "ingroup" refers to "an imagined construct to which we belong" that can be understood as a "positive stereotype" that has significant repercussions for collective and individual identities.[134] Group identity often relies on the assumption that there exists a

unifying essence that characterizes the group as a whole. Furthermore, people tend to "attribute good motives to the same behavior in ingroup members that they describe with bad motives in outgroup members."[135] Therefore, constructing themselves as patriotic Americans offered the bishops' document the possibility of ingroup identification, suggesting that as patriots, they were essentially well-intentioned and pro-American participants of the system they were assessing. In a context of heightened polarization between the "us" of the United States and the "them" of the Soviet Union, the bishops' declarations of American interiority provided grounds for legitimacy.

Although *EJA* signaled that the pastoral was an ingroup text, the pastoral's prose also firmly established the bishops as Roman Catholics. *EJA* used the word "Catholic" one-hundred and fifty-five times, and it called on Catholic doctrine and papal authority as evidence and as markers of its purpose. For example, *EJA* argued that the bishops' positions "were strongly affirmed as implications of Catholic social teaching by Pope John Paul II."[136] This example—one of a multitude—marked the document as Catholic because it used doctrinal evidence, a type of verification that is more accessible and significantly more authoritative for members of the Catholic community than for non-members.[137] Indeed, the bishops explained that they wrote the letter "first of all to provide guidance for members of our own Church as they seek to form their consciences about economic matters."[138]

The bishops' explicit Catholic subjectivity positioned *EJA*'s critique as beyond the American economic system in two significant ways. First, the Catholic subjectivity allowed the bishops to take a global perspective on the nation's economy. As members of such a worldwide institution, the bishops could, as Weakland explained in a letter to the

USCCB, "address the international implications and impact of the American economy in an interdependent world."[139] *EJA*'s prose embraced the Church's globalism as it emphasized "Traditional Catholic teaching on…global interdependence," its concern for "the unity of the human family," and "the need to pursue the international common good."[140] *EJA* explained that the Church recognized that all nations were members of "the human community" and, as Catholic agents, the bishops had to "recognize the moral bonds among all people" that went "beyond national sovereignty" to include fellowship between "industrialized countries of the North and the developing countries of the South."[141] *EJA*'s prose tethered the church's globalism to the long 1980s' increasing awareness of globalization, positioning the Catholic bishops as agents well-disposed to navigate the "increasingly interdependent global economy" in which "nations separated by geography, culture, and ideology are linked in a complex commercial, financial, technological, and environmental network."[142]

The Church's globalism also allowed the bishops to incorporate perspectives that had trouble flourishing within the neoliberalizing United States, but that were gaining traction outside of it. For example, *EJA* borrowed the term "preferential option for the poor" from their Left-leaning Latin American counterparts and adjusted it to the U.S. context.[143] This concept is rooted in Liberation Theology, which emerged from Latin America in the mid-twentieth century as a response to the region's widespread poverty. Liberation Theologians reacted to the prevailing economic push in the 1960s and 1970s to transform "underdeveloped" economies in Latin America into systems modeled after "developed" nations. People in Latin America had largely witnessed the failure of this approach, as they were made poorer and worse off by "development," which fostered

Latin American dependence on first world structures.[144] At their 1968 conference in Medellín, Colombia, Latin American bishops developed a robust set of teachings with a Marxian tint, focusing on empowering the poor. They insisted on a "hermeneutic privilege of the poor" because "the poor are essentially situated to hear the Word of God as a word addressed to those in oppression and as a word of justice and liberation from that oppression."[145] This option called Catholics to see the world as the poor and marginalized do.[146] The U.S. bishops embraced only parts of Liberation Theology's option, and mainly focused on showing middle class audiences and policy experts why they should act on behalf of the poor.[147] Although the letter itself mostly focused on advocating for the poor, it promoted a posture that re-imagined the poor in a neoliberal milieu that emphasized the virtue of wealth.

Next, their Catholic subjectivity allowed the bishops to present their views as beyond ideology and politics, instead constructing them as matters of religious calling. Within the first few paragraphs of the pastoral, the bishops wrote, "We seek not to make some political or ideological point but to lift up the human and ethical dimensions of economic life."[148] The bishops' prose elevated their mission beyond the realm of instrumental politics, focusing audiences' attentions on issues that they constructed as broader and more fundamental. Furthermore, they explained, "The Church's experience through history and in nations throughout the world today has made it wary of all ideologies that claim to have the final answer to humanity's problems," thus using the Church's long history to further distance themselves from any set of principles that could be understood as a political "ideology."[149]

Americanism and Catholicism thus converged in *EJA*'s prose, which embraced the "dual heritage of Catholic social teaching and traditional American values."[150] *EJA* articulated the bishops' dual identities—at once within the system and beyond it—into the singular subjectivity of "moral teachers," unique in their ability to guide Catholics and Americans toward an assessment of the underlying morality of economics."[151] *EJA* combined subjectivities that often function in conservative ways—American patriotism and Catholic institutionalism—to create a subjectivity that could challenge the fundamental philosophies undergirding the neoliberalizing world.

Publicized Doctrine

The episcopal genre also enabled the bishops to engage forms of publicity that applied Catholic doctrine to contemporary issues. *EJA* explained, "we are trying to look at economic life through the eyes of faith, applying traditional church teaching to the U.S. economy," and the document characterized "economic life" as "one of the chief areas where we live out our faith."[152] Although this chapter will explicate the specific tenets of Catholic doctrine in the next section, the very act of application also functioned rhetorically; this move reshaped boundaries between idealism and realism by calling to mind the challenge of living religious ideals in everyday life—a common imperative circulating during the long 1980s. "Followers of Christ must avoid a tragic separation between faith and everyday life," *EJA* proclaimed, as it lightly inoculated its audiences to the challenges confronting such a plan, explaining, "We should not be surprised if we find Catholic social teaching to be demanding. The Gospel is demanding."[153] *EJA* reconfigured idealism and realism by suggesting that Christian life meant negotiating the expedient and the moral in ways that privileged the idealistic but heeded the realistic.

Their warning that such an undertaking would be "challenging" subsumed any strictly realism-based obstacles under a Christian ontology of fall, struggle, and redemption, recasting these challenges as predicted hurdles that must be overcome in a religious journey toward the moral.[154] Such an orientation challenged the economic realism of the neoliberalizing order and created a space in which Catholic doctrine could be introduced as a resource for solving economic problems.

Although U.S. pastoral letters have always been public to varying degrees, the publicity of *The Challenge of Peace* set a spotlight on the economic pastoral, allowing its application of Catholic doctrine to circulate widely. As one *New York Times* article put it, "in the aftershocks of the nuclear pastoral, the letter on the economy has become the subject of … intense and ambivalent anticipation and debate."[155] *EJA* fulfilled such expectations by participating in four forms of publicity throughout its drafting and circulation process.

First, the economic pastoral committee opened their research and drafting process to various publics, thus integrating Catholic doctrine, economics, and public policy. In preparation for the research hearings that the bishops held, the committee requested that each invited speaker submit a written statement before the meetings in which they addressed "the major characteristics and trends of the U.S. economy today."[156] During the hearings, speakers were allotted "fifteen minutes for oral presentation," then engaged in "open discussion with the Committee."[157] Such a structure, which resembled academic, governmental, and professional meetings, positioned the committee of Catholic bishops as officials charged with understanding and addressing a complex and pressing social issue. The bishops assumed the position of officials who would be educated by experts on

the complexities of the multifaceted U.S. economy so they could adjudicate the proper way forward.

Myriad experts and advocates testified in front of the committee, such that the hearings, in their totality, co-articulated economics, public policy, and Catholic doctrine. The bishops heard from speakers with expertise in economic policy and administration, such as representatives from the Council of Economic Advisors from the Nixon, Ford, and Carter Administrations as well as officials from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Financial experts also testified, including prominent economists, financial advisors, and officers of the World Bank. The bishops also met with experts in labor-management relations, such as representatives from the AFL-CIO, managers from General Motors, and small business associations. In addition to these economic experts, the bishops solicited testimonies on intersections between Catholic doctrine and U.S. economics from professors of theology, representatives from Catholic Charities, and lay Catholic economic advocates from across the political spectrum.[158] Taken as a whole, the hearings created a space for experts in economics and finance to subject their knowledge to moral questions and for experts in Catholic doctrine to apply Catholic precepts to economic situations. The speakers' participation also suggested that the bishops' committee was a legitimate forum for their expertise, thus strengthening the comingling of economics, public policy, and Catholic doctrine.

Second, the bishops constructed a publicly oriented, yet doctrinally anchored argument; that is, they offered reasons for their claims that would be most readily accessible to Catholics but also could be comprehended by non-Catholics. For example, the bishops asserted, "The most urgent priority for domestic policy is the creation of new

jobs with adequate pay and decent working conditions."[159] In support of this assertion, the bishops called upon Catholic doctrine, explaining that "Employment is a basic right….which flows from the principles of justice which we have outlined." [160] Furthermore, they marshaled the "deep conviction of American culture that work is central to the freedom and well-being of people" in support of a goal of full employment.[161] Finally, the bishops evidenced their claim with statistics to show that un(der)employment was a serious social problem. Using numbers from the U.S. Department of Labor, the bishops explained, "There are about 8 million people in the United States looking for a job who cannot find one. They represent about 7 percent of the labor force."[162] Combining psychological and public policy research with widely circulating Christianized discourses of protecting the traditional family, the bishops argued that un(der)employment "gives rise to family quarrels, greater consumption of alcohol, child abuse, spouse abuse, divorce, and higher rates of infant mortality."[163] *EJA* co-articulated Catholic doctrine with more publicly accessible forms of reasoning, thus introducing doctrine as one source of evidence for identifying and addressing social problems for wider U.S. publics.

Third, the pastoral's moral-economic message enjoyed widespread circulation within the Catholic Church. *EJA*'s first draft, published by the Church's press, sold over 93,000 copies within six months.[164] The USCCB allotted $525,000 to form an Office of Implementation for the vision articulated in *EJA*.[165] Among other things, this office printed and disseminated pledge pamphlets called "A Pledge of Commitment for Economic Justice." The pamphlets summarized the tenets of the letter and asked parishioners to sign a promissory card that asked the signatory to write specific "actions"

that they would "undertake" to show their "own personal commitment to economic justice."[166] This widespread circulation encouraged Catholics to approach the Church's doctrine as a resource for assessing economic practices.

Fourth, the pastoral and its themes circulated in news media and in public policy circles throughout its drafting process and in its final form. *EJA* enjoyed significant media attention in newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, which attended to its drafting process and the final publication.[167] For example, with the release of the letter's first draft, *The New York Times* featured a story that characterized "The Roman Catholic pastoral letter on the economy" as "the first comprehensive attempt to apply a tradition from scripture, theology and papal pronouncements to the United States economy" in which "the bishops speak as religious leaders and American citizens, saying that there are certain issues that must be addressed from a Catholic perspective."[168] This article, like many others featured in the secular press, legitimated Catholic doctrine's entrance into "the secular debate over economic policy" by devoting significant space to covering the letter and by publicizing the acceptance of the letter by wider religious communities. For instance, the article quoted a Jewish leader saying, "The bishops have reminded us that … the narrow question, 'Are you better off?'… is the wrong question." [169] Thus, the secular press publicized *EJA*'s Catholicism as an acceptable moral intervention in economic policy debate. Furthermore, one month after the release of the pastoral's final draft, the U.S. Congress' Joint Economic Committee invited several of the letter's drafters, theologians, and public policy experts to discuss the pastoral's themes and public implications.[170] In his opening remarks, Chairman David R. Obey (D) said that the letter's importance lay in its recognition "that economics is not

just a matter of mathematics," but that "economic performance" also has impacts "on our own social values" such as "family health."[171] In holding such a hearing, the Congressional Joint Economic Committee affirmed the public relevance of the Catholic perspective in public debate on economic issues, co-articulating the pastoral letter with public policy. Thus, the pastoral letter genre allowed Catholic doctrine to circulate as a public resource for comprehending and judging U.S. economic practices.

Catholic Social Teaching

The bishops' economic pastoral also turned to the CST tradition, which positioned the bishops as moral-economic agents who could, as a matter of religious tradition, challenge the dominant economic worldview by turning to their institutional epistemology.[172] *EJA* publicized the CST tradition as a set of heuristics for moral economic judgment, thereby challenging the burgeoning neoliberal paradigm on ontological and axiological grounds.

By 1980, the CST tradition had grown into a relatively coherent worldview whose adherents had intervened in economics at pressing historical moments. CST's formal inception came with Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which asserted his duty as a moral leader to "speak on the condition of the working classes."[173] The encyclical rejected the material orientation of both capitalism and communism and announced a distinctly Catholic position on economic justice that emphasized the common good, human dignity, traditional family structures, and justice for society's powerless.[174] In subsequent decades, the Catholic hierarchy intermittently developed CST with pronouncements and enactments. [175] In its most general form, CST positions humans

as interdependent, spiritual, and material beings who are called by their God to respect human dignity, promote the common good, and secure justice on Earth.[176]

The U.S. hierarchy has actively taken up the mantel of CST during moments of pronounced economic turmoil. During the Gilded Age, U.S. Catholics articulated an economic worldview that bound Catholicism with U.S. circumstances, where immigrant Catholics were among the poorest and most marginalized communities, and Catholic lay people ranked among the most prominent labor leaders.[177] American CST was again amplified during the Great Depression, when the Church founded labor schools that emphasized CST as an alternative to both free market capitalism and communism, and the USCCB issued statements on industrial relations, endorsing workers' rights to organize, a living wage, and government regulation.[178] The CST tradition influenced the construction and implementation of the New Deal, and CST Catholics enjoyed an unprecedented public position during the Depression decades.[179] As discourses of economic justice became de-emphasized in the post-World War II United States, so, too, did CST recede to the margins until Vatican II prompted the Church to revitalize this tradition.[180]

CST offered the U.S. bishops a robust alternative metaphysics by which to analyze economic upheaval. This alternative tradition normalized the bishops' entrance into public economics as a point of history; simply put, the Catholic hierarchy had intervened morally in economics many times before, thus authorizing it to do so again. The CST tradition allowed the bishops to position themselves as moral-economic agents who could, as a matter of religious tradition, challenge the dominant economic worldview

by turning to their religious ontology and axiology, which were grounded in Catholic epistemology.

This system of moral meaning allowed the bishops to engage an ontology and axiology that antagonized neoliberal commitments. *EJA*'s CST ontology challenged the neoliberal individual and the autonomy of the free market by offering a construction of human nature as inherently communal and subject to divine will. This ontology engendered a CST axiology that challenged neoliberal economic values and urged action to realign the economy with God's moral vision for human life. *EJA* crafted their axiology by building value hierarchies that privileged dignity, the common good, and justice. Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca suggested that rhetors order values because principles often conflict and hierarchies privilege some values over others. These values can be concrete—"attaching to a human being, a specific group, or a particular object considered a unique entity"—or they can be abstract, meaning that one value can attach to different unique entities.[181] *EJA*'s value hierarchies promoted a Catholic vision of economic *justice* that challenged the neoliberal commitment to economic *freedom*.

CST Ontology

The bishops' CST ontology featured three major tenets, each of which antagonized the growing neoliberal articulation. First, the document asserted that the Catholic Church should play an active role in politics as an institution that strives to balance people's spiritual and material needs. In CST ontology, human beings are called by their God to act in ways that bring their material and spiritual wellbeing into alignment.[182] The Church orients people to the material world by calling upon spiritual precepts to guide behavior, and the CST tradition maintains that the Church can play such

a role even in spiritually pluralistic societies by encoding its divine precepts in the language of generalized values and by offering reasons that are defensible in secular arenas.[183]

Following this tradition, the letter constructed a world in which God handed sacred heuristics to people who interpreted them within the context of the Church, which *EJA* defined as "all the people of God, gathered in smaller faith communities, guided and served by a pope and a hierarchy of bishops, ministered to by priests, deacons, religious, and laity."[184] *EJA*'s Catholic ontology re-articulated an early modern connection between divinity and economics. As historian of philosophy Peter Harrison demonstrated, in the eighteenth century, Adam Smith's "invisible hand" would have been understood as a reference to God's providence over human and natural affairs.[185] *EJA*'s insistence on God's providence over economics resuscitated the divine connection, but did not construct it as inevitable. Unlike Smith's construction of the "invisible hand" as God having "instituted general laws which matched human self-love with beneficial social ends," *EJA*'s post-Vatican II perspective suggested that God's vision for human affairs had to be fostered by the actions of human beings because God's vision "is made real through effective action." [186] The bishops' Catholic ontology positioned the Church as an interpreter of God's vision, thus casting *EJA* as a document uniquely qualified to guide people's moral economic actions. This aspect of Catholic ontology suggested that the free market would not simply operate beneficially on its own; instead, the market would have to be guided by human moral action that the Catholic Church could apprehend because of its position as spiritual-material mediator.

Second, *EJA* waded into the powerful and contested terrain of human rights discourse by asserting ontological assumptions about the entitlements that God bestows upon all human beings. As contested, yet familiar rhetorical topoi, human rights rhetorics have offered, in Michael Ignatief's words, "the dominant moral vocabulary in foreign affairs," even as those vocabularies attach to conflicting meanings and commitments.[187] Human rights discourses have manifested tense ambiguities since they were codified in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by proponents who disagreed about which rights should take precedence and to what extent rights were individual or collective.[188] The UDHR maintained that human rights had civil, political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions, but, as the United Nations' Office of Human Rights explained, in the polarizing context of the Cold War, "The market economies of the West tended to put greater emphasis on civil and political rights, while the centrally planned economies of the Eastern bloc highlighted the importance of economic, social and cultural rights."[189] Furthermore, Western proponents have historically constructed human rights as individualistic universals that apply to every person, whereas Eastern proponents have historically constructed these rights as contextually bound and communally oriented.[190]

Even amidst their polarized Cold War context, the bishops rejected the historical division of entitlements into Eastern and Western camps as *EJA* articulated a holistic Catholic understanding of human rights as "The Minimum Conditions for Life in Community."[191] *EJA*'s ontology maintained that individual human beings, as dignified creatures, possessed inherent human rights that included economic and participatory entitlements. *EJA* explained, "fundamental rights…are bestowed on human beings by

God and …are not created by society."[192] The bishops' ontology understood human rights as divine a priori privileges that applied to all people, thus participating in Western universalist notions of human rights as principles inherently attached to individual persons. *EJA* expanded this conception of human rights to include economic dimensions—traditionally understood as Eastern-communal human rights—explaining, "In Catholic teaching, human rights include not only civil and political rights but also economic rights" because "when people are without a chance to earn a living, and must go hungry and homeless, they are being denied basic rights."[193] Finally, the bishops asserted that participation was a hallmark of being a member "of the human race," and as such, "*All people have a right to participate in the economic life of society*."[194] The bishops' Catholic ontology harnessed the language of universal human rights to assert that each individual human being was imbued with the divine privilege of participating in economic life.

This construction of human rights challenged neoliberalism by co-articulating capitalist commitments to individualistic civil and political rights with communist concerns over collectivist economic and social rights. As Arabella Lyon and Lester C. Olson explained, human rights precepts present themselves as "ostensibly 'universal,'" meaning that "human rights principles can never be compromised."[195] The bishops included economic rights in the universalist discourse that promoted civil and political rights, arguing that a commitment to human rights necessitated a commitment to their economic dimensions. *EJA* denied distinctions between types of rights, thereby pointing to the moral limit of neoliberal human rights discourses that ignored economic rights by suggesting that there could be no partial commitment to human rights. Furthermore,

EJA's ontology challenged the neoliberal commitment to the unfettered individual by re-articulating human rights as simultaneously individual and social, suggesting that individual human rights could not be realized outside the context of a community.

Third, *EJA* asserted that God created individual humans as communal and interdependent beings, echoing CST's position that humans are bound together in God and their mutual experiences of suffering, sin, and salvation.[196] The bishops followed this communal trajectory when they declared that "the human person is not only sacred but also social."[197] *EJA* proclaimed, "human life is fulfilled in the knowledge and love of the living God in communion with others" such that "Human life" can only be understood as "life in community."[198] This ontology constructed humans as social beings whose divinely created "common bond of humanity" necessitated an "interdependence" on one another.[199] The bishops concretized this ontology by applying it to circulating discourses of globalization. They referred to "today's interdependent world" as they detailed the "growth of more complex relations of interdependence."[200] The letter noted the "increasingly interdependent global economy" and called attention to the cascading effects of interlocking economic actions; "Decisions made here have immediate effects in other countries; decisions made abroad have immediate consequences for steelworkers in Pittsburgh."[201] *EJA*'s ontology constructed human nature as fundamentally communal and interdependent.

Catholic epistemology allowed the bishops to articulate a CST ontology that positioned God as the pinnacle of all existence and the Church as an institutional mediator of spiritual and material dimensions of human nature. This ontology emphasized people's inherent economic rights and their interdependence, and it

antagonized the neoliberal articulation by offering an alternative tradition that lay claim to fundamental spiritual-material truths about the human condition and, by extension, human affairs.

CST Axiology

Because the bishops' ontology constructed human beings as "created in the image of God (Gn 1:27)," human dignity ascended to the top of the bishops' value hierarchy as a universal and unassailable good.[202] The bishops upheld human dignity as a primary virtue against which to judge economic practices, encouraging people to determine whether economic practices protected or undermined human sanctity. The bishops told readers of the pastoral, "The economy should serve people, not the other way around," preaching that the goal of economies should be the promotion of human dignity.[203] *EJA*'s placement of human dignity at the apex of its hierarchy resonated with neoliberal discourses that lauded human dignity as a primary reason to spread unfettered capitalism around the globe.

Even as they echoed neoliberal commitments to the abstract principle of dignity, the bishops applied the moral heuristic in ways that challenged neoliberalism's concrete policy commitments. For example, *EJA* touted the Church's position on human labor, insisting that work "has great dignity" because people "can justly consider that by their labor they are unfolding the Creator's work."[204] In the name of promoting "the dignity of …labor," the bishops urged policies that would "enable the working person to become 'more a human being,' more capable of acting intelligently, freely, and in ways that lead to self-realization."[205] In this instance, the bishops attached the "dignity" signifier to pro-labor social policies that promoted "full employment" with "adequate pay and decent

working conditions."[206] *EJA* insisted that "the dignity of workers also requires" various benefits, including "adequate health care" and "weekly rest," among other "provisions" that were "essential if workers are to be treated as persons rather than simply as a 'factor production.'"[207] Amidst the growing neoliberal tendency to view the labor movement and fair labor practices as barriers to monetary value creation—as "factors of production" that should be minimized—the bishops yoked abstracted dignity with concrete labor policies, suggesting that the neoliberal commitment to dignity fell short of God's moral plan if it did not concretize in ways that promoted workers' spiritual and material fulfillment.

EJA further dislodged the dignity signifier from its location in the individual when it reasoned that dignity could only be fostered within a loving community, thus elevating the common good as a value on par with dignity. The bishops stressed that, because God created all people with dignity and bound us together in divine love, the dignity of one person was tethered to the dignity of another. The bishops maintained that love of God was "made real through effective action" toward other human beings.[208] Love meant taking on responsibility for all members of the community and "ensuring that the minimum conditions of human dignity are met for all."[209] Furthermore, God called all people to associate communally, so *EJA* invited its audiences to pursue a "cooperative approach that draws on all the resources of the community" through "reasonable coordination among the different parts of the body politic," so that, together, we could "attend to the good of the whole human family."[210]

The letter thus instructed its audiences to judge the economy based on the extent to which it promoted "the common good" and to engage in actions that brought the economy in greater alignment with a divine communal plan.[211] The bishops explained,

"The Christian vision of economic life …asks, Does economic life enhance or threaten our life together as a community?"[212] The foremost economic duty of all people, the bishops asserted, was to consider how individual behaviors "affect the economic well-being of others," redefining individual responsibility as a social phenomenon.[213] *EJA* antagonized the neoliberal "personal responsibility" value by co-articulating dignity and responsibility with community in the "common good" concept such that society could be understood as an entity that fostered the development of its individual members through active and positive action, rather than leaving individuals to their own devices.

According to *EJA*, the government shouldered responsibilities for fostering the common good. In the letter's formulation, "it is government's role to guarantee the minimum conditions" for life in society.[214] As such, the bishops bestowed upon the government an active role in shaping economic policy so that this world could be a righteous place. For example, the letter maintained that the government had a moral obligation to regulate business affairs so that financial arrangements benefited the common good. Although the bishops echoed CST's "Support of private ownership," they argued that "The common good may sometimes demand that the right to own be limited by public involvement in the planning or ownership of certain sectors of the economy."[215] The bishops thus led with a concept on which they agreed with proponents of unfettered capitalism—the importance of private property—but then qualified their endorsement by subsuming this concrete commitment to the more abstract principle of the "common good." In this hierarchy, the common good was more important than private ownership, and so it could limit private property's reach. *EJA*'s axiology dislodged the freedom signifier from its grounding in neoliberal ontology, attached it to community, and

privileged the positive perspective on liberty that demands action and planning, rather than an elimination of all restrictions.[216] The bishops insisted that "God's intentions for us" were simultaneously "Being free and being a co-responsible community," thus placing social responsibility on par with freedom.[217] This construction of government intervention as moral responsibility challenged the neoliberal denigration of the state as a tyrannical apparatus.

In constructing an interdependent world oriented toward the common good, the letter emphasized widespread inclusion.[218] The bishops asserted that societies would be moral only when "all persons" had the ability "to share in and contribute to the common good."[219] In step with globalizing impulses of the neoliberal age, the letter expanded the jurisdiction of "all" beyond national borders, positing that people should "serve the common good of the entire planet," embracing "the whole of humanity" in the pursuit "to use the goods of this earth for the benefit of all."[220] The bishops' construction of this "whole" drew attention to communities at the margins of economic life because they argued for "*Increasing active participation in economic life by those who are presently excluded or vulnerable*" and because they de-centered "privileged economic power in favor of the well-being of all."[221]

Focusing on *all* people antagonized the neoliberal articulation of free markets, prosperity, and individualism by inviting audiences to focus on the margins of neoliberal prosperity. Rhetorics of unity tend to be problematic because they create a whole where important divisions exist by either eliding those differences or purging divergent entities in order to create that wholeness.[222] In the case of *EJA*, though, its rhetoric of unity and inclusion pointed to the limits of neoliberal prosperity's reach. It argued that we could not

judge the morality of an economy by its general prosperity; instead, we had to examine how it treats *everyone*, including the poor and the so-called Third World. Consequently, the letter's rhetoric of "all" emphasized the populations that neoliberal prosperity left behind. *EJA*'s emphasis on "all" suggested that we could not conceive of ourselves as individuals whose aggregate actions created general prosperity; instead, the bishops urged their audiences to view people as creatures pursuing a common good together, a pursuit that included those people excluded from neoliberal narratives of success. Dignity and the common good stood together at the apex of *EJA*'s CST axiology because they were values by which God structured human life.

Economic Justice

Justice—defined as being "in a proper relation to God, by observing God's laws"—also served as a significant abstract value that protected the two highest order values.[223] Drawing on medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas, CST has generally defined justice as those actions that move something toward its natural end, and because human society's natural end is a dignified community, justice applies to those actions that uphold human dignity and advance the common good.[224] The bishops' CST pastoral letter explained that justice was a complex virtue that "suggests what is right or what should happen," and the bishops urged their audiences to work toward securing the "Catholic vision of economic justice" advanced in their letter.[225]

EJA observed that negotiating material and spiritual life on Earth tended to create significant power inequalities, which posed moral problems. The bishops referred to historical patterns of unequal "distribution of power" perpetuated by human social systems, which caused "extreme inequalities of income and consumption," stripped

people of their "dignity" by subjecting them to "dehumanizing conditions," and posed a "threat to the solidarity of the human community."[226] These disparities severed human societies from their creator's vision for human life by stunting the development of dignity and the common good.

To correct this perilous situation, the bishops turned to their religious tradition of privileging of the powerless and poor and approaching material wealth with caution. The bishops asserted that "the Scriptures and church teaching" suggest that "the justice of a community is measured by its treatment of the powerless in society."[227] The letter defined poverty as "lack of material goods" combined with "dependence and powerlessness" and characterized "The poor" as "an exiled and oppressed people whom God will rescue (Is 51:21-23)."[228] *EJA* explained that poverty was aligned with righteousness because the poor "are neither blinded by wealth nor make it into an idol" so "the poor can be open to God's presence."[229] In contrast, the bishops wrote that the Bible describes "wealth" as a "constant danger" because "The rich are wise in their own eyes (Prv 28:11) and are prone to apostasy and idolatry (Am 5:4-13; Is. 2:6-8), as well as to violence and oppression (Jas 2:6-7)."[230] Further mining Scripture, the letter recounted the many ways that "the poor are agents of God's transforming power."[231] The letter also referred to the Biblical Jesus' privileging of the poor: "Jesus takes the side of those most in need…so dramatically" that "in Matthew's Gospel, we are told that we will be judged according to how we respond to the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger."[232] *EJA* constructed earthly poverty as a "misfortune and a cause of sadness," but one for which God takes "special concern."[233]

This construction reversed neoliberalism's wealth and poverty hierarchy. The CST tradition has privileged poverty as a central concern, and the Catholic Church has

long assumed the responsibility of administering services to poor people.[234] *EJA* testified to the bishops' experiences attending to the economically powerless: "The poor and vulnerable are on our doorsteps, in our parishes, in our service agencies, and in our shelters."[235] In addition to affirming such a focus on poverty as "traditional church teaching," *EJA* co-articulated the Catholic emphasis on poverty with more general Scriptural references, positioning the Bible as a document that privileged the poor.[236] "The example of Jesus," *EJA* explained, "imposes a prophetic mandate to speak for those who have no one to speak for them, to be a defender of the defenseless, who in biblical terms are the poor."[237] The Bible, of course, can be read in many different ways, but the bishops presented their Catholic emphasis on poverty as a central message of the Bible, thus antagonizing the neoliberal commitment to wealth and denigration of the poor as antithetical to God's economic message.

The bishops explained that the principle of economic justice called the United States to place the poor at the summit of its economic value hierarchy. The bishops argued that because divine law demanded that the dignity of everyone be secured, those people who "*who are presently excluded or vulnerable*" must take precedence over people with more power in order to dignify populations that experienced economic exclusion.[238] Society had "the responsibility of caring for those who are in need" because "the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor wounds the whole community" such that we could not be a fully functioning social body while people struggled to secure "basic necessities" required for maintaining a dignified life. [239] The letter proclaimed that the responsibility to establish "a floor of material well-being on which all can stand" fell particularly at the feet of "those with greater resources," thereby taking into account

patterns of economic inequity and promoting action that redressed such power imbalances.[240] *EJA* asserted that Jesus' example "demands a compassionate vision that enables the Church to see things from the side of the poor and powerless and to assess lifestyle, policies, and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor."[241] In these ways, the bishops placed historically marginalized populations at the top of their social priority hierarchy as they positioned powerful populations as more responsible for creating parity than the less powerful.

The letter referred to this perspective as the "preferential option for the poor," which meant a kind of advocacy and approach to policy involving a combination of encountering the poor, speaking for the poor, and empowering the poor to speak for themselves.[242] Although the letter itself mostly focused on advocating for the poor, it promoted a posture that re-imagined the poor in a neoliberal milieu that emphasized the virtue of wealth. For the U.S. bishops, this option first and foremost meant encountering poor people, rather than relegating them to shadows. The letter asserted that people of faith must "identify more closely with the poor in their struggle for participation" because "The Church has a special call to be a servant of the poor, the sick, and the marginalized…—a mission shared by every member of the Christian community."[243] The bishops explained that as they encountered the poor, people were called to "charity," which they articulated as a justice-oriented advocacy that went beyond philanthropic aid to public advocacy to change the structures that perpetuate poverty. For the bishops, "True charity leads to advocacy" because "It should probe the meaning of suffering and provoke a response that seeks to remedy causes."[244]

In part, the *EJA* drafting process embodied "preferential option" advocacy as privileged people acting on behalf of the marginalized poor. In drafting their document, the bishops heard primarily from experts speaking *for* the poor, including "economists, moral theologians, business people, labor-union officials, social service coordinators, and legislators."[245] Furthermore, the letter spoke from the bishops' position of power, as an institutional voice circulated by various media.

As an amplified rhetoric, the letter "frankly" challenged "misunderstandings and stereotypes of the poor."[246] The bishops addressed the racial dimensions of poverty, writing, "a common misconception is that most of the poor are racial minorities. In fact, about two-thirds of the poor are white."[247] The bishops provided no other commentary about race, letting the prevailing racial assumptions of the Reagan presidency animate this finding.[248] By declaring poor people as predominantly white, the bishops dislodged the prominent link between poverty and people of color, instead including whiteness in their poverty articulation. Next, they addressed the interlocking stereotypes "that the rolls of Aid to Families with Dependent Children are filled with able-bodied adults who could but will not work," and that mothers on welfare "are also accused of having more children so that they can raise their allowances."[249] Instead, they provided "the truth"; "The majority of AFDC recipients are young children and their mothers who must remain at home," and "70 percent of AFDC families have only one or two children."[250] The bishops reified the gendered family to reconstruct people on welfare as responsible mothers who cared for their children. They also used the language of "family" to applaud people on welfare for responsibly creating the most natural of social bonds through the

rate of procreation that could be accepted as reasonable to many audiences; two children was a perfectly normal number to Americans in the 1980s.[251]

The bishops also constructed poverty as a result of a structural "concentration of privilege" that had developed "from institutional relationships that distribute power and wealth inequitably," actively challenging the construction of poor people as lacking "talent or…desire to work."[252] In support of their position, they reported, "Research has consistently demonstrated that people who are poor have the same strong desire to work that characterizes the rest of the population."[253] The bishops re-envisioned poor families on welfare as protectors of the familial bonds between mothers and children, challenging Reagan's assertion that "instead of helping the poor, government programs ruptured the bonds holding poor families together."[254] In these ways, *EJA* spoke for poor people, constructing them as active and meritorious members of society, challenging the neoliberal notion that poor people were themselves responsible for their dire situations.

In addition to speaking for the poor, *EJA*'s "preferential option" urged actions that would "enable the poor to do *for themselves*."[255] The bishops differentiated between "justice" and "charity," infusing justice with agency for historically powerless populations.[256] "The prime purpose of this special commitment to the poor," they explained, "is to enable them to become active participants in the life of society."[257] The letter applauded efforts that encouraged "greater solidarity…among the poor themselves," pointing to ongoing "Grassroots efforts by the poor themselves" wherein poor people "assist each other in their struggles."[258]

This "preferential option" advocacy set poverty as a moral and social priority both domestically and internationally. Domestically, the bishops asserted that meeting the

demands of justice "*means that the poor have the single most urgent economic claim on the conscience of the nation*."[259] The letter further declared, "*the impact of national economic policies on the poor and the vulnerable is the primary criterion for judging their moral value*."[260] The bishops strengthened their hierarchy when they asserted that, in no uncertain terms, "meeting fundamental human needs must come before the fulfillment of desires for luxury consumer goods, for profits not conducive to the common good, and for unnecessary military hardware."[261] *EJA* constructed a hierarchy in which fulfilling poor people's needs superseded all other social concerns and pursuits, particularly subordinating wealth and military spending, two of the Reagan Administration's most prized values.

The bishops extended their economic hierarchy beyond U.S. borders, challenging contemporary U.S. foreign policy toward so-called "developing countries."[262] *EJA* took the unequivocal position that "*The special place of the poor*…means that meeting the basic needs of the millions of deprived and hungry people in the world must be the number one objective of international policy," and the letter insisted that "extreme material deprivation" worldwide "can be reduced if our own country, so rich in resources, chooses to increase its assistance."[263] The bishops issued a challenge to policy-makers and citizens to reevaluate U.S. foreign policy to privilege the poor, saying ,"Standard foreign policy analysis deals with calculations of power and definitions of national interest; but the poor are, by definition, not powerful." *EJA* explained that, if we wanted to engage with the world in a moral way by focusing on poverty, the priorities of foreign policy had to evolve "beyond economic gain or national security." The bishops declared their solidarity "with the poor everywhere," offering their vision of a moral foreign policy

wherein "relations between the United States and developing nations should be determined in the first place by a concern for basic human needs and respect for cultural traditions."[264] Quoting Pope Paul VI, the USCCB warned U.S. elites to resist "'the most evident form of moral underdevelopment,' namely greed" when engaging with less powerful countries.[265] The bishops' view of international poverty and foreign aid redefined "development" on moral grounds and implicitly indicted the U.S. government's warfare and cultural dominance over the economically "developing" world as morally deficient.

EJA extended its biblical critique of wealth to the present-day, relegating personal wealth and the profit motive to the nadir of their moral hierarchy. The writers referenced the parable in which a wealthy man ignores Lazarus "to warn the prosperous not to be blind to the great poverty that exists beside great wealth," counseling that "The great wealth of the United States can easily blind us to the poverty that exists in this nation and the destitution of hundreds of millions of people in other parts of the world."[266] They thus constructed wealth as a disability that made it difficult to access the truth and morality associated with poverty.

Although *EJA* constructed wealth as a constant moral danger, the bishops proposed a path toward redemption for "the more fortunate" that enveloped wealth in the service of the poor. They instructed the wealthy to "renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others."[267] The pastoral, then, subordinated the concerns of the wealthy to those of the poor, constructing a moral hierarchy in which poor people struggling to survive were on top and wealthy people pursuing self-interest were on the bottom. In between the two extremes, though closer to

the poor than their wealthy counterparts, stood people who devoted their material prosperity to alleviating poverty and empowering the poor. This construction served as the radical opposite of neoliberal hierarchies of worth, which ostensibly posit that there are no hierarchies, that we are all considered equal individuals who succeed or fail on our own merits, but which functionally privilege wealthy people as creators of generalized prosperity and denigrate poor people as, at worst, deviant and, at best, worthy of some sympathetic charity offered by wealthy philanthropists.

Conclusion

EJA introduced CST ontology and axiology as heuristics for judging the morality of burgeoning neoliberal order. Ultimately, the letter pronounced neoliberal ethics deficient, thus functioning as an antagonism to the growing neoliberal consensus. This chapter demonstrated how the bishops were constituted as agents by their milieu and Catholic traditions. Furthermore, this chapter argued that *EJA* rearticulated economics as moral philosophy by leveraging the Christianized political milieu of the long 1980s as well as the tension between economic philosophy and science that became pronounced during Reagan's presidency. Specifically, I argued that the bishops harnessed the pastoral letter genre to establish their ethos as critics of neoliberalism and to pivot from generalized Christian conception of economics to a specifically Catholic one, ultimately turning to a CST metaphysics that antagonized neoliberal economics and ethics. The bishops' message of economic justice circulated widely, thus providing a highly publicized antagonism to neoliberalism.

Even with the wide circulation, such a message was eventually muted because many lay Catholics lacked interest and because the Church became focused on issues of

sexuality in the late 1980s. Catholics in the 1980s were largely middle class, and for many of them, the economy was still working favorably, and they were skeptical that big government could and should intervene to help the poor.[268] Furthermore, the Catholic Church, including its U.S. contingent, became mired in sex abuse scandals when allegations of sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests and nuns began coming to the fore in the late 1980s.[269] With such a horrid scandal at the fore, the Catholic Church could not sound a convincing moral cry about the economy to a wider audience. Moreover, following the Vatican's lead, the Catholic Church largely pivoted away from economic issues between the 1990s and the beginning of Pope Francis' tenure. Instead, the Church focused on advocating against abortion and homosexuality, publicly touting the sanctity of the traditional, heteronormative family structure.[270]

Despite the lack of sustained widespread attention, the letter and CST continue to animate philosophical-moral considerations about the economy. The letter has provided a framework for several models of business ethics.[271] It has also been revisited in numerous symposia and publications.[272] Furthermore, the letter's CST tenets have become prominent again under the leadership of Pope Francis, who has been focusing the church's resources on the plight of the poor and on the wreckage of neoliberal capitalism.[273] *EJA*, then, continues to constitute an important antagonism to neoliberal articulation.

This case study offers three larger implications for understanding rhetorics that antagonize the neoliberal articulation. First, this case study demonstrates the significance of engaging economic philosophies. Tensions between philosophy and science inhabit all economic discourses and practices. Although the discipline of economics morphed from a

philosophy into a social science over three centuries, it has retained its philosophical and, even moral, underpinnings. The neoliberal articulation tends to treat economics as if they were natural phenomena that can be ascertained through scientific inquiry, but philosophical and moral matters pervade even this approach, as concerns over individual freedom and government tyranny animate neoliberal theories and practices. This case study demonstrated that this tension is significant area for antagonistic invention. By asking overtly moral and philosophical questions about the means and ends of economic progress, activist rhetorics challenge people to assess economics as a human endeavor, not a force that occurs beyond our intervention.

Second, *EJA* shows the antagonistic power of engaging alternative traditions and institutions. Many observers have argued that neoliberalism's reach pervades every aspect of human life, but this case study suggests that alternative ways of being can serve as counterweights to the neoliberal order. If the force of articulation and antagonism relies on accumulation, alternative traditions and institutions that predated the neoliberal turn can be powerful counterbalancing tools because they come with significant heft in the form of histories, metaphysics, and resources. The Catholic Church, in this case study's instance, offered such an alternative weight to pull back upon neoliberalism's growing reach. Furthermore, this case study demonstrated that religious rhetorics can serve as powerful antagonisms to the neoliberal order, particularly in contexts that privilege such religious subjectivities. Religious institutions and traditions can offer particularly forceful challenges because they present themselves as beyond worldly politics, beyond ideology, as divinely inspired ways of living that answer to a higher power.

Finally, this case study demonstrates that the "developing" world, and Latin America in particular, stand as poignant geographical-philosophical antagonisms to neoliberal freedom. The bishops' global subjectivity allowed them to articulate these places as challenges to the ethics of neoliberal policies by highlighting examples of coercive economic dependence that haunt neoliberal discourse of progress built on an ethos of non-coercion and equality. Furthermore, the bishops' Latin American counterparts offered them an alternative way of assessing neoliberalizing economics by focusing their gaze on a "preferential option for the poor," thereby pointing to the limits of neoliberal prosperity.

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Sweatshop Shame and Gifford Guilt: Antagonistic Emotion and Free Market Optimism

In 1996, Kathie Lee Gifford reigned as "America's Sweetheart" – a charming celebrity who could connect with "a major cross-section of American women."[1] Gifford became a household name when she co-hosted *Live! with Regis and Kathie Lee*, a wholesome morning talk show that featured what *The Washington Post* called a "daily hour of small talk and tomfoolery."[2] By 1991, the show reached "three and a half million households each day, and the wait for tickets in the studio audience" was up to one year.[3] For many, *Live!* served as what *The Washington Post* called "an oasis of homespun hoke and folksy charm" amidst daytime television's ubiquitous "quadrasexuals and spouse beaters and exhibitionistic tell-alls."[4]

As the co-star of a disarmingly folksy and popular daytime program, Gifford's celebrity persona embraced her subjectivity as a white bourgeois wife and mother.[5] Gifford's appearances on the *Live!* stage showcased her pastel outfits, carefully coiffed hair, and impeccably made up face.[6] Gifford emotionally and humorously recounted personal experiences, mostly about her children and husband, thus inviting a rather intimate connection with the "suburban homemakers" who comprised much of the show's audience.[7] "You love her," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* explained, "because she talks about vaguely risque stay-at-home-mom things, like how her nipples 'went out this far' during a mastitis infection. Or tearfully announced her miscarriage on the air" only to later celebrate that "she was expecting again" on the program. [8] Although she detailed intimate experiences, she created distance with humor and narratives of overcoming, such that her confessions circulated as "charming" and decidedly "not heavy."[9] Gifford's "cute-as-a-button brand of openness" about her adventures in

bourgeois womanhood read to many commentators and audiences as "unpretentious," and Gifford encouraged such a construction.[10]

Gifford's performance of wholesome womanhood resonated with audiences, who forged personal and consumer connections with her. She was named "No. 1 TV mom," and marketers marveled at Gifford's "incredible relationship with her fans" recounting how sincerely "Women relate to her."[11] Gifford, her "eyes misting" from the "outpouring of real love," reported having received "thousands of cards" and "gifts, such as handmade blankets" from "viewers" after her the birth of her first child.[12] Gifford's fans were offered many ways to consume her celebrity persona; in addition to viewing Gifford on *Live!*, consumers could enjoy Gifford's celebrity in other forms, including "commercials, public appearances, [an] autobiography, and 800-number record albums," as well as "a prime-time ABC special" called "Kathie Lee Gifford's Celebration of Motherhood."[13] In 1995, Gifford signed a deal to create the Kathie Lee Collection clothing brand for Wal-Mart. The manufacturers gleefully looked to the future profits of such a deal; the president of Halmode Manufacturing remarked that with Gifford's "effervescent persona and style capturing the attention of a major cross-section of American women," the manufacturers anticipated "a multimillion-dollar success story."[14]

This success surged until Gifford's clothing line became the target of sweatshop activism in 1996. Charles Kernaghan, the executive director of the pro-labor National Labor Committee (NLC) visited clothing factories in Honduras, where a Global Fashions employee surreptitiously handed him a Gifford clothing label.[15] Shortly thereafter, NLC delivered letters to Gifford and Wal-Mart, alleging that "at least one factory producing Kathie Lee clothing has illegally employed child labor" in "humiliating" conditions that

constituted "violations of children's and women's rights."[16] After these letters were ignored, NLC organized Congressional hearings, news conferences, and press releases, in which activists from both the United States and Latin America broadcast these allegations to media outlets, who were more than willing to cover a controversy in which "A Sweetheart Becomes Suspect."[17]

The national news and tabloid media thus drew critical scrutiny to global production at a time when the neoliberal articulation was experiencing an optimistic surge. Optimism, according to Lauren Berlant is an emotion that orients people toward an object that promises to deliver "the good life."[18] With the fall of the Soviet Union, a growing economy, and accelerating globalization, the early-to-mid 1990s pulsated with hope about the free market's promise to usher in peaceful prosperity for the globe and self-realization for individuals. Figureheads and institutions circulated optimistic discourses that oriented people toward the promise of the consolidating neoliberal order.

Although hopeful market discourses were ubiquitous in the early-to-mid 1990s, pronounced anxieties about manufacturing blunted the force of free market optimism. The first dimension of this anxiety was distress about disappearing U.S. jobs, particularly in manufacturing sectors. Activists and politicians publicly linked downsizing to the globalization of U.S. corporations' workforces.[19] In 1992, news outlets reported on an NLC report entitled *Paying to Lose Our Jobs*, which argued "that the U.S. government has spent 'hundreds of millions of dollars' … funding foreign organizations that are effectively transferring U.S. manufacturing jobs … to low-wage Latin America."[20] That same year, Independent presidential candidate Ross Perot famously warned that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would cause "a giant sucking sound of jobs

being pulled out of this country."[21] These sorts of anxious discourses circulated with regularity and punctured the wholeness of free market optimism by suggesting that free market mechanisms could reduce the availability of gainful employment in the United States.

The second dimension of anxiety over manufacturing was activists' re-deployment of the "sweatshop" signifier. The term "sweatshop" has, since at least the mid-nineteenth century, operated as a contested term of critique aimed at sub-standard labor conditions in the manufacturing sector.[22] In the early-to-mid-1990s, labor activists and officials revived the signifier to critique the rapid globalization of manufacturing. For example, in 1992, the Child Labor Coalition launched the Bangladesh Campaign to expose and condemn "How Our Greed Keeps Kids Trapped in Foreign Sweatshops."[23] Two years later, NLC released a documentary called *Zoned for Slavery*, which showed Latin American girls riding reclaimed U.S. school buses to "monstrous sweatshops," where they worked long hours for abysmal wages and endured abuse from managers.[24] In 1995, the sweatshop moved from the global to the local when labor and immigration officials raided an apartment complex in El Monte, CA.[25] There, they found "70 illegal immigrants from Thailand" working in a "sweatshop," defined in one *New York Times* article as "a prison-like California garment factory."[26]

In 1996, the sweatshop signifier attached to America's Sweetheart, whose gendered performance of free market optimism spectacularly clashed with activists' charges. This chapter shows how the mediated Gifford sweatshop controversy inhibited free market optimism by circulating classed shame and guilt. Shame and guilt both refer to a constellation of uncomfortable emotions that occur, in psychiatrist Donald L.

Nathanson's words, "whenever desire outruns fulfillment."[27] Although they are similar emotions, scholars such as June Price Tangney and Ronda L. Dearing have demonstrated that they have important distinctions. Shame refers to the discomfort, resulting from an encounter with a judgmental other, that dampens positive affects with a negative self-judgment. Guilt is similar to shame, but the judgment is focused on behaviors rather than an essential sense of self.[28] I contend that the Gifford controversy first circulated class shame and then transformed this emotion into class guilt by harnessing neoliberal attachments to personal responsibility, consumer agency, and corporate benevolence. This chapter shows how this transformation created significant, if limited, forms of antagonistic agency.

More specifically, I argue that this shame, which initially attached to Gifford herself, was transformed into a guilt that implicated corporations and consumers in addition to Gifford. Activist, news, and tabloid texts first attached shame exclusively to Gifford's celebrity persona. Although this shame was not overtly directed at corporations and consumers, the shame circulated within spaces that celebrated entrepreneurship and consumption, thereby allowing the discomfort to implicitly permeate market-based self-realization. Gifford's mediated emotional defense prompted reporters to investigate the sweatshop charge as a controversy, and as media reports assigned responsibility for such shameful abuses, they transformed Gifford's shame into more widespread guilt aimed explicitly at Gifford, corporations, and consumers. As reports showed Gifford taking responsibility, corporations and consumers were encouraged to do the same. Thus, Gifford's shame transformed into more ubiquitous guilt that implicated multiple structural actors in a neoliberalizing world. Unlike scapegoating, in which a sacrificed

victim takes on collective guilt to ostensibly redeem the moral failings of a society,[29] this case study shows an episode in which shame and guilt articulated the structural moral failings of free market expansion.

To make this argument, I first define free market optimism as the promise of peaceful prosperity and self-realization that was widely circulated in the early-to-mid 1990s. I argue that optimistic discourses fostered a tension between market freedom and social responsibility and promoted attachments to three neoliberal values: personal responsibility, consumer agency, and corporate benevolence. I then demonstrate how Gifford, as a talk show host and celebrity brand name, personified free market optimism. Next, I analyze how activist and media discourses built and circulated classed shame and guilt. I show how these public emotions inhibited free market optimism, made several antagonistic subjectivities possible, and ultimately privileged social responsibility over market freedom. Finally, I explain how this case study demonstrates the antagonistic potential of public emotion.

Early-to-Mid 1990s: Free Market Optimism

In the early-to-mid 1990s, prominent figureheads and institutions circulated free market optimism, which oriented people toward the promise of the consolidating neoliberal order. Optimism is an emotion, which critical affect/emotion scholars largely define as the socially negotiated meaning(s) that attach to bodily intensities, which are called affects. [30] Affective intensities, triggered by some stimulus, regularly flow through bodies at a neurological level and can pass unconsciously or register consciously as feelings. These affects are contagious, but what these intensities mean to particular people may differ, as meaning-making structures translate felt affects into emotions.[31]

Although they feel intensely personal, emotions are collectively constructed and socially contingent meanings that have congealed with affects so that we can identify an intensity as a meaningful moment. [32] Furthermore, public emotions circulate widely in dominant discourses as well as antagonistic ones, consistently drawing collectives and their individual members, in Sarah Ahmed's words, "toward certain objects, which then circulate as social goods" and away from other objects, which are understood as sites of "bad feeling."[33]

To feel optimistic is to experience a hopeful attachment to the potential fulfillment of a desire. In the Lacanian psychoanalytic tradition, people can never fulfill their (un)conscious desires and thus conjure up narratives—called fantasies—that manage and perpetuate the constant deferral of satisfaction.[34] Lauren Berlant's work on *Cruel Optimism* argued that any "object of desire" is a "cluster of promises" about how someone can achieve "the good life."[35] For Berlant, optimism orients people toward fantasies that allow them "to expect that *this* time, nearness to *this* thing will help you or a world to become different in just the right way."[36] Optimism thus motivates a movement toward "the satisfying *something* that you cannot generate on your own" but that you sense is possible to obtain.[37] As a public emotion, optimism works in conjunction with fantasies to orient us toward the world in particular ways.

This era's neoliberal messages constructed the free market as a social good that promised to provide peaceful prosperity to the globe and self-realization to individuals. In constructing such optimism, these messages uneasily combined market freedom and social responsibility, and free market optimism promoted attachments to personal responsibility, consumer agency, and corporate benevolence—values that Gifford's

critics and media reporting appropriated as the controversy antagonized the surging neoliberal order.

Peaceful Prosperity

Prominent voices celebrated the free market as the promise of a democratic world beyond ideological strife. As the Soviet Union crumbled, Western interventionists urged former communist countries to simultaneously adopt market economies and democratic political structures.[38] News outlets reported former Soviet Bloc countries, Russia included, "Reaching for [the] Free Market," and leaders spoke of "emerging market democracies" when referring to countries on the United States' periphery.[39] These discourses showed former adversaries working together on market economies, thus promoting the free market as a promise for ideological transcendence and political self-governance. Amidst these transformations, Francis Fukuyama touted the "end of history," arguing that the globe was steadily moving toward "a remarkable consensus" about the legitimacy of liberal economics and democracy, promising an eventual end to ideology as the globe adopted the free market and its attendant democracy.[40] In his 1993 Inaugural Address, Bill Clinton linked the United States with countries emerging from the "shadows of the Cold War," declaring, "Their cause is America's cause."[41] Prominent discourses of the early-to-mid 1990s thus suggested that free market capitalism would triumph over ideological animosity and would propagate democratic governance globally.

By signaling a post-ideological world, free market optimism also promised an end to violent warfare. Both the George H.W. Bush and Clinton Administrations' foreign policies pivoted away from military intervention and toward economic cooperation and

competition, which would secure U.S. power. Bush's Secretary of State James A. Baker III explained that "economic freedom" was an important "pillar" in the plan to "replace the dangerous period of the Cold War with a democratic peace."[42] The Clinton Administration positioned the United States as a peace-oriented political and economic leader that "would strive to promote democracy and free enterprise around the world."[43] Free market optimism promised to replace traditional warfare with, in Clinton's words, "peaceful competition with people all across the Earth."[44] In line with many liberal discourses, these depictions of foreign policy constructed the free market as an unaggressive mechanism of mutual benefit that ultimately promised to end violent domination.[45]

Free market proponents also promised that liberal economics could engender widespread prosperity. At the dawn of the decade, Baker maintained that promoting the "free market in Russia and Eurasia" would bring these countries "prosperity."[46] Domestically, Republicans insisted that de-regulation would spur economic growth and prosperity for Americans by encouraging competition and creating good jobs.[47] Across the political aisle, Clinton insisted that the transnational free market would "serve ordinary Americans by launching a new era of global growth."[48] Clinton explained that loosening trade restrictions would "help every American family, every American worker, every American farmer benefit from the worldwide growth and the prosperity it [NAFTA] will yield."[49] Government leaders thus constructed the free market as a guarantor of widespread economic fortune.

Furthermore, optimistic discourses linked privatization with peace and prosperity. Reports claimed that corporations could only do business in places that had achieved at

least some modicum of political stability, thus co-articulating political peace with corporate interests. David Mulford, who worked in International Affairs under Bush, explained in 1993 that U.S. corporations should invest in Latin America because the region "is now made up almost exclusively of democratic governments," suggesting that democracy and privatization were inherently intertwined.[50] The *Journal of Commerce* declared "Latin American Nations" the "Comeback Kids of the '90s" because these countries were able to harness "private investment" to place them "back on the path to prosperity…after languishing in political and economic woes in the '80s."[51] Reports insisted that the 1990s' wave of corporate expansion into Latin America would bring the prosperity that all people desired. A *Washington Post* report claimed that "Deregulation, privatization, tax reform and free trade are combining to sweep the continent out of the economic backwater and into the global mainstream," linking privatization with economic prosperity.[52]

The free market's promise of a peaceful and prosperous world was optimistic because it curated interconnected desires for global harmony and self-governance. The Cold War was "Cold" precisely because it was understood a prolonged period of primarily ideological tension. The collapse of the Soviet Union precipitated a flurry of hope and anxiety around the possibility of global peace.[53] Free market optimism harnessed these anxious aspirations and attached them to democracy's promise of self-governance. In the words of political theorist Michaele L. Ferguson, democracy was an "alluring ideal" for many because it suggested that people could exercise agency over their lives, while at the same time maintaining "a relatively ordered social environment."[54] This ideal allowed many people to expect peaceful political agency and

autonomy without the tumult of traditional revolution. Free market optimism bundled these hopes with a pronounced desire for security, implied in the empty signifier "prosperity." This promise suggested that all strife could be solved by creating an atmosphere of economic prosperity that gave people enough opportunities to create the kind of life that they wanted.[55] The peaceful prosperity promised by free market optimism thus promoted interconnected global desires and suggested that the free market could deliver them all.

This optimistic promise of peaceful prosperity uneasily combined liberal economics and social responsibility into a vision of what political scientists Manfred B. Steger and Ravi K. Roy called "a socially conscious market globalism."[56] On the one hand, these discourses suggested that free markets could transcend ideological barriers because they were non-ideological entities focused on economic exchange. On the other hand, these discourses functioned as *optimism* precisely because they saddled free markets with the promise of fulfilling the social desires of post-ideological peace, self-governance, and prosperity.

Self-Realization

Optimistic discourses suggested that the free market could facilitate individuals' self-realization by promising a landscape of options that would ignite individual agency. Commentators touted a free market approach to public services and policy, suggesting that marketization would usher in "freedom of choice" for individuals.[57] For example, the GOP insisted that the government "inject free-market forces into the Medicare program to … increase beneficiaries' options," offering Medicare recipients the agency to choose their own healthcare coverage.[58] In 1992, Colorado moved to "create the first statewide

voucher system for school in the nation," and proponents argued that creating a market for schools would empower parents to push for better education.[59] As market proponent Ron Pierce said, "schools will improve only if parents can act as consumers with choices."[60] Conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh claimed that legislators should "let the marketplace rule" because it was the one system that encouraged an agentic, self-realizing mantra: "think for yourselves."[61] Free market optimists thus constructed the free market as an agent-creating force, offering citizens the promise of self-realization through personal decision-making.

Furthermore, proponents celebrated the free market's promise of individual fulfillment through entrepreneurship. Optimistic discourses lauded the entrepreneur as a self-realizing agent that the free market made possible. For example, Internet and technology entrepreneur Stewart Brand explained how the free market embraced the 1960s liberation spirit, saying, "'Do your own thing' easily translated into 'Start your own business.'"[62] Also, as hip hop culture moved into the commercial mainstream, commentators and artists celebrated "hip-hop entrepreneurs" as achieving "total autonomy" in entertainment and fashion industries.[63] Internationally, *USA Today* drew attention to the "Thousands of small eastern European entrepreneurs" who were "working for themselves for the first time in their lives" once their economic systems embraced the free market.[64] Optimistic discourses thus suggested that engaging private enterprise in the form of the entrepreneur-agent would fulfill individuals' desires for autonomous self-realization.

Free market optimism also offered individuals the promise of fulfillment through consumption. Amidst the various choices provided by an abundant consumer economy,

marketing discourses constructed purchases as primary modes of defining their identities.[65] As *Harvard Business Review* detailed, corporations selling consumer products shifted their emphases in the 1990s "from the design and manufacture of the product…to the consumer and the brand," thus focusing on co-articulating their products with people's desires for self-fulfillment and identity-construction.[66] Phil Knight, the CEO of Nike, Inc. explained that the company wanted to tie "who the consumer is" to "what the brand represents."[67] Knight detailed how Nike's "advertising tries to link consumers to the Nike brand through the emotions of sports and fitness," showing "competition, determination, achievement, fun, and even the spiritual rewards of participating in those activities."[68] By purchasing Nike products, then, people could identify as themselves possessing or pursuing these characteristics.

Many marketing strategies in this era promoted such visions of self-realization through consumption. For example, Levi's marketing built "sharply contrasting campaigns" to give their company's different types of jeans "separate identities" for consumers.[69] Levi's advertised their loose-fitting jeans in a campaign called "Loose" to people who wanted to "typify hipness." [70] This set of advertisements featured images of young, racially diverse people jumping, dancing, hula-hooping, skate-boarding, and smiling in their loose jeans of various colors. This campaign embraced the slogan, "There's no one way to do it," suggesting that people could choose specialized identities by purchasing a type and color of loose-fitting denim.[71] In their "Got to Be Real" campaign, Levi's advertisements featured young men and women wearing Levi's 501 jeans and chatting about their subtle, effortless authenticity.[72] These advertising campaigns combined people's narratives of expression and self-development with Levi's

denim, offering two different senses of self-realization through purchasing Levi's jeans: you could be the epitome of cool in loose jeans, or you could be your authentic self in 501s. Advertisement revenues spiked in 1994, as brands sold themselves as meaningful ways of life and sponsors of cultural expression.[73]

Free market optimism promised self-realization by organizing interconnected desires for agency and social recognition around individual choice and two capitalist subjectivities: the entrepreneur and the consumer. This optimism situated agents primarily in the marketplace, interpolating people as individualized and fluid subjects who had the capacity to take charge over their personal and social lives by choosing from options in free exchange as owners and consumers.[74] Both of these identities largely revolved around the commodity, which in the Marxist tradition, refers to an object that has left the realm of production and entered the world of exchange. Following the psychoanalytic Marxist trajectory, exchange processes infuse the commodity with the promise to fulfill desires that go beyond the use-value of any object.[75] Political theorist Yannis Stavrakakis argued that advertisements "can stimulate and channel desire" for consumers "by constructing a whole mythology" around commodities.[76] Consumption, in Berlant's words, "promises satisfaction" by suggesting that a person "can achieve [social] recognition" by purchasing commodities.[77] Discourses of entrepreneurship attached to consumption fantasies by placing business owners as leaders of the satisfaction industry, themselves satisfied by private ownership. Free market optimism thus saddled liberal economics with the social responsibility of promoting the self-realization of all people.

Promoting Neoliberal Attachments

Free market optimism, which promised peaceful prosperity and self-realization, happily oriented the globe toward neoliberal capitalism. As Joseph Stieglitz remembered, "At the height of the 1990s economic boom—a period of unprecedented growth—capitalism American-style seemed triumphant."[78] Consumer markets were deemed a universal human desire, and, as such, were defended and promulgated across the globe.[79] Such widespread optimism promoted attachments to three prominent neoliberal commitments: personal responsibility, consumer agency, and corporate benevolence.

Free market optimism highlighted the importance of personal responsibility to manage the tension between market freedom and social responsibility. Optimistic discourses constructed the free market as an inevitability teeming with opportunity and suggested that people needed to grasp the opportunity by taking personal responsibility. For example, Clinton suggested that the lesson of "the collapse of the Berlin Wall" was that "even a totally controlled society cannot resist the winds of change that economics, and technology, and information flow have imposed" on the world.[80] In the face of such inevitability, Clinton signed NAFTA into law, explaining that free trade was an "opportunity" that the United States "must not squander."[81] In the world that NAFTA advocacy articulated, opportunity functioned as a future-oriented promise that could only come to fruition *if* the Administration exercised agency over it by implementing free market principles. This rhetoric put the onus of fulfilling the promise of opportunity on various agents—government, individuals, corporations. Clinton argued that the "only realistic option is to embrace these changes and create the jobs of tomorrow."[82] Free

market optimism thus suggested that agents could harness inevitable, non-ideological changes by leveraging them in ways that could fulfill social desires, like employment.

One such agent was the responsible, individual person. In his first inaugural, Clinton celebrated how the "new world" of free trade and technological innovation "has already enriched the lives of millions of Americans who are able to compete and win in it."[83] Clinton thus suggested that private individuals could succeed in the free market milieu if they would "take more responsibility" upon themselves for seizing "opportunity."[84] Such responsibility rhetoric also bolstered moves to chip away at the welfare state; the Clinton/Gore ticket, for example, promised to "end welfare as we know it" by replacing it with a system that encouraged personal responsibility by mandating work.[85] The rhetoric of responsibility encouraged people see themselves as calculating individuals, thereby attributing success and failure to individual agents, not systemic obstacles.[86] Free market optimism thus suggested that individuals were agents who could harness the free market's benefits by taking personal responsibility within a setting of opportunity.

Free market optimism also positioned individuals as consumer-agents who could simultaneously fulfill themselves and promote peaceful prosperity by purchasing commodities. While corporations began privileging marketing in the United States over production, the consumer identity began replacing the worker identity as a primary mode of agentic identification. [87] Free market optimism proposed consumer agency as the apolitical movement that could change the world. For example, superstar CEO Knight explained about Nike, "Now we realize that everything spins off the consumer" such that Nike had to "come up with what the consumer wants…at the grassroots level."[88] Knight's

use of "grassroots" linked consumerism with connotations of agency and social change, a connection that other discourses also perpetuated. *USA Today* reported on the "still-quiet consumer revolution brewing in the West" that could "fundamentally change the way the nation buys its electricity," as individual consumers decided "who supplies their power."[89] A 1994 Global Futures poll indicated that 71 percent of respondents perceived "Consumers, with their choices" as the group that did "the most by their actions to protect the environment."[90] Global trade institutions also understood consumers as vessels of economic agency. Through such mechanisms as the World Trade Organization, the United States enticed other nations into entering trade agreements with the promise of the large American consumer base that could purchase another country's goods.[91]

Finally, corporations also circulated as agents of the capitalist good life because private enterprise was deemed a primary form of agency. Many "New Democrats" argued that private corporations could fulfill public responsibilities—such as healthcare, education, and environmental protections—better than the federal government because corporations reacted to market incentives that benefited consumers and were not subject to tumultuous politics.[92] As public funds for social services and cultural practices were slashed, organizations partnered with corporations to make up lost funds in the form of public-private partnerships.[93] This transition to widespread corporate funding constructed private sponsorship as an integral component of social and cultural practices.[94] Corporate spokespeople echoed the idea "that businesses should be good citizens."[95] Knight pointed to Nike's beneficent acts, saying, "we sponsor a lot of sports clinics for youth. And we're underwriting a series called Ghostwriting that the Children's Television Workshop is developing to teach kids how to read and write."[96] Knight explained that charitable acts

of corporate citizenship were both good for society and for the corporation's bottom line. "We're doing it because we think it's the right thing to do, but we also want the visibility," Knight explained, suggesting that corporate profits and social benevolence were mutually reinforcing.[97] In sum, free market optimism oriented people toward personal responsibility, consumer agency, and corporate benevolence—priorities that Gifford's critics and media coverage appropriated as the sweatshop scandal antagonized the neoliberal order.

Gifford as Free Market Optimist

As a talk show celebrity and brand name in a capitalist society, Gifford personified free market optimism in the early-to-mid 1990s. In P. David Marshall's words, celebrities are "hyperindividual[s]" who, through a mediated legitimation process, "are given greater presence and a wider scope of activity and agency" than other people.[98] Celebrity is powerful because this "public personality" circulates as a product of collective desires, values, and resentments.[99] Thus, a celebrity in a capitalist-democratic society is simultaneously "a real, living and breathing human being" and a "marketable commodity" that is constructed by media and audiences.[100] As both human and product, celebrities in consumer cultures provide a "humanness and familiarity" to "consumer objects" and capitalist-democratic institutions.[101] Gifford, herself both a human and a commodity, embodied the hopeful promises of free market capitalism, as her branded persona incarnated self-realization and peaceful prosperity.

Gifford's persona suggested that people could find personal fulfillment in the marketplace, and that the free market rewarded attention to the fulfillments of private life. In 1992, Halmode manufacturing signed a deal with Gifford to design a dress line for

which she was perfect as "a mother and TV star married to a football star."[102] The marketplace thus promised Gifford fulfillment by allowing her subjectivity to flourish in the clothing commodity business. Similarly, in 1995, Gifford and her four-year-old-son released a book titled *Listen to My Heart*, which sold narrative experiences from the Giffords' "all-American family."[103] This book blended the imperatives of the marketplace—sell books—with the promise of a fulfilling family life. Furthermore, Gifford affirmed the agency-producing choices offered by the market. For example, when asked about her many endeavors and rumors about her leaving *Live!*, Gifford responded, "I get bored easily." [104] She explained that although she was "not bored here…with Reege," she would leave if the show did not give her "opportunities… to do some of the other things that are offered me" elsewhere in the market.[105] Gifford's celebrity persona thus suggested that she found self-realization in the marketplace, which offered multiple opportunities for fulfillment and celebrated private life.

Gifford's clothing line extended this promise of self-realization to women across the United States. With her fashion line, Gifford participated in widespread consumerist discourses that construct fashion choices—particularly those endorsed by celebrities—as significant modes of self-expression.[106] Gifford explained that her "clothing line came about…because she was getting so much fan mail about her TV clothes."[107] In response to her popularity, she offered to expand her fashion identification to women of moderate means as a promise of fulfillment; her line promised women that they could feel like and present as the bourgeois women they could not otherwise afford to be. Gifford promoted her "fall line" by suggesting that women would be delighted because they had "never had this kind of quality at this kind of price" before.[108] Commentators celebrated Gifford for

"giving Wal-mart its first ever serious fashion statement," remarking that celebrity-endorsed clothing like Gifford's allowed "Working women" to be "filling their closets with inexpensive designer-inspired clothing" without anxiety about price.[109]

Gifford's celebrity persona also embodied free market optimism's promise of peaceful prosperity by celebrating post-ideological relationality and philanthropic charity. Gifford publicly embraced a post-ideological subjectivity, identifying politically as "very much a Democrat in terms of social issues" and "very Republican in terms of financial issues."[110] Gifford's persona thus implied that once-salient political tensions were no longer relevant in a 1990s world, and that in this new milieu, people could find joy in their private lives, as Gifford did. Gifford's persona concretized post-ideological relationality by revolving around her "private" life – the life of her heteronormative, bourgeois family and their experiences in the market.

Gifford also embodied the free market's promise of widespread prosperity through her philanthropic charity, which came in two forms. First, the marketing of Gifford's clothing line proposed that she was providing a social service through her affordable clothing line. For example, Gifford's Wal-Mart clothing featured items ranging in price from "$8.96 to $ 34.96."[111] Gifford explained that because "the economy is very bad at the moment," her clothing offered "wives and mothers" a chance to treat themselves, even as they concentrated on taking care of their children in stressful financial times. She explained, "The fact that you can get a nice outfit for yourself, for under $100, is important to women."[112] Gifford's clothing line, then, promised all people—even those struggling through an economic downturn—the enjoyment associated with the markings of prosperity: in this case, a "nice outfit."

Second, Gifford promised that wealth could spread prosperity through charitable acts of donation. In 1992, Gifford publicized her family's involvement with Variety, a children's charity.[113] Three years later, Gifford's husband Frank told *Larry King Live* audiences that "all of the money that comes from the book" that bore Gifford and her son's names went to "Cody House," the Gifford wing of the Association to Benefit Children. Frank explained that the charity they created in their son's name aimed to "help babies who are, by and large, born of crack-addicted mothers. They are HIV-positive, or they have AIDS."[114] Furthermore, Gifford marketed her clothing line as funding children's charities, including Cody House and Variety Club International's Children Charity.[115] Gifford's persona thus embodied the idea that private wealth and markets of exchange would provide social services that could promote widespread prosperity, even for those young children whose success was blighted by drug-addicted parents. Her marketing discourse suggested that wealthy charitable entrepreneurs, like her family, could join forces with the consumers who bought their products to help solve social problems like poverty, addiction, and disease. In sum, Gifford's celebrity persona embodied free market optimism's promise of peaceful prosperity and self-realization.

Gifford's celebrity persona optimistically organized desires for social harmony, agency, and social recognition. Gifford's charm curated an interpersonal desire for social harmony because it lightened any potential strife, suggesting that people could smile and joke their way through conflict. For example, Gifford consistently handled on-air disagreements with her cohost by engaging in friendly banter accompanied by a toothy grin, making this charming, light-hearted fun *Live!*'s defining characteristic.[116] On a systemic level, Gifford's persona also organized desires for social harmony between

classes by performing the idea that wealthy philanthropists could positively affect both racialized and gendered classes. Gifford promised that her profits would benefit Cody House, her charity that positioned her bourgeois family as saviors of babies of color, who were suffering from addiction and disease; similarly, her clothing line offered to dress poorer women in a likeness of rich women's clothing, promising them respect resulting from consumption. Gifford's persona thus proposed a harmonious resolution to wealth inequality in which poor and wealthy alike would thrive from profit-creating ventures.

Gifford's celebrity persona also suggested that people could achieve social recognition for consumerist identity construction. Every day on *Live!* and in countless commercials and special appearances, viewers saw her craft her identity in the marketplace, as both a consumer and entrepreneur. Gifford dazzled audiences with her consumption choices—like her "huge emerald-cut diamond" and her "silk scarf"—that helped construct her as a fashionable, yet relatable woman.[117] Herself satisfied in the marketplace's consumption environment, Gifford performed as an entertainment entrepreneur who promised other women that they, too, could attain satisfaction of their desires through her products.

As a free market optimist, Gifford's persona blended liberal economics and social responsibility. Apropos the free market, Gifford pursued her own profit and social status by selling herself as a celebrity-commodity and by marketing other commodities. Her profit-making endeavors were so successful that in 1995, Gifford made nine million dollars from her clothing line alone.[118] Following the imperatives of social responsibility, she wrapped her market success in the success of others, particularly promising fulfillment and joy to children and women. Gifford delighted in the success of her

clothing line among women of modest means, and she publicly donated one million dollars of her clothing profits to children's charities.[119] Gifford, as an embodiment of free market optimism, suggested that the free market facilitated both wealth accumulation and charity.

As an embodiment of an overtly gendered free market optimism, Gifford became a potent target for sweatshop activists when she started her clothing brand. Gifford's persona embraced all the markers of white bourgeois femininity, including the expectation that women will act as moral stewards over all of society and act as motherly figures who perform affective connections to all children.[120] Gifford's ultra-feminine persona incarnated the compassionate capitalism whose legitimacy institutional spokespeople promoted and sweatshop activists challenged. Thus, she constituted a prime target for sweatshop activists because her celebrity was built upon on her meeting the expectations of white womanhood to seek social improvement, particularly for children.

Circulating Class Shame

The Gifford controversy circulated shame about the manufacturing conditions undergirding consumerism. Shame, according to Tompkins, refers to a constellation of uncomfortable emotions that dampen the experience of positive affects, even in situations that otherwise encourage increased interest or enjoyment.[121] Shame is a negative self-judgment that results from a moment of actual or threatened exposure of the self to some "disapproving other," producing the vulnerable sense that the self's intimate deficiencies are on display and that one's social legitimacy is threatened.[122] This emotion radically alters the presumed division between subject and object because the self, reacting to

exposure before the other, turns judgment upon itself, becoming both evaluator and the object of evaluation.[123] Although shame is an emotion directed at the self, it results from thwarted communion with the other.[124] Thus, in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's words, shame makes a "double movement": at once "toward uncontrollable relationality" by which our identity can be constituted and confirmed and "toward painful individuation" from the knowledge that our attempt at communion has been scorned.[125] Early activist discourses and media coverage of the Gifford sweatshop controversy constructed classed shame around self-fulfillment in the free market and the promise of peaceful prosperity. This shame stunted the optimistic affect attaching to neoliberalization in three moments: revelations, accusations, and reactions.

Revelations

The initial revelation of labor abuses came from Kernaghan's March 15 public letter to Gifford, and from the outset, activist discourse articulated production with Gifford's celebrity identity. The letter opened with an appeal to Gifford's character; "Respecting very much the important national role you play in the defense of children's rights," Kernaghan wrote, "I want to ask your help." [126] His prose punctuated Gifford's role as an agent by celebrating her self-promoted identity as a protector of children. In simple, direct language, the second sentence of the letter linked this identity to the processes of production that created her products: "At least one factory producing Kathie Lee clothing has illegally employed child labor." This statement leveraged the self-realizing discourses of celebrity endorsement to implicate Gifford in the production of the clothing brand that bore her name. The marketing of Gifford clothing promised consumers a piece of Gifford's brand of self-realization, and this letter suggested that the

line *belonged* to Gifford and thus, she could enact agency over the line's production practices.

Furthermore, Kernaghan's statement implied that Gifford's identity as a defender of children necessarily meant that she would seek to protect children from unlawful labor practices. In line with dominant U.S. discourses of childhood in the 1990s, Gifford's motherly persona suggested that children were a special class of people who merited protection and that childhood was a precious moment of growth deserving of defense.[127] Gifford explained that, "as a mother… you monitor … their development, their speech processes, the way they interact with other people, their heart" such that the child could grow up "to be a wonderful human being."[128] Gifford extended her protector role over other children with her well-publicized charity work. Kernaghan's letter seized on Gifford's constructions of childhood by asserting that factories were encroaching on the protected space of childhood. His letter extended childhood into adolescence as it estimated that "ten percent of the workers employed at Global Fashion were young teenaged girls, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen years old." Kernaghan implored Gifford to act in accordance with her motherly persona and declare "that Kathie Lee garments will never be made by children." His letter thus addressed Gifford as a motivated, moral actor who could make a difference in an issue that was a marker of her identity.

Linking identity and production invited public shame to linger at the edges of this early revelation. Suggesting that production was a dimension of Gifford's identity meant that judgments of these practices were also reflections of her character and grounds for questioning the legitimacy of her social standing as a wholesome celebrity. Gifford was particularly vulnerable to such judgments of character because her status as celebrity and

brand was reliant on people's approval and their desire to commune with her. The letter treated Gifford as an agent of self-fulfillment as Kernaghan hailed the "important national role" that she acquired through entrepreneurship and consumerism. Kernaghan wrote, "Perhaps no other person in the U.S. could have so important an impact, or make such a difference…as you could." In Kernaghan's hopeful words lurked the implicit possibility of exposing Gifford's wholesome celebrity persona as fraudulent, if she did not act. Kernaghan positioned himself as the potential judgmental other that could expose this shameful aspect of Gifford's identity. Kernaghan ended the letter by offering three telephone numbers by which he "can be reached." Punctuating the matter's urgency, Kernaghan wrote, "I am anxious to work with you" because "The lives of these women and children … deserve our attention." The letter thus suggested that Gifford's call could thwart his negative judgment.

The letter also threatened shame about the international class structures that undergirded bourgeois self-fulfillment. The letter only mentioned the United States once, when describing the manufacture of clothing "for export to the U.S." It referred to other places, both specifically and in a generalized manner, in conjunction with production; the prose detailed manufacturing practices in "Choloma, Honduras," "offshore," "across Central America, Asia and beyond." The letter thus yoked anxieties over manufacturing with the construction of the United States as a special place of self-fulfilling consumption. The United States stood as primarily a place of exchange with the generalized world "beyond" as a site of production. This construction of classed worlds—one of exchange and one of production—invited shame to linger at the edges of bourgeois self-fulfillment because it suggested that production practices precluded self-

fulfillment for workers in the "developing" world as they worked to serve the desires of entrepreneurial and consumer societies.

Kernaghan's characterizations of workers also contributed to the threat of shame. Kernaghan referred to the factory workers as "young teenaged girls, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen years old" as he reported that "about 80 percent of the sewers are women, the majority of them very young." The letter moved seamlessly between characterizations of workers as "children" and "women," eliding differences between the two and co-articulating "violations of children's and women's rights." Kernghan's construction of "these women and children" participated in widespread discourses that categorize "women and children" as a single category of innocent civilians who merit protection because they, unlike men, are not aggressor-agents.[129] These workers were legible to the consuming worlds as people worthy of sympathy and protection in part because they were marked as women and children. This identification combined with their status as producers to promote the uncomfortable feeling that consumer fulfillment relied on innocent producers in distant lands. Shame often functions to enforce social norms, and in this case, the implied shame threatened to expose Gifford as violating the norm of not harming innocents.[130]

Kernaghan's characterization of working conditions cast innocents as victims of coercive and exploitative production practices. The letter leveraged discourses that construct victims as the pure, passive, and sympathetic recipients of violence and violation.[131] In the letter's case, Global Fashions—the factory, as synecdoche for the production system—transgressed upon the sympathetic innocents. The production system's violent violations manifested in physical, emotional, and economic ways. The

letter detailed how workers were "forced" and "obligated" to work lengthy hours and how the factory employed "armed guards, who are used to intimidate the young women." Women and children worked "grueling shifts...most frequently from 7:30 in the morning to 9:00 at night," sometimes "sewing Kathie Lee clothing, straight through the night until 5:00 a.m. the next morning." Even "pregnant women" worked "on their feet 15 ½ hours" straight. Kernaghan explained that between the locked bathrooms and prohibitions on speaking, the factory was a "humiliating place to work." He added, "There is a lot of screaming by the supervisors for the women to work faster and faster," even as the exhausted workers earned no benefits and so little pay that "The mothers working at Global Fashion do not make enough to feed their children properly." The factory was thus constructed as an exploitative and coercive place that violated pure, passive, sympathetic victims.

The letter invited classed shame by leveraging neocolonial discourses to suggest that Gifford had a responsibility to act on these abusive conditions. Kernaghan's construction of violations amplified familiar development discourses that construct suffering, need, and inadequacy to authorize intervention into the so-called Second and Third Worlds.[132] NATO divided the world into these three classes during the Cold War: the prosperous First World included countries aligned with NATO, countries aligned with the Soviet Union comprised the Second World, and the dispossessed Third World encompassed unaligned countries.[133] This partition cultivated an image of the Third World as lacking in agency, drowning in suffering, and waiting for a First World agent to save it.[134] Development discourses have often featured women and children as the Third World's sympathetic victims, and their assumed passive innocence has authorized the

First World to act upon the Third World to benevolently save such gendered and aged victims from harm.[135] Kernaghan's letter appropriated such tropes of suffering and agency and addressed them specifically to Gifford, imploring her to embrace her subjectivity as a First World agent to save the suffering Third World innocents. Implied shame animated Kernaghan's imperative, suggesting that if she did not act, the legitimacy of her identity as a savior of innocents could be threatened.

Ultimately, the letter invited class shame because it threatened to halt optimistic enjoyment of entrepreneurship and consumerism. Kernaghan engaged the rhetoric of "unmasking" when he purported to expose the hidden truth of production that the illusion of optimistic self-fulfillment obscured. As I explained elsewhere, the unmasking posture "implicates a faith in the transformational power of truth-knowledge; identifying the real problem, unmasking suggests, will get us closer to fixing it."[136] Kernaghan's letter presented factory conditions as unassailable truths garnered from workers' testimonies and his own observations. Having unmasked these practices, Kernaghan's letter asked Gifford to prove her character by taking a specific action; "You could move the entire industry to set new human rights standards," the letter explained, "if you would announce that independent human rights monitors will have access to all plants which produce clothing for Kathie Lee." Kernaghan's letter suggested that Gifford could continue to enjoy entrepreneurship and consumption if she acted in accordance with her benevolent persona; implicit in this directive, however, lurked the threat of shame if Gifford did not act. If she ignored his truth, she risked having Kernaghan, as judging other, inhibit her optimism by exposing her as a fraudulent philanthropist.

Accusations

In the weeks after Kernaghan delivered his letter to Gifford and notified Wal-Mart, the retail chain put Global Fashion on its "blacklist" of sweatshop manufacturers to avoid, and Gifford did not publicly respond.[137] On April 29, Kernaghan testified before the Senate's Democratic Policy Committee, where he repeated his March 15 revelations and added an accusation: that Gifford continued to harm workers, even as Wal-Mart blacklisted Global Fashion.[138] Kernaghan's testimony and subsequent media coverage began to shift the issue's emotional tenor from implied toward overt shame.

Kernaghan questioned Gifford's commitment to self-realization and peaceful prosperity during his testimony. "The solution is not in taking Kathie Lee work out of Honduras," he explained, because "These young women need jobs, just as the U.S. people do." Kernaghan's words had embedded in them the assumption that employment could lead to both self-realization and prosperity, and he suggested that Gifford had taken such opportunity away from "young women" in the already-victimized producing world. The "young women" characterization allowed Kernaghan to pivot away from the child labor issue into a critique of global production. He combined the dual anxieties over production—disappearing U.S. jobs and disconcerting sweatshops—into a single accusation of abandoning workers in both the developed and developing world. He implicitly charged Gifford with abandoning U.S. workers by moving factory jobs to the Third World, only to abandon victim producers by moving factories again.

This accusation began to bring shame to the forefront of the Gifford issue. Kernaghan again positioned himself as the judging other who deemed Gifford's actions insufficient and who questioned the veracity of her public persona. He aimed his criticism

at Gifford as a responsible market agent, who had promised the world bourgeois self-realization and peaceful prosperity. Kernaghan "call[ed] upon Kathie Lee… to clean up these sweatshop conditions" so that jobs around the world would "respect basic internationally recognized human and workers' rights." Shame began to shift into overt view as Kernaghan explicitly, if rather softly, condemned Gifford's actions as abandonment and offered his plan of action as the only acceptable solution. In sum, Kernaghan suggested that Gifford should be ashamed of herself for abandoning the women and children her public persona so vigorously defended.

This testimony interrupted enjoyment of market optimism by exposing the market as an insufficient mechanism for securing social welfare. The act of Congressional testimony itself suggested that the market could not secure its promises without some form of governmental intervention. Kernaghan implied that he had tried a private approach by informing Gifford about the abuses. In response, Gifford moved work to another factory—in effect, choosing her brand over the fulfillment and prosperity of vulnerable producers. Her actions, as described in Kernaghan's testimony, suggested that Gifford's market-based choice would not sufficiently provide peaceful prosperity to the producers that she left behind.

News media and the tabloid press circulated variations of Kernaghan's accusation, creating classed anxieties that ultimately gave way to shame. News reports crafted class anxiety by negotiating Gifford's ambiguous agency over production, characterizing Gifford as simultaneously unaware and agentic. Spokespeople stated that Gifford "is not involved in production and was 'totally unaware' of conditions at the plant" and that she "would never condone, tolerate or accept the exploitation of

children."[139] Even as they asserted Gifford's ignorance about manufacturing, her spokespeople confirmed her agency over production by assuring the press that Gifford had "severed ties to the Choloma, Honduras, plant once problems were discovered," and "that the Wal-Mart stores no longer manufacture the Kathie Lee Line at the factory."[140] This ambiguity co-articulated anxieties over production with Gifford's celebrity persona, questioning the extent to which bourgeois agency was responsible for producer subjugation. Severing relationships with the manufacturers confirmed the abject reality of the Honduran sweatshop and exposed Gifford as an agent in production decisions.

Having constructed her as an agent, media accounts juxtaposed Gifford's persona with sweatshop conditions. The *Daily News* characterized Gifford as a "Perky TV personality" whose "discount clothing line" was being manufactured in a "hellish Honduran sweatshop."[141] The story detailed how "underage and pregnant women work 20-hour days in stifling heat, sewing garments" for the "Kathie Lee line… for 31 cents an hour, forbidden to speak." [142] Newspapers reported that "Items in TV talk show host Kathie Lee Gifford's signature line of women's clothing are being made by Honduran children working up to 13 hours a day for 'starvation wages.'"[143] This juxtaposition provided perspective by incongruity, which Kenneth Burke theorized as a re-ordering of relationships between terms; this reorganization can destabilize a system of meaning by introducing elements into a system that do not usually belong in it.[144] The media provided such perspective by placing terms of enjoyment and fulfillment—like "Perky TV personality" and "discount clothing line"—in the same sentence as terms of oppression and subjugation—like "hellish Honduran sweatshop" and "starvation wages."

The media's reporting circulated class shame by co-articulating the self-realization of bourgeois entrepreneurship and consumption with the victimization of suffering producers. Using the rhetoric of unmasking, media accounts constructed self-realization and victimization as mutually constituting, thus dampening the enjoyment of consumption and entrepreneurship by constructing production practices as the abject materiality that undergirded bourgeois enjoyment. Abject materiality refers to a destabilizing glimpse at some entity that has been, in Julia Kristeva's words, "radically excluded" from a system of meaning; it is the eruption into existence of some body that, in Judith Butler's words, "has been systematically deprived the privilege of ontology."[145] The news media inserted descriptions of classed bodies working "20-hour days in stifling heat, sewing garments" into Gifford's free market optimism.[146] In 1996, these characterizations registered as descriptions of actually existing conditions because they fit into sweatshop tropes that constituted popular anxieties over production.[147] The reporting induced shame by bundling these familiar tropes of suffering producers with Gifford's promise of self-realization.

Early news coverage further manifested shame as it depicted Gifford's retreat from public view. News outlets reported that "Gifford could not be reached for comment" on the sweatshop allegations; instead, reactions came from "her attorney," "a spokesman," or "Gifford's camp."[148] The reports showed Gifford exercising a form of agency available to celebrities, wherein she could hide from direct exposure, yet respond with crafted messages delivered by employees. This representational response was particularly notable for Gifford because audiences were accustomed to encountering her every morning, chatting openly about even the most intimate aspects of her life. Gifford,

then, could be understood as hiding from the allegations by not addressing them personally as her perky, open, chatty self. Hiding or escaping from perceived sources of shame are common and popularly recognized forms of reacting to the emotion.[149] Thus, reports of Gifford's escape from public view helped construct the allegations as a shameful moment, during which Gifford could not show her face.

These news reports also circulated shame by constructing activists as judging others. News media publicized the accusations of "workers rights activists" broadly and Kernaghan and his "labor group…[the] National Labor Committee" specifically.[150] Reports detailed how activists "continued to hammer at" Gifford after she severed ties with the Honduran sweatshop, repeating Kernaghan's accusation that "Just cutting and running" was "the worst thing Gifford could do."[151] *The Daily Mail* printed Kernaghan's verbatim judgment of Gifford; "Exploiting these young women, these kids…and then just pulling out, and taking the jobs with you, and leaving these people in the gutter, that's no answer." Kernaghan judged Gifford as neglecting her responsibilities, saying that she and her retailer "owe those kids something."[152] *The Daily Mail* printed Kernaghan's assertion that the only way to rescue her character was for "Gifford to tour the factories and speak out against them."[153]

This coverage constructed labor activists like Kernaghan as judging others, who could assess modes of bourgeois self-fulfillment and peaceful prosperity and then either sanction them as legitimate or denounce them as fraudulent. Like many sweatshop discourses of the 1990s, this coverage constituted U.S. activists as agents over victimized Third World producers, thereby appropriating patterns of imperial hegemony to authorize activists' judgments.[154] The activists were constructed as First World agents who held

their compatriots to moral standards set by the First World. Early news coverage thus circulated shame by constructing activists as others who judged Gifford as a morally insufficient market agent.

Reactions

With news and tabloid media circulating the "bombshell allegations of using abused children to make her Wal-Mart clothing line," Gifford targeted Kernaghan with an emotional outburst on *Live!*[155] Looking directly into the camera with glistening tears in her eyes and an angry quiver in her lips, Gifford scolded the activist publicly.[156] This outburst and its widespread media coverage further circulated class shame, situating the emotion in white, middle-class livings rooms across the country. Gifford's eruption embodied the self-focused discomfort that accompanies a moment of non-recognition.[157] Gifford displayed signs of visceral discomfort; she quickly blinked her eyes as they welled up with tears, she shook her head back and forth as her voice jumped octaves, and she slammed papers on a coffee table.[158] The next day, news and tabloid media noted the "unusual TV moment" in which "Kathie Lee los[t] her cool."[159] Outlets reported that "The usually bubbly Kathie Lee Gifford broke into tears Wednesday," visibly "distraught" and "shaking" as she issued "a huffy, tearful on-camera denial."[160] As the reports made clear, audiences were accustomed to seeing this free market optimist bubble over with enthusiasm, and this outburst confronted audiences with a visceral discomfort around the identity of a self-realized, prosperous, and benevolent woman of the marketplace.

Gifford's discomfort centered on the status of her *self*, as she addressed allegations on a show that featured her identity as its centerpiece. She "defended herself

on the air" as she characterized Kernaghan's allegations as a "personal" offensive on "my integrity," and she rejected the idea that she was "personally responsible" for production practices.[161] *Live!*'s camerawork confirmed the intimacy of the allegations by featuring Gifford's monologue mostly in close-up view, allowing audiences to look directly into Gifford's eyes as she defended her *self*.[162] The day after, newspapers confirmed the focus of Gifford's monologue; *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, for example, reported that during Gifford's monologue, she "focus[ed] on the fact her name had been smudged."[163] This coverage, and the outburst itself, showed her publicly performing the discomfort often associated with having one's identity challenged.

Although Gifford clearly constructed herself as the primary issue, her shame could be understood as applying more broadly to bourgeois fulfillment and peaceful prosperity. Not only was Gifford an embodiment of free market optimism, but this shameful episode was oriented around her clothing line's capacity to provide self-realization and peaceful prosperity. Furthermore, Gifford's enactment of shame was situated in overlapping spaces of prosperous and peaceful fulfillment. *Live!*'s set was modeled after a middle class, white, suburban living room of the 1990s. The set featured Gifford and Regis sitting on light brown wicker chairs behind a short, light brown coffee table that held orange coffee mugs, newspapers, and magazines. The hosts were surrounded by other white, middle class accoutrement: light brown book cases decorated with trophies and vases, a white piano topped with a lavender vase brimming with pastel-colored flowers, and a large imitation window that looked out onto a painted, tree-lined suburban street.[164] This set situated Gifford's shame in a televised version of a living room, inviting a para-social identification with audiences who valued bourgeois

domesticity. Moreover, this domesticity was beamed into the homes of *Live!*'s viewers, further situating the outburst of shame within people's private homes. The shame thus permeated a prominent space of free market optimism—a prosperous family's suburban living room.

Gifford's monologue broadcast two common reactions to shame: avoidance and attack. A person experiencing shame may avoid the negative evaluation of the self and seek to distract from it, which Gifford did as she offered evidence of her good deeds.[165] "I started my clothing line to benefit children. Millions of dollars have gone to help children," she argued.[166] Gifford explained that upon hearing Kernaghan's charges, "I immediately called Wal-Mart and said this is obscene if this is happening. They said, 'That happened months ago, we found out about it and took care of it.'"[167] Gifford avoided shame, directly stating, "Today I am wearing with pride my Kathie Lee outfit."[168] Thus, Gifford sidestepped the negative evaluation of herself and free market optimism more broadly by pointing to shame's opposite emotion—pride—in her charity work, her concern for humane production practices, and Wal-Mart's swift action against sweatshops. These intentions and actions, she suggested, affirmed an optimistic attitude toward the market and its agents.

Gifford also externalized blame for her discomfort by directly attacking Kernaghan. People may angrily attack others to defend themselves against shame's painful self-evaluation.[169] In Tangey and Dearing's words, such "seething, bitter, resentful" externalization can be a powerful coping mechanism because blame's "accompanying feelings of self-righteous anger can help the shamed person to regain some sense of agency and control."[170] Gifford scolded Kernaghan for "impugning my

integrity!" With squinted eyes and pursed lips, Gifford angrily said, "You can say I'm ugly. You can say I'm not talented." Her words and delivery suggested that as a celebrity, she had grown resilient to criticism about her outward characteristics. Gifford then scolded Kernaghan as a righteous mother might reprimand a child who crossed boundaries of decency. Gifford lowered her eyebrows, leaned in toward the camera, and raised her voice. "But when you say I don't care about children, and that I will exploit them for some sort of monetary gain," she exclaimed with righteous anger, "for once, Mister, you better answer your phone because my attorney is calling you today." Gifford punctuated her condemnation by throwing papers on the coffee table and exclaiming, "How *dare* you," to which the audience responded with resounding applause.[171] Gifford blamed her discomfort on Kernaghan's infringement of decorum, suggesting that Kernaghan himself was avoiding consequences and that she was the activist's righteous victim.

Gifford's dramatic public denial prompted subsequent investigation and coverage of Kernaghan's accusations as news and tabloid media jumped at the chance to feature a dramatic confrontation between celebrity and activist. Media characterized Gifford's monologue as "a blistering counteroffensive" against "an activist's attack."[172] With such titles as "Kathie Lee Fights Back," reports described Gifford as "defensive," "angry," and "mad as hell."[173] Further stoking the flames of a dramatic clash meant contextualizing Gifford's outburst with Kernaghan's charges and soliciting his response. For instance, New York's *Daily News* provided such contextualization and rebuttal: "Labor activist Charles Kernaghan, who stirred the controversy Monday when he told a congressional committee that children and pregnant women had sewn clothes for the Kathie Lee

Gifford Collection, said yesterday he was disappointed by her response. 'Doesn't she care that abuses were done to make clothes that bear her name?' he asked."[174] In this example, Kernaghan's question explicitly charged Gifford with callously pursuing her self-realization by marketing "clothes that bear her name" through "abuses" perpetrated on vulnerable producers. This shame suggested that free market optimism's promise of peaceful prosperity did not apply to the global producer class. Such coverage sustained attention to the shameful dimensions of production by re-iterating charges and allowing Kernaghan to overtly shame Gifford about her defensive response.

Other media coverage mirrored this example's form, in which Kernaghan openly shamed Gifford's response. For example, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that Kernaghan "rejected Gifford's demand for an apology, saying 'the real victims are the children.'"[175] This statement re-cast Gifford's self-focused defense as further reason for shame, dampening any enjoyment that Gifford's righteous anger may have engendered. Kernaghan's words exposed Gifford as manufacturing her own victimhood, instead of focusing on what he considered the "real" victims—the young producer class. *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* also depicted Kernaghan openly shaming Gifford and her corporate partners for pursuing their self-realization on the backs of the vulnerable; "Kathie Lee and Wal-Mart can't go into a country and exploit children and then walk away," the paper reported him saying. "Kathie Lee and Wal-Mart owe those children."[176] The coverage cast Kernaghan as the judging other who would continue to shame Gifford until she accepted responsibility for children of the global producer class.

Media coverage constituted this situation as a pressing shameful controversy. Several media outlets explicitly referred to the allegations and denial as a

"controversy."[177] The *Daily News* published a story in which a reporter accosted Gifford with Kernaghan's charges, asking "if she would speak out against hellish sweatshops."[178] As a paper known for pursuing "hard-hitting coverage of public issues" with a "titillating" bent, the very fact that the *Daily News* pursued this story constructed it as a controversy.[179] True to the paper's form, the story showed a reporter asking Gifford provocative questions in a sensationalized investigative style, which positioned the reporter and the viewer as enthusiastic partners in the search for the truth behind celebrity endorsement and sweatshops.[180] The story covered Gifford stumbling over her responses to the allegations: "No…We're thinking about it. I'm not really sure yet." The reporter pressed on, asking "if she felt any anguish over children being paid 31 cents an hour to sew garments bearing her name," to which "Gifford started to say, 'No, I don't . . .' But before she could finish, her husband, Frank, interrupted the interview by grabbing a reporter's arm and snapping, 'She said everything she's going to say.'" This emotionally-charged account constructed the situation as a controversy by showing two oppositional perspectives—Kernaghan's and Gifford's—and by suggesting that the situation merited an investigation by a reporter working in the public interest. Furthermore, the story steeped the controversy in shame by showing the Giffords on the defensive, forcefully rejecting both Kernaghan's allegations and the reporter's request for answers.

Primetime Live—a popular national television program—also constructed the sweatshop allegations as a shameful controversy when it featured an interview with Gifford on May 22.[181] As a news magazine show, *Primetime Live* offered audiences longer coverage than standard newscasts, delivered in a documentary style that implied an ethos of investigative reporting.[182] Interviewing Gifford on the show contributed to the

controversial nature of the sweatshop allegations because news magazine shows tend to broadcast, in Sarah R. Stein's words, "stories that feature a dramatic urgency" that are "built around conflicts" and induce a "sense of outrage."[183]

The May 22 show generated shameful controversy by introducing Gifford as "a woman in the heat of the spot-light" and characterizing her as a "lightning rod."[184] Reporter Cynthia McFadden told Gifford and audiences, "I used to think the world was divided into dog and cat people and I now come to understand that it's divided into people who love Kathie Lee Gifford and who hate Kathie Lee Gifford." Characterizing Gifford in these ways constructed a public debate over Gifford's persona. McFadden reiterated Kernaghan's charges on air and asked Gifford to respond to them, modeling an oppositional dialogue. McFadden reminded Gifford that she had "been accused of being a hypocrite, of saying that you care about children and yet of exploiting children to make your clothing line." Gifford again responded by defending herself and attacking activists, again performing common reactions to shame on a popular television program, this time as a guest. Gifford asserted that critics "don't know me. They don't know the 20-plus years I've been working for children." Constructing herself as a victim of critics' attacks, she remembered, "I felt like I was being- of all people, being kicked in the teeth for- for trying to help kids." Recalling how her son heard the allegations, Gifford turned again on Kernaghan, demanding, "how dare he make my own child question my integrity?" McFadden and Gifford's back and forth constructed the shameful controversy, with the reporter taking Kernaghan's perspective on Gifford's character to challenge Gifford into publicly confronting such allegations.

Constructing the situation as a controversy also meant circulating information that could enable people to judge which side—Gifford or Kernaghan—should legitimately feel ashamed. The controversy thus drew attention to production practices, as reporters, activists, and Gifford's team moved to blame someone or something for the uncomfortable emotions attaching to consumption and entrepreneurship. This coverage exposed the global marketing-production chain and imbued it with shame.

Stories constructed celebrities as marketing agents located primarily in the consuming world and corporations as manufacturing agents that bridged the consuming world with the producing one. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* covered Gifford's lawyer Ronald Konecky insisting that Gifford was not involved in the production end and was "'totally unaware' of factory conditions."[185] New York's *Daily News* reported Konecky saying "that Gifford helps design the clothes but leaves it to Wal-Mart to find a manufacturer."[186] These stories showed a disconnect between marketing and production, and they began to bridge this chasm by co-articulating these practices in a reporting project that mapped relations of production and marketing.

Reports expanded the coverage of production by showing that many corporations contracted with the producing world. *The Washington Post* explained that "Kathie Lee is not alone" in having "her Wal-Mart clothing line" produced overseas.[187] The story listed some of the "plenty of other popular U.S. clothing retailers" who "rely on such factories around the world": The Gap in El Salvador, JC Penny's in Haiti, Nike in Indonesia, and Sears in Bangladesh. An Associated Press story that was published by several local newspapers co-articulated Gifford and the owner of her show's broadcasting station, The Walt Disney Company. The story reported that in addition to Gifford's overseas

production, Disney clothing "turned up" during the NLC's "tour of Haitian plant."[188] Harnessing the investigative impetus of the "controversy" frame, these stories offered a wider context to the Gifford story, articulating the global chain of production.

These stories attached classed shame to this chain by suggesting that celebrities and corporations privileged their self-realization over peaceful prosperity. Stories publicized Kernaghan's shaming words, writing that "Kernaghan said Wal-Mart took care of" the sweatshop issue "by moving the operation to Nicaragua, where conditions are even more repressive and the wages are even lower" than in Honduras.[189] This narrative suggested that the Wal-Mart corporation only acted to escape bad publicity, as evidenced by locating production in areas with worse records of sweatshop practices. *The Washington Post* expanded such allegations beyond Gifford and Wal-Mart by publishing the working conditions for members of the producing world who created other popular commodities for the consuming world. For example, The Gap reportedly paid "56 cents an hour" to workers at the "Mandarin International Factory" in El Salvador, which employed "100 workers ages 14-17," and Nike contracted production to "Pou Chen Complex" in Indonesia, which offered a wage of "17 cents an hour" and allegedly engaged in "intimidation of protesting workers."[190] Publicizing these conditions halted marketing exuberance over self-realization by exposing production practices as revoking the promise of peaceful prosperity. These stories re-cast bourgeois self-realization as exploitation.

Media coverage amplified Kernaghan's calls for celebrities and corporations to "do the right thing."[191] Psychologists have referred to shame as a "moral" emotion because it manages people's interaction with the social world and its expectations.[192] In

this case, stories featured Kernaghan, as judging other, prescribing the moral action: merging self-realization and peaceful prosperity in ways that could benefit people in the producing world alongside those in the consuming world. For example, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* quoted Kernaghan calling on Gifford to "clean up this place," and *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution* reported, "He wants the popular TV star to tour the factories in Central America and bring more attention to foreign sweatshops to help improve working conditions."[193] *USA Today* and New York's *Daily News* quoted Kernaghan asking Gifford to "come with us and take a look with her own eyes" to "see what conditions are like at these plants."[194] In these ways, media coverage publicized Kernaghan's prescription for moral action: the authentic pursuit of global self-realization and peaceful prosperity through witnessing and advocating for vulnerable members of the producing world.

Reports widely circulated the shameful marketing-production chain in various fora, implicating a variety of audiences in the classed shame. Newspaper and magazine stories about the marketing-production controversy appeared in multiple sections including News, Lifestyle, Features, Style, Gossip, and Movies among others.[195] Coverage also circulated on television news as well as tabloid and entertainment television programs.[196] This controversy over production and marketing thus co-articulated economics, politics, and entertainment, suggesting that everyone's life in the consuming world was touched by the producing world. Although not explicitly centering consumers in the story, this classed shame began to implicate consumers by referring to common clothing brands and by inserting issues of production into entertainment commodities. The classed shame surrounding Gifford made its way into people's homes

through their television sets, newspapers, and magazines, drawing audiences into the uncomfortable feelings attaching to self-realization in the free market.

Transforming Class Shame into Class Guilt

Although Gifford's *Primetime* appearance mostly cultivated shame, the interview also apprehensively waded into the territory of guilt. As Tangney and Dearing explained, guilt refers to an emotion that, like shame, is a painful feeling that inhibits enjoyment.[197] Also like shame, guilt stems from a social infraction that prompts the person experiencing guilt to evaluate the self.[198] Unlike shame, though, guilt prompts evaluation of the self's *behaviors* rather than the person's identity itself.[199] Guilt centers on the effects of a transgression on others, and this emotion occurs on both individual and collective levels when someone or some group feels responsible for harming others.[200] Nyla R. Branscombe, Ben Slugoski, and Diane M. Kappen argued that groups may feel guilt, instead of shame, if they perceive themselves as agents in the transgression and/or its outcome.[201] These scholars defined collective guilt as the anxiety that accompanies a group's acceptance of responsibility for illegitimate actions that have violated an accepted moral code.[202] The extent to which groups feel guilt depends on social norms of assigning responsibility and deeming an action (un)justified.[203] Both individual and collective guilt have tended to engender a desire to right the wrong in socially acceptable ways.[204] From the *Primetime* interview on, the mediated Gifford controversy gradually transformed from a shameful episode to a performance of class guilt.

Gifford explained in her *Primetime* interview that she had "been so upset" about the allegations that she was "announcing right now" that at her "own expense" she was starting her "own watchdog organization … who will be responsible for surprise visits

and regular inspections of every one of the twenty-four factories around the world" that manufactured "anything that bears my name."[205] Gifford momentarily accepted Kernaghan's prescription for ameliorative action, implicitly taking a modicum of responsibility for production before again attacking Kernaghan as someone concerned with his "own agenda" rather than "the exploitation that's taking place." Gifford again vacillated between postures of responsibility and self-defense when McFadden showed Gifford a picture "of some of the children" that Kernaghan "says were working in this factory." McFadden explained that Kernaghan planned to bring "the little girl in the front row, who's now fifteen…to New York. He wants to know whether or not you would meet with this child." Gifford responded, "Absolutely, I would meet with this child. I'd meet with any child. Absolutely. But Cynthia, you do know that he could take any picture of any child and put something on the bottom."

These moments of oscillation performed on *Primetime* began the uneasy transformation of the controversy's shame into guilt. At the beginning of this transition, the news and tabloid media established that a harm had been perpetrated abroad. For example, *Nightline*'s June 19 episode on sweatshops showed Kernaghan—a white, middle-aged man in glasses and a suit—explaining that overseas sweatshops harmed "minors, between twelve and fifteen."[206] A large black and white photograph propped up behind him showed more than a dozen children of color posing for a solemn picture in which their unsmiling, direct gazes confronted the viewer with their existence. These serious "minors" offered implicit evidence for Kernaghan's charge of harm. The *Los Angeles Times* reported Kernaghan's organizing work, narrating his surreptitious meeting with "a dozen or so workers" who were "huddled behind a roadside grocery stand,

attempting secrecy" so that they would not face retribution from their abusive bosses.[207] Media also featured Wendy Diaz, a 15-year-old Honduran sweatshop worker who Kernaghan brought to the United States to testify about her experiences of abuse. *Nightline* showed images of Diaz—a young woman of color with a lightly freckled face, big dark eyes, and with her hair in a modest, long, dark pony tail—as she testified to a Congressional committee and in subsequent interviews. Speaking in Spanish, with an English translation, Diaz was shown saying, "Conditions are very bad. We're shouted at. Some of us are hit." [208] Diaz was also shown describing the long days—"we work until 7:00 at night almost the entire year. Sometimes we get out at 9:00 P.M."—and the constant intimidation: "If you speak up, you can be sure you will lose your job."[209] The *Los Angeles Times* described Diaz as "effortlessly pitiable. An orphan who helps support three younger brothers, she has a weary but hopeful face that seems ennobled by poverty."[210] Drawing on neo-colonial discourses, media portrayals constituted these brown, young, Third World women—for whom Diaz stood as synecdoche—as the vulnerable producing class that was being victimized at work.

Reports showed that this classed harm was also being perpetrated in the United States. Immediately after the Giffords' *Primetime* interview, the Giffords learned from a *Daily News* reporter that "Just three subway stops from her TV studio, workers at one of the worst sweatshop buildings in New York have just finished making 50,000 Kathie Lee Gifford blouses."[211] These charges sent reporters to investigate the harm lurking in domestic sweatshops, and reports circulated depictions of classed abuse located in New York City. For example, CBS' *Eye on America* accompanied "New York labor investigators" into "the heart of New York's Chinatown down a narrow hallway, up six

flights of stairs" into "a classic sweatshop."[212] There, the camera showed a cramped, window-less cinderblock room, illuminated by harsh neon lights and littered with heaps of plastic, boxes, and fabric. The camera's short-range shot focused on six Asian women sewing furiously at overcrowded stations cluttered with boxes and fabric. Another shot showed an Asian man in a black tank top pressing clothing in a quickly moving ironing machine, steam rising into the small fan near the machine. The camera then focused on one specific worker, who the reporter described as a "young girl, who tried to hide in the bathroom, who inspectors believe is underage." On the screen, a large Asian man with missing fingers in a stained green t-shirt reluctantly opened a door. A young Asian woman stepped out from behind this door, wearing jeans and a t-shirt, smiling nervously and anxiously touching her neck. Similar images appeared across mediated sweatshop depictions, featuring people of color hunched over industrial sewing machines in cluttered, dirty rooms without windows.[213] Again drawing on neocolonial discourses that mark people of color as dependents, the images' racial, gendered, and aged dimensions mixed with depictions of their working conditions to visually characterize them as members of the vulnerable producing class. This time, though, Third World conditions were located squarely in one of the First World's epicenters, challenging the idea that under-development was to blame for abusive labor practices.

The news media began to attach responsibility for such harm to the First World's self-realization imperative. Reports assessed, in ABC newscaster Ted Koppel's words, "who's to blame, and what to do" about what CBS anchor Peter Jennings called "The disgrace of American sweatshops."[214] Such assessments of responsibility meant co-articulating sweatshop conditions with prominent agents of the neoliberalizing United

States: celebrities, corporations, and consumers. In assigning responsibility, media coverage enabled the transformation from shame to guilt by amplifying discourses of personal responsibility, corporate benevolence, and consumer agency. This guilt pointed to the limits of free market optimism by privileging social responsibility over free market expansion, and the circulation of this public emotion constituted potent, if limited, forms of antagonistic agency.

Personal Responsibility

Drawing on prevalent discourses of personal responsibility, news segments assigned liability to the celebrity whose face and name adorned the clothing produced in sweatshops. Reports co-articulated Gifford personally with the abuses that enabled her self-realization in the marketplace as an entrepreneur who encouraged commodity consumption. Gifford's logo implicated her as a responsible party because it featured her smiling face as well as her signature. Stories suggested that Gifford's logo signified ownership over all aspects of her clothing, inclusive of production. For example, ABC News showed a Gifford tag attached to a garment lying on a work station in a dismal production room. As the camera focused on Gifford's smiling face and her signature, the newscaster reported that "a sewing shop here in New York violated labor laws producing her signature blouses."[215] NBC News showed images of Asian workers in a crowded cinderblock room with no windows or exits, as reporter Bob Kurr's voice-over told audiences that "underpaid garment workers…make some of Kathie Lee's line."[216] The *Los Angeles Times* explained that union organizers had found garments with "Kathie Lee's contented face" on a tag in New York's "Seo Fashions sweatshop."[217] Other media reports suggested that Gifford was responsible because she directly profited from the

exploitation of workers. For example, NBC News' camera panned over seemingly endless racks replete with clothing whose tags featured Gifford's smiling face. As the camera showed hundreds Gifford faces, the reporter's voice-over argued that her clothing line had "meant big profits for Gifford."[218]

In a neoliberalizing milieu that encouraged people to see individuals as responsible agents in a world of opportunity, Gifford's face, signature, and name implied that she, herself, was responsible for what she owned. The news reports co-articulated Gifford personally with the abused members of the producing class, thus suggesting that she had some responsibility over production. Juxtaposing the harmed producers with Gifford's happy profit cultivated guilt by implying that Gifford's pursuit of self-realization in the marketplace had harmed vulnerable members of the producer class. Neoliberal discourses of personal responsibility suggested that Gifford should accept liability for what was hers. Furthermore, media reports implied that Gifford bore personal responsibility because she now knew that her clothing was manufactured in sweatshops and could no longer claim ignorance.[219] Since free market optimism fostered an attachment to personal responsibility, media reports attributed some blame to Gifford personally as the self-realizing benefactor who was aware of sweatshop conditions.

Beginning with *Daily News*' May 23 story, the news and tabloid media narrated Gifford's transformation from a shamed celebrity acting in self-defense to a guilty spokesperson taking personal responsibility for harming producers. [220] Stories began the narrative of transformation by publicizing Gifford's original defensive stance. *Nightline* detailed how "At first, Kathie Lee acted like she wanted to sue the messenger," as the news program re-played Gifford's *Live!* outburst.[221] The *Los Angeles Times* reported,

"For a while, Gifford's instinct was to go on lashing back, and her TV show provided the luxury of rebuttal time."[222] In an interview on *Larry King Live*, Gifford recalled her initial reaction: "I remember being so stunned by the allegation that I was very angry about the way it was handled."[223]

After re-iterating her defensive posture, stories showed Gifford accepting personal responsibility for the harm enacted on vulnerable producers. Gifford and her husband publicly took such responsibility on May 22 when Gifford sent Frank to the New York City sweatshop to pay victimized workers.[224] ABC News reported on May 25 that Gifford's "husband Frank tried to make amends, showing up to give each worker a check for $300 in back pay."[225] On the screen, Frank handed out white envelopes saying, "Here you are sir" to a man of color who sat at a table in a cinderblock room with neon lighting. NBC News showed Frank saying, "They will be paid" at a make-shift news conference in a cinderblock sewing room. The camera zoomed in on Gifford's burly, white hands, one finger adorned with a large ring, clutching onto white envelopes as the reporter narrated, "The Giffords recently brought envelopes of cash to underpaid garment workers in New York."[226] *The St. Louis Dispatch* reported that "Kathie Lee Gifford sent her sportscaster husband, Frank, to pay cash to sweatshop workers who…were underpaid for making blouses that carried her label." The story quoted Frank saying, "There's $300 in there, and I am really sorry" to "a 32-year-old illegal immigrant, who sobbed as he gave her the money."[227]

This public moment showed the Giffords taking personal responsibility for harming producers and featured them acting on their desire to personally remedy such a harm. In this episode, people saw celebrity embodiments of white, First World free

market optimism offering reparations to individual members of the vulnerable producing class. The juxtaposition between Frank's bejeweled, white hands with envelopes of cash and a sobbing illegal immigrant woman accepting payment fostered classed guilt—the uncomfortable feeling that halted enjoying bourgeois pursuit of self-realization in the marketplace. This guilt suggested that such a pursuit was perpetuating harm on producers, who were marked as vulnerable by their working conditions and dimensions of their identities that designated them as victims in a neocolonial frame. The producers who presented as men could be understood as vulnerable because they were both producers working in terrible conditions and people of color, and this combination, from a neocolonial gaze, implied their limited agency. The producers who presented as women could be understood as even more vulnerable because their gender amplified the characteristics they shared with their male counterparts. Furthermore, some reports explicitly commented on the producers' (illegal) immigrant status and others implied it with their depictions of workers as others, who either spoke limited or no English and presented as Latin American or Asian. These depictions furthered the guilt because they simultaneously suggested these workers' vulnerability and the anxiety over white people's disappearing manufacturing jobs. Media coverage of this episode cultivated personal classed guilt around market self-fulfillment because it showed the wealthy Frank making personal reparations to individual aggrieved producers.

The Los Angeles Times publicized the Giffords' guilt in stories that demonstrated the couple's concern about and desire to remedy the harm for which they accepted personal responsibility.[228] The paper reported that Gifford "educated herself in private" about "the prevalence of sweatshops," and that the couple met with Secretary of Labor

Robert Reich, who "was impressed by their questions" and "thought his listeners were 'genuinely appalled' by all they heard."[229] The story narrated the Giffords' eagerness to right their wrong, reporting that when Reich asked, "Will you help us?" the Giffords responded, "By all means."[230] This story—and others like it—facilitated a shift from shame to guilt by moving away from negatively judging Gifford's character toward focusing on how her actions could mirror her moral character. As Wendy Diaz said in the story, "If she's good, she'll help us."[231] This aspect of the coverage focused on Gifford's personal involvement and her ability to bring her actions and character into alignment in the eyes of individual producers like Diaz and individual officials like Reich.

Having established the Giffords' discomfort and desire for redemption, stories focused on Gifford taking personal responsibility for a structural issue. *Eye on America* re-broadcast a moment from *Live!* in which Gifford said that her experience with sweatshops taught her that "It's obvious that this is a *pervasive* problem."[232] Reports showed Gifford accepting responsibility by working with government officials to fight abusive labor practices. ABC News depicted Gifford testifying in Congress, the star sitting behind a desk with a microphone, wearing a light pink and white blazer, her voluminous blond hair framing her made-up face as she spoke to people situated just above her. The reporter narrated the scene: "On Capitol Hill today television co-host Kathie Lee Gifford…came to lobby for a child labor bill."[233] NBC News featured a close-up shot of Gifford at the Congressional testimony, her glossed pink lips lightly quivering as she read her testimony, at times tentatively looking up from her paper at the Congressional audience. "This is what I've come to believe. That every one of us from the entertainer, the sports figure, whomever, who lends their name…has an obligation to

know how and why a garment was made."[234] Stories also depicted Gifford working with other government officials to eliminate domestic sweatshops. NBC News showed Gifford in a light peach colored suit, nodding her perfectly coifed blond hair and pursing her glossed lips as she stood behind Reich at a press conference. The reporter told audiences, "she appeared with Labor Secretary Reich to call for more oversight of sweatshop operations."[235] *USA Today* reported that the Giffords "appeared with New York Governor George Pataki" when he announced "legislation to ban the sale of apparel made by exploited workers."[236]

These stories co-articulated Gifford's personal responsibility with government oversight. Such an articulation harnessed the neoliberal personal responsibility imperative to circulate guilt around a classed harm that was perpetuated on a structural level. The structural level was made legible by Gifford's admission of the scope of the problem and by her partnering with governmental agencies to take sufficient action. Overwhelmed by the prevalence of sweatshops, yet prodded by the discomfort of her having perpetuated harm, Gifford was shown turning to government agencies as her way of enacting personal responsibility for harm. Gifford's mediated performance of guilt and personal responsibility thus implicated the systemic production-marketing-profit chain, interrupting a systemic enjoyment of self-realization in the marketplace by suggesting that if she was personally responsible, so were other actors.

Unlike shame, guilt offered future enjoyment and approval as rewards for correcting harmful behaviors.[237] The Giffords enjoyed such public approval from multiple agents who applauded their taking personal responsibility. On May 25, ABC News reported labor officials saying that Frank's wage reparation was a "remedy" and "a

step in the right direction."[238] *The Philadelphia Inquirer* detailed how "labor-rights advocates, including Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich, welcomed the spotlight Gifford brings."[239] The story quoted "Jeff Ballinger of Press for Change, a nonprofit consumer education group" celebrating Gifford as a "gift from heaven" who "stepped up" and showed "a lot of integrity." The same report commented on admirations Gifford received in Congress, including the "verbal bouquets from Rep. James P. Moran (D., Va.), who likened her to Gandhi." Gifford's acceptance of responsibility transformed classed shame into guilt, and her public performance of this emotion promised redemption if appropriate actions were taken.

The episodes detailing Gifford's acceptance of personal responsibility constituted several actors as guilt-tripping agents and challenged the market's claim to peaceful prosperity. Media reports constructed labor activists like Kernaghan, Department of Labor (DOL) Officials like Reich, and Third-World workers like Diaz as agents who had moved Gifford into taking personal responsibility. As the *Los Angeles Times* explained, "Three crusaders—a gadfly zealot, a garment-makers union, the U.S. secretary of Labor—all have skillfully made Gifford a conscript in their anti-sweatshop campaigns."[240] White, male government officials and labor activists and an underage foreign worker emerged as agents capable of proscribing harmful action, prescribing remedial compensation, and praising a return to the moral fold. Gifford's acceptance of personal responsibility within a structural framework demonstrated that, if left to its own devises, the market would not provide peaceful prosperity to producers. Her mediated acceptance of personal responsibility and the subsequent applause she received for it

privileged social responsibility over market freedom and demonstrated that the market was an insufficient mechanism for acting responsibly.

Corporate Benevolence

When stories showed Gifford taking personal responsibility for sweatshop harm and enjoying applause for such action, Gifford herself became a guilt-tripping agent who showed that market redemption was possible for celebrity endorsers and corporations. Gifford could be simultaneously understood as an individual and the personal face of a corporation because she was a celebrity and a brand name whose commodities were being sold by corporations; Wal-mart sold her clothing in stores, and Disney sold her personality on television. The *Chicago Tribune* depicted Gifford at an August White House sweatshop summit, where President Clinton praised Gifford, saying "She didn't bury her head in the sand" when confronted with sweatshop revelations.[241] Baltimore's *The Daily Record* showed Gifford joining her guilt-tripping government counterpart Reich in calling on "national retailers, manufacturers and celebrities" to "demand that the industry accept the moral responsibility for ending Third World working conditions in the most prosperous nation on earth."[242] ABC News reported that labor officials "worry these conditions" for which Gifford accepted responsibility "will continue until retailers are held directly accountable."[243] Such mediated calls for corporate social responsibility harnessed free market optimism's promise of corporate benevolence to assign responsibility for sweatshop harm to corporations.

Stories reported that corporations had privileged profits over laws and morality. *Eye on America*'s Peter Jennings framed the program's sweatshop investigation by saying that the shops' prevalence could be explained when "you start tallying the dollars

and cents involved in an industry where increasingly it seems the right thing and the legal thing is [sic] often side swept by a drive for profits."[244] *Nightline* featured Kernaghan saying that the Gifford controversy was part of "this scheme of the multinationals jumping from country to country to country, in search of starvation wages."[245] The same episode interviewed investigative journalist Sydney Schanberg who reported that "companies are going to those nation states because labor is cheap, and the cheapest labor of all is child labor." He added, "Children are not only cheapest, but they're the least complaining, the most malleable of workers." *USA Today* reported on "Secretary Robert Reich's pledge to name names of manufacturers violating labor laws."[246]

These stories implied that corporations' drive for profits over social welfare was an illegitimate action—a charge that made sense in a milieu that featured both manufacturing anxieties and free market optimism. This condemnation of profits was made legible by the familiar anxieties over manufacturing that Kernaghan explicitly voiced on *Nightline* when he said that retail corporations were "asking the U.S. manufacturer, the U.S. contractor, to meet the same prices that they pay offshore, which is impossible. You can't do that legally."[247] This charge of illegitimacy only made sense as a moral breach because of neoliberal market optimism that encouraged people to see corporations as benevolent agents of peaceful prosperity and widespread self-realization. In other words, the free market had set up the expectation for corporate social responsibility by promising economic abundance for all in a free market system led by benevolent corporations. Thus, market optimism made it possible to assign responsibility for sweatshop harm to corporations.

Further drawing on a neoliberal celebration of corporate agency, reports publicized the DOL's argument that corporations should be responsible for conditions because they were primary social actors. ABC News reported that government officials did not have enough resources to crack down on sweatshops, "So, the DOL has asked retailers to police themselves."[248] *The Washington Post* detailed how "The Labor Department says it can't" go after the sweatshop problem "with only 800 federal inspectors and a few hundred at the state level for the entire industry."[249] Thus, "Reich wants American retailers to take responsibility because he says they are the real power brokers in the garment industry."[250]

Assigning such responsibility to corporations made sense in a neoliberal milieu that trusted private enterprise more than government regulation. The DOL's statements harnessed these discourses to explicitly argue that corporations were responsible for ameliorating the harm that they had knowingly perpetrated. *Eye on America* showed Reich, a middle-aged white man in a suit, positioned in front of an American flag, giving the reporter a knowing smile saying, "Some of the big retailers have buyers who know very well what's going on."[251] In these ways, reports constructed the government as a guilt-tripping actor who could prod corporations into doing "the right thing."[252] Corporations, in turn, were constructed as powerful agents who were expected to take social responsibility for ensuring peaceful prosperity.

Similar to Gifford's mediated transformation, news media showed corporations first resisting responsibility for harming producers. ABC News reported, "Retailers say they should not be expected to do the government's job of enforcing the law and defend themselves by saying they don't knowingly buy goods from sweatshops."[253] As a reporter

narrated this response, viewers saw people shopping in retail stores and then sweatshop inspectors going through the familiar cramped, industrial hovels. These images, combined with the verbal reporting, suggested that retail corporations shirked responsibility for the sweatshops now in plain sight. *Nightline*'s reporter Dave Maresh stood in front of a Disney's busy Times Square store reporting that, "Industry spokesman Robert Hall says it's not the retailer's responsibility…even though they're the ones who contract out these product lines to the manufacturers."[254] The imagery suggested that corporations, like Disney, were neglecting the responsibility that came with capitalist success, a claim legitimated by the presence of an investigative reporter. The program's anchor Ted Koppel opened the episode's interview segment announcing "first of all, who won't be joining us tonight. We invited, but they won't be coming, representatives from Nike, Reebok, and the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association."[255] Such a pronouncement suggested that these corporations were neglecting their duty as primary social agents.

Also similar to Gifford's transformation, this initial denial of responsibility drew investigative attention to how commodities were produced and retail power consolidated in a neoliberalizing world. *Nightline*'s Maresh told audiences, "Reebok, contracts to several plants in China, while making soccer balls in Pakistan…Nike, makes shoes in Indonesia, and soccer balls in Pakistan."[256] On the screen, people saw a digitized map with outlines of these countries, stamped by the logos of the corporations that contracted labor in them. Maresh also detailed how "some U.S. suppliers…subcontract to sweatshops" while the camera showed a woman of color bent over a sewing machine, guiding fabric through a noisy machine in a cramped room stacked with clothing.[257] *The*

New York Times reported how Gifford's clothing ended up in Seo, the NYC sweatshop; the "Alabama company" with which Wal-Mart signed a contract "'sub-contracted' part of the order to New Jersey-based Universal Apparel, which in turn sub-sub-subcontracted to Seo – both typical transactions in the garment business."[258] *The Washington Post* argued that because "Retailing power has become increasingly concentrated…Retailers are the forces of pressure on manufacturers and … have helped to set consumer expectations about cost and availability."[259] These reports cultivated guilt around corporate self-realization, as they characterized corporate maneuvers as power plays that allowed companies to profit from production practices that were causing widespread anxiety—namely, overseas manufacturing and sweatshop labor. These stories also challenged the optimistic promise of peaceful prosperity by linking corporations' prosperity with visceral depictions of inequality.

Like Gifford's narrative of transformation, news media showed retail corporations and their representatives eventually accepting responsibility and taking ameliorative action. On *Nightline*, Robert Hall, a spokesman for a retail organization, first acted defensively, saying that retailers could not be expected to do government's work. In an interview session toward the end of the broadcast, Hall pivoted this position, saying "retailers are taking responsible action" in the form of "monitoring programs."[260] *USA Today* explained that "In the wake of the Kathie Lee Gifford sweatshop furor, the nation's biggest retail chains are scrambling" to avoid using sweatshop labor.[261] *The Washington Post* reported that these retailers met with guilt-tripping agents—including Reich and Gifford—at the White House to "broker an agreement that would have the companies taking special measures to ensure that their products were not made in

'sweatshop' conditions."[262] Again like Gifford's actions, these admissions of guilt received praise from guilt-tripping agents. New York's *Daily News* quoted Gifford's "spokesman" as saying that "The system is beginning to prove that it can be effective in shutting down sweatshops," lauding corporations for embracing their role as benevolent actors in the marketplace.[263]

Corporations thus emerged from the controversy as agents that responded in laudable ways to their guilt. Although this construction of corporate benevolence bolstered free market optimism's celebration of private enterprise, it elevated social responsibility—as directed by government officials and labor activists—over market freedom. This construction challenged the unfettered market's capacity to usher in peaceful prosperity by depicting the government, activists, and the media as instrumental moral evaluators who could condemn actions and prescribe ameliorative action.

Consumer Agency

Drawing on neoliberal discourses of consumer agency, news reports assigned responsibility for harming producers to the consumers who demanded self-realization in the marketplace. As *The Washington Post* reported, "consumers want cheap fashion. They want the hot style this season, not next year," and so "manufacturers are pressured for a fast turnaround on a hot item" and "turn to subcontractors for help in meeting deadlines."[264] ABC News assigned visual responsibility to consumers by showing images of shoppers combing through overflowing racks of clothing as the voice-over narrated retailers' reluctance to "police themselves."[265] These images suggested that retailers were merely responding to consumer demand for clothing choices. *Eye on America*'s reporter lamented that "the outrage" over sweatshops "never seems to last for long" because "the

consumer" moves on and "buys her next outfit or his next pair of sneakers."[266] As the reporter spoke, audiences could see groups of women of color stuffing shoes on a cramped assembly line and then a single woman hunched over a sewing machine surrounded by boxes.

Stories also suggested that consumers were responsible for sweatshop harm because they relentlessly sought commodified self-realization at a bargain price. *Eye on America* asked, "what about the consumer?"[267] Answering this question, a voice-over claimed, "Many in the industry say shoppers will not pay more to end sweatshops," while on the screen, several white women were shown looking through department store racks replete with clothing. *Nightline* introduced its sweatshop segment with images of young girls of color sewing in poorly lit, cramped rooms and a reporter's voice-over saying, "Tonight, the real cost of a good deal."[268] On the same program, Ted Koppel told audiences that "those of us who buy the products… pay very little attention to where and how those products are manufactured, as long as we feel that we're getting a bargain." This bargain-hunting "is, of course, what encourages the manufacturers to search out the lowest-paid hourly workers, wherever in the world they may be."[269] *The Los Angeles Times* quite bluntly aimed responsibility at First World consumers when they named "the consumer, grown used to bargain shopping at national chains" as "The great beneficiary" of the "ruthless machinery" of the "sweatshop" in which "garments could be sewn ever-more cheaply" in "filthy, fly-by-night rag shops that paid paltry—and sometimes sub-minimum—wages." Simply put, consumer "savings could be indirectly traced to exploited workers in America and abroad."[270]

News media thus suggested that First World consumers shared in the sweatshop blame because they demanded abundant and inexpensive commodities such that their appetite for market self-realization at a bargain price drove corporations to harm producers. This characterization of consumer agency cultivated classed guilt because it impeded consumers' bargain-shopping enjoyment by co-articulating consumerist pleasure with producer suffering. Media reports circulated the sense that First World shopping contained within it inadvertent violence directed toward innocent producers, imbuing the activity with an anxious responsibility for having caused this illegitimate harm.

Stories depicted guilt-tripping agents directing this consumer guilt toward ameliorative action. On ABC News, DOL officials urged consumers to "become more educated about the extent of the problem," and *The Los Angeles Times* upheld Gifford as an example, quoting her as saying "It has been a real education for me…I hope not just for me, but for every American who goes shopping.'"[271] News media also publicized calls for consumers to "demand accountability from clothing makers and sellers" through inquiry and shopping habits.[272] *The Washington Post* publicized the DOL's "consumer-oriented 'No Sweat' campaign" that prompted "consumers to ask retailers where clothes were made, whether the retailer independently monitors the contractors that make their goods and whether the retailer supports the 'No Sweat' campaign with a public commitment not to buy sweatshop goods."[273] An editorial for Florida's *St. Petersburg Times* argued that in addition to asking questions, "consumers also have the power to stop these companies by not purchasing their products."[274] Media reports circulated these

ways of channeling consumer guilt into forms of action that were sanctioned by prominent sweatshop guilt-trippers like the DOL and Gifford herself.

Although media reports did not depict consumers taking such ameliorative action during the Gifford controversy, stories later suggested that the controversy engendered consumer guilt that translated into anti-sweatshop purchasing and organizing behavior. Several months after Gifford appeared at the White House, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that "The high-profile Gifford is the one who churned up all this attention" about "sweatshops" causing a "groundswell of similar movements."[275] The next fall, *The Washington Post* Style writer Amy Brecount explained, "With all the hoopla about Kathie Lee Gifford and Wal-Mart last year, the issue of sweatshops here and abroad surfaced in the consumer consciousness."[276] Brecount went on to recount the many ways that "one lone consumer, really" could do to combat sweatshops, including joining a fair trade organization, asking where and how products were made, and only buying items not produced in sweatshops.

These media reports publicized a simultaneously potent and limited form of agency for consumers in a neoliberalizing age. Consumers were understood as primary agents operating under free market optimism, and in this case, mediated classed guilt challenged consumers to learn how their self-realization in the marketplace implicated exploitative production practices. This guilt antagonized free market optimism's promise to consumers that their apolitical purchases could fulfill them personally and spread peaceful prosperity globally. Instead, the guilt politicized purchasing, suggesting that consumers could again enjoy the marketplace if they learned about the systemic class structures that undergirded consumption and then chose products that privileged social

responsibility. This kind of antagonistic agency was potent because it took a primary agentic identity of the marketplace—the consumer—and pivoted it toward politics. As potent as it was in its milieu, this kind of agency was limited because it reified the neoliberal subjectivity of the individual consumer and the possibility of redemption in the marketplace. Still, in its limited way, this construction encouraged consumers to politicize their consumption by orienting it toward social responsibility and away from the unfettered market.

Conclusion

After decades of inattention, the 1996 Gifford controversy catapulted sweatshops back into mainstream U.S. consciousness. This controversy exposed the conditions of production that undergirded bourgeois life, like the exposés from the United States' period of industrialization, including Jacob Riss' *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) and newspaper coverage of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire (1911). Similar to exposés at the turn of the previous century, the Gifford controversy interrupted bourgeois enjoyment by permeating it with discomfort. During the Gifford affair, the news media nearly tripled its coverage of production practices, and sweatshops sustained significant coverage for years afterward.[277] Such public consciousness gave rise to various initiatives and movements, including a Presidential task force on employment standards and a swell of anti-sweatshop activity at the grassroots level.[278] Furthermore, discourses negotiating the "sweatshop" dimension of the free market have proliferated widely since 1996.[279] This debate would ultimately take three routes: one focused on persuading corporations and vendors to voluntarily ameliorate their practices, another pressured national and transnational regulatory agencies to enforce fairer labor standards, and a third pushed

individual consumers to shop ethically. Each track has had varying degrees of success, but the regulatory demands have been, for the most part, either stalled or ignored.[280]

In this chapter, I argued that this controversy was potent because it interrupted the enjoyment of free market optimism, which is a discourse that fosters a hopeful attachment to liberal economics by promising that the market will bring peaceful prosperity to the world and self-realization to individuals. In the early-to-mid 1990s, this discourse encouraged societies to move toward neoliberal restructuring by promising social and personal fulfillment. These hopeful discourses fostered a tension between market freedom and social responsibility because they saddled liberal economics with the promise of fulfilling social desires.

This chapter demonstrated that the Gifford controversy inhibited the pleasure of free market optimism by circulating shame and guilt—two related emotions that impede enjoyment. The mediated Gifford controversy circulated classed shame, then transformed it into classed guilt. Reports publicized Kernaghan's charges, co-articulating Gifford's character with the victimization of suffering producers. The news and tabloid media accelerated such coverage when Gifford responded to the allegations on air in a defensive, emotional outburst. Reports engaged an investigative ethos as they constructed a shameful controversy that drew attention to abusive production practices in the so-called Third World. Eventually, news stories transformed the shame into guilt by harnessing neoliberal attachments to personal responsibility, corporate benevolence, and consumer agency. Audiences saw Gifford and corporations taking social responsibility for class harm and engaging in redemptive behavior. Stories also circulated classed guilt around consumers' self-realization in the marketplace and encouraged them to also seek

redemption. The controversy interrupted the surging neoliberal articulation by privileging social responsibility over market freedom in ways that people could viscerally feel. It also crafted interconnected forms of agency that cast government officials, transnational activists, and redeemed offenders as moral evaluators. Ultimately, this episode challenged the unfettered market's capacity to usher in peaceful prosperity.

In this case, Gifford did not act as a scapegoat because she was not sacrificed to redeem the moral failings of global capitalism. Instead, activist texts and media reports articulated her as an embodiment of compassionate capitalism, and her redemption was held up as a model to prod other actors into redeeming the system. Gifford could act as synecdoche for compassionate capitalism because her market persona reified white bourgeois womanhood and its attendant social expectations: to act morally and to perform care for children and broader social welfare. Furthermore, publics could expect Gifford, as a woman, to be disciplined by male activists (Kernaghan and Reich) and to be moved into action by a suffering child (Diaz). Therefore, the Gifford episode suggests that capitalist womanhood can be quite susceptible to calls for antagonistic moral action because bourgeois women are often held to higher moral standards than masculine capitalists.

Other scholars have rightfully pointed to the limits of the controversy's foci and resolutions. Ethel C. Brooks argued that the episode's privileging of First World agents focused "on branding and corporate citizenship, and in the end it left the garment workers to fend for themselves in an industry that had been changed very little despite the media frenzy surrounding the summer of the sweatshop."[281] Brooks demonstrated how government initiatives were not implemented successfully because they relied on

corporations to monitor their own operations, with no outside enforcement.[282] Brooks argued that the controversy thus folded into the neoliberal narrative that privileges First World consumers, nation-states, and corporations as agents and celebrates individuals like Gifford instead of empowering workers to organize or governments to regulate.[283] Robert S.J. Ross similarly argued that government officials' embrace of voluntary monitoring was an insufficient outcome because workers continue to have no power over their working conditions.[284] Ross also maintained that consumer agency, particularly the agency to seek information about production practices, fell short by placing the onus on individual consumer choice.[285]

These critiques are certainly accurate and my study, in part, supports these conclusions. However, this chapter also suggests that the Gifford controversy antagonized the neoliberal articulation in three main ways: it created discomfort around the free market's hopeful promise, it pivoted neoliberal attachments and agents toward the political, and it amplified social responsibility over market freedom. These antagonisms were potent because they leveraged neoliberal attachments and identifications in ways that pointed to the limits of free market optimism, in effect showing that market freedom and social responsibility were uneasily attached in the most generous reading or, more radically, impossible to simultaneously pursue. The controversy suggested that one must often be jettisoned for the other to thrive. Therefore, rhetorically, this controversy constituted an antagonism that was legible as a denouncement of neoliberalism because it participated in dominant discourses and then pivoted them toward critique.

Beyond this judgment, the Gifford case study has four major implications. First, it demonstrates that shame and guilt can be wielded as antagonistic public emotions because both emotions inhibit the enjoyment that is inherent in ideological structures. People participate in systems, in part, because they are drawn to the enjoyment a system offers or promises to provide in the future.[286] Shame and guilt both offer opportunities for impeding such enjoyment in ways that feel very personal because these emotions implicate individuals in social norms. Both have been called "moral emotions" because they evaluate a person/group or their actions while also negotiating social expectations.[287] Guilt prompts people and groups to assign responsibility for harmful actions, thus prompting them to evaluate social constructions of harm and agency. This case study also demonstrated that guilt offers the promise of future enjoyment and approval as rewards for correcting harmful behaviors and that agents who experience guilt can pass it on to others.

Second, this case study demonstrates that the partition of the globe into "First" and "Third" worlds offers an opportunity to antagonize neoliberalism by foregrounding class in a globalized world. This case study showed how discourses implicitly constructed class by amplifying neocolonial discourses that blend race, gender, age, and occupation to construct classed worlds: the "First" as a world of exchange and agency and the "Third" as one of production and victimization. This move is clearly problematic, particularly when it comes to constructions of agency that translate into a felt responsibility for the First World to "save" the Third World through interventions. However, in the Gifford case, these worlds were co-articulated with shame and guilt, allowing a global understanding of class to challenge the neoliberal articulation. This

challenge was particularly potent when "Third World" conditions were exposed in the "First World," thus interrupting the sense that under-development led to abuse; instead, the First World's impetus to profit and consumption assumed some responsibility for class differentiation. This construction challenged the neoliberal articulation's construction of profit, deregulation, and the free flow of global capital as heralds of human progress.[288]

Third, the Gifford controversy shows the power and limitations of antagonistic agency in a neoliberal world. Labor activists, government officials, and a redeemed celebrity emerged from this controversy as prominent judgmental others who assessed modes of bourgeois self- fulfillment and peaceful prosperity. To a lesser extent, Diaz, the 15-year old Honduran sweatshop worker, also played the role of judgmental other, though she was often cast as an accompaniment to the more prominent First World agents. In moments of shaming, the judgmental other denounces someone or something as fraudulent, while in moments of guilt-tripping, the judgmental other pronounces certain actions as illicit. The judgmental other and/or the moral code upon which their judgment is based must in some way participate in dominant discourses in order to be legible as a legitimate denouncement. In a neoliberal world, the judgmental others may summon guilt by amplifying neoliberal attachments and then pivoting them away from the market, as difficult a task as that may prove to be. For instance, in this case study, Gifford's version of such agency co-articulated personal responsibility with government oversight, thus harnessing a neoliberal value to circulate guilt around a classed harm that was perpetuated on a structural level. Government officials and labor activists also engaged as judgmental others, wielding this simultaneously potent and limited form of

agency—that of a moral prodder of the powerful, not as a moral actor with significant power. However, given the restrictions on government and labor activism engendered by the neoliberal articulation, it is no surprise that these entitites could not emerge as power brokers.

As limited as the judgmental other may be, in the Gifford case, these judicious others set the bounds of penance and acted as agents of forgiveness. Thus, in any situation involving guilt, it is imperative that judgmental others carefully consider their prescriptions for redemption. Consider, for example, what might have happened if Kernaghan and Reich called on Gifford to set structures that empowered garment workers to unionize. It is possible that this call would have fallen flat in a neoliberal world, but penance is usually also a negotiation between the judgmental other, the accused, and other social actors, and this call would have at least started closer to worker empowerment than the inspection proposal.

In addition to the judgmental other, this case study shows that news and tabloid media can engage antagonistic agency by publicizing controversy. In the Gifford case, reports publicized the dispute over sweatshops and many reporters adopted either a confrontational or investigative posture, both of which prodded various actors to ruminate publicly on production practices. In this case, also, Gifford's celebrity persona and entrepreneurship invited coverage from various sectors of news media including gossip columns, business section, front-page news, and investigative tabloids. The controversy, then, located discomfort around neoliberal production in spaces of inquiry and enjoyment. This form of agency was powerful because of its breadth and its ability to constitute sweatshop labor as an issue worthy of opinion and investigation, and the

"controversy" frame allowed reports to offer scathing indictments that antagonized the neoliberal articulation. News media agency was also limited, though, because, like the judgmental other, it lacked enforcement outside of the court of public opinion and because many news media were compelled to feature both sides of the sweatshop issue, thus also giving voice to sweatshop apologists and other neoliberal agents. Still, this case study shows that news media play a crucial role in circulating antagonistic disputes.

Ultimately, this chapter points to the importance of re-organizing structures of emotion around the free market. This controversy did not stop at offering refutations or engaging in "unmasking" rhetorics that revealed the truth of exploitation. By constituting and circulating shame and guilt, the controversy actively altered the emotional attachments to market behavior such that product endorsement felt uneasy for celebrities, cheap production felt disagreeable to corporations, and shopping felt uncomfortable for consumers. Guilt's promise of redemption created new structures of emotional attachment such that people could again enjoy market activities if they privileged social responsibility over market freedom.

NOTES

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[4] Shales, "Oh, Reege! Oh, Kathie Lee!"
[5] Ethel C. Brooks, *Unraveling the Garment Industry: Transnational Organizing and Women's Work* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 54, 62.
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[14] Morgan, "Kellwood Teams with Kathie Lee; Wal-Mart to Carry Gifford's Collection."
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[31] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 108–12; Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*, 116–64.
[32] Of course, the distinction between affects and emotions is porous and itself a meaning-making devise, but many affect and emotion scholars maintain this conceptual differentiation to analyze the construction and circulation of affective and emotional resonances. For more on the distinction between affect and emotion, see Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 50, 108–12; Antonio R Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Inc., 2000), 35–81; Jenny Edbauer Rice, "The New 'New': Making a Case

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The Battle in Seattle:
Democracy and Violence as Antagonistic Disruptions

In late 1999, the streets of Seattle exploded with rejections of neoliberal globalization. Thirty-thousand protesters swarmed the city to direct their "free-form anger" about globalized capital at the meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO).[1] Just after dawn on the first day of meetings, protesters mobilized by the Direct Action Network (DAN) descended on the convention center and joined their arms with bicycle locks to prevent delegates from reaching their meetings, which the protesters condemned as secretive and anti-democratic. Several blocks away, the AFL-CIO set up its parade, which demonstrated organized labor's resistance to free trade agreements that institutionalized low wages and an insecure workforce.[2]

As the first day of protests progressed, both the Seattle Police Department (SPD) and the leaders of the WTO were overwhelmed with the displays of resistance. By ten o'clock in the morning, the SPD began firing rounds of tear gas to disperse the protesting bodies that took over the streets. To the police's dismay, the tear gas did not disperse the protesters, who remained linked, coughing, but chanting, "Whose streets? Our streets!"[3] The AFL-CIO parade began shortly thereafter, and several-thousand labor marchers jettisoned their parade route to join the action around the convention center. In the days before the protests, the Black Bloc Anarchists had made a deal with DAN to not engage in any violence as long as the police also remained peaceful. Once the police fired the tear gas, Black Bloc Anarchists moved swiftly to destroy prominent symbols of the neoliberal world order. They descended on Starbucks, Nike, the Gap, and Old Navy and smashed their windows in protest. Dumpsters burned in the middle of Seattle streets.

Police fired tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber bullets in an effort to restore order in the streets. The WTO leadership cancelled its scheduled opening-day events. By nightfall, Seattle Mayor Paul Schell declared a state of emergency, instated a curfew, and called in the National Guard to discipline the largest protest against global free trade the United States had ever seen.[4]

The events of that first day set the tone for the rest of the WTO meeting. For the next four days, protesters both inside and outside the meeting articulated a vision of the world economic order that rejected the global spread of neoliberal policy. Protesters outside the meeting held myriad sit-ins, demonstrations, parades, and street art shows, all aimed at "shutting down" not only this meeting, but also the spread of unfettered capitalism worldwide.[5] For days, a "loose coalition of environmentalists, unionists," students, and even "right-wing Reform Party presidential hopeful Pat Buchanan" enacted what "democracy looks like."[6]

Inside the meetings, delegates from poorer countries took their own stand against the wealthier, more powerful nations like the United States and Britain. Within one day, 1,700 groups affiliated with poorer countries signed a petition that condemned the way the talks were structured. Delegates criticized the speed of negotiations and their countries' exclusion from the agenda-setting conversations, during which social issues "were seen to be constantly suborned to pure economic interests."[7] One Filipino leader commented that if leaders were "worried about a few windows being smashed," they "should come and see the violence being done to our communities in the name of liberalization of trade."[8] In sum, the myriad people who were "left behind" by a global free market agenda gathered to re-organize economic priorities both inside and outside

the WTO meetings. Ultimately, the talks collapsed, ending in a failure to set a WTO agenda.[9]

This "Battle in Seattle"[10] forcefully challenged global proliferation of the neoliberal articulation at a time when powerful leaders and institutions promoted its expansion in the name of democracy and prosperity. With capitalist democracies declared victors of the Cold War, prominent discourses of the 1990s celebrated the dawn of a "new world" primed for free markets and democracy.[11] Amidst accelerated openness and mobility across once-firm boundaries, governments of powerful nation-states and international monetary organizations offered to deliver peaceful prosperity to the world by promoting global free trade and advancing private enterprise.[12] As the previous chapter demonstrated, optimistic discourses promised that free market capitalism would usher in peaceful prosperity, thus eliminating ideological animosity, ending violent warfare, engendering widespread prosperity, and extending democratic governance.

In the 1990s, proponents of global economic liberalization emphasized democracy as an unstable legitimator for neoliberal policies. Prominent spokespeople and institutions largely re-articulated existing connections between democracy and free markets, even as they subtly allowed for the dis-articulation of the two by suggesting that free markets could reasonably precede democratization. Although such separation became possible, even spokespeople who suggested that economic liberalization could precede democratization often couched such assertions in some eventual promise of democracy. As a powerful empty signifier, democracy could legitimate neoliberal proliferation because it invoked a familiar ideal of peace that had gained resonance and global power with the collapse of the Soviet Union. As chapter three demonstrated, democracy's

affective allure in the 1990s resided in its promise of what Katherine Fierlbeck called "the diffusion of power within a relatively ordered social environment."[13] Democracy, as imagined in these discourses, promised to "facilitate and protect individuals' command over the way in which their life is to be lived" without the overt threat of force and violence.[14] Connected with democracy's promise of peaceful agency, many Western audiences could imagine economic liberalization as a peaceful alternative to violent warfare in a post-Cold War world.

To facilitate a global economy premised on peace, the WTO replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1995, becoming the world's premier multilateral trade body.[15] The WTO formalized and modified GATT, which was a multilateral trading agreement and negotiation process that, according to the WTO's telling of its history, "arose in 1947 out of the ashes of the Second World War."[16] The WTO institutionalized a process for negotiations between states that had been customary under GATT, extended membership to nations previously excluded, and widened the scope of trade to include "the cross-border movement not just of goods but of services, capital, ideas and even people."[17] The WTO sought to make trade as open as possible, which advocates maintained was the only peaceful and sensible arrangement in an inevitably interconnected world. According to the organization's promotional materials, the WTO would function as "a forum for countries to thrash out their differences on trade issues…peacefully and constructively" in a world where interconnectedness meant "more opportunities for trade disputes to arise."[18] Advocates of the WTO, then, asserted that the institution would offer peaceful agency in a world where globalization was an inevitable reality.

In response to such discourses, protesters and media descended on Seattle in the last two months of the twentieth century to challenge the WTO's neoliberal approach to international economic relations. These momentous protests have engendered robust analysis by communication scholars. Researchers have demonstrated the diversity of strategies that Seattle protesters employed when communicating with each other, with mainstream and alternative media, with the state, and even with archivists after the protests.[19] Existing scholarship has also shown how both mainstream and alternative media coverage of the protests catapulted the protesters' critiques of the WTO into very public view, and how the protests can be understood as part of a wider movement for global justice.[20] Each of these studies has taken a very specific aspect of the protests, yet these studies have not explored *how* the protests interrupted hegemonic globalization.

This chapter fills such a void by demonstrating how the protests—taken holistically—disrupted neoliberal globalization. This study treats the Seattle protests as an embodied and mediated rhetorical moment that antagonized the neoliberal articulation by dis-articulating democracy and free trade, while co-articulating free trade and violence. I argue that these protests took advantage of the unstable relationship between democracy and free trade to force a wedge between the two concepts. I also argue that the protests antagonized the neoliberal articulation by associating free trade with violence. Ultimately, this chapter shows how the protests articulated a stark choice for the globalizing world: neoliberal autocracy or economic democracy.

To make this argument, I first argue that discourses advocating global economic liberalization simultaneously co-articulated and dis-articulated free markets and democracy, thus fostering a tension that the Seattle protests would engage. I then

demonstrate how the WTO fostered a more specified tension by simultaneously co- and dis- articulating democracy and free trade. Next, I analyze how embodied and mediated dimensions of the Seattle protests further dis-articulated democracy and free trade and co-articulated the latter with violence. Finally, I explain how this case study demonstrates the antagonistic potential of two potent empty signifiers: democracy and violence.

The Latter 1990s: Globalizing Free Trade and Democracy

Drawing on connections fortified during the Cold War, many prominent discourses of the latter 1990s marked democracy as a primary legitimating term for the expansion of neoliberal policy. As an abstraction, democracy assembled a wide array of explicit and implicit commitments, practices, and connotations. In discourses advocating economic liberalization, democracy commonly referred to the dispersal of economic, political, and cultural power.[21] For example, Senator Bill Bradley (D) offered such de-centralization of power as evidence of a democratizing trends in China, remarking that "Beijing's centralized control over the provinces has loosened."[22] Hector Garcia, the leader of a free trade advocacy group, argued that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) could "help speed the process of democratizing the global economy" as "the first international agreement in which representatives of the developed and developing nations" were bestowed with "similar authority" in negotiations over trade.[23] Garcia's comments, like those of others, suggested that democracy meant dispersing authoritative power across loci, thus associating democracy with de-centralized power.

Democracy also tended to describe a form of participatory and lawful governance that stood in stark contrast with dictatorial rule. Commentators pointed to the

proliferation of elections in Latin America as evidence of "the region's almost universal embrace of democracy."[24] President Bill Clinton and other prominent commentators celebrated elections as markers of the "dramatic swing of Latin American and Caribbean nations from dictatorship to democratic government."[25] Pro-liberalization rhetoric suggested that such popular participation was enabled by the transparent rule of law. For example, when describing China's democratization, Bradley asserted that "The rigor of law is slowly replacing the whim of the Communist Party in many economic sectors," which enabled local, non-governmental entrepreneurs to participate in crafting their country's economy.[26] Messages like Bradley's suggested that democratic governance could traverse politics and economics. The democracy signifier, then, commonly connoted what M. Lane Bruner called "rights-based constitutional nation-state governments" that coordinated, but did not control, political and economic life.[27]

Finally, democracy often implied improved social conditions, including the advancement of ambiguously-defined human rights. Clinton asserted that "democratic government" would provide Latin American nations "benefits that will actually change the lives of real people for the better."[28] A nation-state's democratic status depended on the extent to which it advanced individual freedom and protected human rights, a concept that meant a variety of often contradictory commitments.[29] Democratizing countries like China meant crafting "an effective human rights policy," according to John Shattuck, Clinton's Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy and Human Rights, whose title alone suggested democracy's link to human rights.[30] In discourses advocating the neoliberal articulation's global expansion, then, democracy signified a transparent and

participatory structure of governance that dispersed power, improved social conditions, and protected human rights.

As chapter one demonstrated, the neoliberal articulation sutures free markets and democracy, drawing on a discursive history that extends to the European Enlightenment, when a capitalist market and the private property of a growing bourgeoisie disrupted monarchical power.[31] In the mid-to-late 1990s, discourses advocating global economic liberalization simultaneously amplified and de-emphasized this connection, thus fostering a tension that the Seattle protests would engage.

Co-articulating Democracy and Free Markets

Proponents of free trade and privatization re-articulated Cold War rhetorics that drew impenetrable boundaries between market democracy and communist authoritarianism.[32] Discourses advocating globalized neoliberal policies fortified links between market economies and political democracy as they reinforced connections between state-controlled economies and political authoritarianism. Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Bernard Aronson explained that "the old, closed system of statist economic controls throughout Latin America was the bedrock of power of the corporatist, oligarchic elite that financed and supported authoritarian rule."[33] Aronson maintained that "Dismantling that structure has liberated not only market forces in the economy but also the forces of democratization in civil society."[34] In a speech to the World Bank's Board of Governors, the organization's president, James D. Wolfensohn, remarked on such a change, marveling at the extent to which "democracy has swept the world" as "Country after country has moved away from command and control to greater reliance on markets."[35] Some journalists reinforced this worldview by reporting on the economic and

political "transformation" sweeping the globe.[36] For example, Charles Trueheart, writing for *The Washington Post*, described how "Before 1980, more than a dozen Latin American countries were ruled by military dictatorships and two were Marxist states; now, Cuba is the only country in the region that has not held democratic elections."[37] In the same paragraph, Trueheart asserted that this "political transformation has been accompanied by a massive shift toward economic liberalization."[38] As these observations demonstrate, commentators slipped between terms, treating economic and political systems as inherently bonded in ways that reinforced Cold War themes.

Advocates of free trade and privatization also sutured free markets and democracy by asserting that these policies would create economic growth and that such prosperity would engender peaceful democratization. Operating on the assumption that democracy could not thrive in poverty, commentators and policy makers suggested that growing economies would create the conditions necessary for democratization.[39] For example, some advocates of liberalized trade relations with China argued that "trade links will help create a thriving Chinese middle class, which in turn offers the best hope for China to eventually follow the path toward democratization."[40] Senator Bradley argued that economic growth would "create a fluid political and social environment and the emergence of a class of prosperous Chinese—all of which fuel democratization and improved human rights practices" because "prosperity breaks down old controls and generates demands for improved political and social conditions."[41] Regarding economic development in the Western Hemisphere, Aronson asserted that "economic liberalization is empowering a new class of entrepreneurs" who were "far less inclined to risk economic isolation by supporting a military coup d'etat."[42] Thus, he predicted that "trade

flowing freely across its borders" would allow "our hemisphere" to "emerge in the 21st century as a zone of democracy and peace where rising prosperity is widely shared."[43] Speaking to the *New York Times*, foreign policy expert Michael Mandelbaum neatly summarized what he called the "driving conviction" of the growing post-Cold War hegemony: "that economic and trade relations will lead to democratization."[44]

Furthermore, international monetary organization discourses suggested that economic liberalization would create economic stability, which would allow democracy to take root and flourish where authoritarian regimes once ruled. In 1993, the Clinton Administration announced that they would lobby "international lending institutions to put money into development projects that promote democracy."[45] In 1998, president of the Philippines Fidel Ramos tied economic reform to democratization when he met with representatives of the U.S. government, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank. Ramos reassured these organizations that his country was "a better functioning democracy than six years ago, because we have been able to fulfill most of the economic recovery programs" designed by international monetary institutions.[46] Indeed, monetary institutions warned countries that their grip on democracy grew more tenuous with each step away from economic liberalization. For example, the IMF's Michel Camdessus warned Russian leaders that their economic policies could endanger democratization, criticizing the government for "letting inflation get out of control, saying the risk of hyperinflation threatened Russia's fledgling democracy."[47] Camdessus insisted that "Hyperinflation must be stopped at all costs" because "Many democracies in the world have been killed by hyperinflation."[48] Discourses like these suggested that

liberal economics would offer a context of stability, which would enable democracy to take root.

Some proponents of economic liberalization reversed this logic by arguing that democratization would enable the development and maintenance of free markets. During a speech at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Alan Greenspan argued that "democracy is a necessary component for the efficient long-term functioning of a free market economy."[49] Greenspan constructed democracy as the transparent rule of law that protected the individual freedom to engage in a private market, concluding, "We depend on government in a free society to ensure those market 'rights.'"[50] Clinton's national security advisor Anthony Lake asserted a similar relationship between democracy and free markets, writing in *The New York Times* that "Democracies create free markets that offer economic opportunity."[51] Although these remarks inversed the logic that constructed free markets as enabling democracy, both logics constructed positive relationships between democracy and free markets, thus reinforcing the two concepts' inextricable linkages.

These links were consistently repeated, even without an explicit logic, as commentators and policymakers addressed democracy and free markets in tandem. Leaders of both the United States and Britain advanced Third Way politics, which blended commitments to free markets and liberal-democratic values.[52] British Prime Minister Tony Blair touted the "historic opportunity" that allowed Third Way policymakers to re-affirm "our long commitment to fairness, democracy and freedom" while "applying them to our new world of dynamic markets."[53] Stateside, Lake asserted that powerful nations like the United States should "reshape and create international

structures…to consolidate the victory of democracy and open markets."[54] Internationally, U.S.-led trade summits often addressed "democratization" alongside free trade agreements because, as Clinton asserted during one such gathering, "democracy and trade go hand in hand."[55] Such repetitions consolidated the terms' co-articulation as a matter of common sense.

Dis-articulating Democracy and Free Markets

Although free markets and democracy emerged as a prudent pairing, discourses promoting and implementing global economic liberalization also suggested that free markets could reasonably precede democracy. Such a suggestion allowed people to conceptually understand free markets as able to be separated, if only temporarily, from democracy. For example, experts publicly warned the Clinton administration not to address "democratization" at trade summits because "Latin American leaders want to talk about one issue—creating a free trade zone."[56] One commentator warned that if Latin American leaders "hear too much about other issues" they could "form trade alliances with Europe and Asia" instead of with the United States.[57] Before attending a three-day hemispheric trade summit, Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen confirmed that trade was "at the top of the agenda" and "the most important question."[58] These kinds of discourses prioritized trade over democracy, thus suggesting that the concepts were not as inextricably linked as other dimensions of neoliberal discourse suggested. Even if the rationale for free trade was eventual democratization, privileging trade suggested that the two could be implemented separately.

The international handling of the 1997 Asian financial crisis also fostered a conceptual separation of democracy and free markets. In the name of economic stability,

several international monetary organizations and the United States together pledged to loan Indonesia eighteen billion dollars to "give the country a lift and help contain a regionwide crisis," even though the nation was ruled by "the authoritarian Suharto government."[59] The loans did not make financial assistance dependent upon democratic reforms, but lenders did mandate that Indonesia liberalize its economic structures. When Suharto wavered on adopting such liberalization, representatives of the IMF and the U.S. government pressured him to pursue "demonstrable and vigorous implementation of IMF reforms" as "the best prospect for restoring financial stability and economic growth in Indonesia."[60] Criticism of the handling of this crisis abounded, even among advocates of economic liberalization. One commentator noted that "When dealing with crises such as the one in Indonesia, the traditional U.S. preference is for stability, even if it results in repression and the denial of democracy and human rights."[61] These discourses subtly cleaved democracy from free markets by showing that economic liberalization aimed at creating free markets had been implemented before democratic reforms.

This disarticulation became particularly prominent in the United States during debates over trade relations with China. These discourses tended to highlight the protection of human rights—particularly those of Chinese pro-democracy dissidents—as a primary dimension of democratization.[62] Since 1980, China had been granted most favored nation (MFN) trade status, which meant that Chinese goods could enter the U.S. market at low tariff rates.[63] With some debate, this status had been renewed annually, but in 1993, the newly inaugurated Clinton Administration decided to make this renewal contingent on China's progress on human rights.[64] One year later, the administration changed course by "de-linking" human rights and trade.[65] When Clinton revoked the

linkage, he publicized a split between terms that his campaign and his first presidential term had once overtly linked. This widely publicized decision suggested that the implementation of unimpeded trade policies took priority over addressing human rights concerns in China.

This disarticulation became more pronounced when Clinton's 1997 renewal of China's MFN status prompted heated debate in Congress.[66] Among other rebukes, opponents complained that trade engagement had not democratized China; they declared that the country's "human rights violations have increased" and that "China's oppression of free expression continues" as its MFN status was renewed.[67] Resisting such criticism, proponents of free trade argued that "the mandatory linkage between trade privileges and human rights" was so "obsolete" that it belonged in "the dust heap of history."[68] Although many proponents of renewal insisted that trade could eventually bring democracy, this controversy subtly allowed for the dis-articulation of free markets and democracy by affirming the possibility of implementing free trade without evidence of progress toward democratization. In the next few years, the Clinton administration would "come under criticism for what its opponents describe as the elevation of trade over human rights," thus suggesting that the separation had gained traction.[69]

Contesting Globalized Free Trade and Democracy in the WTO

When Clinton called on Congress to ratify the WTO's establishment in 1994, voices resurfaced from the NAFTA debate.[70] Although the measure passed with a "Big Bipartisan Vote," various publics contested the WTO's public meaning since its inception.[71] Both advocates and critics characterized the WTO as a locus of agency in a globalizing world, even as they contested the nature and valence of such globalized

power. As leaders, institutions, and critics negotiated the nature and value of the WTO's agency, they simultaneously co-articulated and dis-articulated democracy and free trade. In these discourses, democracy generally signified a transparent and participatory structure of governance that dispersed power and improved social conditions. However, divergent usages emphasized different aspects of the democracy abstraction, thus marking democracy as an unstable term.

Co-Articulating Democracy and Free Trade

Characterizations of the WTO often attached to more general judgments about free trade because the organization was committed explicitly and solely to promoting global free trade.[72] As such, advocates of the WTO co-articulated democracy and free trade in two ways; they suggested that the institution's free trade agenda was pursuing democratic goals and that the organization abided by democratic procedure. The first democratic goal touted by WTO proponents was the widespread distribution of global power. The organization's promotional materials argued that the WTO empowered nations struggling for global agency by "giving smaller countries more voice" and by providing opportunities "to form alliances and to pool resources."[73] Without the WTO, one pamphlet explained, "more powerful countries would be freer to impose their will unilaterally on their smaller trading partners" who "would be much less able to resist unwanted pressure" by negotiating without the WTO.[74] Clyde V. Prestowitz Jr., president of the Economic Strategy Institute, told *The Washington Post* that the WTO was "another step in a gradual spread of economic power around the world."[75] In addition to adjusting global power imbalances, the WTO promised to help national governments resist "pressure from narrow interests groups" that threatened to hijack national economic

agendas.[76] Stateside, commentators lambasted WTO opponents as "special interests that want to preserve the government's ability to protect them by imposing unilateral trade sanctions."[77] In these ways, proponents of the WTO constructed the organization as committed to diluting concentrated hubs of power like large nations and lobbying groups.

To ensure such dispersed power, the WTO aimed to institute "the rule of law" in global economics because "A system based on rules rather than power makes life easier for all."[78] The WTO named its primary objective as establishing "the global rules of trade between nations," calling its agreements "the legal ground-rules for international commerce" and "contracts" that guaranteed "member countries important trade rights."[79] WTO materials touted the system as "fair" because "everyone has to follow the same rules" in their "non-discriminatory trading system."[80] This system included a dispute resolution forum to which countries could appeal "if they think their rights under the agreements are being infringed."[81] One pamphlet explained that the WTO's procedure was "The most harmonious way to settle" disputes because it constituted a "neutral procedure based on an agreed legal foundation."[82] In his address to the leaders of the WTO, President Clinton, himself the leader of a capitalist-democracy, applauded the organization for "its insistence on rules that are fair and open" and its "powerful role" in moving the world "toward open and accountable government."[83] Like Clinton, advocates of the WTO touted the organization's insistence on the transparent rule of law, implicitly joining free trade with democracy.

The final WTO goal aligned with democracy was "to improve the welfare of the peoples of the member countries" by replacing warfare with negotiation.[84] WTO publications placed the organization within a post-WWII trajectory of peace, wherein

enforceable trade rules played a key role in maintaining harmony. One brochure explained, "After the war, the world's community of trading nations negotiated trade rules which are now entrusted to the WTO."[85] In the post-war world, "international trade tension is reduced because countries can turn to organizations, in particular the WTO, to settle their trade disputes," an option that "was not available…Before World War 2."[86] WTO pamphlets also included historical counter-examples of "trade disputes turning into war."[87] One document asserted that "the trade war of the 1930s…worsened the Great Depression and eventually played a part in the outbreak of World War 2" because "countries competed to raise trade barriers in order to protect domestic producers and retaliate again each others' barriers."[88] This narrative suggested that protectionist economic policies actively caused violent eruptions and that warfare could be avoided with better managed, freer trade. More generally, the WTO maintained that free trade agreements were well positioned to provide such peace because, "Crudely put, sales people are usually reluctant to fight their customers."[89] In the vision proffered by the WTO, free trade agreements could improve social conditions by preventing violent warfare.

Advocates of the WTO also constructed the free trade organization as a representative democracy that sought to eliminate undue coercion. Proponents insisted that the WTO was a "member-driven" organization premised on self-governance, not autocratic authority.[90] Institutional publications plainly stated, "the WTO does not dictate to governments to adopt or drop certain policies…In fact, it's the governments who dictate to the WTO" because "The WTO is run by its member governments" and "All major decisions are made by the membership as a whole."[91] Even the WTO's coercion to

comply with agreements and rulings could be understood as legitimate self-governance because, according to the WTO's promotional material, they enforced "agreements that the infringing government had itself accepted," rather than taking authoritarian action.[92]

WTO proponents also touted the democratic nature of the organization's procedures for decision-making by highlighting the procedures' privileging of representation, negotiation, and consensus. Promotional materials asserted that "Individuals" were represented in the organization "through their governments" in WTO negotiations, during which "The private sector, non-governmental organizations and other lobbying groups do not participate" directly because "The WTO is an organization of governments."[93] This construction suggested that the organization privileged citizens over private enterprise because the WTO was comprised of representative governments that voiced their citizens' concerns. The documents also insisted that representation was endemic to the WTO agreements because procedures mandated that "nations took agreements back to their parliaments for ratification."[94]

In addition to touting the WTO's representational character, the organization promoted its commitment to negotiation as an essential institutional characteristic. One pamphlet read, "one of the WTO's most important functions is to serve as a forum for trade negotiations," which offered agency to member nations to peacefully engage to their mutual benefit.[95] Promotional materials maintained that "liberalization under the WTO is the result of negotiations."[96] Pamphlets suggested that trade agreements resulted from "considerable debate and controversy," and were not settled until every party entered into them voluntarily and with their interests served.[97] This kind of negotiation

could be understood as democratic because it dispersed power and offered participatory agency to member nations, thus constituting a non-authoritarian form of governance.

WTO advocates further publicized the institution's commitment to non-authoritarianism by highlighting its fair and consensual decision-making process. Months before Congress ratified the WTO's establishment, trade analyst Claude Barfield re-assured readers of *The Washington Post* that the organization instituted both "the principle of one nation/one vote" and "initial decision-making by consensus."[98] WTO promotional materials also maintained that decisions were "typically taken by consensus among all member countries," meaning that "every country accepts the decisions. There are no dissenters."[99] Such a process, pamphlets asserted, was "even more democratic than majority rule because everyone has to agree," thus ensuring that each member country's "interests are properly considered" and that "every country has a voice."[100] WTO proponents explained that "When consensus is not possible," decisions were still undertaken fairly through a voting process. One pamphlet explained that a vote on a new rule could be "won with a majority of the votes cast and on the basis of 'one country, one vote.'"[101]

For proponents of the organization, the institution's process was legitimate because "decisions taken in the WTO are negotiated, accountable and democratic."[102] By casting the WTO and its goals as democratically oriented, advocates of the institution co-articulated free trade and democracy. In these discourses, democracy signified a procedure by which government representatives voluntarily negotiated transparent and enforceable agreements. These voluntarily adopted rules promised to improve social

conditions globally by offering participatory economic agency and by replacing violent warfare with peaceful negotiation.

Dis-Articulating Democracy and Free Trade

Discourses making sense of the WTO also dis-articulated democracy and free trade in two ways. First, the WTO and its opponents alike maintained that the institution foreclosed democratic engagement on the free trade question. Although WTO advocates touted the organization's democratic process, promotional materials acknowledged that free trade itself was not up for negotiation because the system was designed to enable "countries to lower their trade barriers and to allow trade to flow more freely."[103] Therefore, although member nations could negotiate on "how low those barriers should go," they could not negotiate about free trade as such because the WTO's founding documents created a strict line between trade and politics, claiming the former as the institution's domain.[104] As a free trade organization, the WTO could mark issues like "Labour standards" as officially "not on the agenda" because such considerations had a "political angle" that could "simply be an excuse for protectionism," which would impinge upon trade liberalization.[105]

Seizing on the WTO's trade focus, critics accused the organization of autocratically advancing free trade. In a series of op-eds, writers from Public Citizen explained that although "Trade agreements now affect a broad range of issues, from the safety of our food to how local tax dollars are spent, from the size and safety of trucks to the methods used to protect endangered species," the WTO's "rules put maximizing trade liberalization ahead of other values such as safety, the environment or living standards."[106] *Whose Trade Organization?* argued that when national laws became

"subject to a WTO panel's review," they were "judged exclusively by narrow, specific WTO-set economic standards," barring all other policy questions from deliberation.[107] Commenting on the WTO's first dispute resolution decision in 1996, economic analysts Alan Tonelson and Lori Wallach wrote that "at the WTO, trade effects trump all other considerations."[108] In sum, both critics and advocates dis-articulated free trade and democracy by placing the questions of free trade and social policy outside the purview of the WTO's negotiation process.

Second, critics of the WTO charged the organization with wielding autocratic power and overriding domestic policies, a charge that WTO documents, to some extent, confirmed. Critics characterized the WTO as a secretive locus of concentrated global power. Public Citizen's Ralph Nader and Laura Grund separately commented on "The widening shift in power" taking place "from local democratic bodies to unaccountable global trade bureaucracies."[109] Their commentary appropriated the term "bureaucracy," a derogatory term for governmental administration that had gained currency in the neoliberal milieu, to criticize the WTO as a complex structure that refused citizen participation. Similarly, *Whose Trade Organization?* argued that "WTO business is conducted by committees and panels that meet behind closed doors in Geneva, Switzerland."[110] This construction dis-articulated democracy and free markets because it characterized the institution responsible with liberalizing trade as a faceless and distant system, cordoned off from citizen concerns.

Such unaccountable power played a particularly prominent role in the WTO's dispute resolution process, in which countries could confidentially bring trade disputes if one party perceived that another was breaking negotiated agreements.[111] As described in

the WTO's promotional material, the organization granted its Dispute Settlement Body "the sole authority to establish 'panels' of experts to consider the case."[112] Panels of three or five trade "experts from different countries" would "examine the evidence and decide who is right and who is wrong," and then report to the Dispute Settlement Body, "which can only reject the report by consensus."[113] Consensus meant that these rulings were "automatically adopted unless there is a consensus to reject a ruling," so "any country wanting to block a ruling has to persuade all other WTO members (including its adversary in the case) to share its view."[114] The WTO's Director-General Renato Ruggerio celebrated this dispute resolution system as "stronger" and "more automatic" than previous systems.[115]

To critics, the strength, confidentiality, and speed of the resolution process was reason for concern about diminishing democratic norms. *Whose Trade Organization?* accused the panels of being "Secretive and Without Due Process" because the hearings were kept confidential and the rulings were adopted immediately, making the WTO "unique among all other international agreements in that consensus is required to *stop* action."[116] Even Clinton, an ardent supporter of the WTO, criticized the secretive resolution process, urging the organization's leadership to "take every feasible step to bring openness and accountability to its operations. Today," he said, "when one nation challenges the trade practices of another, the proceeding takes place behind closed doors" and "there is no mechanism for private citizens to provide input in these trade disputes."[117] Discourses critical of the WTO, even sympathetic ones, characterized its dispute resolution process as either unintentionally lacking perspicuity, at best, or actively obfuscating decisions, at worst. These critiques dis-articulated free trade and

democracy by characterizing the WTO as skirting democratic norms of transparency, participation, and collective deliberation.

The final charge of autocracy leveled against the WTO was that the organization wielded the power to override domestic policies that had been decided by democratic process. *Whose Trade Organization?* argued that the WTO was staging a "*coup d'etat* over democratic governance worldwide" by instituting "new and unprecedented controls over democratic governance."[118] The book concluded, "After an in-depth analysis of the decisions reached by WTO dispute resolutions panels," that the WTO had consistently ruled against all "democratically achieved environmental, health, food safety or environmental law" on the basis that they constituted "barriers to trade."[119] Grund offered an example to readers of *The Washington Post,* writing that "a panel of three WTO trade bureaucrats in Geneva" was currently considering a case against "part of our Endangered Species Act that protects rare sea turtles from methods of shrimp harvesting." [120] If the panel ruled against the act, "the United States will have to change the law or face sanctions."[121] This example suggested that the WTO was anti-democratic because its panels of only three "trade bureaucrats" could overturn a law that was established by the U.S. government, which understood itself as a democracy. To some extent, WTO promotional materials supported such a charge, confirming that the "WTO body can have a direct impact on a government's policies" because "the losing 'defendant'" must "bring its policy into line with the ruling."[122] Otherwise, the Dispute Settlement Body had "the power to authorize retaliation" against a noncompliant nation.[123] These discourses, critical and descriptive alike, contributed to the dis-articulation of free trade and democracy by constructing the WTO as a system that could discipline the United States'

domestic policies, which many U.S. audiences could imagine as having been passed democratically.

Discourses critical of the WTO deemed the institution illegitimate because it pursued "autocracy over democracy" and instituted a regime of "trade uber alles" that limited "citizens' ability to self-govern."[124] By casting the WTO and its pursuit of free trade as autocratic, opponents of the institution dis-articulated free trade and democracy. In these discourses, democracy signified national sovereignty, transparency in process, and the ability of citizens to collectively participate in deliberations over myriad concerns, including trade. Advocates of the WTO did not ascent to the charge of autocracy, particularly because their definition of democracy emphasized representative negotiation and rule of law over national sovereignty and citizen participation. Nonetheless, some advocates' discourse contributed to dis-articulating democracy and free trade by confirming WTO procedures and, at times, calling for reform. Opponents and advocates thus negotiated both interpretations of democracy and the meaning of the new free trade organization. These discourses of democracy enabled the Seattle protests by articulating a terrain of contestation over democracy.

Furthermore, drawing on separations articulated during the NAFTA debate, discourses critical of the WTO enabled the emergence of a complex political identification that opposed the WTO. Ernesto Laclau argued that in populist discourse, "the people" are constituted as an unstable totality by linking separate unfulfilled demands under an empty signifier that renders differentiated claims equivalent.[125] Prior to the protests, critics of the WTO linked different unfulfilled demands—safeguard the jobs of American workers, secure environmental protections, shield domestic policy from

foreign influence—under a critique of the WTO as "undemocratic," thus constituting "democracy" as an empty signifier that rendered the different demands equivalent, if unique. Furthermore, Laclau argued that "the people" are constituted by expelling an other from their ranks and that such an exclusion also bestows equivalence to differentiated demands; discourses critical of the WTO named the institution and its allies as the other that granted such equivalence, thus enabling the emergence of a "people" united by democracy and their opposition to the WTO.

Dis-Articulating Democracy and Free Trade in Seattle

Neoliberal globalization discourses had marked economics as an appropriate site of democratic participation. Taking advantage of this opening, thousands of protest groups descended on Seattle to enact political agency over economic globalization. Chantal Mouffe argued that "the political" describes an adversarial relationship in which discourses draw frontiers between *us* and *them*.[126] For Mouffe, democratic political engagement requires the active construction of a demos—a political "we" that is constituted through the articulation of some provisional and limited commonality that differentiates *us* from *them*.[127] The demos and its adversary are mutually constituted as an oppositional pairing, with each leaving traces in the other.[128] Ultimately, drawing these contaminated frontiers enables people to reconfigure power relations.[129]

The Seattle protests disarticulated democracy from free trade by drawing such political frontiers between a democratic *us* and an autocratic *them*. The protests crafted this division by naming the WTO as an enemy of the people and by amplifying existing critiques. This separation allowed the protests to expel free trade from *our* democracy and to articulate a populist-democratic alternative to the WTO's "trade uber alles" regime.[130]

Naming the Oppositional Pairing

The act of organizing protests against the WTO ministerial meeting drew on existing discourses to overtly construct a demos and its adversary. The repetition over centuries of marches and rallies in many modern nation-states has marked such engagement as a prominent tactic of democratic participation and citizen opposition.[131] Therefore, when groups began planning demonstrations against the WTO, a certain demos/adversary relationship could begin to form without much strain on popular imagination. Furthermore, throughout the 1990s, groups had organized protests that named free trade deals, corporations, and globalizing capitalism as adversaries; NAFTA opponents staged several actions, the WTO's first meetings precipitated global protest, and recurring "Reclaim the Streets" protests took aim at globalizing capitalism.[132] The repetition of these protests created an existing system of signification that distinguished protesters as an *us* in opposition to a *them* comprised of elite financial organizations.

Public organizing texts also promoted an oppositional pairing, specifically naming the WTO as an adversary of democracy. A flier announcing the protests called "Citizens," "People," and "activists" to "March on the WTO" because "Democracy is too important to be surrendered to corporate interests!"[133] The flier suggested that the WTO was a worthy target because "The WTO Hurts Workers, the Environment, and Democracy."[134] This flier drew a frontier between *us*—active citizen-defenders of a democracy that valued workers and the environment—and *them*, an organization that had begun an offensive on *our* democracy. DAN's organizing materials also drew such frontiers, casting *us* as a "broad alliance of national, regional and local groups" that formed specifically "to plan and create an infrastructure to support a nonviolent mass

action and mobilization against the World Trade Organization."[135] These materials claimed phrases easily associated with democratic participation at the end of the twentieth century—"alliance," "nonviolent mass action," and "mobilization"—as dimensions of an *us* mobilizing against an adversary. Such organizing discourses created the possibility for an embodied democratic *us* to coalesce in Seattle by clearly articulating an adversary against whom various interests could provisionally unite.

On the ground, protesters re-iterated this oppositional pairing. For example, the public statements of the "Seattle International People's Assembly" signed off with a declaration of "Unity" that characterized *us* as "participants...coming from the First and Third Worlds" to "Say NO to WTO!" [136] The statement also described *us* as a group "firmly united in the task of exposing and opposing the WTO and advancing the people's resistance to imperialist globalization."[137] This text co-articulated protesters with democracy by naming them as a "people," and it cleaved democracy from the WTO by co-articulating the organization with imperialism, a concept that often connotes autocratic imposition. Similarly articulating a demos, a bright red protest poster featured the black outline of an octopus with the letters "WTO" written above its furrowed brows.[138] Each of the creature's tentacles wrapped around a different victim: the word "democracy," a person in a straw hat, a sick cow, a frightened turtle, and a car emitting fumes. This image constructed a multi-faceted and democratic *us* by co-articulating democracy with human, animal, and object as separate entities made equivalent by their experience of victimization by a powerful *them*.

Like these materials, news media accounts of the demonstrations named the WTO as the protesters' constitutive outside. Steven Greenhouse of *The New York Times*

described the protests as "A Carnival of Derision" that would "Greet the Princes of Global Trade," and he covered the thousands of people in Seattle's streets "denouncing the target of their ire: the World Trade Organization."[139] ABC's Deborah Wang reported, "for these protesters, this single organization, the WTO, has come to symbolize about all that is wrong in the modern world," as the camera showed Chinese pro-democracy demonstrators marching in the street behind her.[140] The nightly news programs on NBC, ABC, and CBS showed crowds and individual protesters chanting, "Hey hey, ho ho, the WTO has got to go" and "Hell no, WTO" as well as protesters holding signs with the letters WTO crossed out in red.[141] News media and protesters simultaneously constructed an *us* and *them* by overtly naming the WTO as the adversary of a whole host of constituencies. These groups were constituted as a demos by their mutual opposition, by their overt articulation with democracy, and by their engagement in recognizable democratic norms of street protest.

Amplifying Existing Critiques

The protests also drew political frontiers by amplifying existing discourses that denounced the WTO as a secretive and concentrated locus of elite power. Protesters verbally amplified the charge that the WTO served the interests of private corporations, thus distinguishing between a privileged *them* and a marginalized *us*. Demonstrators characterized the organization as "the instrument of multinational corporations" and recounted the many ways that the WTO advanced "global trade and commerce rules that benefit only multinational corporations."[142] *The New York Times* reported that Seattle's protesters accused "the trade organization" of being "a handmaiden of corporate interests whose rulings undermine health, labor and environmental protections around the

world."[143] ABC's Wang rode a bus toward Seattle with "A group of radical activists" who traveled to the protests because "the WTO has failed to stop the exploitation of workers in the third world."[144] One of the protesters, a mocha-skinned man wearing circular glasses, explained to audiences, "They want profit."[145] Drawing on existing discourses that offered protesters and media coverage a system of signification, the protests amplified the construction of *them* as an organization that privileged multinational corporations, as opposed to *us*, who privileged "people, individuals" alongside "communities, workers and the environment."[146]

Protest coverage brought the charge of elitism to life by depicting the WTO's delegates and supporters as elite actors. For example, *CBS Evening News* interviewed Secretary of Commerce William Daley, a white adult man in a suit situated in front of a bookshelf. Daley, a WTO supporter, told audiences that the WTO would bring net benefits, even if there were individual losses; he said, "there will be dislocations; there will be job loss, there will be job gain. What this is all about is trying to make sure that there's more positives than negatives."[147] The same report showed streams of people dressed in casual clothing or hand-made costumes marching through the streets. [148] News programs consistently drew similar visual distinctions, depicting WTO delegates carrying briefcases and donning professional attire, while protesters clamored in the streets wearing casual clothing, handcrafted costumes, or plastic rain ponchos.[149]

This juxtaposition marked the WTO's elite supporters off from literal people in the streets, who could be understood as ordinary democratic citizens for two primary reasons beyond the protest tradition in modern states. First, existing frames already decried the WTO as an elite organization run by "bureaucrats," so images of casual

dissenters and professional supporters could be folded into those existing narratives with relative ease.[150] Second, most of the protesters depicted in these news stories were white. As Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek argued, whiteness emanates power through its invisibility and its capacity to be used as a quiet, yet universal standard from which others are distinguished.[151] Indeed, whiteness operated undercover in the news media, never verbally mentioned, but implicitly marking the protesters as ordinary by participating in assumptions that construct white people as the standard bearers of humanity.[152] Protesters' predominant whiteness problematically marked them as ordinary; yet, depicting protesters as white folk made them intelligible as a "people" because of entrenched discursive frames that offer white people as inconspicuous embodiments of neutral humanity. The interspersed people of color in the crowds, in turn, implicitly legitimated the predominant whiteness by articulating some semblance of inclusion in this visual articulation of the demos.

Marking protesters as ordinary citizens and free trade proponents as elites drew on populist frames to co-articulate protesters with popular democracy and to expel free trade from the democratic fold. Michael Kazin posited that American populism described a discourse in which an "ordinary people…view their elite opponents as self-serving and undemocratic, and seek to mobilize the former against the latter."[153] The Seattle protests drew such lines between ordinary people defending democracy against an elite aligned with free trade. Thus, free trade was co-articulated with an anti-democratic elite.

Advancing a separation between the demos and its elite opponent, the Seattle protests amplified the existing discourse that accused the WTO of holding secretive negotiations. Protesters found themselves literally "on the street," at various points of

proximity to the convention center where the meetings were taking place, but never inside.[154] Protester Jeffrey St. Claire described one demonstration as confined in "a protest pen next to a construction site near the convention center."[155] The first labor rally occurred "at Memorial Stadium," located "around the Space Needle, some fifteen to twenty blocks from the convention center."[156] Direct action protesters formed a "human chain at the intersection of 7th and Pine," a block away from the meetings.[157] The protests made literal and physical the claim that the WTO restricted citizen access to its meetings through embodiment, which, as I have explained elsewhere, "merges traditional distinctions made between the 'thing' and the 'symbol' that is supposed to represent the object."[158] Such a "synthesis gives a recognizably material presence to the symbolic, one that can be experienced, felt, and understood as a multifaceted reality."[159] Protesters' physical confinement to the outside of the meetings incarnated the charge of secrecy as a multifaceted reality that placed *them* inside and *us* outside.

News coverage consistently dichotomized the spaces of WTO meetings, circulating clear boundaries between a *them* on the inside and an *us* on the outside. *The New York Times* reported that delegates had planned "intense, closed-door talks," while protesters in the streets aimed "to make their protests as visible as possible."[160] *CNN*'s Rusty Dornin told audiences, "Protesters may not become the core discussion inside the conference halls, but they plan to lead the discussion outside."[161] This newscast showed environmental and labor groups marching in the streets outside the meeting as reporter Dornin narrated, "both are angry to be left out of negotiations." Greenhouse interviewed protester Bill Simpich "who started his day in the rainy, pre-dawn darkness by gathering with other protesters in a park near the Pike Place Market and then marching toward the

convention hall." [162] This characterization marked the protesters as on the literal outside of the convention center, and Simpich drew similar lines verbally, telling *The New York Times*, "We will keep marching until the process is open and until they let the people in the door when the decisions are made."[163] News media thus distinguished between the inside and outside of the WTO meeting, drawing literal and metaphorical boundaries that separated a democratic *us* from an elite *them*.

Finally, the protests amplified the domestic autonomy critique, charging that, in the unequivocal words of one flier, "The WTO undermines national sovereignty."[164] News media circulated images of the hundreds of environmentalist protesters who wore sea turtle costumes, thereby giving physical presence to the creatures that U.S. environmental laws protected before the WTO overruled this safeguard.[165] *The New York Times* reported on demonstrations during which "Speaker after speaker voiced anger" about how the WTO "overturned national laws that protected the environment, endangered species and consumers." [166] From these news accounts, the demos emerged as a combination of human, animal, and system, all located within the confines of the nation-state and each made equivalent by their opposition to the WTO's undermining of popular sovereignty. As one protester explained to ABC, "it's the basic issue of sovereignty, of democracy that gets all these disparate constituencies riled up about the WTO."[167]

The popular sovereignty critique was viscerally amplified when the state clashed with protesters to ensure that the WTO could meet. Officers of the SPD arrived at the protests in black uniforms and protective helmets with face guards, carrying batons.[168] As direct action protesters refused to break their physical blockades, the police issued a

warning. "We will forcibly remove you from this intersection," one officer explained as he paced back and forth between a line of protesters on the ground and a line of standing police officers.[169] "I would like to not hurt anyone," he declared. "However, we will clear this intersection. We will clear it with chemical and pain compliance. If you do not move, you will be the subject of pain." [170] Protesters covered their faces with bandanas dipped in vinegar, which would dampen the effects of airborne chemicals. Officers affixed their gas masks before taking formation and moving on protesters with batons, guns shooting rubber bullets, pepper spray, tear gas, and armored vehicles.[171]

On the ground, this display of force amplified the charge of undermining local sovereignty because officers of the SPD privileged the meeting's delegates over the protesters in the city's streets. The police issued a sartorial warning to protesters even before they told them to disperse; the police's gear suggested the possibility of an armed confrontation should protesters disrupt the WTO's planned meetings. When the police enacted their warning with physical assault, protesters felt their marginalization at a physical level. Mac Lojowsky described the feeling of tear gas: "My eyes and face were on fire…Inside my body, my lungs began to seize with burning pain. My stomach began to contract uncontrollably, and I began throwing up heavy globs of mucus."[172] Since many protesters understood themselves as protecting their version of democracy, such visceral experiences created a multi-modal enactment of the claim that democratic sovereignty was under attack by the WTO and its supporters.

This charge was further amplified when Seattle's mayor "ordered 25 square blocks of downtown cordoned off," making "the heart of the city" a "no protest zone" patrolled by police who removed "any visible signs of protest against the WTO,"

including "signs, leaflets, buttons and even t-shirts."[173] Although the order did not explicitly name the restricted area a "no protest zone," it blocked anyone with anti-WTO messaging from entering the area.[174] St. Clair watched as "a gang of cops body-slammed a protester who was standing on 6th Avenue handing out leaflets," and as "Dozens of protesters were arrested immediately" upon entering the zone.[175] Again, for protesters on the ground, enforcement of such an order made the claim of lack of sovereignty real by incorporating multiple senses into a system of signification in which protesters constituted an *us* defending democracy against an autocratic *them* who would undermine domestic civil liberties to push their agenda.

The news media amplified the sovereignty critique and the us/them opposition by circulating images and narratives that portrayed state forces repressing protesters and supporting WTO delegates. For example, CBS aired footage of officers in masks carrying protesters away, as anchor Dan Rather explained, "Backed by the national guard, police finally cleared protesters from the streets of Seattle today."[176] The broadcast later showed an elderly white woman sitting on the ground next to two younger white adults; all three had their hands secured behind their backs in plastic wrist cuffs. The elder woman explained to the camera, "We got arrested for trespassing on the public streets," the tinge of sarcasm in her voice implicitly indicting the police for infringing upon protesters' right to assemble. As the camera panned to a white adult woman in a bright National Lawyers' Guild cap, reporter John Roberts explained, "Attorney Amy Kratz was pushed away as she tried to act as a legal observer in one mass arrest." Looking into the camera, Kratz explained, "I'm not really familiar with cities being able to suspend the Constitution." In contrast to protester treatment, the same report showed adults in suits—mostly white

men—freely moving past police through a glass door as Roberts narrated, "With protesters swept away, the WTO was back in business. Delegates, whose movements had been frustrated Tuesday, walked the streets freely." Other news media coverage offered similar juxtapositions of how protesters and delegates were treated by the state.[177]

This news coverage amplified the existing charge that domestic sovereignty would be overturned to advance the WTO agenda by circulating a literal and physical manifestation of this claim. Such imagery could comfortably fold into an existing system of signification that hailed the WTO's opponents as defenders of domestic democracy and denounced the organization's supporters as global autocrats. As one letter to editor of *The New York Times* said, "By unleashing the National Guard on a group of citizens exercising its constitutional rights to free speech and assembly–in the country that claims to provide more freedoms than any other–it seems that the government has gone a long way toward proving the demonstrators' point."[178] These discourses strengthened the oppositional pairing between *us* and *them* by constructing the demos as a set of nationally-anchored activists with diverse demands who were made equivalent by suffering physical and metaphorical marginalization at the hands of an adversary aligned with free trade.

Amplifying and embodying the existing critiques constructed the protesters as a democratic *us* and the WTO as an autocratic *them*. Existing critiques allowed specific manifestations of resistance to the WTO—like flier language, physical marches, or state violence—to attach to an existing system of signification that drew equivalences between opponents of the WTO and cast the organization's supporters out as others. The amplified critiques constituted the demos as a collection of human actors—activists, laborers,

environmentalists, public organizations—and elements traditionally associated with the natural world—like sea turtles—all unified as a political force through their opposition to the WTO. This configuration expelled free trade from democracy because the WTO was understood as an organization that advanced a free trade agenda, a position that the demos on the streets overtly rejected as elite and undemocratic. Seattle's demos was also constituted through its defense of *our* democracy, which emphasized national sovereignty, popular participation, and social protections. The protests thus offered multi-modal amplifications of existing critiques that cast the WTO as autocratic and its challengers as democratic.

Articulating Economic Democracy

Having expelled the WTO and its supporters from *our* midst, protesters offered their performance of economic democracy as the only legitimate form, casting the WTO's free trade regime outside of democracy's boundaries. Protesters and news media coverage crafted visions of an economic democracy that privileged mass participation, plurality, and solidarity. As tens of thousands of protesters gathered in Seattle, news media circulated accounts of this wide-scale participation; television networks and newspapers foregrounded depictions of the demonstrations as "massive in scale," characterizing the event as "one of the biggest protest efforts in years," which had drawn "thousands" of participants "from more than 500 organizations."[179] Newscasts featured footage of Seattle's streets crowded with masses marching in endless streams past cameras and reporters.[180] These depictions allowed audiences to visualize popular sovereignty by drawing on the familiar logic of numbers in protests, wherein significant participation offers a spectacle of legitimacy to dissent, particularly when it is covered by

media.[181] The emphasis on masses offered such a spectacle of popular participation as a marker of *our* economic democracy, as juxtaposed with the selective delegates of *their* economic autocracy. In *our* democracy, the masses implied, many people participated in deliberations on economic policy.

Both protesters and news media explicitly noted the multiplicity that comprised these masses, treating differences as an attribute of, rather than an impediment to, democracy. Protester Stephanie Guilloud celebrated the "broad spectrum of people" who gathered to oppose the WTO in their "different voices."[182] Ace Saturay, a participant in the Seattle International People's Assembly, remarked that the gathering drew "various organizations, citizens' movements and NGOs from twelve countries in Asia, Central America, Africa, the Middle East, Canada and USA."[183] Greenhouse documented such plurality for *The New York Times*, writing, "protest groups range from the well-known, like Friends of the Earth and the Humane Society, to the obscure, like the Ruckus Society and Raging Grannies."[184] ABC depicted white middle-aged men holding signs rejecting the WTO; the camera then panned to images of Asian people practicing yoga on a grassy area.[185] Narrating these visuals, Wang reported on the "conservative Republicans" as well as members of "the Chinese spiritual movement" participating in demonstrations.[186] These accounts preserved the differences inherent to the demos' linkages, thus constituting, in the words of one flyer, "a diverse, international civil society movement opposed to corporate globalization."[187] Protesters and news media offered a vision of globalized economic democracy that privileged difference.

The protests further articulated their democratic alternative to the WTO by emphasizing pluralistic action and identification. The horizontal structure of the massive

protests empowered interest groups to act autonomously. With so many groups organizing actions, complete coordination could not take hold, particularly because groups did not agree on ideologies and tactics. For example, the AFL-CIO eschewed direct action in favor of a march, while DAN planned a series of coordinated actions that put protesters' bodies in direct confrontation with WTO delegates and police. DAN, in turn, rejected tactics such as property destruction and physical assault, which groups like the Black Bloc embraced as useful modes of disruption.[188] Even within specific networks, subgroups acted with relative autonomy. For example, protesters participating with DAN formed "self-reliant groups of 5-20 people" called "affinity groups," which were composed of "people who are friends, coworkers, from the same neighborhood, city, workplace or school, or people who have a common identity or interest."[189] Members of these groups planned their own actions, used tactics suitable to them, and made in-the-moment group decisions on Seattle's streets.[190]

These organizing patterns offered protesters the experience of radical democratic pluralism. Mouffe argued that pluralism names a condition in which social agents recognize the "particularity" and "limitation" of their claims, such that difference decenters universality.[191] On the ground in Seattle, different tactics and ideologies existed simultaneously and eschewed totalizing unity, apart from rejecting the WTO. Even such rejection was pluralistic because protest groups acutely disagreed about whether to reform or abolish the organization and reached no consensus on the matter.[192] For Mouffe, radical democratic politics place limits on pluralism because some forms of difference mean unacceptable subordination; therefore, radical democratic politics consistently advance contestation over which differences are appropriate and which must

be rejected.[193] The Seattle protesters rejected the WTO's autocracy as an unacceptable difference, which set the horizon for expulsion. Positions short of this horizon were largely treated as having at least some claim to legitimacy.[194] These organizing patterns offered protesters the experience of participatory political engagement on economic policy, in which interest groups enacted the kind of agency that members crafted together. In their planning and execution, protest groups largely de-emphasized totalizing consensus between groups, beyond opposition to the WTO. This sense of democratic engagement on economics differed significantly from the WTO's expelled model, wherein individual delegates represented entire nations as a unified whole and aimed at widespread consensus.

While maintaining a space for acceptable difference, the Seattle protests featured enactments of solidarity that solidified equivalences between individuals and groups. Solidarity is an act of political intersubjectivity whereby, in Max Pensky's words, individuals and groups "assume obligations to one another" and foster a sense of "belonging" in a community.[195] In Seattle, acts of solidarity sutured protesters and groups to each other. Lojowsky recounted the "human tidal wave, crossing cultural, political, sexual, economic, and geographical boundaries joined in solidarity to overtake the streets of Seattle that Tuesday afternoon."[196] He described how "Environmentalists joined the march with topless, radical feminists, linked arm-in-arm with graying steel workers," while "A large delegation of Chinese activists marched with American students" and "Longshoremen, carpenters and bikers chanted along with organic farmers, French farmers and young revolutionaries."[197] St. Clair celebrated with other protesters when a contingent of unionists broke from their planned march to join direct actions near the

convention center.[198] He also recalled the cheers erupting in Seattle's streets when protesters learned that "Inside the WTO, the African nations had shown the same solidarity as the protesters in the streets" when "They refused to buckle to US demands," and "hung together" until "the WTO talks collapsed."[199]

Such moments of intersubjectivity solidified equivalences by creating multidimensional bonds between participants. The African delegates' simultaneous acts of solidarity and rejection allowed them to transform from *them* to *us*, thus crossing over the inside/outside dichotomy. On the streets, individual protesters drew on their trainings and each other's words to incorporate their affective experiences into systems of meaning that named their felt intensities as solidarity.[200] Lojowsky described the "total energy of solidarity" that ran along the streets as people linked arms and refused to move.[201] Guilloud recalled how police's tear gas and pepper spray co-mingled with the sense of intersubjectivity on the street, leaving protesters "feeling the heat of solidarity move through our veins to throat, tongue, and mouth."[202] Anarchist organizer Chris Crass described "Being tear gassed in the streets with thousands of amazing activists" as an experience that "brought so many emotions to the forefront – anger and profound sadness."[203] He named this mixture of emotions as the "undeniable sense of solidarity with everyone who is struggling in the streets to resist corporate tyranny."[204] Seattle protesters feeling such solidarity incarnated an alternative mode of economic agency. As Pensky noted, "belonging to a group in solidarity is not derivative from a calculation of the benefits that membership grants to the individual person"; rather, solidarity embraces the costs as well as the benefits of belonging, even if costs outweigh benefits.[205] Protesters on the ground, then, expelled the WTO's model of economic deliberation,

which privileged negotiations based on delegates' calculations of benefit. Instead, economic solidarity emerged from Seattle as the possibility of creating bonded communities that pursued their economic values, even at individual risk.

News media also rendered protesters' differences equivalent by highlighting the solidarity between unionists and environmentalists taking shape at the protests. Such a combination was striking because prominent discourses since at least the 1970s had consistently constructed the two groups as adversaries by pitting environmental health against employment opportunities.[206] Before the protests, some voices articulated the possibility of such an alliance in various academic journals and opinion pieces in newspapers.[207] NAFTA protests had also brought labor and environmentalists to the same table to strategize against the agreement, but without much amplification.[208] Seattle coverage brought the unusual alliance to the forefront, with television news showing images and recounting narratives of unionists joining environmentalists to oppose the WTO.[209] *The New York Times* reported on the "20,000 union members and their allies" who "packed Memorial Stadium" to cheer speakers like "James P. Hoffa, the Teamsters union president" and "Carl Pope, the executive director of the Sierra Club."[210] Writing for *The Los Angeles Times*, Marc Cooper characterized the "scenes from Seattle," where, in the words of one protest sign, "Teamsters and Turtles" came "Together at Last," as once "totally unimaginable."[211] These stories covered the coalition as a moment in which former adversaries assumed mutual obligation to each other to oppose a shared adversary. Such solidarity reconstituted the boundaries of exclusion to form a community bonded by shared opposition and mutual support.

In sum, protesters and media coverage drew on existing discourses to constitute the WTO as an autocratic adversary of the demos. Drawing frontiers between *us* and *them* enabled political engagement over economic governance because, as Mouffe argued, contestation is the marker of politics. Having constituted the demos' autocratic outside, protesters and media coverage expelled free trade from protesters' democracy, offering a vision of economic engagement that privileged mass participation, plurality, and solidarity.

Co-Articulating Free Trade and Violence in Seattle

The protests further cleaved democracy from free trade by associating the latter with violence. Although democratic practice has long had violence embedded within it, prominent discourses of the Post-World War II era marked democracy as an alternative to political violence, and neoliberal articulations re-iterated these discourses.[212] Neoliberal discourses of the 1990s re-articulated this association when they suggested that the proliferation of capitalist democracy would bring peace to the world. The WTO protests antagonized this promise as violence erupted in the streets of Seattle.

Violence is an empty signifier, but it often refers to a forceful disruption in which some entity negates or acts upon another.[213] Slavoj Žižek distinguished between "subjective" violence, which is "performed by a clearly identifiable agent," and objective violence, which is accepted as "inherent" to the "'normal' state of things" and is not necessarily attributable to responsible agents.[214] Many people are more capable of perceiving the subjective variety of violence because we often understand violence as a rupture, a disruption in the "normal" functioning of life.[215] Objective violence is difficult to perceive as *violence* because it refers to the harm that is accepted as a normal part of a

functioning system. Therefore, it is easier to perceive, for example, one person shooting another as violence than it is to characterize the physical and emotional harm caused by unemployment as violent. Indeed, Žižek argued that subjective and objective violence "cannot be perceived form the same standpoint" because objective violence is so normalized that it becomes part of the nonviolent scene that subjective violence disrupts.[216]

Like any system, neoliberal globalization in the 1990s perpetrated systemic violence, which was often difficult for people to perceive as violent. Systemic violence is a form of objective violence that refers to, in Žižek's words, "the often catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems."[217] For Žižek, the fundamental difficulty with neoliberal systemic violence is that "it is no longer attributable to concrete individuals and their 'evil' intentions, but is purely 'objective,' systemic, anonymous."[218] Drawing on Žižek and Michel Foucault, Johanna Oksala argued that neoliberalism strips systemic violence of politics and morality, understanding destruction in purely economic terms.[219] The systemic violence of neoliberal globalization was difficult to perceive because such obfuscation is a characteristic of all objective violence and because structural violence was primarily understood in economic terms, as destruction that was necessary for economic prosperity.

Despite these difficulties, the Seattle protests rendered the systemic violence of neoliberalism perceptible and political through enactments of subjective violence. As Michael Kevin DeLuca and Jennifer Peeples demonstrated, images and narratives of violence "functioned as the dramatic leads for substantive discussions of the issues provoking the protests."[220] Because "the protesters' criticisms of the WTO received an

impressively extensive and sympathetic airing," the violence ultimately "sparked a conversation about the violence of global corporations in their daily practices."[221] Moreover, the protests marked neoliberal free trade as violent when police and protesters engaged in recognizable forms of violence. In a milieu where, in Deluca and Peeples' words, "news is attracted to disturbers of order and deviation from the routine," news media rushed to cover these eruptions of perceptible violence.[222] Mediated clashes between police and protesters thus created visions of threatening chaos and turmoil that co-articulated neoliberal free trade with violence. In what follows, I first explain why police actions and protester engagement could be considered violence; then, I demonstrate how these dual modes of subjective aggression co-articulated neoliberal free trade and violence.

Police Violence

The presence of armed, protected, and prepared police marked the trade talks as a space where violence *could* erupt. On the ground, demonstrators were met with what one protester called "paramilitary riot squads."[223] Police arrived at the convention center in armored vehicles and emerged from these so-called "peacekeeper" vans clad head to toe in bullet-proof armor and carrying batons, guns loaded with rubber bullets, and canisters of tear gas and pepper spray.[224] Media reports depicted armed and protected police marching in formation and riding on horseback down the streets of Seattle.[225] NBC's *Nightly News* covered "how jittery the authorities are as these meetings get under way," reporting that "Law enforcement forces" were "prepared for all sorts of potential threats, including acts of terrorism."[226] One day before the meetings were scheduled to begin, news media showed police shutting down the convention center because of a "security

concern."[227] *CNN Worldview* reported that police had "declared a lockdown, kept everybody outside for four hours while the SWAT team surveyed the situation inside," deciding "after about four hours…that it was safe for the other folks to go in."[228]

This police presence permeated the free trade talks with the threat of violence. Threat is a powerful emotion that self-substantiates, creating what Brian Massumi described as "a felt certainty about the world, even in the absence of other grounding for it in the observable world."[229] The threat of violence widely circulated in the 1990s as part of what Chin-Kuei Tsui called President Clinton's "new terrorism" discourse.[230] "New terrorism" rhetoric circulated the fearful anticipation that attacks like the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing or 1996 Centennial Olympic Park bombing would continue to disrupt the peaceful functioning of the United States in a globalizing world.[231] As a site dedicated to the globalization of free trade, the WTO meetings were deemed a likely target for such violent disruption. Police preparation and armored presence thus harnessed threatening discourses of terrorism to attach a diffuse sense of violent threat to the free trade meetings.

This threat was realized when police officers physically assaulted protesters. When protesters refused orders to disperse, police aimed pepper spray directly at protesters' eyes, shoved and beat them, and launched canisters of tear gas, rubber bullets, and concussion grenades into groups of demonstrators.[232] Protesters understood these assaults as violence because they experienced bodily harm inflicted upon them by specific agents. St. Clair later narrated his experience: "my eyes began to boil in my head, my lips burned and it seemed impossible to draw a breath."[233] As he "staggered back up"

the street to get away from the tear gas, he "stumbled into a cop" who "turned and gave me a swift whack to my side with the tip of his riot club."[234]

Protesters experiencing such an assault could also understand police actions as violence because the demonstrators had constructed their direct action as nonviolent. Direct action refers to what April Carter called collective and public "methods of noncooperation, obstruction or defiance" that seek to challenge a system by engaging in modes of dissent that are not constitutionally protected.[235] The role of (non)violence is still debated, though direct action has largely been co-articulated with nonviolence since at least the mid-twentieth century.[236] Nonviolent direct actions have functioned rhetorically as dramatic confrontations that make systemic violence visible by provoking or threatening subjective violence.[237]

During a week-long preparation event in Seattle, DAN trained protesters to engage in "mass nonviolent direct action" to "creatively and nonviolently shut down the WTO."[238] There, affinity groups could practice modes of such direct action as blockades, in which groups "take on responsibility for blockading one section of the streets surrounding the WTO opening, so that it is completely inaccessible."[239] Groups associated with DAN consented to nonviolence guidelines, promising to refrain from bringing weapons, engaging in physical or verbal violence, and destroying property.[240] Even participants in the Anarchist Black Bloc, whose protest tactics include property destruction, agreed to refrain from such action if the police did not physically assault protesters.[241] Having cloaked themselves in the rhetoric of nonviolence, direct action protesters could understand police assaults as violence—as a harmful disruption that disturbed the nonviolent order. In a display of such disruptive force, one protester

recounted how a police car charged at people in a blockade, while the protesters chanted, "nonviolence."[242] Demonstrators could understand themselves as victims, who stood their "nonviolent" ground in the face of physical assault.

News media circulated stories of these physical assaults of protesters perpetrated by police officers. *The New York Times* reported that "police used tear gas, pepper spray and rubber pellets" against demonstrators.[243] The story also described how "uniformed officers fired rubber-coated capsules at protesters. The pellets, which the police said contained chemical irritants, hit some of the protesters in the leg or the arm, causing visible welts." For days, television news circulated footage of riot police spraying tear gas and pepper spray directly onto demonstrators who shielded their faces with bandanas and raincoats. The footage also showed riot police shooting into crowds of protesters from atop their armored vehicles and physically assaulting individual protesters.[244] For example, *CBS Evening News* featured shaking footage of the dark Seattle street, in which several police officers shoved a single protester to the ground, hit him with batons, and aimed their guns at the casually clad demonstrator writhing on the street.[245]

This imagery could be understood as violent by news media and viewers because it featured subjective physical assault, perpetrated by police officers against protester victims. Subjective physical assault is commonly understood as a kind of violence, and this construction was made clear by the asymmetrical engagement between police and protesters. Police wore armor and used weapons, while protesters wore casual clothing with which they protected themselves; *The New York Times* highlighted such asymmetry by recounting how police used "tear gas" on demonstrators engaged in "a largely peaceful protest."[246] Other reports also cast protesters as victims of police violence by

characterizing protesters as some combination of white, nonviolent, and physically hurt.[247]

For example, *CBS Evening News* showed a violent exchange in which a masked police officer clad in riot gear reached for a white woman holding a brown folder. Roberts narrated, "She carried no banner, just business papers. The young woman said she wanted only to use the streets of her city." The woman was shown swatting the officer's hand away as she said, "Don't touch me. I'm not bothering anybody here. I'm standing right here. Get out of my face." Roberts explained, "In Seattle today, however, to challenge the police in any way was to risk arrest. With uncompromising force the police in Seattle today sought to end any kind of protest in the city center." On screen, the officer shoved the woman, first with his hand and then his baton, while another officer grabbed her by the collar and slammed her against a concrete wall before dragging her away. The narration marked this woman as a fellow-protester because of her encounter with the police on Seattle's streets. Although she verbally rebuked the police, her white womanhood comingled with officers' physical assault to render her recognizable as a victim of police violence. As this example illustrates, police actions were understood as violence because they conformed to common discourses that frame physical assault of victims as moments of violence.

Protester Violence

Even as some protesters were marked as victims, other demonstrators engaged as agents of subjective violence. On the ground, some demonstrators "fought back" against police assaults, picking up tear gas canisters from Seattle's streets and launching them at the police.[248] Protesters assaulting police officers could see themselves as acting in self-

defense against a police force that had attacked them first. Nonetheless, they confronted police with acts that could be considered violent because they refused to take a purely victimized position and retaliated with physical force and weaponry, if in an asymmetrical manner. Protesters also destroyed property, a tactic that began after José Bové, who St. Clair identified as "a sheep farmer from Millau …and a leader of… a French environmental group," gave a rousing speech in front of a McDonald's.[249] Bove and others broke the chain restaurant's windows and invited "the customers and workers to join the marchers on the streets."[250] The next day, Anarchist Black Bloc participants broke the storefront windows that lined Seattle's downtown shopping district and defaced buildings with spray paint.[251]

Anarchists may not have considered their property destruction violent, but they engaged in such behavior with the knowledge that many—perhaps even most—observers could understand these acts as violence. Black Bloc participants understood their vandalism as a powerful symbolic "attack," but not as violence because, according to the ACME Collective's post-N30 Communiqué, they "targeted corporate property," not people.[252] This communiqué contended that, for its anarchist authors, "property destruction is not a violent activity."[253] Indeed, this communiqué questioned other protesters' "nonviolence," describing how "so-called 'non-violent' activists physically attacked individuals who targeted corporate property."[254] While Anarchists' construction of violence did not include property destruction, as Bart Cammaerts explained, "legally and certainly in its mediated representation and public perception, this distinction is often not made" and, as such, "damage to property is uniformly represented and punished as violence."[255] This approach stems from a longstanding bourgeois attitude that

equivocates destruction of property with destruction of people.[256] Property destruction and forceful self-defense against police participated in what Cammaerts described as "the long-standing Anarchist tradition of 'propaganda by the deed,'" whereby activists enact fearlessness and physical force to destabilize the power of private property and law enforcement.[257]

These moments of conspicuous subjective violence drew media attention as newsworthy moments.[258] News media widely circulated stories and visual footage of subjective violence perpetrated by protesters in the form of physical assault and property destruction. Video footage showed protesters throwing smoke canisters and safety cones at police, and *The New York Times* reported that protesters "attacked" multiple authorities, including "police officers," "A security officer," and even "several bus drivers."[259] Most television coverage of the protests spent significant time depicting masked protesters clad in black running through Seattle's downtown streets, using hammers, baseball bats, safety cones, street signs, and their bodies to break the large storefront windows of establishments like U.S. Bank and Starbucks Coffee.[260] Footage also showed protesters spray-painting buildings, jumping on cars, and overturning trash cans and newspaper boxes, sometimes setting them on fire.[261] Some reports showed the aftermath of property destruction—shattered glass, boarded up windows, and spray-painted building walls, and a downtown inaccessible to owners and shoppers.[262]

These deeds could be understood as violent because they took the form of physical assault and because the news media explicitly called the actions "violence."[263] Individual police officers were visually accessible as subjects who protesters targeted for physical assault. Also, the long-standing bourgeois norm of treating property as

something worth protecting created the possibility for seeing protesters' property destruction as a physical assault aimed at an object-cum-subject. Moreover, news media narratives characterized what viewers were seeing as violence. For example, Rather reported on *CBS Evening News* that the WTO meetings "were overshadowed by some carefully orchestrated violent protests in the streets."[264] Behind Rather, viewers could see images of a street filled with protesters and lined with armed riot police. Although these specific images did not feature physical assaults or property destruction, Rather's words framed the reception of these and subsequent images as moments of violence. Later in the broadcast, Roberts repeated this characterization, explaining that "Protesters turned violent," as images of protesters' assaults and destructions flashed on screen. [265] Other media sources echoed such a characterization; CNN and NBC both named the protesters' actions as "violence," and *The New York Times* described the "surge of violence" that had overcome protests in Seattle.[266]

In addition to overtly naming protesters' modes of engagement as "violence," news media bolstered this construction by using words associated aggression and disruption. Across news media, accounts described how protesters "attacked" and "smashed" storefront windows, engaging in a "rampage" that caused "mayhem," "turmoil," and "terror" in Seattle.[267] These words framed the visual and verbal accounts of protester engagement in aggressive terms, so that visuals coalesced with these words to form a sense of violent eruption in Seattle's streets. Characterizing these actions as disruptions, *The New York Times* described how "minutes after the union and environmental groups passed through downtown, the mood changed" when other protesters engaged in violent acts of disruption, causing "jarring sights in a city that

prides itself on its laid-back image."[268] Such characterizations described some protesters violating the dual norms of Seattle's spirit and marchers' emotional tenor, thus casting these moments as ruptures of the non-violent norm.

Further characterizing such engagement as a violent disruption, news media verbally and visually distinguished between protesters employing such aggression and nonviolent demonstrators. *CBS Evening News* juxtaposed "destruction" and "rowdy, but non-violent, protest."[269] *The New York Times* described the "destruction" that "was carried out…by a relatively small gang of self-proclaimed anarchists" as they implicitly chastised police for ignoring this violence while "using tear gas nearby to contain what had been a largely peaceful protest near the convention hall."[270] Offering visual contrast, NBC juxtaposed an image of a white woman holding up her left hand in a peace sign with stunned crowds standing near a smashed Starbucks window.[271] CNN cut from an image of a large and colorful day-time street march to footage of a smoke-filled street at night, where protesters hurled canisters of gas.[272] These verbal and visual contrasts established that some protesters ruptured the assumed normalcy of nonviolent protest, thus marking some forms of engagement as violent.

News stories bolstered this construction by showing nonviolent protesters denouncing and distancing themselves from acts of destruction. As images flashed of black-clad, masked protesters breaking windows, CBS gave voice to "the hundreds of organized protest groups" who "deny involvement" in any of these actions.[273] *The New York Times* reported that "demonstrators shouted at the vandals to stop the violence" and that "groups that had planned to be arrested all along sent out a call for a 'massive cleanup' of the damage done by people they labeled as vandals."[274] This story

constructed protesters as internally divided into a nonviolent, decorous mass and a violent, disrespectful group. This story highlighted how "Dozens of the protesters" in the former group "took brooms to the fresh scars of the city's retail core" to atone for the pain that the destruction had caused the city.[275] Such vivid coverage of these embodied denouncements on the part of protesters worked proactively to simultaneously bestow virtue upon nonviolent protesters and to cast people engaged in destruction as others who had disturbed overlapping norms.

News media constructed these others as menacing perpetrators of violence. Multiple news reports depicted protesters—many of whom could be read as white—"dressed in black," with their faces covered with bandanas and "black masks."[276] Their monochrome darks and covered faces made distinguishing between protesters difficult and suggested that they had planned to obfuscate recognition. Moreover, focusing on the group's black attire, news media's visuals implicitly drew on common (neo)colonial light/dark dichotomies to suggest that these protesters constituted a sinister group that had specifically chosen to identify themselves with darkness, rather than light.[277] Media referred to these black-clad protesters as "vandals" and "troublemakers," and allowed them to voice their identification as "Anarchists."[278] Such words and images combined to differentiate this group of protesters as a menacing force that disregarded established laws and forms of decorum.

Such characterizations negotiated common tensions of chaos/order to further construct these protesters as menacing perpetrators. ABC's *World News Tonight* characterized Anarchists and their fellow disrupters as "Troublemakers with no political agenda"; the camera showed a masked protester standing in front of several young men

of color with exposed faces, as one unmasked young man told the reporter, "There ain't no point; it's just fun."[279] *NBC Nightly News* showed footage of masked protesters, who could just barely be read as white by the skin that peaked out through their black garb, alongside several young men of color without masks cheering as a window broke.[280] The scene then cut to a vision of several shadowy figures quickly taking items from store shelves, while the newscaster characterized the activity as "a rampage of destruction and looting."[281] When asked how he felt "about all the vandalism and destruction left behind," one demonstrator averted their masked face from the camera and responded, "I feel great about it."[282] These narratives of chaos drew on neocolonial discourses that construct dark spaces filled with (dark) "others" as a wilderness that calls for taming and containment by white, bourgeois people and institutions.[283] The images combined visions of a dark street, men of color, and white people draped in black clothing and masks to constitute the streets of Seattle as a wild place, where rules of civilization had collapsed.

Simultaneously, news media constructed the protesters as highly motivated and organized political actors who posed a threat to the status quo because of their strategic prowess and discipline. *NBC Nightly News* characterized the protesters as "highly organized," and showed Chief Norm Stamper of the Seattle Police Department telling reporters, "The anarchists are very well trained in the tactics they're using."[284] *World News Tonight*'s Judy Muller explained that while "'Organized anarchy' might seem like an oxymoron…Dozens of young people have been planning for months about ways to incite the crowds at this event."[285] Muller told audiences, "in fact, many of them had been drilled, gathering this summer in Eugene, Oregon, where they nurtured an ideology based on the destruction of capitalist societies."[286] The camera then showed a young

white man with a bandana around his neck but with his face uncovered, telling Muller, "A lot of people equate anarchy with chaos. That's not at all what anarchy is. Anarchy is actually organized."[287] Mike Dolan, identified as the Deputy Director of Public Citizen on the screen, told ABC that he had "seen them on the periphery of some of these peaceful demonstrations, and they seem almost drilled to a sort of military precision."[288] These accounts characterized Anarchists as, in the words of *NBC Nightly News* reporter Kelly O'Donelly, "mostly young, middle class whites, described as angry and anxious about the future, determined to antagonize the establishment."[289] Drawing on discourses that mark white men of means as embodiments of human ability, these newscasters constructed Anarchists as smart political actors who had blended strict training, ideological fervor, and chaos to attack the free trade regime specifically and capitalism more generally. These narratives suggested that young, white, men were breaking norms of political decorum and instead embracing a "strategy" that emphasized the "open advocation [sic] of violence."[290] In sum, the mainstream news media constructed some protesters as menacing perpetrators engaged in recognizable forms of subjective violence.

Neoliberal Free Trade and Violence

Embodied and mediated clashes between police and protesters marked free trade as a site of violence. For protesters on the ground, clashes incarnated a physical battle between neoliberal free trade and its activist opponents. A critique of systemic neoliberal violence had brought many activists to Seattle; as one call to organize explained, "various grassroots groups prepare to take action" against the WTO because "the CAPITALIST SYSTEM, based on the exploitation of people, societies and the environment for the profit of a few, is the PRIME CAUSE of present SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL

TROUBLES."[291] On the city's streets, both police and protester violence incarnated the charge that neoliberal free trade meant violence—not only that perpetrated by protectors of the order, but also by those acting in opposition to a worldwide system that stripped them of other forms of potent agency. Police assaults made *physical* the existing claim that neoliberal free trade harmed people. Moreover, as some protesters hurled objects at the police and destroyed the windows of corporate stores, they transformed themselves into what St. Clair called "street warriors" whose embodied "bravery" had culminated in a "tremendous triumph: they held the streets long enough to force the WTO to cancel their opening day."[292]

When opposing something as diffuse and abstract as "free trade" or "capitalism," incarnating it as an embodied fight can send surges of motivating sensation through both individual and collective bodies, allowing intellectual oppositional claims to manifest at a physical level. As I explained elsewhere, "Affective experiences are powerful because they register as what Catherine Chaput calls a 'gut feeling' that seems more personal and primordial than the discursive and social."[293] When these feelings attach to a political discourse, they become political emotions that feel, as I explained, "more real and personal" than experiences "that do not proffer that kind of sensational attachment."[294] For the "street warriors," such embodied engagement constituted free trade—and by extension, capitalism—as a practice literally worth fighting against.

News media also marked free trade negotiations as a space of violence in three ways. First, they reported the clashes as part of their WTO meeting coverage. Reports of police violence contextualized these assaults as taking place *because* of free trade negotiations. *The New York Times* reported on how "the police were using tear gas…

near the convention hall where the world trade group delegates were to meet."[295] *CBS Evening News* similarly co-articulated the talks and police violence: "Using tear gas and pepper spray," the reporter explained, the police "dispersed a group of demonstrators who had blocked the routes to the WTO conference and canceled its ceremonial opening."[296] The visual coverage implicitly drew on tropes of police-protester contention to co-articulate free trade and violence. DeLuca and Peeples gave voice to these hidden connections when they argued that news coverage of police assaults in Seattle "exposed the violence of the state and transnational capital as the allegedly progressive haven of Seattle cracked down with a show of force worthy of 1960s Birmingham or Los Angeles."[297] Such implicit collective memories of police violence associated free trade with struggles for black civil rights, over which police had historically assaulted protesters. Thus, media coverage of state-sanctioned assault co-articulated free trade and state violence.

Second, news media characterized demonstrators' descent into chaos as an orchestrated response to free trade and the kinds of economic prosperity that it engendered. For instance, Rather explained on *CBS Evening News*, "World Leaders are in Seattle tonight hoping to set the economic agenda for the 21st century, but today, at least, they were overshadowed by some carefully orchestrated violent protests in the streets."[298] An image behind Rather further connected chaos and the WTO; a smoke-filled street teemed with police and protesters, several of whom held two large signs that read, "Resist!" and "Greed + Ignorance = WTO." This story also marked the targets of protester violence as multinational corporations, which stood as symbols of the economic success that free trade advocates promised was possible. Rather explained that a "group

of troublemakers" had "attacked a symbol of Seattle's economic success, smashing the windows of a Starbucks restaurant."[299] Similarly, *The New York Times* interviewed some Anarchists who "said they might have smashed a window or two, but carefully noted that any destruction they might have committed was against stores representing what they said were 'multinational corporations' like Starbucks, Nike or the Gap."[300] These accounts connected protester violence to the economic successes associated with free trade, marking such policies as spaces that invited civic aggression.

Finally, news coverage marked free trade as a space of violence by constructing police and protester aggression as an aberrant "violent frontline battle over free trade."[301] On CBS's *Early Show*, anchor Bryant Gumbel explained that "Violent street confrontations Tuesday between protesters and police have thrown the meetings of the World Trade Organization into chaos."[302] News media visually signified such chaos with hazy and shaky images of protesters and police bodies moving swiftly in multiple directions through streets filled with thick, white smoke.[303] Reports cast such chaotic scenes as aberrant in the United States, yet common occurrence around free trade talks.[304] For example, *NBC Evening News* interviewed John Goodman, a white, middle-aged, male steelworker in a cowboy hat wearing a shirt with an American flag on it. [305] Goodman told audiences, "I've witnessed things in the last four days that I – I didn't think could happen in America." Other reports showed similarly chaotic scenes simultaneously erupting in London over free trade, thus suggesting that while this chaos was perhaps unusual in Goodman's America, it followed free trade around the world.[306]

Discourses of such aberrant chaos stoked fear about free trade. As Žižek argued about scenes on television of Hurricane Katrina's aftermath in New Orleans, mediated

images of chaos in American streets "recall a whole series of real-life media and cultural phenomena" depicting a "disintegration of the social order" in Third World countries far from the West.[307] Žižek explained that this anxiety over images of domestic chaos is anchored in a realization that "what we were used to seeing happening THERE was now taking place HERE."[308] These images and narratives suggested that free trade could summon such a disintegration in spaces unaccustomed to outbursts of such subjective violence. This anxiety traversed news stories as a fear that there would be no sanctuary from the violence associated with free trade.[309] For example, *NBC Nightly News* explained that "For Seattle's workers and shoppers," the chaos was "a nightmare."[310] A white woman trembled as she spoke the reporter from her car window. She cried, "I just wanna be out of the middle of it, I'm scared to death, I just wanna get to work, I want my kids out of the car and I don't wanna be in the middle of this."[311] Thus, the co-articulation of free trade and violence circulated fear and anxiety about neoliberal globalization from which no one was safe.

Conclusion

Combining threats of disruptive violence and visions of popular democracy, the protests in Seattle articulated a forceful and widely-circulated choice for the globalizing world: neoliberal autocracy or economic democracy. In the neoliberal autocracy articulated by the protests, bureaucrats representing wealthy interests met behind closed doors, while protesters and police physically battled in chaotic streets, where no one was safe. In the protests' economic democracy, "the people" – composed of environmentalists, workers, human rights activists, and the natural world—acted in pluralistic solidarity to enact agency over economic globalization. As a December 2 *New*

York Times editorial asserted, "The chaos" in Seattle's streets had "conveyed a warning" about secretive economic deliberations, demonstrating that "vital issues affecting the health and prosperity of the planet deserve a visibly fair hearing."[312]

This choice continued to travel globally, as Seattle catapulted the "global justice movement" into very public view.[313] The lives of many protesters were forever changed, as the experience sutured them to the task of challenging neoliberal globalization.[314] For example, Columbia University economist Suresh Naidu told the *Huffington Post* that his experience protesting in Seattle "was exciting and exhilarating" because "it felt like we were winning" and "changing the terms of the debate on free trade."[315] Maidu said that his experience in Seattle prompted him to both study the dynamics of international economics and participate in movements for global economic justice. More generally, these protests had reframed direct action tactics as successful, inspiring subsequent challenges to neoliberal globalization in streets around the world.[316] Moreover, the Seattle protests engendered the rapid proliferation of what Todd Wolfson called the "cyber left."[317] The reach of alternative media networks like Indymedia grew significantly after Seattle, thus circulating alternative visions of economic democracy throughout the world.[318] Seattle also encouraged the proliferation of transnational organizations and coalitions that challenged neoliberal autocracy and developed modes of economic democracy.[319] Under such public pressure, the WTO and other international economic organizations began to open their deliberations in the years after Seattle, until another violent disruption closed elite organizations again in 2001.[320]

Just two years after Seattle, the global justice movement's accelerating power in the United States was stunted when the World Trade Center was attacked. This attack

prompted many U.S. global justice activists to re-consider tactics, goals, and foci.[321] Moreover, the U.S. response to the attacks re-energized a global security regime and a new war effort. Emboldened by laws and resources that authorized surveillance and pre-emptive action in the name of security, law enforcement officials developed what Patrick F. Gillham called "strategic incapacitation" to infiltrate and shut down social movement groups like those advocating for global economic justice.[322] Finally, after September 11, many of the U.S. groups left standing focused on specifically opposing the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and, because of increased security measures, moved away from engaging in direct actions.[323] Despite these difficulties, in recent years, the Seattle-style critique of neoliberal globalization has re-emerged from its public dormancy in the United States, perhaps most notably in the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) actions of 2011-2012.[324]

In this chapter, I argued that these critiques and modes of engagement were potent in Seattle because they dis-articulated free trade and democracy, thus puncturing a prominent legitimating co-articulation. In the 1990s, discourses advocating global economic liberalization simultaneously co-articulated free markets and democracy, marking this empty signifier as a primary legitimating term for expanding neoliberal policy. Such discourses co-articulated democracy and free markets by re-articulating bipolar Cold War rhetoric, by asserting positive relationships between democracy and free markets, and by consistently addressing the concepts in tandem. However, the implementation of neoliberal policies also enabled the disarticulation of democracy and free markets by suggesting that economic liberalization could reasonably precede democratization. These discourses thus fostered a tension between free markets and democracy that also framed the creation and reception of the WTO.

In WTO discourses, leaders and institutions simultaneously co-articulated and dis-articulated democracy and a specific aspect of free markets—open trade. Advocates of the WTO co-articulated democracy and free trade by suggesting that the institution's free trade agenda was pursuing democratic goals and that the organization abided by democratic procedure. However, contentious discourses making sense of the WTO also dis-articulated democracy and free trade in two ways. First, the WTO and its opponents alike maintained that the institution foreclosed democratic engagement on the free trade question. Second, critics of the WTO charged the organization with wielding autocratic power and overriding domestic policies, a charge that WTO documents, to some extent, confirmed.

I argued that the Seattle protests took advantage of the tension between free trade and democracy to drive a wedge between the two concepts. The protests constructed the WTO and its free trade agenda as an opponent of the demos, drawing a political frontier between a democratic *us* and an autocratic *them*. The protests did so in both embodied and mediated ways, overtly naming this oppositional pairing and amplifying existing critiques of the WTO's free trade agenda. Drawing such frontiers allowed the protests to articulate a democratic alternative to the WTO's free trade regime. This alternative emphasized participation, pluralism, and solidarity.

Moreover, I argued that the protests associated free trade with violence. The Seattle demonstrations marked neoliberal free trade as a site of violence when police and protesters engaged in recognizable forms of aggression. For protesters on the ground, clashes incarnated a physical battle between neoliberal free trade and its activist opponents. News media also marked free trade negotiations as a space of violence by

reporting the clashes as part of their WTO meeting coverage and by characterizing demonstrators' descent into chaos as a response to free trade. News coverage thus circulated police and protester aggression as a battle over free trade. Ultimately, democracy and violence emerged from Seattle as empty signifiers that powerfully challenged the neoliberal articulation.

Beyond Seattle, this case study has three main implications. First, this analysis demonstrates that the constitution of a political "people" is a complex rhetorical process that is necessary for political engagement. My study confirms Michael Calvin McGee's argument that the constitution of a "people" is a rhetorical process, and this chapter suggests that the news media play a significant role in such a construction.[325] Also, following Mouffe and Laclau, this chapter suggests that the construction of a "people" necessitates both a constitutive outside in the form of an adversary and linkages between political demands.[326] Finally, this case study suggests that an existing antagonistic system of signification can accelerate the formation of an embodied and mediated "people." A recognizable people and enemy could form in Seattle, in part, because the protests amplified both existing critiques of free trade and existing constructions of a multifaceted people for economic democracy. Thus, protesters and news media could turn to existing frames for understanding the disruptions in Seattle's streets as a coherent and decipherable challenge to neoliberal globalization.

Second, this analysis suggests that "democracy" is a potent empty signifier for challenging the neoliberal articulation. As Jodi Dean demonstrated, democracy certainly is a troubled term because it is used by a variety of communities to authorize neoliberal intervention.[327] Democracy has been closely aligned with free market capitalism since

before the Cold War, and such an association intensified during and after these tensions.[328] Although the two terms have been sutured, their intersections exist a node of tension in the neoliberal era because phenomena deemed democratic can be disregarded or punished in favor of market liberalization.[329] Although democracy certainly is a troubled term, it is also a potent one precisely because it is an empty signifier that has both animated the neoliberal articulation and offered a way out of it. As communities re-articulate democracy and its intersections with economic relations, the term can de-legitimize the neoliberal practices that it has authorized for decades.

Finally, this case study suggests that collective, public acts of subjective violence can be a potent avenue for disrupting the neoliberal articulation, which is legitimated by the promise of peace. As this study showed, violence is itself an empty signifier that attaches to various acts and threats of harm. As Žižek argued, subjective violence is a powerful form of disruption that is often more visible than objective violence, which refers to the harm that is considered necessary and normal for the smooth running of a social system.[330] The Seattle protests disrupted the neoliberal promise of peace when police and protesters engaged in recognizable forms of subjective violence, which were contrasted with nonviolence. These acts of recognizable violence muddied the neoliberal promise of peace with embodied and mediated visions of aggression that protesters and news media sutured with free trade. Žižek argued that subjective and objective violence cannot be seen from the standpoint, but my case study suggests otherwise, particularly when my arguments are paired with those of DeLuca and Peeples, who found that protesters' symbolic violence attracted news attention to systemic critiques of neoliberal globalization. My study suggests that narratives can connect public explosions of

subjective violence to the objective violence of the neoliberal articulation. Ultimately, this case study demonstrates that both violence and democracy are powerful empty signifiers that can pose significant challenges to neoliberal hegemony.

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Antagonistic Disruptions of Neoliberal Capitalism

Commentators suggested that the 2016 election directly challenged neoliberal hegemony. Jon Talton, a columnist for *The Seattle Times*, named "neoliberalism" as "one of the foremost targets" of both Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump, arguing that "the economic policies that have held sway for more than 35 years are under unprecedented attack."[1] Talton warned readers, "If the system doesn't reform itself, people will seek alternatives. And the hunt might not be pretty." The day after Trump declared victory, Naomi Klein argued in *The Guardian* that "Democrats' embrace of neoliberalism…won it for Trump."[2] Klein told readers that "Under neoliberal policies of deregulation, privatisation, austerity and corporate trade," people's "living standards have declined precipitously." She explained, "For the people who saw security and status as their birthright – and that means white men most of all – these losses are unbearable." Klein suggested that Trump's campaign resonated because it spoke "directly to that pain" by summoning a "nostalgic nationalism and anger at remote economic bureaucracies" and by "bashing immigrants and people of colour, vilifying Muslims, and degrading women." Her article concluded by praising Bernie Sanders' "amazing campaign" for demonstrating "that the appetite for democratic socialism" as an alternative to neoliberalism "is out there." As these commentators suggested, electoral discourses of 2016 challenged neoliberal hegemony by pointing to its limits and by positing alternatives. Using the parlance of this dissertation, the commentators could argue that these electoral discourses antagonized the neoliberal articulation.

In this project, I asked two primary research questions. First, how did the neoliberal articulation create opportunities for people to resist it? Second, how did people

take advantage of these opportunities to challenge neoliberal hegemony? To answer these questions, I took an approach grounded in theories of articulation. In chapter one, I explained that taking this approach means mapping the various relationships established rhetorically between both material and symbolic elements. These relationships develop over time, and repeated connections solidify to create dominant systems of meaning that make sense of the world in ways that privilege some subjectivities over others. Although they are powerful, hegemonic articulations are an unstable cobbling together of ideas and practices, and so are always subject to destabilization. Antagonisms pull apart the dominant articulation by showing that it is not natural, essential, nor complete. Moreover, hegemonic articulations tend to create some room for antagonistic agency because people identify with multiple and often conflicting subject positions. Thus, an articulation approach assumes that the capacity to challenge often arises from negotiating competing, overlapping, and often contradictory subject positions available under a particular configuration of power.

Taking such an approach, I defined neoliberalism as a hegemonic articulation that strings together four governing principles: freedom as primary, economics as natural, the individual as rational actor, and the free market as pure. I demonstrated how the articulation of these principles emerged as a system of thought when members of the Mont Pelerin Society sought to privilege unfettered capitalism after the Second World War. I argued that the neoliberal articulation gathered strength in the United States and Britain as a response to the economic crises of the 1970s and that it was legible because of its historical antecedents. Through amplification, repetition, and implementation, the neoliberal articulation combined governing principles and structural adjustments such

that a common sense about how to govern emerged: a common sense that privileged the free market as natural, pristine space.

Having established neoliberalism as a hegemonic articulation, I approached each case study as an antagonism that pointed to its limits. In chapter two, I analyzed the U.S. Catholic Bishops' 1986 treatise, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (*EJA*), arguing that this letter introduced Catholic Social Teaching as a counterweight to the burgeoning neoliberal articulation. This chapter situated the letter in several contexts that enabled the bishops to issue such a challenge. I demonstrated that the Ronald Reagan Administration fostered a tension between understanding economics as a technocratic science and as a moral philosophy, and I argued that the bishops' letter amplified this tension in ways that privileged morality over technocracy. Specifically, I suggested that *EJA* leveraged the renewed emphasis on politicized Christianity and the pastoral letter genre to pivot from a generalized Christian conception of economics to a specifically Catholic one. This case study demonstrated the relevance of economic philosophies, showed the antagonistic power of alternative traditions and institutions, and suggested that Latin American traditions and "developing" status could poignantly antagonize neoliberal promises of freedom.

Chapter three examined the 1996 controversy over allegations that Kathie Lee Gifford used underage sweatshop labor to produce her Wal-Mart clothing line. This chapter also situated the controversy in several contexts that enabled activists to target Gifford and news and tabloid media to circulate her emotional responses to the charges. I advanced the concept of "free market optimism" – a discourse that uneasily combined

market freedom and social responsibility as it promised that free markets would engender peaceful prosperity and self-realization. I argued that activist Charles Kernaghan, Gifford herself, and the news and tabloid press circulated class shame around bourgeois fulfillment, which inhibited free market optimism. I then demonstrated how the controversy transformed this shame into class guilt by appropriating neoliberal attachments in ways that privileged social responsibility over free market expansion. This case study suggested that shame and guilt can be powerful antagonistic emotions, particularly when circulated by mainstream media as a controversy. It also showed that dividing the globe into "First" and "Third" worlds can foreground class and that anchoring antagonistic agency in neoliberal identities is at once potent and limiting.

In chapter four, I considered Seattle's 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) protests within the overlapping contexts of neoliberal globalization and democratization. This chapter demonstrated how proponents of economic liberalization—including the WTO—discursively combined free markets and democracy, while simultaneously separating the concepts. I argued that the protests amplified this tension in ways that constituted the WTO and its free trade agenda as enemies of a democratic people. I also demonstrated how amplifying this tension allowed the protests to articulate a democratic economic alternative to free trade. Finally, I argued that the protests co-articulated free trade and violence when police and protesters engaged in recognizably violent acts, which mainstream news media covered extensively. Ultimately, the chapter showed how the protests articulated a choice for the globalizing world: neoliberal autocracy or economic democracy. Beyond Seattle, this case study also suggested that the rhetorical construction of a political "people" is a complex and necessary process and that

democracy and violence both circulate as potent empty signifiers that can antagonize the neoliberal order.

Taken together, these case studies offer scholars and activists lessons about the neoliberal articulation and rhetorics that antagonize it, and each of these implications can inform the study and practice of rhetorical antagonisms more generally. In this concluding chapter, I explicate what these studies teach us about hegemonic articulations, antagonistic agency, and multimodal accumulation. As I expound on these implications, I propose "antagonistic disruption" as a term that describes antagonisms that interrupt hegemonic discourses and evoke the possibility of their demise.

Hegemonic Articulations

The project suggests that hegemonic articulations adjust to antagonisms leveled against them. Although each case significantly antagonized the neoliberal articulation, none of them—even together—dissolved this powerful system. Chapter two concluded that *EJA*'s critique of Reaganism became muted, in part, because the Catholic Church pivoted away from its antagonistic economic vision and became embroiled in sex scandals that themselves antagonized the Catholic Church's claim to moralism. Chapter three showed how spokespeople and institutions channeled antagonistic guilt into subjectivities that upheld the neoliberal articulation in the long term. Chapter four's conclusion demonstrated how the attacks on the World Trade Center, the subsequent rise of the militarized police state, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq allowed for the neoliberal articulation to patch over the cracks caused by the Seattle protests. Indeed, the neoliberal articulation is *hegemonic* because it is sustained by consistent financial,

institutional, and rhetorical support that secures its adaptability. It is consistently circulated, funded, implemented, and naturalized by powerful people and institutions.

Such adaptability is why this dissertation opts to approach antagonisms as *disruptions* of neoliberalism. Sociologists Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward defined "disruption" as the collective withholding of cooperation from a system that relies on participation; such disruptions force a change because they impair the system's functioning.[3] These case studies suggest that antagonistic disruption has a similar meaning because it describes antagonisms that halt the smooth circulation of a hegemonic articulation. This term, then, draws our attention to the various interruptions that impede the functioning of a system of signification.[4] Antagonistic disruptions also suggest the possibility of shattering the hegemonic articulation because to disrupt also means, in the words of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, "To break or burst asunder; to break in pieces, shatter; to separate forcibly."[5] Thus, antagonistic disruptions interrupt and suggest the possibility of shattering hegemonic articulations.

This project suggests that antagonistic disruptions are made possible, in part, by the tensions that animate hegemonic articulations. Specifically, this dissertation suggests that discourses promoting neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s uneasily attached free markets to social goods. As chapter two demonstrated, technocrats took control of an economy in crisis and implemented economic liberalization on the promise that these practices would usher in moralistic freedom. Chapter three showed how optimistic discourses of the 1990s pursued market freedom by suggesting that markets would engender prosperity and social responsibility. Chapter four demonstrated how efforts to globalize free market exchange rested upon the unstable promise of democracy. In each

case, the neoliberal articulation uneasily combined free markets with social goods. The neoliberal articulation needed both market freedom and social goods to gain and maintain its hegemony because its power came, in part, from these attachments. However, as the preceding chapters demonstrated, these attachments often came into conflict when people implemented neoliberal policies and when critics of economic liberalization drew attention to decisions that privileged market freedoms over social goods.

Since the late 1990s, the neoliberal articulation has adjusted to antagonisms as it has gathered strength, but similar tensions have continued to animate this powerful discourse. Nearly one year after the World Trade Center Attacks, the George W. Bush Administration outlined its National Security Strategy in starkly neoliberal terms, treating economics as a technocratic science and a moralistic philosophy. Echoing the technocratic arguments of Chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan, the document stated as a fact that "Economic growth supported by free trade and free markets creates new jobs and higher incomes."[6] The document also struck a moralistic tone, asserting that "The concept of 'free trade' arose as a moral principle even before it became a pillar of economics." The strategy document explained that a market was moral because it "is real freedom, the freedom for a person—or a nation—to make a living." Thus, the Bush Administration simultaneously approached economics as a technocratic science and a moralistic philosophy, and Bush would continue to celebrate the scientific accuracy and philosophical primacy of neoliberal economics even as the economy crashed in 2007.[7]

A decade later, President Barack Obama's discourse also exhibited a tension identified in this dissertation: the tension between free markets and democracy. On the

one hand, the Obama Administration's approach to diplomacy and free trade suggested that democracy and free markets did not always work in tandem. For example, in a 2016 speech to the United Nations, Obama dis-articulated free markets and democracy, asserting that "some countries, which now recognize the power of free markets, still reject the model of free societies."[8] Obama said that although various governments adopted market approaches, the adoption of "liberal democracy" was slow or non-existent; he shared with his audience a sense of frustration at learning "that liberal democracy will not just wash across the globe in a single wave." Yet, in his 2017 Farewell Address, Obama warned against "autocrats in foreign capitals who see free markets, open democracies, and civil society itself as a threat to their power."[9] Thus, seventeen years into the new millennium, Obama co-articulated free markets and democracy in ways reminiscent of 1990s discourses of neoliberal globalization.

Most recently, the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans have activated the final tension examined in this dissertation: the uneasy combination of market freedom and social responsibility. Although Trump antagonized neoliberalism on the national border front, his cabinet appointments and policy suggestions have largely towed the neoliberal line. Take, for example, the recent healthcare debate. Throughout 2017, advocates of market approaches to healthcare, including Trump, sought to repeal the Affordable Care Act's regulations, mandates, and subsidies for health insurance, thus moving healthcare further toward a free market system. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan explained that transforming healthcare into a "free market" would offer U.S. individuals the freedom to "pick the plan they want" and "to pick the doctor they want."[10] Writing for *The Hill*, President of the Taxpayers Protection Alliance David Williams asserted that

"If we want more affordable healthcare in this country," we must turn to "Free market reforms" to "increase competition and innovation in the healthcare system."[11] People proposing free market reforms thus saddled free markets with the social responsibility of providing desirable and affordable healthcare.

This project prompts scholars and activists to pay close attention to these and other tensions. As the neoliberal articulation continues to legitimize the free market by attaching it to social goods, scholars can identify other tensions that animate this powerful discourse. Moreover, activists seeking to antagonize the neoliberal articulation can continue to exploit the above tensions, which remain ripe for exploitation because they have already been publicly amplified.

Antagonistic Agency

This dissertation showed how particular antagonisms interrupted the neoliberal articulation by amplifying the aforementioned tensions. Each antagonism also implied the possibility of neoliberalism's disintegration by pivoting the legitimating value away from the free market. *EJA* constructed economics as a moral philosophy aimed toward community, the Gifford controversy turned salient subjectivities toward social responsibility, and the Seattle protests articulated a form of democracy that excluded free trade. By pivoting salient discourses away from the market, these antagonisms implied the viability of a world beyond neoliberalism. More generally, this dissertation suggests that antagonistic agency amplifies animating tensions and tends to privilege one of the tension's elements while muting the other.

The preceding chapters also teach scholars that existing discourses and previous antagonisms enabled activists and news media to enact antagonistic agency. Chapter two

argued that the Catholic bishops' economic agency was made possible by the Christian milieu and by Catholic traditions and institutions. These existing discourses rendered the bishops publicly legible as economic activists, thus prompting the news media to cover their letter as a newsworthy intervention into public policy. Chapter three showed how Kernaghan's sweatshop claims fit neatly into an existing system of signification that wielded "sweatshop" as a term of critique. Activists and the news media had laid the rhetorical groundwork for the Gifford controversy by circulating other sweatshop exposés, and existing discourses of celebrity and neoliberal identifications facilitated the mediated transformation from shame to guilt. Finally, chapter four demonstrated that the Seattle protests activated existing discourses of democracy and previous antagonisms aimed at global capitalism. Previous activism had created modes of engagement and frames of legibility for activists and for news media outlets, which were thus primed to cover "The Battle in Seattle" as a critique of globalization.

Once each antagonistic disruption had been enacted, it embodied the possibility of shattering hegemonic articulations by demonstrating that people had already challenged neoliberalism, and thus could do it again. As such, each antagonism explored in this project itself became a discourse that authorized future antagonistic agency. In the last few years, *EJA* has re-emerged as a rhetorical resource for Catholic antagonisms of neoliberal capitalism. *Al Jazeera America* contextualized Pope Francis' "critique of trickle-down theories of economics" by tethering it to *EJA,* which the report identified as a cornerstone text of "the Catholic left" in the United States.[12] Villanova University professor emeritus Joseph Betz tied Sanders' campaign to *EJA* in an editorial. Betz told readers of *The Philadelphia Enquirer* that thirty years before Sanders' bid for the

presidency, *EJA* had proposed an "experiment in securing economic rights…for every person," and that "Bernie Sanders now offers to lead us in designing this experiment."[13] Writing for the Catholic daily *La Croix International*, Charles Wilber argued that Trump's "economic program…conflicts with Catholic social thought as embedded in a number of social encyclicals and the U.S. bishops' 1986 letter on the economy, 'Economic Justice for All.'"[14] Wilber contrasted Trump's priorities with *EJA* and concluded that "Catholics attentive to our tradition of social and political thought should be wary of Trump policies." As these examples demonstrate, despite having been muted by Catholics in the 1990s and 2000s, *EJA* now circulates as an existing discourse that authorizes other Catholic antagonisms of the neoliberal articulation.

The Gifford controversy also enabled future enactments of antagonistic agency. For example, it significantly increased the news coverage of Nike's use of sweatshop labor, and the company's chief executive officer Phil Knight partially followed Gifford's lead, assuming some responsibility for Nike's labor practices.[15] In their analysis of five years' worth of Nike sweatshop coverage, Josh Greenberg and Graham Knight found that stories largely privileged activist perspectives, but that the coverage "tended to concentrate on solutions rather than causes, and the source of the problem tended to be rooted in the agency of consumers rather than producers."[16] Their study suggests that the antagonistic agency of consumers articulated by the Gifford controversy, with all of its limitations, stuck to subsequent sweatshop controversies. Spurred by these dual controversies, students established chapters of United Students Against Sweatshop (USAS) at campuses around the country and pressured their universities to denounce and divest from corporations that used sweatshop labor.[17] This activist network even

established an independent monitoring organization called the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), which, as of September 2017, claimed one hundred and ninety-one universities and colleges as affiliates.[18] Gifford's controversy, then, created forms of antagonistic agency that begot future antagonisms.

The Seattle protests also enabled similar antagonisms to neoliberalism. In recent years, the Seattle-style critique of neoliberal globalization has re-emerged from its public dormancy in the United States, perhaps most notably in the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) actions of 2011-2012.[19] OWS began on September 17, 2011, when hundreds of protesters marched on Wall Street to protest economic disparity and declared, in the words of *Adbusters*, "It's time for DEMOCRACY NOT CORPORATOCRACY."[20] In the coming weeks, hundreds of people occupied Zuccotti Park in New York City, renamed it Liberty Square, and lived there, creating an embodied community of participation, plurality, and solidarity.[21] Activists set up such encampments in cities across the United States in the fall of 2011 and into 2012. Combining embodied action and media coverage, OWS publicly dis-articulated free market capitalism and democracy, re-articulated economic democracy, and showcased police and protester violence.[22] Collective memory of the 1999 Seattle protests offered a system of signification for understanding OWS as a movement with significant historical precedent, as media reports and activists connected 2011 with 1999.[23]

In addition to this lesson, the mediated dimensions of these case studies teach scholars that antagonistic agency must not necessarily be tethered to purpose. The activists certainly sought to undermine neoliberal priorities in each case, but the news media did not necessarily engage in intentional antagonism aimed at disrupting the

neoliberal articulation. Following dictates of newsworthiness and controversy, news media antagonized the neoliberal articulation by covering the intentional antagonisms of activists and by circulating their own narratives that framed the activism as significant and disruptive. News media, then, can enact a form of antagonistic agency that is not necessarily tethered to antagonistic purpose. However, activists certainly should not rely heavily on news media amplification, since news media are themselves subject to a neoliberal system that privileges shareholders over other constituencies.[24]

Ultimately, this project suggests that antagonistic agency is disruptive when it is enacted through existing systems of meaning. Existing meanings render antagonistic disruptions intelligible, and thus capable of interruption. Existing antagonisms also evoke the possibility of neoliberalism's demise by showing that both challenges and alternatives are possible. Therefore, these cases suggest that activists should attach their actions to existing discourses and re-articulate previous antagonisms, which can offer both inspiration and the rhetorical heft of history. Moreover, this dissertation suggests that activists should attract news media attention to their public actions in situations where the possibility of a sympathetic frame of controversy exists.[25] In other words, if the existing system of signification is such that it might offer a sympathetic take on activist actions, the news media can amplify antagonisms to the level of disruption. However, this opportunity is likely not uniformly accessible to all activists and all causes; thus, activists and scholars can collaborate to locate potentially sympathetic news media frames for particular antagonisms.

Multimodal Accumulation

This project affirms Darrel Enck-Wanzer's contention that engaging in multiple rhetorical modalities creates potent forms of agency.[26] As Chapter One demonstrated, theories of articulation propose that discourses gain force as they accumulate, and my case studies suggest that engaging multiple rhetorical modalities allows antagonism's disruptive force to accumulate by infiltrating multiple sense-making spaces.

EJA primarily took the form of an institutional letter, a modality that allowed the bishops to curate theology, history, and economics into an antagonism whose institutional affiliation granted it the weight of the Catholic Church. As an institutional document, *EJA* could register as an official moral treatise. This modality also attached to several other modes of engagement, each of which brought *EJA* into additional spaces. As the bishops held committee hearings with economic experts and poor people's advocates, *EJA* attached to economics and advocacy. As newspapers covered *EJA*, its articulation of economic justice attached to national news about policy and economics more broadly. In the years immediately following the letter's release, the bishops began to create Church programs, sermons, and pamphlets that sought to bring *EJA* into practice. Had the Church not pivoted away from economic justice, these programs could have engaged members of specific parishes, thus attaching this antagonism to everyday practices of U.S. Catholicism.

The Gifford controversy also engaged multiple rhetorical forms, which allowed for the sweatshop critique to accumulate as it attached to ever-expanding spaces. Kernaghan first articulated the charges in a letter sent to Gifford and Wal-Mart, and the limitations of this modality became clear when the allegations were largely ignored.

Kernaghan escalated the publicity of his antagonism by speaking with members of Congress and by holding a press conference. These modalities made the antagonistic shame a matter of public policy and marked it as newsworthy. As Gifford reacted with shame and guilt on television, the antagonism penetrated the living rooms of people all over the country, attaching antagonistic emotion to spaces of leisure and comfort. As news and tabloid media became antagonists, the sweatshop charge stuck to labor laws, to the global production chain, and to consumer preferences and behaviors. This antagonism also manifested in hearings held at the highest levels of national government, as Gifford testified in Congress and at a meeting and press conference held at the White House. The sweatshop critique, then, accumulated by attaching to more spaces and issues, until social responsibility became a common component of capitalist consumption in the United States.

The Seattle protests likewise activated multiple modalities. Activists planned the protests for months, coordinating in-person trainings and crafting materials in preparation for their embodied action on the city's streets. These planning efforts blended communal co-presence with ideological principles to steel protesters for a confrontation between democracy and free trade. On the streets, protesters blended various embodied modalities—some marched, others blockaded, yet others engaged in violence. Marchers assumed the posture of acceptable protest, while direct action protesters elevated the risk and power involved with the antagonism, using their bodies as barriers and suffering violence at the hands of police. Protesters who engaged in violence infused the antagonism with threat, giving free trade an ominous emotional tenor. The police attached another dimension to the antagonism when they enacted violence against

protesters in ways that attached the democratic critique of free trade to literal people in the streets. The news media also facilitated the accumulation of the antagonism by covering the demonstrations for days and as part of its reporting on issues of national significance. The verbal dimensions of the coverage offered a narrative that separated free trade from democracy, and the visual dimensions confirmed the narrative accounts by featuring violence, mass demonstration, and an overzealous police force protecting an elite group of bureaucrats. The multimodality of the Seattle protests disrupted the neoliberal articulation by antagonizing free trade in multiple spaces and in ways that activated multiple senses.

This dissertation also suggests that antagonisms are disruptive to the extent that they are consistently engaged, and thus allowed to accumulate. When compared to the other case studies, *EJA* was the least disruptive, in part, because it was the least consistent. With the weight of Catholic institutions behind it, the letter had the potential to significantly disrupt the burgeoning neoliberal articulation, particularly if the Church had implemented its plans to put *EJA* into regular Catholic practice. In recent years, this antagonism has resurfaced with the institutional lead of Pope Francis, and the Catholic Church is again poised to stand as a significant antagonist of the neoliberal articulation. It will remain up to Catholic institutions, leaders, and congregants to amplify this moral critique of neoliberal economics in multimodal ways that activate diverse senses and spaces.

The Gifford controversy offered a significant disruption because its impetus to social responsibility was consistently repeated in multimodal ways. Various communities and institutions—from the White House to Nike to student groups—adopted this

antagonism, allowing its critique of market freedom to accumulate. Of course, the danger of Gifford-style accumulation is that it was ripe for appropriation because it revolved around market identities like the consumer and the corporation. For example, *Forbes Magazine* reported that the Gifford controversy and its Nike corollary "cemented an expanded expectation of business to accept responsibility for the oversight of the social and environmental impacts of its supply chain."[27] *Forbes* explained that as corporations "became concerned about tarnished reputations, potential regulations, and shareholder actions," they created the growing field known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Many consumers, also, have taken on responsibility for "ethical consumption" when purchasing a plethora of consumer goods, including clothing, food, and housing.[28] In many ways, such self-regulation and consumerism strengthened the power and morality of the free market by showing that social responsibility could be enacted in the marketplace.[29]

Nonetheless, through accumulation, the social responsibility critique of market freedom has attached the threat of shame and guilt to the production-consumption-profit chain in ways that manifest every day. Moreover, this accumulation has heightened the tension between market freedom and social responsibility because corporations and consumers have embraced responsibility as a marker of neoliberal identity. Thus, antagonists can again amplify this tension in multimodal ways that dis-articulate the free market and social responsibility, while emphasizing the latter. As they pursue such a task, antagonists should heed a key rhetorical finding of chapter three—that the remedies prescribed by guilt-tripping agents can shape the possibilities for remediation. These

remedies, then, should focus on excising the market from social responsibility to the extent that existing discourses enable such a separation.

People involved with movements for "Fair Trade" have combined the social responsibility impetus with the democratic antagonism made prominent in Seattle. Movements for Fair Trade, according to Michael K. Goodman, seek to "re-connect producers and consumers economically, politically, and psychologically through the creation of a transnational moral economy."[30] Many fair trade advocates use the language of populist democracy to privilege *fair* over *free*; for example, the Fair World Project promoted their vision of an "empowering and activist model of trade that supports small farmers, democratic organizations, and engaged consumers."[31] Fairtrade America asserted that their organization enabled "democracy in action" because it offered "producer organizations the opportunity to elect how they invest in their communities," thus promoting "self-determination."[32] In the last decade, some development scholars have suggested that fair trade, not free trade, may aid global democratization, thus lending scholarly authority to this co-articulation of fair trade and democracy.[33]

Movements for fair trade are but one example of people re-engaging the democratic antagonism of free trade. Indeed, the Seattle protests' populist-democratic challenge to free trade—itself a re-articulation of previous antagonisms—has accumulated to the point of significant disruption. When President Obama pushed to ratify the Trans-Pacific-Partnership (TPP) in the last years of his presidency, familiar critiques resurfaced. Writing for *The Nation*, Lori Wallach—the same person who had written op-eds against the WTO in 1999—argued that the TPP was "a massive assault on democracy" because it "would grant enormous new powers to corporations."[34] The

critique also re-emerged when political candidates in 2016 made the TPP a focal point of the election. Sanders called it "a disastrous trade agreement designed to protect the interests of the largest multi-national corporations at the expense of workers, consumers, the environment and the foundations of American democracy."[35] Trump also called the TPP a "disaster" and went as far as to compare it to sexual assault, saying that the deal was "done and pushed by special interests who want to rape our country."[36] Trump's unseemly metaphor highlighted populism, violent imagery, and the lack of consent to challenge the free trade deal. Although Hillary Clinton originally supported the TPP, she also denounced the deal on the campaign trail as one that did not adequately control "currency manipulation," which had cost "American jobs" in the past.[37] Clinton largely avoided the democracy critique, but she nonetheless re-engaged the national sovereignty and worker-centric elements of the Seattle protests by pledging allegiance to "American jobs." In the end, the United States did not adopt the TPP.

Ultimately, my case studies show that the more multimodal and frequent the antagonistic engagement, the more forceful the disruption. With each enactment, the antagonistic disruption gains force as it attaches to more senses and spaces, thus simultaneously interrupting the hegemonic articulation and implying the possibility of its collapse. This project, then, recommends that activists focus on consistency and multimodality when enacting antagonisms. Moreover, this dissertation suggests that rhetorical scholars of social change should examine how people come to re-articulate multimodal antagonisms. Scholars might inquire how existing discourses enable such re-articulation and how particular antagonisms become, to borrow Sara Ahmed's word, "sticky" enough to disrupt.[38]

Antagonistic Disruptions of the Neoliberal Free Market

When Trump won the presidency in 2016, Cornel West proclaimed that "The neoliberal era in the United States ended with a neofascist bang."[39] West characterized the election as one in which "White working- and middle-class fellow citizens—out of anger and anguish—rejected the economic neglect of neoliberal policies" and "supported a candidate who appeared to blame their social misery on minorities."[40] This dissertation suggests that Dr. West sounded neoliberalism's death knell too soon. Indeed, the Trump Administration's embrace of free market principles demonstrates the ability of the neoliberal articulation to adjust to antagonisms leveled against it. Instead of watching for the definitive end of neoliberal hegemony, this project suggests that we approach recent electoral discourses as antagonistic disruptions—that is, discursive interruptions that evoke the possibility of shattering neoliberalism's hegemony.

Taking this approach, we can analyze how existing discourses enabled electoral antagonisms, which tensions the campaigns amplified, and how they enacted antagonistic agency. For instance, we can see how existing xenophobic-nationalist discourses around free trade enabled the Trump campaign.[41] Taking advantage of such discourses, the campaign amplified a neoliberal tension between globalism and nationalism: an uneasy attachment of globalized free trade to a nationalistic social good—namely, the promise of economic opportunity in the United States.[42] Trump vowed not to "surrender this country, or its people, to the false song of globalism," unlike the leaders who he said had been "moving our jobs, our wealth and our factories to Mexico and overseas."[43] Discourses surrounding Trump's campaign also marked Hillary Clinton as the "globalist" who had to be defeated in order to restore national sovereignty over economics and identity.[44] The

Trump campaign pivoted national wealth away from a global free market in multimodal ways – through speeches, rallies, news media coverage, and eventually, through an Electoral College win.

We can also examine how the Sanders Campaign amplified a tension that animated the progressive end of the neoliberal continuum. Nancy Fraser recently coined the term "progressive neoliberalism," which describes a form of the free market impetus that blends the emancipatory claims of "new social movements" with deregulatory and individualistic commitments.[45] In Fraser's configuration, we again see the free market attaching to a social good—this time to the practice and promise of emancipation. Although Clinton adopted policies that reigned in the unfettered market, prominent discourses in 2016—including those of Sanders' supporters—had cast her as an embodiment of progressive neoliberalism.[46] Enabled by such existing discourses as Occupy Wall Street and criticisms of the TPP, the Sanders campaign pivoted social movement emancipation away from the free market. For example, in Sanders' speech celebrating his New Hampshire primary win, he vowed to "pursue the fight for women's rights, for gay rights, for disability rights" in the same breath as he told his supporters, "we must tell the billionaire class and the 1% that they cannot have it all at a time of massive wealth and income inequality."[47] The Sanders antagonism also engaged multiple modalities including speeches, rallies, policies, grassroots organizing, news media attention, and high-profile endorsements.

Despite these disruptions, the neoliberal articulation is currently adjusting to 2016's disruptions, thus supporting this dissertation's assertion that no single antagonism will tear apart the neoliberal articulation. The Trump Administration and Congressional

Republicans have embraced the free market as a beacon for their domestic policies, and Democrats are in the throes of deciding whether to heartily embrace progressive neoliberalism or to embark on a more socialist-populist platform.[48] This dissertation also suggests, though, that antagonistic disruptions can accumulate if they are consistently engaged in multimodal ways. One year after the electoral upset, antagonists have been mobilizing against the neoliberal articulation on multiple fronts. The Sanders campaign has morphed into Our Revolution, a national group that organizes for progressive candidates and policies; the Democratic Socialists of America recently broke their record in memberships, tripling in size; sixteen Democratic Senators co-sponsored Sanders' 2017 Medicare for All bill.[49] The antagonisms appear to be accumulating, and my dissertation suggests that consistent, multimodal disruptions have the potential to tear neoliberalism apart.

NOTES

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[46] For example, see Anis Shivani, "Donald Trump Is Going to Win: This Is Why Hillary Clinton Can't Defeat What Trump Represents," *Salon* (blog), May 23, 2016, https://www.salon.com/2016/05/23/donald_trump_is_going_to_win_this_is_why_hillary_clinton_cant_defeat_what_trump_represents/; Jonathan Easley, "Sanders Ally Calls Clinton a 'Milquetoast Neoliberal Sister,'" *The Hill* (blog), June 9, 2016, http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/presidential-races/282972-cornel-west-calls-clinton-a-milquetoast-neoliberal-sister.

[47] Bernie Sanders, "The Transcript of Bernie Sanders's Victory Speech," *The Washington Post*, February 10, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/02/10/the-transcript-of-bernie-sanderss-victory-speech/?nid&utm_term=.569cf482b990.

[48] Daniel Bessner and Matthew Sparke, "Don't Let His Trade Policy Fool You: Trump Is a Neoliberal," *The Washington Post*, March 22, 2017, sec. Perspective, https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/03/22/dont-let-his-trade-policy-fool-you-trump-is-a-neoliberal/?utm_term=.5bc12b013347; Monica Ball wrote, "This debate between left and center has consumed the Democratic Party as it looks for a way forward after the debacle of 2016. Leftists claim that Hillary Clinton's technocratic caution and coziness with Goldman Sachs alienated voters, and that Sanders, had he won the Democratic nomination, could have defeated Trump. Third Way makes the case that its brand of neoliberal centrism is still the party's best hope." Monica Ball, "On Safari in Trump's America," *The Atlantic Monthly*, October 23, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/10/on-safari-in-trumps-america/543288/.

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