

The Frank E. Seidman  
Distinguished Award  
In Political Economy

Acceptance Paper by  
**Albert O. Hirschman**  
recipient of the 1980 award

*Morality and the Social Sciences:  
A Durable Tension*  
delivered September 25, 1980

Southwestern At Memphis  
host college of the Award

# THE FRANK E. SEIDMAN DISTINGUISHED AWARD IN POLITICAL ECONOMY

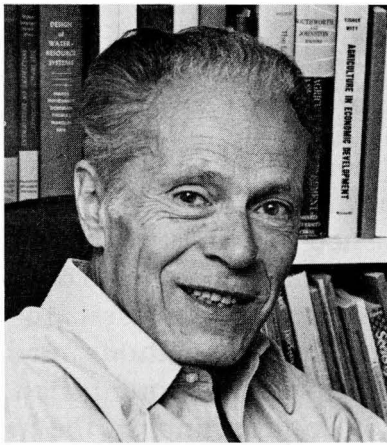
The Frank E. Seidman Distinguished Award in Political Economy was established in memory of Frank E. Seidman by Mr. and Mrs. P. K. Seidman. The host college for the Award is Southwestern At Memphis, a liberal arts college established in 1848. An honorarium of ten thousand dollars will be given to an economist who has distinguished himself or herself internationally by contributing, in the judgment of his and her peers, to the advancement of economic thought along interdisciplinary lines and to its implementation through public policy.

The purpose of the Award is to recognize and encourage economists who are attempting to extend their work into the interdependent areas of the other social sciences. The Award is established with the expectation that social welfare will be advanced when proper cognizance is given to environmental and institutional influences upon the economic behavior of individuals and groups. The basis for evaluation will encompass both the synthesis of existing thought in political economy and the pathbreaking development of new concepts.

The recipient of the Award is chosen by the Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of a rotating Selection Committee composed of eminent economists.

The Award is presented annually at a formal banquet in Memphis, Tennessee.

Mel G. Grinspan  
Director



ALBERT O. HIRSCHMAN  
Recipient of the Seventh Annual  
Frank E. Seidman Distinguished Award  
in Political Economy  
Memphis, Tennessee, September 25, 1980

Dr. Hirschman is an economist and professor of social science at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, New Jersey. Prior to working at the Institute, Dr. Hirschman held the post of Professor (1964-67) and Lucius N. Littauer Professor of Political Economy (1967-74) at Harvard University. From 1958 to 1964 he was professor of International Economic Relations at Columbia University and from 1956 to 1958, a visiting research professor at Yale. From 1952-56, he lived in Bogotá, Colombia where he worked as an economic advisor and consultant. From 1946-52, he was an economist for the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Hirschman holds a doctorate in economics from the University of Trieste, Italy, as well as an honorary doctoral degree from Rutgers University which he received in 1978. He attended the London School of Economics, Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales and Institut de Statistique, Sorbonne and the University of Berlin.

The recipient of numerous awards, Dr. Hirschman has been a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University; a fellow of and consultant to the Rockefeller Foundation; a consultant to the Ford Foundation and a Faculty Research Fellow; and a Fellow, International Student Service at the London School of Economics.

In his work, Dr. Hirschman has consistently examined the interaction of economics with political and broader social processes. This interest is evident in his earliest book, *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* (1945), where he analyzed how relations of political power, influence, and dependence can arise out of economic transactions between nations.

*The Strategy of Economic Development* (1958), which has been translated into ten languages, made major contributions to the understanding of the development of the poorer countries in such matters as industrialization, inflation, regional development, etc. Based directly on Hirschman's practical experience as economic advisor and consultant in Latin America, the book is concerned equally with private and public development decisions. *Journeys Toward Progress: Studies of Economic Policy-Making in Latin America* (1963) marks a further exploration of public policy in developing countries and, in particular, of the conditions under which social and economic reform becomes possible.

In the 60's, Dr. Hirschman continued his intensive study of development problems in Latin America, but also traveled and worked in other developing nations such as India, Pakistan, Nigeria, and southern Italy. The result was *Development Projects Observed* (1967), a study of development projects financed by the World Bank that dealt with their economic, social, and political repercussions.

The interaction of economics and politics at a more general level was the subject of *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty* (1970). The conceptual scheme of this work has already found application in many diverse fields, from labor economics to international relations.

His latest book, *The Passions and the Interests* (1977), ex-

amines how political philosophers and economists of the 17th and 18th centuries speculated about the political effects of the commercial expansion that took place under their eyes.

Dr. Hirschman is also the author of *A Bias For Hope: Essays on Development and Latin America* (1971). He is presently preparing another volume of shorter papers to be entitled *Essays in Trespassing: Economics to Politics and Beyond* which will include the address printed below.

His works have appeared in many professional journals including *American Economic Review*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* and *Federal Reserve Bulletin*.

Dr. Hirschman, 65, was born in Berlin, Germany. He left Germany in 1933 and for the next six years studied and worked in France, England, and Italy. In 1939-40 he served as a volunteer in the French Army and from June-December 1940 collaborated in Marseilles with American-led efforts to rescue political and intellectual refugees threatened by the Nazi advance in Europe. He immigrated to the United States in 1941 and served in the United States Army from March 1943 to December 1945.

# MORALITY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES: A DURABLE TENSION

Address by  
Albert O. Hirschman

*Dedicated to the memory  
of Arthur M. Okun*

What is the role of moral considerations and concerns in economics? More generally, what can be said about the "problem of morality in the social sciences"? In commenting on these questions—the second was the subject of a conference I attended not long ago—I shall first give some reasons why this sort of topic does not come easily to the social scientist; only later shall I show why there is today an increased concern with moral values, *even* in economics—that rock of positivist solidity. In conclusion, I shall suggest some ways of reconciling the traditional posture of the economist as a "detached scientist" with his or her role as a morally concerned person.

To deal usefully with the relationship between morality and the social sciences one must first realize that modern social science arose to a considerable extent in the process of *emancipating* itself from traditional moral teachings. Right at the onset of the modern age, Machiavelli proclaimed that he would deal with political institutions as they really exist and not with "imaginary republics and monarchies" governed in accordance with the religious precepts and moralistic pieties that have been handed down from one generation to the next by well-meaning persons. Modern political science owes a great deal to Machiavelli's shocking claim that ordinary notions of moral behavior for individuals may not be suitable as rules of conduct for states. More generally, it appeared, as a result of the wealth of insights discovered by Machiavelli, that the traditional concentration on the "ought," on the manner in which princes and statesmen ought to behave, interferes with the fuller understanding of the "is" that can

be achieved when attention is closely and coldly riveted on the ways in which statecraft is in fact carried on. The need to separate political science from morality was later openly proclaimed by Montesquieu, another principal founding father of social science, when he wrote:

*It is useless to attack politics directly by showing how much its practices are in conflict with morality and reason. This sort of discourse makes everybody nod in agreement, but changes nobody.*<sup>1</sup>

A similar move from the “ought” to the “is” was soon to be made in economics. As the actual workings of trade and markets were examined in some detail from the seventeenth century on, a number of discoveries as shocking and instructive as those of Machiavelli were made by writers on economic topics. I am not referring just to Mandeville’s famous paradox about private vices leading, via the stimulation of the luxury trades, to public benefits. Quite a bit earlier, in the middle of the seventeenth century, a number of deeply religious French thinkers, the most prominent of whom was Pascal, realized that an ordered society could exist and endure without being based on love or “charity.” Another principle, so they found, could do the job of making the social world go round: the principle of self-interest. This ability of doing without love came to them as an uneasy surprise and as a worrisome puzzle: a society that is not held together by love is clearly sinful—how could it then be not only workable, but so intricately and admirably constructed that Divine Providence seems to have had a hand in it?

A century later, such worries had given way to outright celebration: Adam Smith evinced no religious qualms when he bestowed praise on the Invisible Hand for enlisting self-interested behavior on behalf of social order and economic progress. Yet, the idea of morality supplying an alternative way of ordering economy and society still lurks somewhere in the background as Smith mocks it in one of the most striking formulations of his doctrine: “It is not from the *benevolence* of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we

---

<sup>1</sup>*Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Roger Caillois (Paris: Pléiade, NRF, 1949), Vol. I, p. 112.



expect our dinner," so he writes, "but from their regard to their own *interest*."<sup>1</sup> Smith fairly bubbles over here with excitement about the possibility of discarding moral discourse and exhortation, thanks to the discovery of a social mechanism that, if properly unshackled, is far less demanding of human nature and therefore infinitely more reliable. And, once again, the refusal to be satisfied with the traditional "ought" created a *space* within which scientific knowledge could unfold.

Marx remained strictly in the Machiavelli-Montesquieu-Smith tradition when, in his attempt to interpret and, above all, to change the prevailing social and political order, he consistently refused to appeal to moral argument. He scoffed at the "utopian socialists" precisely for doing so in their critique of capitalist society and for resorting to moral exhortation in putting forth their proposed remedies. In spite of the ever-present moralistic undertone of his work, Marx's proudest claim was to be the father of "*scientific socialism*." To be truly scientific, he obviously felt that he had to shun moral argument. True science does not preach, it proves and predicts: so he proves the existence of exploitation through the labor theory of value and predicts the eventual demise of capitalism through the law of the falling rate of profit. In effect Marx mixed, uncannily, these "cold" scientific propositions with "hot" moral outrage and it was perhaps this odd amalgam, with all of its inner tensions unresolved, that was (and is) responsible for the extraordinary appeal of his work in an age both addicted to science and starved of moral values.

The tension between the "warm" heart and the "cold" or, at best, "cool" head is a well-known theme in Western culture, especially since the Romantic age. But I am speaking here not only of tension, but of an existential incompatibility between morality and moralizing, on the one hand, and analytical-scientific activity, on the other. This incompatibility is simply a fact of experience. Our analytical performance becomes automatically suspect if it is openly pressed into the

---

<sup>1</sup>*Wealth of Nations*, Modern Library Edition (New York, 1937), p. 14.



service of moral conviction; and conversely, moral conviction is not dependent on analytical argument and can actually be weakened by it, just as religious belief has on balance been undermined rather than bolstered by the proofs of God and their intellectual prowess. The matter has been best expressed by the great German poet Hölderlin in a wonderfully pithy, if rather plaintive, epigram. Entitled “*Guter Rat*” (Good Advice), it dates from about 1800 and, in my free translation, reads:

*If you have brains and a heart, show only one or the other,  
You will not get credit for either should you show both at once.*<sup>1</sup>

The mutual exclusiveness of moralizing and analytical understanding may be nothing but a happenstance, reflecting the particular historical conditions under which scientific progress in various domains was achieved in the West. These conditions have of course left strong marks on cultural attitudes, marks so well identified by Hölderlin.

But the hostility to morality is more than a birthmark of modern science. With regard to the social sciences in particular, there are some more specific reasons to think that antimoralist petulance will frequently recur, because of the very nature of the social scientific enterprise and discourse. Let me briefly explain.

In all sciences fundamental discovery often takes the form of paradox. This is true for some of the principal theorems of physics, such as the Copernican proposition about the earth moving around the sun rather than vice versa. But it can be argued that social science is peculiarly subject to the compulsion to produce paradox. The reason is that we all know so much about society already without ever having taken a single social science course. We live in society; we often contribute to social, political and economic processes as

---

<sup>1</sup>Hast Du Verstand und ein Herz, so zeige nur eines von beiden,  
Beides verdammen sie Dir, zeigest Du beides zugleich.

Hölderlin's distinction between *Verstand* (reason) and *Herz* (heart) reflects the rehabilitation of the passions in the eighteenth century that led to the “heart” standing for the many generous moral feelings, impulses, and beneficent passions man was now credited with while reason was becoming downgraded; at an earlier time, the contrast, not between the heart and the head, but between the passions and reason, or the passions and the interests, carried a very different value connotation. I have dealt with these matters in *The Passions and the Interests*, pp. 27-28, 43-44, and 63-66.

actors; and we think—often mistakenly, of course—that we know roughly what goes on not only in our own minds, but also in those of others. As a result, we have considerable intuitive, commonsense understanding of social science “problems” such as crime in the streets, corruption in high places, and even inflation, and everyone stands forever ready to come forward with his or her own “solution” or nostrum. Consequently, for social science to *enhance* our considerable, untutored knowledge of the social world it must come up with something that has not been apparent or transparent before or, better still, with something that shows how badly commonsense understanding has led us astray.<sup>1</sup> Important social science discoveries are therefore typically counter-intuitive, shocking, and concerned with *unintended* and unexpected consequences of human action.

With the commonsense understanding of social science problems having usually a strong moral component (again much more so than in the natural sciences) the immoralist vocation of the social sciences can in good measure be attributed to this compulsion to produce shock and paradox. Just as one of social science’s favorite pastimes is to affirm the hidden rationality of the seemingly irrational or the coherence of the seemingly incoherent, so does it often defend as moral, or useful, or at least innocent, social behavior that is widely considered to be reprehensible. In economics, examples of this sort of quest for the morally shocking come easily to mind. Following the early lead of Mandeville and his rehabilitation of luxury, many an economist has carved out a reputation by extolling the economic efficiency functions of such illegal or unsavory activities as smuggling, or black marketeering, or even corruption in government.

Lately this taste for the morally shocking has been particularly evident in the “imperialist” expeditions of economists into areas of social life outside the traditional domain of economics. Activities such as crime, marriage, procreation, bureaucracy, voting and participation in public affairs in

---

<sup>1</sup>See Gilles Gaston Granger, “L’explication dans les sciences sociales,” *Social Science Information* 10 (1971), p. 38.

general have all been subjected to a so-called "economic approach" with the predictable result that, like the consumer or producer of the economics textbook, the actors involved, be they criminals, lovers, parents, bureaucrats or voters, were all found to be busily "maximizing under constraints." Such people had of course long been thought to be moved and buffeted by complex passions, both noble and ignoble, such as revolt against society, love, craving for immortality, and devotion to the public interest or betrayal thereof, among many others. In comparison with this traditional image of man's noneconomic pursuits, their analysis at the hands of the imperialist economist, with the emphasis on grubby cost/benefit calculus, was bound to produce moral shock; and once again, the analysis drew strength from having this shock value.

In a book review, my colleague Clifford Geertz recently wrote a marvelous first paragraph that is eminently applicable to the writings to which I have just been referring:

*This is a book about the "primary male-female differences in sexuality among humans," in which the following things are not discussed: guilt, wonder, loss, self-regard, death, metaphor, justice, purity, intentionality, cowardice, hope, judgment, ideology, humor, obligation, despair, trust, malice, ritual, madness, forgiveness, sublimation, pity, ecstasy, obsession, discourse, and sentimentality. It could be only one thing, and it is. Sociobiology.<sup>1</sup>*

To most of us this sounds like a scathing indictment, but partisans of the book under review may well feel that its author deserves praise precisely for having cut through all those "surface phenomena" listed by Geertz to the *fundamental* mechanism which lays bare the very essence of whatever the book is about. In the same way, practitioners of the "economic approach" to human behavior probably take pride in their "parsimonious" theory, and whatever success they achieve is in fact largely grounded in the reductionist outrageousness of their enterprise.

One cannot help feeling, nevertheless, that this particular

---

<sup>1</sup>Review of Donald Symons, *The Evolution of Human Sexuality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) in *The New York Review of Books*, January 24, 1980, p. 3.

way of achieving notoriety and fame for the economist is running into decreasing returns. For one, the paradigm about self-interest leading to a workable and perhaps even optimal social order without any admixture of "benevolence" has now been around so long that it has become intellectually challenging to rediscover the need for morality. To affirm this need has today almost the same surprise value and air of paradox which the Smithian farewell to benevolence had in its own time. Second, and more important, it has become increasingly clear that, in a number of important areas, the economy is in fact liable to perform poorly without a minimum of "benevolence."

The resurgence and rehabilitation of benevolence got started in microeconomics. One of the conditions for the proper functioning of competitive markets is "perfect" information about the goods and services that are being bought and sold. We all know, of course, that this condition is frequently far from being met, but imperfect information might not be too damaging to the market system if it were limited and widely shared among all citizens, be they sellers or buyers. What happens, however, if, as is often the case, the knowledge of the buyers about a certain commodity is far inferior to that of the suppliers and sellers? In that case the stage is set for exploitation of the buyers by the sellers unless the latter are somehow restrained from taking advantage of their superiority. Government could be and has been entrusted with that task, with varying success: we all know by now that government will not necessarily succeed where the market fails. An ingenious solution would be for the sellers to subject themselves voluntarily to a discipline that keeps them from exploiting their superior knowledge. For example, surgeons could take on the obligation, as a condition for the exercise of their profession, never to prescribe an operation when none is needed. This is the case, pointed out some time ago by Kenneth Arrow, where adherence to a code of professional ethics can remedy one specific form of market failure. So we are back to benevolence: in a somewhat institutionalized form it is here invoked as an input essential for the functioning of a market economy in which sellers have more information than buyers.

The fact that there is a need for ethical behavior in certain situations in which the market system and self-interest, left to their own devices, will result in undesirable outcomes does not mean, of course, that such behavior will automatically materialize. Perhaps it tends to do so when the need is particularly imperious, as it is in the case of surgeons and surgery. In any event, we worry quite a bit more about "being had" when we buy a secondhand car than when we consult a doctor about the need for an operation. Economists have recently identified a number of areas, from the market for "lemons" to day-care services and psychotherapeutic advice, where the performance of the market could be much improved by an infusion of "benevolence," sometimes in the modest form of cooperation and exchange of information between suppliers and customers.

The need for ethical norms and behavior to supplement and, on occasion, to supplant self-interest appears with great clarity and urgency in the just noted situations of "market failure." But this need is actually always there to some degree: if only because of the time element contained in most transactions, economic efficiency and enterprise are premised on the existence of trust between contracting parties, and this trust must be autonomous, that is, it must not be tied narrowly to self-interest. To quote a recent, sweeping statement of this point: "Elemental personal values of honesty, truthfulness, trust, restraint and obligation are all necessary inputs to an efficient (as well as pleasant) contractual society. . . ." <sup>1</sup> If all these needed personal values are added up, the amounts of benevolence and morality required for the functioning of the market turn out to be quite impressive!

So much for microeconomics. But the really giant, if unacknowledged, strides in the rehabilitation of morality as an essential "input" into a functioning economy have taken place in the macro area, as a result of the contemporary experience with, and concern over, inflation. In spite of all the noise caused by certain technical debates (demand-pull

---

<sup>1</sup>Fred Hirsch, "The Ideological Underlay of Inflation," in Fred Hirsch and John H. Goldthorpe, eds., *The Political Economy of Inflation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 274.

vs. cost-push, monetarist vs. Keynesian or post-Keynesian views), there is in fact wide agreement—because it is so self-evident—that the understanding *and* control of contemporary inflation require probing deeply into the social and political underlay of the economy. For example, suppose it is correct that increasing public expenditures must be blamed for the inflation, then the question surely is: why is the modern state subject to ever increasing pressures for dispensing an ever more comprehensive set of public services to newly assertive interest groups? Similarly, if it is true that wage and price restraint could do much to hold back inflation, then why is it that such restraint is so difficult to come by? A British sociologist has written, in answer to such questions, that “conflict between social groups and strata has become more intense and also to some extent more equally matched, with these two tendencies interacting in a mutually reinforcing way.”<sup>1</sup> Here is a well articulated expression of the widespread view that inflation reflects increasing combativeness or, in colorful British parlance, “bloody-mindedness” on the part of various social groups that have heretofore been viewed in our textbooks as “cooperating” in the generation and distribution of the social product. The result of this sort of sociological analysis of inflation is then to plead for a “new social contract” which would hopefully result in inhibiting and reducing “bloody-mindedness” all around.<sup>2</sup>

The observation that is in order at this point will already have occurred to the reader: this nasty attribute, “bloody-mindedness,” which it is so important to restrain, is nothing but the obverse of benevolence which it is therefore essential

---

<sup>1</sup>John H. Goldthorpe, “The Current Inflation: Toward a Sociological Account,” in *The Political Economy of Inflation*, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup>An alternative solution is to fight fire with fire and to apply what might be called “countervailing bloody-mindedness.” The recently much discussed idea of making it expensive for management to increase wages through a special tax levied on payroll increases beyond a certain norm has the avowed purpose of “stiffening the back” of management as it faces militant labor. The monetarist injunctions can also be regarded as a proposal to counter the bloody-mindedness of various social groups by that of the Central Bank (something that in a number of countries turns out to require strong-arm regimes as well as *real* bloodletting). For a more extended examination of the sociological aspects of inflation, see “The Social and Political Matrix of Inflation” in my forthcoming book, *Essays in Trespassing: Economics to Politics and Beyond*, Cambridge University Press, chapter 8.

to foster. Hence, getting on top of our major current macroeconomic problem turns out to require the generation and diffusion of benevolence among various social groups! So it definitely would seem time for economists to renounce the amoral stance affected, at least in the *Wealth of Nations*, by the illustrious founder of our science: for the solution of both micro- and macroeconomic problems, the pursuit of pure self-interest on the part of each individual member of society is clearly inadequate.

So far so good. But have we gotten very far? We have learned that we should not scoff at benevolence and at moral values in general. We can also appreciate that Malthus had a point when, in endorsing the Smithian rule according to which everyone should be left free to pursue his self-interest, he systematically added the reservation "while he adheres to the rules of justice."<sup>1</sup>

But this sort of addition of a qualifying, moralizing afterthought is not really much of a contribution. Granted the important place of moral thought and values for economics, how should we map out the new terrain and become aware of all the insights we have missed because of our previous exclusive concentration on self-interest? One way to proceed is to attempt a head-on attack. The opposite of self-interest is interest in others, action on behalf of others. So the obvious way of making amends for their previous disregard of moral values and "generous impulses" is for economists to study altruism. A number of works on this topic have indeed appeared in recent years.<sup>2</sup> They are instructive and useful, but suffer perhaps from the attempt to make up for lost time in too much of a hurry.

In my opinion, the damage wrought by the "economic approach," based on the traditional self-interest model, is not

---

<sup>1</sup>*Principles of Political Economy* (London: John Murray, 1820), pp. 3 and 518. This qualifying clause was brought to my attention by Alexander Field; see his paper "Malthus, Method, and Macroeconomics," unpublished, May 1980. As Field points out, in the numerous expositions of the principle with which *The Wealth of Nations* is studied, Adam Smith added the similar phrase "as long as he does not violate the laws of justice," only once. See Modern Library edition, p. 651.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Kenneth E. Boulding, *The Economy of Love and Fear: A Preface to Grant Economics* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1973); Edmund S. Phelps, ed., *Altruism, Morality and Economic Theory* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1975); David Collard, *Altruism and Economy: A Study in Non-Selfish Economics* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1978).



just the neglect of altruistic behavior. It extends to wide areas of traditional analysis and is due to far too simplistic a model of human behavior *in general*. What is needed is for economists to incorporate into their analysis, whenever that is pertinent, such basic traits and emotions as the desire for power and for sacrifice, the fear of boredom, pleasure in both commitment and unpredictability, the search for meaning and community, and so on. Clearly this is a task that cannot be accomplished once and for all by a research project on the injection of moral values into economics. Any attempt of this kind is likely to yield disappointing results, and would thus invite an extension to economics of the French saying, "With beautiful sentiments one makes bad literature."

An effective integration of moral argument into economic analysis can be expected to proceed rather painstakingly, on a case-to-case basis, because the relevant moral consideration or neglected aspect of human nature will vary considerably from topic to topic. The task requires a conjunction of talents that is difficult to come by: first, familiarity with the technical apparatus of economics and, secondly, openness to the heretofore neglected moral dimension whose introduction modifies traditional results.

A fine example of such a conjunction—and also of its difficulty—is Robert Solow's recent presidential address to the American Economic Association on the topic of labor markets and unemployment. In explaining why the labor market is not smoothly self-clearing, he stressed the fact that workers pay a great deal of attention to "principles of appropriate behavior whose source is not entirely individualistic," such as the reluctance of those who are out of work to undercut those who hold jobs. "Wouldn't you be surprised," so he asked, "if you learned that someone of roughly your status in the profession, but teaching in a less desirable department, had written to your department chairman offering to teach your courses for less money?"<sup>1</sup> Here is an important recognition of how certain moral-social norms profoundly affect the working of a most important market: they make it less perfect

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert M. Solow, "On Theories of Unemployment," *American Economic Review*, 70 (March 1980), pp. 3, 4.

from the point of view of self-clearing, but certainly *more* perfect from almost any other conceivable point of view!

I now turn to the difficulty of coming up with such an observation. Note that its vehicle was Solow's presidential address. Is there perhaps a tendency in our profession to wait until one has reached the pinnacle before coming forward with such, after all, only mildly moralistic and heretical views? Now I am quite sure (at least in the case of Solow) that it is not pusillanimity and the desire for advancement that are responsible for such *late* blooming of moral emphasis; rather, the explanation lies in that mutual exclusiveness of heart and head, of moralizing and analytical understanding, on which I dwelt at the beginning of this essay. When one has been groomed as a "scientist" it just takes a great deal of wrestling with oneself before one will admit that moral considerations of human solidarity can effectively interfere with those hieratic, impersonal forces of supply and demand.

There is a notable instance here of what Veblen called a "trained incapacity." It is so strong, in fact, that we will often not avow to ourselves the moral source of our scientific thought processes and discoveries. As a result, quite a few of us are *unconscious* moralists in our professional work. I have a personal story to illustrate this point, and here is how I told it in the special preface I wrote—for reasons that will be apparent—for the *German* edition of *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*:

*As is related in my book, its intellectual origin lies in an observation I made some years ago in Nigeria. But quite a while after the book had been published in the United States, it dawned on me that my absorption with its theme may have deeper roots. A large part of the book centers on the concern that exit of the potentially most powerful carriers of voice prevents the more forceful stand against decline that might otherwise be possible. This situation is not altogether unrelated to the fate of the Jews who were still in Germany after 1939. Most of the young and vigorous ones, like myself, got out in the early years after Hitler took over, leaving a gravely weakened community behind. Of course, the possibilities of any effective voice were zero in the circumstances of those years no matter who left and who stayed. Nevertheless, the*

*real fountainhead of the book may well lie in some carefully repressed guilt feelings that, even though absurd from the point of view of any rational calculus, are simply there.*<sup>1</sup>

At this point, a further afterthought suggests itself: it was probably fortunate that I was *not* aware of those deeper moral stirrings when I wrote the book; otherwise, the presentation of my argument might have been less general, less balanced as between the respective merits of exit and voice, and less scientifically persuasive. My excursion into autobiography thus points to an odd conclusion: one, perhaps peculiarly effective, way for social scientists to bring moral concerns into their work is to do so unconsciously! This bit of advice is actually not quite as unhelpful as it sounds. For the reasons given, it seems to me impractical and possibly even counter-productive to issue guidelines to social scientists on how to incorporate morality into their scientific pursuits and how to be on guard against immoral “side effects” of their work. Morality is not something like pollution abatement that can be secured by slightly modifying the design of a policy proposal. Rather, it belongs into the center of our work; and it can get there only if the social scientists are morally alive and make themselves vulnerable to moral concerns—then they will produce morally significant works, consciously or otherwise.

I have a further, more ambitious, and probably utopian thought. Once one has gone through the historical account and associated reasoning of this essay, once we have become fully aware of our intellectual tradition with its deep split between head and heart and its not always beneficial consequences, the first step toward overcoming that tradition and toward healing that split has already been taken. Down the road, it is then possible to visualize a kind of social science that would be very different from the one most of us have been practicing: a moral-social science where moral considerations are not repressed or kept apart, but are systematically commingled with analytic argument, without guilt feelings

---

<sup>1</sup>Original English text of preface to German edition in Albert O. Hirschman, *Abwanderung und Widerspruch* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1974), p. vii.

over any lack of integration; where the transition from preaching to proving and back again is performed frequently and with ease; and where moral considerations need no longer be smuggled in surreptitiously, nor expressed unconsciously, but are displayed openly and disarmingly. Such would be, in part, my dream for a "social science for our grandchildren."

# 1980 Board of Trustees

## The Frank E. Seidman Distinguished Award In Political Economy

---

P.K. Seidman  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Senior Consultant,  
Seidman & Seidman  
Memphis, Tennessee

James H. Daughdrill, Jr.

President,  
Southwestern At Memphis  
Memphis, Tennessee

Robert M. Solow

Past President,  
American Economic Association;  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Boston, Massachusetts

Wasfy B. Iskander

Chairman,  
Department of Economics  
and Business Administration  
Southwestern At Memphis  
Memphis, Tennessee

Robert L. Booth, Jr.

President,  
Economic Club of Memphis;  
President,  
Commerce Union Bank  
Memphis, Tennessee

James Tobin

Former Member,  
President's Council of  
Economic Advisers;  
Yale University  
New Haven, Connecticut

Richard M. Gillett

Chairman of the Board,  
Old Kent Bank and Trust Company  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

---

Kurt F. Flexner

Consultant to the Board of Trustees

Economist  
Memphis, Tennessee

Mel G. Grinspan

Director of the Award

Distinguished Service Professor,  
Department of Economics  
and Business Administration  
Southwestern At Memphis  
Memphis, Tennessee