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"CONSUMED BY CAPITALISM"

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Introduction and Moderator:

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Featured Speaker:

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Commentary:

WILL WILKINSON
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Panelist:

E.J. DIONNE JR.
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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GALSTON: It's my pleasure to welcome you all to this event which is the fifth in the "Governing Ideas" series which is sponsored by the Governance Studies Program here at Brookings. We are gathered as you know to discuss Professor Benjamin Barber's latest book, the seventeenth by my count, entitled "Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole."

Professor Barber is far too well known to require much of an introduction, but in keeping with the civility and good manners we try to cultivate here at Brookings, I will give him a brief one anyway. The bare bones are pretty straightforward. The last time I checked, he is the Gershon and Carol Kekst Professor of Civil Society and Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland, a Distinguished Senior Fellow at Demos, a New York City based research center, as well as President and Director of the International NGO, CivWorld.

These bare facts hardly tell the whole story. Barber is to begin a distinguished political theorist whose book "Strong Democracy" did much to revitalize democratic theory and to rekindle the idea of direct civic participation on public affairs. He is, second, a wide-ranging public intellectual who has looked repeatedly over the horizon to warn us about hitherto unsuspected dangers.

His book "Jihad vs. McWorld" published in 1995 is a classic exercise in civic foresight. He is, finally, a citizen of the world who is trying to weave together an international network of citizens and civic organizations who are prepared to take interdependence seriously and to promote it as an emerging global reality.

Whenever I ponder Barber's career I think not entirely by accident of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Most of you I am sure are aware of Rousseau's efforts most famously of the social contract to restore the theory and practice of republican self-government, but for the most part, only we professional political theorists know much about his equally significant critique of the culture of modernity. Here is a representative sentence from Rousseau's first discourse, "Ancient politicians talked incessantly about morality and virtue, our politicians talk only about business and money." In that spirit he distinguished between bourgeois and *citoyen*, a distinction I believe Barber has resuscitated and refurbished in the distinction which is the key distinction in his latest book between the consumer and the citizen.

But enough of this. On with the show, and here is how the show is going to go. Professor Barber will get us started by summarizing the argument of his book. Commenting on the argument will be Will Wilkinson, a policy analyst at the Cato Institute, Managing Editor of "Cato Unbound," and most recently author of a perceptive analysis of contemporary research on happiness.

After his comments, Professor Barber will have an opportunity to respond briefly after which E.J. Dionne, a Senior Fellow in Governance Studies, *Washington Post* columnist, and celebrated author, and I, less celebrated, will

pose a few questions. We will end this event with roughly by my calculation a half an hour of questions from the floor. But enough of me. Professor Barber, the podium is yours.

(Applause)

MR. BARBER: Thank you so much, Bill Galston and E.J. Dionne for making this afternoon of discussion possible. I want to say how grateful I am particularly to Bill Galston. I about 7 years ago left Rutgers University where I had been for many, many years and came to the University of Maryland primarily because of Bill's presence there and our collaborative work around an organization called the Democracy Collaborative. As you all know, Bill has in a sense been a pioneer in thinking about how to rethink and reposition the liberal perspective in a world of morals and religion and has had a profound impact not just on the thought of political philosophers but also on the thought and work of politicians and the Democratic Party. It has hard to imagine that the Democratic Party would be in a position that it is today both once again in control of Congress and with the possibility of taking the White House again without the kinds of fundamental adjustments in its view of the relationship between liberty and morals that Bill Galston made possible.

Likewise, E.J. Dionne has represented for many years now a voice both in the media and among intellectuals that refuses to begin with ideological cant or a fixed ideological position and has instead brought an independent spirit of inquiry and criticism to politics and culture in a way that has made him by far one of the most interesting and important and commentators on the politics and

culture of the 21st century. So to be here as your guest is a great honor to me, and thank you Will Wilkinson for also joining us. I have been at Cato a number of times and have had some very lively debates there and I look forward to talking to you about this.

Let me just try to summarize, I can't obviously in this period do more than summarize an argument, and though this is a book that is critical of consumerism, I will forgive you if you want to buy the book at the back of the room and consume it. As I said on the *Colbert Report* when I was on there and Colbert introduced me as the guy who was there to sell his book against consumerism, as I said, if you're addicted to pills, think of it as the last pill you have to take to get over your addiction to pills, and that's roughly its position here.

Let me talk about what I'm trying to do in the book because this is not simply another book about consumerism. We know that conspicuous consumption, commercialization, commodification, shopaholism, these are features of the landscape that commentators and writers have been talking about way back before Vance Packard and "The Hidden Persuaders," so that we know the critique of advertising. It's a very old one. Tom Frank wrote an early about it, advertising in the 1960s and its relationship to the counterculture. So the phenomena I'm looking at, a highly commercialized society in which many goods that were not originally material have become commodified and material and in which the commercial culture tends to push out everything else is not itself a new phenomenon. But I do want to suggest it has now reached a point where there is a critical change in the impact of that commercial culture such that it now threatens

democracy and also capitalism itself in the way at least I want to understand capitalism. The book is also not a book against capitalism per se, but against what has happened to capitalism in recent decades, something that I think endangers its fundamental capacity as a producer of wealth and a producer of not just private goods but of common goods as well.

Let me start with a slightly romantic picture of capitalism in the 15th and 16th century probably because I haven't got time to do the full exploration and probably because I want to use a picture of traditional productivist capitalism as a template against which to measure commercial and consumer capitalism today.

In the period about which Max Weber writes, capitalism has as its primary aim the production of wealth through addressing core needs and wants of a population willing to pay to have those needs addressed and thereby providing a quite remarkable recipe linking altruism and self-interest. You provide goods and services that meet real needs, you can make a profit doing it, so that self-interest and altruism very much in the manner of early Protestantism seemed to be linked together. Moreover, as Weber himself makes clear, that created a synergy between the Protestant ethic in 16th and 17th century England, the Continent, and the United States, and Puritanism and Ben Franklin's values, between those well-known virtues of deferred gratification, the celebration of hard work, service to others, and the behavior required by capitalism, namely, a willingness to defer profit-taking, reinvest capital, work extremely hard, and work in part in the name of service to others. We know at the end of the last century that George Gilder

wrote a book about capitalism in which is kind of pretended to himself that capitalism was still there and that capitalism was about service to others and altruism and he was trying to tap that older understanding of capitalism which did to some degree capture that extraordinary synergy between the effective political morals of Puritanism and the attributes required by entrepreneurial capitalism in that period.

Again to egregiously summarize, in the last 30 or 40 years I want to suggest that partly because of capitalism's extraordinary success in actually addressing real needs and wants in the developed world or should I say the developed part of the developed world, we find increasingly a middle-class society in those parts of the world that can be defined as middle-class—and we can argue which parts they are and which parts of America they are but know they are extensive and expansive—in those parts of the world, people find that most of their core needs and basic wants have largely been met. I am not making a philosophical distinction here between needs and wants and the elemental needs of thirst and appetite and having a roof over your head and clothing in your body, I'm talking about needs and wants that can include cars and refrigerators and television sets and so forth, but in terms of the stuff of us need, most of us have it. There is little in the way of things that one might want, access to communication, to transportation, to adequate household, a nice kitchen, a pleasant bedroom, sheets and blankets and so forth, we have most of what we need or want due to capitalism's extraordinary productivity, due to its success.

But the result is capitalism today finds itself in the peculiar position not of manufacturing goods and creating services to meet the needs and wants that human beings have but, rather, of manufacturing needs to sell the goods and services, it needs to continue to sell to stay in business. This by the way suggests this isn't an argument about mischievous or villainous capitalists or poisonous marketers and advertisers. They are simply doing what the market requires them to do, to continue to sell, sell, and sell to people who don't really need or want what's for sale, and that creates an extraordinary disjunction. It means that you have to find more and more customers in a world where those customers are limited, it means you have to expand consumer markets to include not just adults, but teens, not just teens, but tweens, not just tweens, but toddlers, right down to infants. There is a new *Baby First* television network whose primary target is 6-month-old to 2-year-old kids. Psychologists have discovered recently that infants can recognize brand logos before they recognize words and a lot of marketers have said that's a good thing. That means we can start securing brand loyalty before kids know how to speak.

It is also a world in which in order to sell all that needs to be sold to adults, it makes sense to try to sell to adults childish goods and to some degree to turn adults into children, that is to say, to invest in them the same kinds of impetuosity, acquisitiveness, greed, need to have now, I want, gimme, gimme, gimme, that's typical of children and typical of what in fact adult cultures usually try to educate out of children as they grow up, that growing up is understanding that gimme is probably not a great formula for happiness. Our culture has turned

that exactly around, that gimme is precisely the formula for happiness and to the extent that adults can be gotten to want and love the same things kids do, you're going to be in a stronger position with respect to the market economy.

For that reason for example in 2004, and you can look at this from 2000 or 2006 or 1995, the top grossing films worldwide among all demographics, all moviegoers old, young, middle-aged, were films designed for 15-year-old boys and girls. In 2004 that was "Shrek 2," "Spiderman 2," "The Incredibles," an animated cartoon, and the Harry Potter film of that year. And they weren't just the top-grossing films, they out-grossed everything else by a very considerable amount. Movies for kids marketed to adult audiences. I have an argument in the book, I can't make it here, that fast-food is basically food for kids, kids don't want to sit down to eat, they're restless, they like to move around when they're eating, they want to eat in a hurry, they don't understand that food is a social ritual, it's a religious ritual, rather it is a way to get a little energy and go on playing, and in effect fast-food is all about that. "Fast-food Nation" is all about the burgers and fries. You can have fast-Tandoori, fast-sushi. It's about the speed. It's about not sitting down. That's why fast-food is the specialty of our malls where the last thing you want people to do is to sit down for 2 or 3 hours at a restaurant meal. You want people in effect to fuel up ideally standing next to fast-food counters, and there's a lot of variety actually. You can get Italian and Chinese and Japanese and so on, but you get it all in a hurry and it doesn't take time to get back to shopping.

So the dumbing down of adults is one piece of this, the targeting of children is another. And for those who say this is just what adults want and you're just trying to impose your taste on them, and I want to come back to that in a minute, but nobody can argue that 2- and 3- and 4-year-olds are candidates for a voluntarist approach to what they want or need, and yet increasingly they are the targets of both marketing and merchandising and their discretionary income through their parents make them the key deciders in the family and marketers increasingly see them that way. Marketers actually talk about parents as gatekeepers, which is an accurate enough description, they act as gatekeepers between their children and the society and the commercial world. The object of marketing is removing the gatekeepers, and that's the language they themselves use, how can we get the gatekeepers out of the way, how can we remove the gatekeepers so we can get directly at the kids without having to deal with the go-betweens.

In malls this is done in part by putting the shops that cater to adult tastes in one part of the mall and the shops that cater to teens and younger in another part of the mall so families won't shop together. The family that shops together shops far more prudently and spends much less money than the family that you can divide up into a series of individual shoppers. That is one way to get the gatekeepers out of the way.

The other side of this argument, and let me just mention it for a minute because I am not going to talk about it but there is a lot about it in the study of consumerism, is that while it is true that in the developed world a lot of

core needs and wants have been met and you could say that in order to stay in business markets have to sell people stuff they really don't want or need, it is not true that there are no needs in the world that can't be effectively addressed by capitalism. The problem is this, putting it very simply, those with the dough don't have the needs and those with the needs don't have the dough, the 3 or 4 billion people with prime needs, with core needs not being addressed, and the great philanthropies whether it's Bill Gates or Ford or the Clinton Foundation are busy trying to figure out how to address them, and with foreign aid we're trying to figure out how to address them, and the Millennium Goals are about how to address those needs, well, there wasn't a whole lot of philanthropy in the 15th and 16th centuries, and there certainly wasn't a lot of foreign aid, what there was was capitalism in Europe and what capitalism did is figure out how to address those needs. The folks whose needs were being addressed also didn't have a lot of money. They didn't start that way. That is to say, the wealth-production machine of capitalism had to start with less than ample wealth and create the wealth on the way to doing it, pulling itself up by its own bootstraps, and the critical move there was deferred gratification, deferred taking of profits, deferred rise in wages, and wealth creation was all about doing that.

In the world today among the 3 or 4 or 5 billion people who have ample and overwhelming real needs and wants but are without the wealth to play a role as consumers in the market, one might think this would be an idea situation for not just philanthropists and governments but also for capitalist entrepreneurs. And of course, we know and I write about them, there are some folks who are

trying to do it, Muhammad Yunus's microcredit Grameen Bank is an attempt to find ways to jumpstart small entrepreneurial enterprises with small loans and get people into a moment where they are capable of addressing their own needs with the help of entrepreneurial investment, and those who make the investment are presumably in a position to make some dough, and the Grameen Bank as you know is labor-intensive and therefore a high-interest loan market, 60 to 70 to 80 percent per annum on very small loans so that they can get repaid for the labor-intensive things so you can actually even make money that way. In fact, the most interesting feature of the Grameen Bank's success is that the larger banks where the Grameen Bank has been and done well are now trying to get involved in the larger second- and third-generation loans that are being made to those who the Grameen Bank got started with.

Let me give you an example of how this works. First World, our world, the developed world, we happen to live in a country because of its modernization, its science, its health standards where every American poor or rich can get clean water from the tap from wells and reservoirs, yet today there has been created by smart marketers not satisfied with selling us colas, a $20 billion a year business in bottled water. Nobody can show me that we need or even want bottled water. We might want the convenience of a canteen we take with us, so take a canteen. Get a bottle, fill it with water and bring it with you. You can do that. But instead we are spending all this money on water. We've got the money, we don't need the water, but it's a way for people to make the water. By the way some people argue, well, but the water is a little better. Something like 70 percent

of the water is taken from reservoirs in Michigan, Texas, Massachusetts, and other states that in effect sell their water to the companies that put it in bottles and then sell it back to the people living in the areas among other places where the water comes from. In other words, what you're getting is tap water in terms of most of the water that you get. There's no difference except you're paying for it, so you're making a profit by buying something that you could have for free.

On the other hand, in the Third World we know that there are literally billions of people living without access to potable water, even clean enough to wash clothes in let alone have children drink. That's a part of the world where some form of entrepreneurship in water whether it's water conservation, whether it's water production, or whether it's the kind of entrepreneurship in some infantilization of the interesting little entrepreneurial inventions that are on the market today, for example, hand pumps which can be made locally and that can tap water 8 or 9 feet down and make clean water available to people who otherwise don't have access to it in the streams and pools around them. Or clay cisterns and clay filters made from the clay that's beneath the feet of people living in villages without clean water that would allow them to filter the water, those are great little businesses. That would be a place for entrepreneurship to both address a real need and make money. We can multiply that again and again.

As to alternative energy in the United States, the Clinton started to talk about the way in which alternative energy wasn't just important with respect to getting off the teat of the Middle East and Middle Eastern oil, but was important because it was a vital new industry where people could over time take a

real profit, and we know that the opportunities for alternative energy have multiplied but it is not yet clear that business folks are doing it, and we know why, because that means deferring profit-taking, it means investment, and it also means risk, once thought to be the rationale for allowing a profit where you take the risk and succeed. But now most businesses want to be risk-free, mergers and acquisitions are a much safer way to make money, you don't produce any wealth but you don't take the same risks.

We know that 15 years ago General Motors had innovative hybrid technology they decided not to use because they couldn't see the short-term profits in it. Instead they went with the SUVs and trucks, high-gas-guzzling vehicles, that Americans "wanted" back then, while Toyota, way, way behind GM 15 years ago, took over, bought, and borrowed some of GM's technology, developed their own, and today of course are the premier hybrid carmaker but also the premier small carmaker, and as we know, they are about to overtake General Motors as the world's largest and most successful auto company because they acted the way a capitalist company is supposed to. They thought about real needs, they thought about the future, they deferred taking their profits and did it, so this isn't just an exercise in altruism or long-term planning we're talking about, it's about how capitalism is supposed to work, and how it is when capitalistic firms pursue that logic, they actually end up having a success, but it does require something that is harder and harder to find in the American economy, the willingness to defer profits.

Let me come to this argument that is made again and again to me, and particularly to me because they say Barber talks about being a Rousseauist Democrat, but he just don't like what people want. He wants to tell them what to want. He's an Eastern elitist. He doesn't like fast-food. He doesn't like all the gadgets. He thinks no one really wants an iPhone, they're just been talked into it by Apple. He thinks violent films are something people are selling to people that they don't really want. But corporate capitalism in America is simply giving people want they want. That's the mantra you'll hear again, we just give people what they want.

There are two fundamental problems with that. One is that a quarter-of-a-trillion-dollar advertising and marketing industry per annum in the United States alone suggests that it's not just a matter of giving people what they want, there is a compelling, persuasive, and didactic element involved in this particularly when it comes to young people, and if you look at practices like buzz marketing, using kids to sell other kids things without telling the kids you're paying some of the kids to sell to others, paying doctors to sell medicine to people for conditions that have been medicalized and aren't real to begin with or are the wrong conditions as we saw recently was happening with antidepressants and so on, all of that suggests that there's a lot more to it than just giving people what they want. And of course, marketing to children, do we really want to say children have free will in the same sense that adults do?

But let's put all of that aside because let's assume for a minute that the free market in a developed commercial society really does nothing more than

give people what they want. This does indeed satisfy the conditions of private liberty, or private choice, but the problem of societies organized around private choice and private liberty is that they become incapable of exercising public choice and securing the conditions for public liberty that allow us to control our social and public worlds, and increasingly as the result of both commercialization, consumerization, but also privatization, the notion that the government is the problem and the market is the solution, we have disempowered ourselves of social choice, the power to make public and common and social choices. We have also thrown out of the equation of cost the social cost of private choices, sometimes referred to as externalities by economists which don't come into it. Let me give you a couple of examples.

Wal-Mart, forget about unionization and workers and the conditions of workers' health schemes. Let's put that aside and just say I'll agree Wal-Mart and other big-box national chains give people something that mom-and-pop stores and small retail can't, variety of product at a very good price, particularly good as Wal-Mart will tell you and economists will tell you for poor people which is why a lot of poor people shop there. They can get a lot of stuff they can't get around the corner, and they can get it at a relatively reasonable price as long as they don't actually have to work there.

But here's the problem. We know that big-box stores have social consequences that we don't think of when we shop there. They make normal mom-and-pop, small retail impossible, but the problem is in the United States and in most cultures, small-town, small-scale retail is the core of our community

development whether they're villages or towns or urban neighborhoods, and you put small-scale retail out of business and you destroy communities, you destroy the basis for the community values that come with those communities. There's a cost. Pittsfield, Massachusetts where I have a summer home 30 years ago went for a mall and a Wal-Mart, and Pittsfield which was a town of 70- or 80,000 people, and it still had GE when this happened, GE left later, started on a trail downwards, the downtown commercial zone closed, the downtown art gallery closed, the movie theater then closed, and it became a skeleton city and if people wanted to go out they went to the mall about 10 miles outside of town. That's been replicated again and again.

Our wish as private consumers to shop at Wal-Mart does not entail that we want to destroy the fabric of our social life. That's not the choice we're making. We don't think about that. But in fact, private choices over and over again have public consequences often unintended but often deeply pernicious to the social character of the country we live in. We know that the choice of private transportation, the choice of gas-guzzling cars makes us oil-dependent, Tom Friedman writes about it all the time, and leads to things like the war in Iraq, the contretemps with Venezuela. Nobody who buys a Hummer today really wills that our soldiers get blown up in Hummers in Baghdad, but that is in fact an entailment because buying a Hummer continues in behavior that creates the social consequence of oil dependency that makes America engaged in a world of oil dependency that among other things includes war, that is not the only reason by any means, but it becomes one rationale for war. That is a social consequence

that nobody buying a Hummer gas-guzzling car particularly thinks about. The public consequences and public costs of private decisions simply aren't reckoned.

If you reckoned into Wal-Mart's costs when you shop there, the cost of destroying downtown communities, Wal-Mart would be the most expensive store in the world. Add that onto the price. But of course you don't do that. That's an externality. It's not included in the price that we pay. You reckon into the gas-guzzling cars and so on the trillion-dollar or billions of dollars of cost for the war in Iraq, American cars get very expensive for consumers, but consumers don't pay the price. We pay it as taxpayers, as citizens, and of course that is not included, that is now how we do our accounting.

So the belief that private liberty and private choice can be how we express our will about the nature of the world we live in, the character of our public zones, is deeply dangerous and yet it is the primary conceit of today's society shared by Democrats and Republicans alike neither of whom have very much good to say about the political institutions of governance and about democracy. We are seeing some changes in that, but there is still this deep kind of suspicion in the sense that wherever possible let markets do it, let private choice do it, let consumers act as surrogates for citizens. Vote with your dollars, your yen, your euros, and that will give you an adequate world. So the private-public liberty issue is fundamental.

Finally, and I'll close with this, let me say that the issue here is not simply about shopping, it's about shopping 24-7, the issue isn't about advertising and marketing, it's about advertising and marketing everywhere all the time, it's

about religious holidays become shopping holidays. Ramadan has now become in many developing cultures in places like Cairo and so on a primary shopping holiday. I was in China in December and I thought what a nice honor, they are honoring us Americans and us Westerners because every little store you go into in Beijing has a Santa Claus in it and the waitresses are dressed with little red and white fur collars and so forth, and candy canes, isn't that nice, and I then learned that in fact Christmas has become the primary selling day for the Chinese, they have converted it into a secular period for buying and selling to help jumpstart the Chinese consumer economy. So you have the oddity of a holiday, a Christmas holiday, that religious people here worry about becoming too commodified introduced as nothing but a commercial holiday elsewhere. Shopping all the time, commerce all the time, advertising everywhere, there is nowhere you can go whether it's the Internet or the multiplex or the highway or the airport or on an airplane where you either are being advertised to or being sold things. It's almost impossible not to shop. Every occasion outside the home becomes an occasion for shopping, every occasion inside the home where you're communicating outside the home whether on your television or on the Internet is an occasion for shopping. The great new technology of the Internet introduced 20 years ago, once it was transformed from its original military uses as a great new possibility for lateral civic and democratic and educational communication has become as we know primarily an electronic mall. Ninety-five to ninety-six percent of the usage is commercial, and by the way, about a third of that is pornographic, which is okay, but it's sort of sad that this great new lateral technology, point-to-point

technology, is being put to the uses of the oldest profession in the world rather than to the uses of new democratic civil culture. But it is not a surprise. Every area has been commercialized.

I want you to think about this, and I'll close with this, we live in a society that quite rightly is deeply disturbed by Islamic fundamentalism and we're disturbed by it because we think that whatever you think about Islam or indeed Christianity or any other religion, the problem with fundamentalism whether it's Protestant sharia or Islamic sharia or Jewish sharia is that when religion dominates every sector or life and makes rules for all the different sectors and not just the religious sectors, we live under conditions we call theocracy and that obliterates both diversity and liberty.

And we argue likewise that when you live in a place where politics dominates everything and political slogans are everywhere and where one party rules everything and permeates every sector of society, we call that, there's a long literature on that, totalitarianism, political totalitarianism. But when commerce and advertising and shopping dominate everything, every public square, every mode of communication and every sign, we call that liberty. That we say is our freedom.

But I think if you make a comparison between the pervasiveness and the totality of commercial message, commercial communication, commercial shopping, that it is as dominant and pervasive as religion is in the most pervasive and totalitarian of theocracies and as politics is in the old totalitarian fascist and communist states and that means that there is an assault on what to me is the most

precious commodity of democracy, our diversity, our pluralism. We are creates who pray and play and make love and make art and buy and shop and produce, all of those things, and we need spaces for all of those things and traditional communities including the original *agora* and the Middle Eastern *suk*, the so-called marketplaces, actually had space for a lot of things. Imagine the towns where many of us grew up, a park square, a school, a town hall, some shops, an art gallery, a movie theater, some businesses, a full manifestation of that diversity of our lives and habits as human beings that represented who we are, and now go to any suburban community in America like the one I lived in Piscataway, New Jersey, when I taught at Rutgers. If you came to Piscataway and said let's go downtown, I literally had nowhere to bring you. There is no downtown. Forty- to fifty-thousand people live in Piscataway. The schools are on a corporate park. The town hall and police station sit all alone at the end of a four-lane highway. There is literally no downtown but there are dozens of strip malls and big-box malls and multiplexes. In other words, there is only commercial space, there is only a representation of our commercial nature, and there are literally no other civic or public or religious entities to speak of. If you can find a church, which is hard, or a synagogue they sit alone again in a kind of corporate plain next to four-lane highway. We have actually distorted in the suburbs our space so that the pervasiveness and totalization of the commercial society are almost all we see and that human diversity has vanished. That is not healthy for capitalism and it is also not healthy for culture, freedom, or democracy.

So the challenge of this radical consumerism I describe is certainly a challenge for capitalism itself because capitalism cannot survive for very long if it only meets fabricated faux needs instead of meeting the real needs and finding out a way to profit off of real need, but it will also destroy the democracy and the culture that it is supposed to serve. Capitalism has always at its best served democracy, worked in partnership with democracy. When democracy serves capitalism, when politicians serve money, when religious leaders well themselves as commodities, then we have a form of commercial totalism that destroyed the essence of democracy and our humanity. That's the rhetoric. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. WILKINSON: Good afternoon. It is a pleasure to be here today at the Brookings Institution. I am honored and privileged to have been invited today. I feel like I may be punching a little above my weight class in this panel of distinguished company, so please forgive me if I'm ever a little bit nervous, but I hope my comments are stimulating and challenging and are combative enough to give you a good show.

Professor Barber's book is full of lots of information and lots of arguments about lots of things including the quality of movies, the effect of Wal-Marts on small towns, the quality of content on the Internet, branding and marketing and so forth. I disagree with almost all of it. It is very difficult for me to go through each and every point of disagreement, so instead I want to focus on a few fundamentals, some of the broad strokes in the argument that I think most everything else depends upon.

The argument of "Consumed" seems to me to rest almost entirely on the premise that capitalism in its contemporary incarnation is in some sense overproductive. Barber cites William Greider is a relevant authority in this regard who tells us that "Too many unprofitable products chase too few consumers, too many of whom must be prodded, pushed, and cajoled into consumption." Early on in the book Barber accuses George Gilder, one of his ideological nemeses, of failing to grasp "the relationship in the modern economy between the manufacturer of goods to meet real needs which was in decline and the manufacturer of needs to address an absorb the commodity in service surpluses of overproduction which was growing."

There is a massively well-confirmed in economics known as Say's Law which tells us that in a regime of freely moving prices and capital, long-run overproduction is exceedingly improbably if not literally impossible, and the fact of Say's Law is the intellectual basis of a fairly damning review that Paul Krugman wrote of Greider's book, "One World Ready or Not" that Barber cites several times in support of the overproduction claim which runs throughout the book, and I will return to Krugman's review in a moment.

Greider does believe in the empirical truth of his overproduction thesis which is why Krugman takes him to task, but it is not really central to Barber's argument as I see it. He could do without it. It seems that Barber mainly means to assert what I am calling the moralized overproduction thesis. The moralized thesis need not include the theoretically and empirically absurd claim that capitalism is producing more goods and services than can be consumed, that

Say's Law is being violated on a daily basis or is about to be. The moralized overproduction thesis instead states that capitalism is producing and consumers are in fact consuming goods and services that ought not to be either produced or consumed. That is, capitalism produces too much crap that we don't need. The moralized overproduction thesis is the foundation of Barber's claim that at some point in the not distant past, productivist capitalism which set about meeting authentic needs made some kind of transition to consumerist capitalism which induces and satisfies fake needs. We consume all this stuff that we don't need, that we don't even want to want, according to Barber, because our minds have in some way been colonized by advertisers and marketing. The form this psychological highjacking takes infantilization which "serves capitalist consumerism directly by nurturing a culture of impetuous consumption necessary to selling puerile goods in a developed world that has few genuine needs."

Barber claims that infantilization is not false consciousness but limited consciousness which causes what he calls civic schizophrenia, a kind of internal battle between our lower-order and higher-order desires. And quoting Barber again, "We actually do want we are allowed to choose privately, but are nonetheless worse off and have less liberty despite having more private choices since those choices are in a domain where the real decisions are not being taken. We want what we want privately, but we want even more to be able to choose the public agenda that determines what our private choices will be." That is my very brief summary of what I take to main outline of the argument to be.

This raises a number of what I think are somewhat elementary questions none of which I found to be satisfactorily answered in "Consumed." First, I wondered and searched in vain for Barber's theory of needs. How do you tell the difference between an authentic human need and an invented or false one? I don't believe and I don't think Professor Barber believes that basic human needs were fully met for the middle class or the wealthy in 1907, 100 years ago. Imagine that we have counterparts here at Brookings 100 years from now. Will they think that all of our basic needs have been met? I doubt it, and if they aren't going to believe it, why should we?

Second, when exactly did the transition from productivist to consumerist capitalism take place? Barber indicates that one of the intermediate phases between productivist and consumerist capitalism is managerialist capitalism which seems to have taken us through the 1960s, so it seems that the transition is fairly recent. Maybe the tipping point was in 1973 when I came into the world.

This raises more questions for me. According to the Nobel Prize-winning economic historian Robert William Fogel, "Studies of changes in functional limitations among persons who have reached 65 since the early 1980s indicates such limitations declined at an accelerating rate during the balance of the 1980s and 1990s." Did these elderly people not really need to have fewer functional limitations in their old age? I don't know. I don't think that's answered in the book.

Barber claims that we are worse off in some sense since the shift to consumerist capitalism, but in what sense are we worse off? Almost every indicator of human well-being has improved since 1970. Despite the passages that Barber takes from Robert Lane's book "The Loss of Happiness" in market liberalism or something like that, average happiness levels have in fact increased slightly in the U.S. and the E.U. since the 1970s. A better measure, an index called Happy Life Years that was constructed by Ruut Veenhoven, a Dutch sociologist who is the editor of "The Journal of Happiness Studies" shows that we are living happily longer and especially in advanced consumerist capitalism countries.

The strongest predictor of a better score on the Happy Life Year index is GDP per capital, economic freedom, and pluralistic tolerance. The U.N.'s Human Development Index in which it attempts to operationalize something like Amartya Sen's capabilities theory of well-being, shows that some of the world's most roilingly commercial advertising-saturated cultures such as the U.S. and Japan are in the top 10. The trend in suicide is down in the U.S. and the E.U. since the 1970s, people continue to live longer, people continue to get physically bigger, a sign of good nutrition and physical robustness, the real material standard of living of the least well-off in consumer societies is leaps and bounds what it was 30 years ago.

Barber's thesis seems to me to imply that we ought to see some kind of decline in well-being on some dimension since the onset of consumerist capitalism. Then why don't we? The evidence points strongly toward the

conclusion that capitalism continues to meet real human needs according to multiple conceptions and proxies for human well-being. I have no doubt that many of us consume a lot of things that Barber disapproves of, and having read the book, I think I now have a good sense of what a lot of those things are, but I will not buy the moralized overproduction theory in the absence in a theory of needs and in the absence of evidence that our current patterns of consumption are not in fact meeting real needs.

Barber's theory of well-being that runs through "Consumed" seems to me to center on a notion of thick civic and democratic participation which to me eye seems pretty much straight out of Rousseau. Here is Barber, "We want what we want privately, but we want even more to be able to choose the public agenda that determines what our private choices will be." This is an interesting hypothesis, but I didn't see any actual evidence that people in fact do want this, or that people who in fact have more of it are in fact better off, or that there is some problem in the provision of public goods in countries where there is less of it.

Barber advances precisely the conception of positive liberty that the great liberal political theorist Isaiah Berlin warned us against. According to Berlin, Rousseau had equated freedom with self-rule, and self-rule with obedience to the general will, and the general will can be independent of and often at odds with the individual will, but that's okay since individuals are often deluded as to their own interests. This is what I think Barber is getting at when he says, "Contrary to intuition, by constraining choice in the private sector, we can actually facilitate the sense of liberty we feel. This may explain the paradoxical

phrase Rousseau used to capture his crucial conception of public liberty, that we can actually be forced to be free."

At the bottom of "Consumed" I think is a very strong, very deeply felt comprehensive conception of the human good, one that frankly I think most of us do not share, that centers on a certain kind of ideal of social embeddedness and collective choice. Barber seems to me to dislike consumerist capitalism so much because it is so at odds with the ideals that move him, but if his argument is going to be persuasive, those ideals need to move us the reader as well. But he seems to take these ideals for granted. He doesn't seem to take alternative conceptions of the good very seriously, which is to say that Barber doesn't seem to care much for pluralism. He basically argues that pluralism as we experience it in the actual world is a kind of false pluralism unless his favored comprehensive conception of the social good is already in place, but this seems to me to miss the point of the problem of pluralism: we have to find a way to accommodate the fact that people do in fact have deeply divergent notions of the good.

I don't doubt that people have a yearning or a desire for a richer public life. Let me give you an alternative narrative of the source of that yearning and then argue that I don't see why you the reader should not adopt it and should adopt Professor Barber. Here is my alternative narrative. The hunger for the collective unity of sentiment and values that underlies the fetishization of democracy, or what my friend Daniel Klein has called the people's romance, is atavistic tribalism, a throwback to our roots in small us-versus-them bands in the Pleistocene that required oppressively "thick" cultural identities in displays of

sacrificial commitment in order to maintain the conditions of solidarity and in-group mutual exchange that made survival in that world possible. The transition from personal to impersonal exchange, the transition from status to contract in which technologies like diplomas which certify and signal skill or credit ratings which certify and signify trustworthiness, these replaced hierarchy and norm-enforcing gossip of the dominant means of managing mutually beneficial relationships.

This has liberated individuals who are in fact unique from the suffocating bonds of parochial collectivism. Instead of having our preferences constructed coercively by the inescapable myths of our dominating elders and their public institutions, we construct our own preferences in the way that we rebuild the boat while at the same time sailing on it out of the ambient noise of a diffuse commercial culture created by millions of far-flung potential partners in private exchange each competing for our allegiance. The identities we thereby build are indeed less thick because they are not part of a mandatorily shared way of life and our minds built by evolution to absorb and inhabit that cultures sometimes do pine for the lost world, but our thin identities, our commercial consumerist identifies, are indeed ours in a way thick collective identities never can be.

We are more free. We are more self-governing. We make our meaning out of the cultural materials because we are not force fed something that is ready made. We are more likely than ever to be producers as well as consumers of culture, to start a band, to start a blog, make a documentary movie.

Some of us are more creative and some of us are more conformist, some of us have refined tastes and some of us are frankly a little bit vulgar, but we are on the whole more satisfied with life as I think the data on well-being unequivocally show. Yet the atavistic urge for a return to the tribal womb embodied in the romantic rejection of dynamic social orders that are not so ordered by will consensus is a constant danger that always threatens to throw us back into the world or poverty, disease, and war that we have gladly left behind.

Barber has said little to convince me that I should give up my story and accept his, and one reason why I did not find it persuasive is that it seems to me to be a book teaming with factoids but starved of data. I wouldn't say that Barber marshals evidence to the defense of his position. The arguments, a barrage of small facts tenuously connected by undermotivated theories exhumed from the graveyard of 20th century social theory, Freud, Marcuse, Adorno, Dewey, which at best add up to a vague impression that there may be some evidence to support the thesis.

Back to Krugman. Krugman I'm sure we can all agree is a man of the left. He is also one of his generation's social scientists, and this latter quality is what led him to write such a completely damning review of the Greider book that Barber cites as far as I can tell the only support for the constantly repeated claim that capitalism has become overproductive. I fear that Krugman's criticism may apply equally to Barber's new work, and I will quote from Krugman, "I have little hope that the general public or even most intellectuals will realize what a thoroughly silly book Greider has written. After all, it looks anything but silly. It

seems knowledgeable and encyclopedic and it is written in a tone of high seriousness. It strains credibility to assert the truth which is that the main lesson one really learns from those 473 pages is how easy it is for an intelligent, earnest man to trip over his own intellectual shoelaces."

I congratulate Professor Barber for taking on such large themes. One thing I'm sure we can all agree on is that our world is becoming increasingly complex and works like "Consumed" that attempt to comprehend and give meaning to this dizzying complexity are most welcome. However, I am afraid that Barber's particular synthesis may leave some readers understanding commercial capitalism less well than when they started. In my opinion, "Consumed" is a chain of intellectual weak links, you can tug anywhere and it snaps. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. BARBER: If my story is that story, I don't blame you for not wanting to have any part of it. I certainly wouldn't.

But you've got it wrong almost at every point, and maybe the key to how you've gotten it wrong is that you embrace Berlin. Berlin is to Rousseau what Krugman is to our friend Greider. You obviously like Berlin and totally mischaracterize and misunderstand Rousseau. I am not going to into it here, we haven't got time, but I suggest at some point you read Rousseau through Kant's eyes rather than the eyes of tribal collectivists. Rousseau was precisely grappling with a modern world in which tribal collectivism was no longer possible and asking whether liberty was possible in such a world and how it may look.

Part of the argument comes, and I don't want to get into the overproduction thesis, you have actually given me permission not to because you said my argument doesn't depend on it, so I'll take that as a reason not to spend me time on that here, but this starts of course with the old argument that Americans have with one other and that maybe left and right has with one another. You obviously start from a disposition to say things are okay. I'm okay. You're okay. The country is okay. Consumerism is okay. Targeting kids is okay. Everything is basically okay. What's your problem? You're some intellectual highfalutin, high-culture guy who doesn't like McDonald's, doesn't like commercial culture.

Let me start by saying what somebody said when I wrote "Jihad vs. McWorld" quite correctly and I've acknowledged it over and over again, that you can't write a book about McWorld unless you have a pretty good liking for McWorld. I like commercial culture. I have a lot of the gadgets. I drive a pretty nice car and have been persuaded that it's a nice car by the advertisers. My problem is not with shopping and with consumption as I said to you, it's about shopping all the time. You didn't address at all the fundamental claim I make which is that shopping has not enhanced diversity, but has shrunk our diversity. The examples you gave when you came to your discussion of diversity interestingly enough did not talk about love or art or prayer or recreation, you differentiated between different goods, reminding me of the potato chain, this is a fast-food place that sold baked potatoes of one kind or another, and it says, "We give you liberty. We give you the liberty of choosing your own toppings," and

the liberty and diversity that you offer is the liberty of toppings. We don't just have the right to drive cars in America, we can drive I think I read a couple days ago there are now 385 brands of automobile. What diversity? What pluralism? What you can't do in a lot of American cities of course is take efficient, clean, attractive public transportation because public transportation is a consequence of public choices and to you those have no particular attraction.

But basically you like where we are. You think I don't like it because basically my taste is offended. I hear this and I try to address it here that you think the problem is my taste and I'm trying to impose my taste on you, you've got your taste and don't want to have my taste. But the distinction I made which again you didn't address was the distinction between first- and second-order desires. I never once and don't anywhere in the book talk about higher or lower desires which is why I don't get into a theory of need.

I talked about first- order and second-order desires. We all want things and then we all have views about what we want, and I would argue that there is a greater moral dimension and a greater possibility of happiness in addressing what we want to want than simply in acknowledging what we want. You might want, for example, heroin, there was a time when I wanted tobacco and I wanted it badly, but I didn't want to want it because I thought it was bad for me, I thought in the end it would make it unhappy and in the end I kicked the habit, and I'm glad I did. And that wasn't a matter of, well, some people like tobacco, some don't, each to their own taste. Many of the wants that we have in our society today are wants that we don't particularly approve of ourselves. We

increasingly live in a society which has mechanisms that empower our first-order wants and disempower our second-order wants.

The other distinction I made again was not higher and lower, but between private and public forms of wanting, private and public forms of choosing, and that is directly actually related to power. I think you and I for all our disagreements would probably agree that there is some relationship between power and happiness and one of the problems is that private choice trivializes power. It assumes that if we can choose any kind of car or any kind of toothpaste or any kind of potato, that is really freedom and that makes us powerful. If you don't to drive a Hummer, drive a Chevy, if you don't want a Chevy, drive a Prius, and that's power.

But the argument I was making as a social scientist is that power lies with collective choice. Collective choice isn't about some tribal thick society in which we're all but kill everyone who's not a brother. Collectivism is about the capacity to touch collective power, and as individuals we are all subjected to collective power, and democracy is a theory about how to share and have control over the public power that makes all the difference in the lives that we lead. The choice to drive a Bentley rather than a Prius in L.A. will do nothing about the 101 or the 5 jammed with traffic for 5 hours. No matter what you're driving, you're going to sit for 5 hours and not move. You are going to be powerless whatever can you have chosen and the only way to become powerful is to create a transportation system that is not likely to be dependent on automobiles alone.

So what we're talking about here is empowerment and you're making the argument although you didn't state it precisely that I'm attacking. You're making the argument that we are more powerful, we can determine whether we are happy or not more if we stick to making private consumer choices than if we act as citizens. You've turned my brief for citizenship into a nostalgia for the tribal village. I have said again and again in writing, I've said it in an essay on Alasdair MacIntyre I wrote a while ago that I am very pleased that we live in the 21st century, I am very pleased to live in a developed society, I am very pleased to live in a society that has gotten us where we are, but because we've gotten where we are doesn't mean that there aren't pathologies and problems associated with the mechanisms that got us there, and what I am trying to do is look at and address those mechanisms.

You end by saying my problem is I am not interested in pluralism, you did hear me I believe at the end speak about pluralism, and I spoke about pluralism in terms that I think were considerably more robust and rich than yours because I speak about not just the pluralism of a public and a private sphere, I talk about the pluralism of different dimensions of human behavior that do include religion, the economy, production, play, art, love, friendship, only a number of which are capable of making a profit for anybody. And one of the problems is most of the things human beings want to do and like doing don't necessarily make a profit for anybody, and if you're in the economic business, your job is to figure out how to make a profit. We can drink water free. If you can convince people to buy it, then you can make a profit out of something they had for free. If people

take a walk in the park they might have a very good time on your good life index, but if we convince them they can only have a good time recreationally if they go and pay for some sports facility somewhere, then you can make a buck along the way, and I'm not denying that that might not also bring another kind of pleasure. But there are many human pleasures that are not profitable for someone else and whether you want to call it overproduction or overzealousness or overgreediness, the fact is we live in an economy that wants to make money coming and going on everything. That's why when you sit in an airplane even you will be subjected, maybe you like it, maybe it makes you happier when they come around and say would you like to buy some perfume, but for most of us when we're sitting on the airplane being offered something to buy, being told we're still in a store, is a problem. Maybe you like the pop-up ads on the Internet, maybe you like the ads on television; most of us don't, certainly not all the time.

So you and I agree on one thing which is that pluralism is the essence of democracy but you seem to think pluralism means the variety you get in an airline catalog before the shopping cart comes around and if you have access to those goods then that's a pluralistic life. I think pluralism means having a large portion of our lives insulated from commerce, insulated from advertising, and the kind of pluralism that allows us to do and act as we choose.

Finally, let me just come back to this Berlin-Rousseau point. You make an elementary sociological distinction between the ascriptive identity that's there in thick tribal society and the modern social contract identity. This is Ferdinand Tönnies, this is Weber. We've all been there. But you seem to think

that's the choice, it's one or the other, and since I am rejecting in some ways, and you're right about that, since I am critiquing the social contract society as thin and bloodless and not very pluralistic, I must want to go back. I want to go forward. The challenge of modernity since the 18th century and since Rousseau, and Rousseau himself understood it, is not how to go back, that's easy, but both impossible and probably not desirable even if you could, the question is how you go forward. Is a thin, bloodless, homogenous, securalized society where everybody more or less looks the same, buys the same stuff, is that our only choice? Or are there forms of human liberty and human pluralism that don't depend on ascriptive identity, that don't depend on giving up our individual liberty, but do allow us to use our public and collective power to create a pluralistic world that allow us to go forward in a way that retains our fundamental hard-won freedom but also does allow a degree of love, or bonding and art? Or do you want us to choose as the only option the kind of happiness that we do indeed get in the mall? I am happy for about an hour or two a day or a week in the mall. I am not happy to live my life in the mall. I don't know anybody who is. Perhaps you are. But I think if the choice is to live your life in the mall or live the kind of life I described, I think there probably I could win a democratic election. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. GALSTON: This has been a great colloquy up to now and I don't expect it to lose altitude. For the next 15 minutes or so E.J. Dionne, and if I have time, I as well will pose a handful of questions to Professor Barber. At 3:30

promptly we will turn as promised to questions from the floor and responses from those to whom the questions are addressed. E.J.?

MR. DIONNE: I hate to get in the middle of a good argument, and I am actually going to try to keep the argument going rather than to stop it. Christopher Lash wrote a wonderful essay about the lost art of argument when people are willing to enter imaginatively into each other's views, and I think we are going to have some of that going on today, so thank you, Will, and Ben Barber.

I am happy to be here today for a number of reasons one of which is I very much admire Ben Barber. I still love his definition of democracy contained in the title of his 1992 "An Aristocracy of Everyone." It's a very interesting way to think about democracy, "Jihad and McWorld" was important, and I think lots of people are going to identify with this book.

But I am also I came here today because if I had not, I would not know that there is a Journal of Happiness study. I was thinking of their marketing slogan, our research brings you joy, or we do research so you can chill out, and actually I was thinking also that this is a very important area of study, though imagine if one of your kids came home and you said, what are you majoring in in college and they replied happiness, it would be a very interesting conversation.

MR. : Would you believe that that's what my son majored in?

MR. DIONNE: Did he really? He did very well. I like Krugman, Greider, and Berlin, so I am either very open-minded or terribly confused. I am

complicated on Rousseau, but I hope some consumer outlet will sell me Ben Barber's lectures on Rousseau and then I will see the question much more clearly.

Let me start off with a couple of basic questions. On the one hand, I think a lot of people, Ben, will instinctively identify with large parts of your argument, that you're on to something important. In particular, early in the book you quote the child development scholar Susan Linn as talking about "the hostile takeover of childhood, corporations are vying more and more aggressively for young consumers, while popular culture is being smothered by a commercial culture relentlessly sold to children who are valued for their consumption." I know even the staunchest libertarians who are worried about the impact of consumer culture on kids and I think is a piece of your argument that I'd like you to talk about.

On the other hand, and I think this is sort of the dilemma in the middle of your debate with Will, I think almost every person would insist that their own favorite consumer items whether a car or an iPod, certain kinds of food or sports equipment or furniture, or less-than-highbrow books, TV shows or movies, can't possibly be part of the infantile consumerist culture that you are condemning. And I think it does go to Will's question about how do we make a distinction here between a capitalist culture presumably buffered with redistributional mechanisms that ensure some kind of distribution of real goods, though use of the word goods is no accident I think, that lots of people actually want and may even need, from this culture you're talking about because I think it is hard to be clear on where you draw that line. Or if I can ask the same question

a different way, when I was in college, my roommate and I had an obsession with arguing with some of our friends on the left, and we were also people of the left, who would attack false consciousness among working-class people because they oh so wanted things like washing machines. My friend and I would usually that note that, A, the people making those arguments were usually kids of millionaires and never had to worry about where they bought a washing machine. But number two, there was nothing wrong with wanting a washing machine. So it was a skepticism about a false consciousness kind of argument, and I would like you to disentangle your argument from a kind of false consciousness argument.

MR. BARBER: Thanks. I'll try to be brief so we will have a chance for everybody to get involved in this. The big question to me about happiness studies is are the people who do them happy?

MR. : Miserable work.

MR. DIONNE: But somebody has got to do it.

MR. BARBER: And perhaps, Will, you will want to come back to this too because you didn't address the large part of my argument that talks about the targeting of children, the addressing of parents as gatekeepers to be removed, the attempt to get at the discretionary incomes that turn children into decision makers with respect to spending, and the targeting of younger and younger cohorts of children and even infants. That is a large part of the argument and I why I used this term infantilization as my description of the modern ethos, infantilist ethos, that is the analog to Weber's Protestant ethos that could almost be called -- a simplistic way to say it is he was talking about a kind of adult ethos,

growing up, being prudent, deferring gratification, thinking about second-order desires, thinking about what you want to want, not just what you want, and today the argument I'm making is that we live in a culture that has encouraged exactly the opposite, stay first order, don't go second order, don't screen, don't filter.

Again, I am not suggesting that Will should filter his desires to Barber's norms which is in a sense the implication that you made. I am suggesting that filtered his desires through Will's norms and I do suspect despite being at Cato he has some. I don't think Cato is normless, I know it's libertarian, but I suspect there are a set of values there as well, and I suspect that like all of us you subject your wants and maybe you sometimes even call them whims to some sense of a life order or a life purpose and values you hold and you think about I want that but that is not really good for me. So you are quite right to say, and if that is what I'm saying I'm guilty of Berlin, of saying that if you've got to subject your wants to my norms, that is heteronymous and a problem. But I am only suggesting that all of us tend to want to subject our whims and wants to our own norms and that is part in answer again E.J. to you because the issue here is that is why I don't really want to address the theory of needs and wants because what I am suggesting is we each do that ourselves.

I know myself sometimes I want something and I say, wait a minute, do I really need that and I don't have to do a philosophical theory of needs. What I mean by that is does it really fit into my life plan, the expenditure of cash it would take, the amount of time that I would have to use in order to do

it? So it is that sort of self-scrutiny which is why terms like first- and second-order need are so important to me.

I do think there are a number of goods out there about which it is harder to do so. I agree with you. I myself think the iPhone is like those devices that engineers came up with in the 1950s that was a toaster and a mixer and a refrigerator all at once because engineers could do it and they found out that housewives actually didn't want it, housewives wanted a kitchen in which there were discreet instruments to do discreet things even though engineers came up with one convergent thing to do it all with. I suspect the iPhone is going to be less successful than we think based on the things I have already seen because I actually don't think people want a hand-held device that is going to be a movie screen, an email device, a camera, and a number of other things. I think on the whole most people, and it turns out there is data on this that I have looked at that most people use their phones as phones, not as cameras, and most people actually have digital cameras that are better than their phones and they use their phones. That is not so important so they're talked into buying something that does all of those things even though they're only going to use one or two of the functions, but nonetheless, that suggests an ability and capacity to make distinctions.

But I would go again to the edges here. Talk about bottled water. Talk about Botox. I guess an argument can be made for Botox, although as I've tried to suggest in my book it's an argument that has a great deal to do with the industry's attempt to convince men and women that aging is a bad thing, that looking young is a good thing, that poisoning your face, actually putting poisons

into your face and freeze it is a good thing and there is some basis on saying, well, if that is what you want, fine. But to me there is a very basic difference between a refrigerator, say, and Botox. And if you don't think that, if you think Botox is just another choice, okay. We can each make our own rank order of these things.

But the fundamental argument I'm making is that we all make two kinds of distinctions. We distinguish between what we want for ourselves, and what we want for our families, neighbors and the communities in which we live of which as individuals we are a part. That's the Rousseau problem with Berlin's critique—it is not the individual against the collective will, it's the general will that incorporates need into the larger thing. The second order is between what I want and what I want to want. Those are both things that we can do as individuals. They don't imply that you have to listen to me or anybody else to decide what it is you want, you will as a citizen with other citizens decide what as a citizen you want, but we all distinguish between what we want as a citizen and what we want as a consumer.

MR. GALSTON: On this note we have now reached the final stage of the proceedings, namely, yours. I will recognize people. There is a traveling mike that will be made available to you as you're recognized. When you begin to speak please do identify yourself as you choose to. If you have a statement to make, keep it short. If you have a question to ask, likewise please keep it short so that as many people as possible can be accommodated. Yes, sir?

MR. LIEBERMAN: My name is Dan Lieberman and I'm a nonconsumer. My basic question is, one thing I found missing from your talk,

maybe it appears in the book, is the word alienation. Of course, that has a lot of meanings, but to give it the most appropriate meaning, I'm referring to Herbert Marcuse's one-dimensional man. Isn't alienation really the most pernicious result of what we call capitalist consumerism? And in line with that, I believe you said that capitalism can fulfill almost all our needs, but by promoting alienation doesn't detract from our need for love which is often fulfilled more by trading of gifts than trading of emotions.

MR. BARBER: Very briefly, there is obviously a rich tradition of critique that goes from the economic manuscripts of Marx and before, and Rousseau, down to Marcuse and the Frankfurt School that explores the ways in which commodification leads to an objectification of ourselves and so forth. It's a rich strain. I don't explore it at any great length in part because the tradition is there, and in part to insulate myself from the charge, but I didn't succeed, so maybe I should have talked about it more, people like Will that I'm just another old Habermasean kind of putting used goods out there in the marketplace that have been done better before. So I tried to make arguments that didn't depend on alienation. I myself am sympathetic to it and can well understand why you would see this as related to the arguments I'm making.

MR. GALSTON: Next question?

MR. RAKER: Sam Raker. A statement and a question, I guess.

MR. GALSTON: Please stand.

MR. RAKER: Just considering the Roman Empire down through the early days of America, on both a cultural and political level, it always seems

that diversity and diversification and pluralism has been a groundswell up, that at no point has the government ever said they are already making this kind of art so you're just going to have to make something else, or of course we're going to let these people into our country, that just seems to be something that always comes from largely economic stimuli.

My question to you is that you said we shouldn't feel the same way about what we want as you do about what you want. Therefore, how do you reconcile that making your own decision sort of thing with the fact that you do apparently have a problem with all of these people who seem to be pretty comfortable with themselves buying $2 bottled water and betting Botox injections and who clearly are spending their hard-earned to whatever extent money on these things? What would you have them do since they already seem to think that they're right?

MR. BARBER: What I would have to persuade you and them of is that they have not subjected their desires and their wants to the kind of self-scrutiny that I described. That doesn't mean have they subjected it to my norms, have they bought what I want.

It's possible, and I can imagine a person, an aging man, who might well think about all the alternatives and decide that not only does he want Botox, but he wants to want Botox, and I guess I'd say that's okay. What my bet is, but it's only a bet, is that subjected to self-scrutiny a lot of people wouldn't do it. I am working with several people right now, and if you know me you know that in general when I theorize about something I also try to do something about it, to

start a small company that will provide recyclable empty bottles that people can fill with their own water and have a little strap carry it. And every time they fill them with water they put $2 in an envelope and send it to their favorite world water charity. A lot of people I've talked to said what a great idea, that's really good, and have said I'm not going to buy bottled water, that's really stupid. If they don't, if they think about it and say that's a stupid idea, I like bottled water, it's very convenient, it's cold, it's easy to get, I'm suspicious of what's in my tap water, I don't believe when you say it's coming from Michigan anyway, fine, let's do that. That's part one.

The other part again is the choice we make as individuals and the choice we make as, I'll use Will's word, collectivists. When you get married the first thing you realize that happens is that your sense of what your interest is suddenly grows to encompass that of a gnat and of a partner, and suddenly you can't think about what's good for you without thinking about that. Not because you're an altruist, but because now your sense of self -- then you have children and you start calling yourself a parent and mom and dad, and even husbands and wives say mom and dad to one another because they see themselves in relation to their kids, and your values change. You don't say I'm an altruist now, I care only about my kid, not about myself. You say I can't care about myself without including the welfare of myself in it. The citizen is an extension of that, I can't care about myself without caring about the community and caring about the nature of the community, if I care about the kind of world I have, I have to also think as a citizen. So it is that kind of thinking I'm talking about. But you're right

to say my claim is, my argument is, that the kinds of things I'm criticizing I believe are the result not of people who have subjected their thought to those two kinds of self-scrutiny and come up saying no, I want only private transportation and a choice of 200 cars and I've thought about this and I want what I want, but that they haven't subjected themselves to that process and that if they did so we'd have a very different looking country.

MR. GALSTON: Next question?

MR. DIONNE: By the way, could I just say something quickly?

MR. GALSTON: Please.

MR. DIONNE: This is just crude marketing for Ben. I happen to notice there are four footnotes to Marcuse in Chapter 6, two of them quite discursive, so I just pass that on to the gentleman.

MR. GALSTON: Yes, I think there's a woman right behind the wooden panel there. My distance vision is not so great.

MS. STEENLAND: I'm Sally Steenland with the Center for American Progress, and, Mr. Barber, your book resonates very much. I have a question about the ubiquity of advertising. As I'm sure you know, advertisers prey on our deepest needs. We don't want to die, we want to be loved, we are afraid of being rejected, all of those things. Then they are linked to products which is why it's so powerful. That has always been true. Do you think the difference now is that there's just less unclaimed territory, that it's our faces, it's our elbows, it's that there's nothing left untouched anymore? And how do you explain the power of it? The hope for feminism was that we would be free of this,

and instead there is less freedom. Your teeth have to be white. There is just such a drive to not look old, to not get near death, for men now too. It feels so primal. How do work against that and how do you pull back territory that's been claimed by commerce and say this is off-limits, just let nature take its course?

MR. BARBER: The quick answer of course is that you try to get people to subject their choices to the sorts of self-scrutiny that I'm talking about. But you're right, and I do want to thank you for reminding me that an important part of the argument that I really haven't addressed and that Will didn't address either is the part associated with branding and the way in which increasingly brands are sold not on the basis of saying this is what you need or want but, rather, associating what they're selling to you with forms of affect and deep human needs for love or acceptance or sexuality and so forth that is unrelated to the products in question so that there is no argument being made by the manufacturer that they are trying to sell you what they're selling you, they're rather selling you affect.

A long time ago Nike said we're not in the shoe business, and Starbucks said we're not in the coffee business, we're in the ambiance business, we're in the feel business, we're in having a certain affect. There is a wonderful story that I tell about the head of Saatchi & Saatchi who tells the story on himself, but he tells it proudly. He says I have been a life-long customer of Head & Shoulders. It is an amazing product. It's a great product. It's a product I love, and for the last 10 years I have used it religiously every time I shower, and I think

that's a wonderful tribute to the product because I've been bald for the last 10 years.

(Laughter)

MR. BARBER: Think about that. But there are so many products that have to do not with our need for them and increasingly we are being sold them on that basis, so there is an appeal. We want to be attractive and so on, as women and as men we want to be attractive, and when we're told if you do certain sorts of things you will be attractive, and they are not selling you the product, they're selling you a kind of affect.

This is the great mistake of libertarians. They always think that the only source of coercion is collectivism and democracy and the state, and they don't see the forms of powerful, invisible, bottom-up coercion that comes out of the marketplace, out of advertises, who create wants, who create a desire, who create a fear in women to weigh more than a certain amount, who create suicidal and despairing feelings in women if they don't meet certain public stereotypes that are there every day in the magazines and in the advertisements and so on. They ignore that and they say that's the market. That can't be coercive. What's coercive about that? Don't look at it. You don't like the ads, don't look at them. Don't pay attention to them. So they miss those invisible sources of bottom-up coercion that Tocqueville recognized and that Rousseau recognized and that today represent for me by far the greater part of coercion in the marketplace. So I completely agree that it's not the coercion of guns and prisons and manacles, it's a much more dangerous kind of coercion of the kind that you're talking about.

MR. GALSTON: Will, I think in all fairness if you want to brief reply to the question of what tyranny is in 21st century America.

MR. WILKINSON: Yes, I would like to reply to that to give a little pitch for the magazine that I edit, *Cato Unbound*. Right now we're having a discussion on the nature of coercion, so this is quite interesting.

I think the big difference here in our outlook is how much control consumers have over the meanings of the messages in advertising and marketing. There is a sense that I get from you that somehow there is a meaning that is already there that just sort of implants itself in people's heads, and I see consumers as being much more active in reinterpreting, undermining, subverting the meaning of advertising. The way people engage with advertising and marketing is one of the ways in which they their express autonomy.

And this point as well, it is sort of mysterious to me the notion that we are made to want things that we don't want, one, why it is that if you take the average person, they have bought to the first approximation zero percent of the things that have ever been advertised to them. And two, while it is that almost every product that has ever entered onto the market failed. Those seem to be a fundamental problem for this conception of the power of advertising to subvert people's agency.

MR. BARBER: I'll be very brief because I know you don't want to rekindle this discussion, but you could also suggest and there's even some truth to it that when you're imprisoned by a tyrannical regime, your real freedom, and Viktor Frankl, the great psychologist who was in a Nazi prison camp said this,

your only freedom is how you react to it, how you interact with the oppressor, and that is true. And likewise, it is certainly true that we can interact with the advertisers and marketers and redefining meanings and interpret our own way, but that's not the same thing as liberty any more than interacting with the prison camp guard and taking an attitude toward it that doesn't allow us to be mentally oppressed by our physical imprisonment is liberty. So, yes, of course there is an interactivity there, but what has to be measured is not the degree to which we do interact, but the degree to which we either don't interact or interactions do not affect the overall form of the message that is out there. So, yes, we do to some degree interact. And by the way, and again this is the sort of privileged position I think of libertarianism, those of us who are better educated, who have more power, who are more used to communication, are probably much better able to do that than those who are not. That's not an elitist argument, that's just to say that education, skills, and communication help us to negotiate the media and negotiate advertising in ways that an awful lot of people don't have the opportunity to do, those who are most preyed upon.

MR. GALSTON: I now see a sea of hands in the front, starting with the woman to my right, and I'll work across.

MS. MCARDLE: I'm Megan McArdle from *The Economist*. Ever since John Kenneth Galbraith we've been hearing essentially the same argument about consumerism which is that marketing as advertising, as Will was saying, plant these pernicious desires that we don't actually have in our heads. At least when I was in business school 5 years ago, there was a lot of evidence that

marketing and advertising could redistribute desires within categories of goods and that there was a substantial information component to it about new products, but the evidence that advertising could change either children's or adults' desires seemed to be entirely absent. As late as Eric Schlosser's book, I interviewed him about it, and he also had not, which was odd because it was about half the thesis of his book, actually come up with any data that indicated that children for example could have their preferences altered by advertising rather than simply being able to recognize Ronald McDonald.

I'm curious what sort of data you have, and I'm afraid I just got my review copy so I haven't read it. But I'm curious what sort of data do you have and do you think that your argument would stand if it were not in fact true that advertising and marketing in any sort of noticeable way altered our preferences.

MR. BARBER: Let me start this way. There are a lot of irresponsible firms whose shareholders should close them down if a quarter-of-a-trillion dollars is being spent every year for an affectless impact on the world. I assume that if people are spending the money they are spending to do what they are doing, they believe it has an impact, and that is not enough of an argument I agree, we want other evidence and there is evidence in the book, and the evidence that I have seen about the psychology of children is not just that they recognize logos but that they have a loyalty to them. If you read the book "Lovemarks" which assesses a good deal of evidence by The Saatchi & Saatchi CEO, he actually has a fair number of statistics about his campaigns and the difference they have made.

I would acknowledge that a lot of the data I'm using comes from advertisers and marketers themselves and it could be that they're trying to aggrandize themselves to rationalize or justify the high wages that they get from the firms they represent. But it seems to me that it is almost counterintuitive to suggest that firms that spend this kind of money, that corporations that spend this kind of money, really think that it has no impact and that it makes no difference.

MS. MCARDLE: I would say two things. First of all, if you have covered, or at least a journalist covering companies are pretty comfortable with the idea that companies spend huge amounts of money on moronic projects that go nowhere.

MR. BARBER: That's reassuring.

(Laughter)

MS. MCARDLE: But beyond that, it seems to me that you're making an assumption that the only function of advertising is to persuade people to buy things that they didn't want. For example, when the Swiffer Wet Mop came out I tried one and it turns out I really like it because it's convenient and it cuts time out of my day. I wasn't induced to buy something I didn't want, I was induced to buy something I didn't know existed before.

Similarly, there is evidence that branding does redistribute spending. I buy Tide instead of All or Wisk. That might be in some economically useless spending because it's competitive and it just redistributes a zero sum, but it's not evidence that companies believe or certainly know that

they've found a way to get into your skull and turn you into a zombie who just spends money.

But beyond that, I'm curious, does it matter? Are there other pernicious ways in which we're driven to consumerism which don't involve marketing and advertising?

MR. BARBER: Two things. One, you did the same thing, Will, people are always asking me for data and then they provide their own anecdotal evidence for their own view of the situation as you just did from your own personal choices which we can all do.

The argument about marketing has to do not with the introduction of products that have virtues we know, that advertising has vital informational purposes, if people don't know a product is there, even a very new medicine that will save lives, it's got to advertised so people it's out there. But the kinds of things I'm looking at are for example you might have seen the story a couple of days ago of pharmaceutical companies paying doctors to prescribe and misprescribe medicines for conditions for which they were not intended and it turns out they're being paid and we don't know they're being for it. That's not advertising per se, that's another example where advertising is not involved but where direct payments are involved in which products are being sold which doctors themselves know involve either misdiagnosis or the misapplication of a medicament to a situation.

We also see for example the medicalization of many conditions in order to sell medicines to cure them which for a long time have not been

considered medical conditions at all, attention deficit syndrome is one of them and though probably there are issues there, it is clear that an awful lot more medicine is being sold to people who probably can do without them. So, yes, there are many other things than just advertising and marketing that are stake, but we are talking here about a whole series of products that are sold. The easiest example of course is salt, sugar, and fat being sold to children in fast-food and being sold to cafeterias and Coca-Cola machines being put into public schools. There can be no rationale that I know of, do the kids want it? Uh-huh. Is that an adequate argument for citizens to use tax money to have fast-food brought into school cafeterias and fed to children? I would think not. To me those issues are beyond argument, but so much of the argument that goes on ignores all of those very big and powerful and overriding issues in favor of saying, yes, but changed my soap brand because I really had a better soap brand.

MR. GALSTON: E.J., I'll get you in a minute. You have just replicated a wonderful passage in Plato's "Gorgias" toward the end where Socrates images that has to defend himself to the citizens against the accusations of a pastry cook who accuses Socrates of wanting to take away the pleasures that he the pastry cook can provide the citizenry. So this is a very, very old argument. E.J.?

MR. DIONNE: Just this advertising thing, it's not I wanted to ask, but I am struck that my kids have been greatly influenced, this is another anecdote, by Subway ads effectively against McDonald's and data on fat. The advertising is so complicated in terms of hidden persuasion versus actual

information or persuasive information versus relying on looking pretty or whatever.

But my question was it doesn't strike me anyway, and I could be misreading you, that your argument actually hangs on whether all advertising is misleading or the like. It seems to me that you make an argument about the collective effect of masses of advertising that orients us all to a consumer culture and that it doesn't ultimately depend on whether we buy this or that, but that you're talking about the larger effect of that which is pulling us away from what. That is I guess part of my question because implicitly it is pulling us away from political activism, from concern for the community, but am I reading you right, and what is it pulling us away from?

MR. BARBER: Again, it's all commerce all the time, all shopping all the time, all advertising all the time. Even if we think it's completely innocuous, all advertising all the time in all our public signage, in all our places, on television, wherever we're going, all the magazines, that is to me is a problem even if it's more than informational and useful because it dominates, it creates a culture for which there is no room for anything else. It also creates a culture, and this comes back to your happiness point, in which we think ultimately, and this is the deep philosophical problem and I admit it is philosophical and here I will moralize, the notion that you can buy happiness is deeply in our culture, that if you are unhappy there is some commodity you haven't yet bought, whether it's a medicine or a food or a vacation or a movie or a gadget or a car, that notion that happiness is connected not with materialism even, that's the old myth, but that it's

actually connected to buying things. That to me is deeply pernicious, and as you rightly say, it is that much more than just -- advertising and marketing we can look at one piece of doing that, but it much more about that which is why I keep coming back to the place where I think you and I actually even though you may not agree with me on my definition about it, about pluralism. My biggest concern is a kind of pluralistic life where there are parts of our lives when you're not looking at ads, you're not shopping, you're not buying things, but doing a lot of the other things we do that don't depend on us to do that.

MR. WILKINSON: I'd like to say something about pluralism. Again I was left wanting for some kind of data that there has been some downturn in levels of civic participation, that social cohesion has eroded.

There are problems with that, that people are not going to churches much. I think I am understanding this better now, I was talking about a pluralism of sort of conceptions of the good, you're talking about pluralism of domains of life, that these different domains of life can stand on their own without infiltration by the market. I think kind of what it comes down to is it has to do with your baseline assumptions. If you see market exchange in things like advertising as individuals trying to court each other into mutually advantageous relationships, then there doesn't seem to me to be anything particularly insidious about somebody making an offer to you. It might bother you if somebody makes an offer to you in church or in the public square, but it wasn't clear to me. So I might agree with you that there is more marketing going on in these other domains. The question is whether it's problematic or sort of totalizing in the way that you

characterize it. If you just do see it as free individuals making offers to one another they can either accept or reject, then there might be something in bad taste in people making those offers in certain domains, but it doesn't seem to strike me as some sort of problem where nobody can get any space because people do go to church.

MR. BARBER: Isn't your assumption Nozickian that wherever you see an exchange it's a free, bilateral, egalitarian exchange, whereas my assumption is not Nozickian, my assumption is that every such exchange is conditioned by power and sometimes the power is invisible and we can argue about where the power is and who has it, but the minute you put power on the table, you haven't got (inaudible)

MR. WILKINSON: That was the other point I actually wanted to make about pluralism because if the assumption is where people are getting their preference is from the sort of ambient noise of advertising and marketing and you exclude that, then the question is what's the alternative? And the alternative is that people's preferences are formed by the family, they're formed by the church, it's formed by the public school that they have to go to.

MR. BARBER: Do you know Jim Fishman's experiment?

MR. WILKINSON: Which one?

MR. BARBER: Deliberative democracy? Deliberation is about subjecting our own interests and choices to self-scrutiny and debate with others on the assumption that once we do that we may change our minds, not that you will

change your mind to my mind or his mind, but change your mind based on a deliberative encompassing of other points of view.

MR. WILKINSON: Can you opt in or out data of deliberation day? Do you have to go to the high school gym for those 6 hours?

MR. BARBER: That's a good question. I would argue that part of education is, yes, you have to because it makes you happier and better, and freer. And freer. That's force to be free. Education is about forcing --

MR. GALSTON: I'm not going to try to tame this team of wild horses for a minute. The gentleman in the white shirt has had his hand up the longest and the firstest.

MR. VAN DE WATER: My name is Paul Van De Water. The founders of our republic for the most part seemed to think that citizenship required some sort of basis in morality which they in turn though would have to derive from religion. At around the same time, Adam Smith who was a professor of moral philosophy was saying pretty much the same thing in terms of participants in the burgeoning capitalist economic society. Is that essentially the same discussion we're having today, how we can operate as citizens or as consumers in a world where our moral basis is uncertain and certainly pluralistic is a good term but perhaps lacking at worst?

MR. BARBER: Yes. Yes.

MR. GALSTON: To quote Joe Biden.

MR. BARBER: In deference to my chair who thinks we're running a little wild up here.

MR. GALSTON: No.

MR. BARBER: Let me say you put it very well. Obviously there are many changes. One change is that the commercial sector itself is far more powerful, the communications realm and the changes in communication means there's a lot more capacity to influence that way. But essentially is it the same set of problems? Yes.

MR. DE WERDER: One thing never said throughout this afternoon is what we're really supposed to do about this.

MR. BARBER: I should say the last 100 pages of the book is exactly about that, but we haven't -- the diagnosis has been rejected if we accept this without doing anything about it because we're fine, I'm okay and you're okay. But if we want to do something about it, then you're right, it's a big question and I do have some lines of response.

MR. GALSTON: We have time for one more question, but I have a prediction. I've known Professor Barber for a while and my guess is that even if I honor the implicit contract to this group to bring the formal proceedings to a halt at 4 o'clock, if you have questions, he has answers and I bet he would be willing to stick around to share them with you. I think you had your hand up there, sir.

MR. TRATZA: I'm Charles Tarzan. I'm an economic consultant and as an economist it's a very interesting argument. I'd like to shift a little bit to the direction that was just suggested and that is the application of these thoughts to what's been happening in the elections and the explosion of the amount of money that is directed in the campaigns. We still come out with only one

president and yet we spend more and more money in trying to find him. And the extent to which the information might be considered dysfunctional or informative, my own feeling is there's less informative information coming out now than ever before and it's a large waste of resources.

MR. GALSTON: I believe you've just pressed a button, sir.

MR. BARBER: Yes. Let me say one piece of the problem is it's not just the unequal relationship between commerce and others, but the subordination of those domains to which commerce was itself once subordinated so that politics itself has been commodified and politicians sell themselves as product which enhances the role of money and makes money absolutely essential. I saw the one common feature that all the presidential candidates have is that they're rich in the paper today and it's impossible not to be rich. We see the same thing in religion and televangelism and so forth the way in which religion gets sold like a commodity and that can't be good.

Just a word in closing about what one does. I think there are parallel tracks. I think first of all capitalism itself has to figure out, we haven't talked much about this, how to entrepreneurially address the world of real needs. I think you and I would probably agree that while there can be some argument that with a bottle of water there's a certain kind of want for it and maybe some rationale for it, it is not at the same level of intensity as the need for clean water in much of the Third World where there's none at all and if capitalism can find a way to address those and develop an entrepreneurial spirit that that would be a very good thing. So capitalism has to think about reforming itself.

Parents and consumers have to think individually about subjecting themselves to the kind of self-scrutiny I'm talking about and not subjecting themselves to somebody else, their preachers or their teachers, but subjecting themselves to those questions of whether they really want what they want, whether what they want as a consumer is the same thing as they want as a citizen. I believe if we did that we would go a long way toward addressing some of the problems we have. But to do that requires also institutional changes and this sort of secondary bugaboo that I look at in this book is the 30 or 40 years of privatization, the starting notion that the state is the problem and the market is the solution, and the state is the source of all coercion and that the market is the source of all liberty. And while there was some truth probably to the notion that the overweening welfare mommy did in some ways interfere with entrepreneurial activity and individual liberty, certainly now we have reversed the polarity so that the market is thought to be everything and the state nothing. That disempowers us of our citizenship, it takes away our capacity to make public choice and to exercise public liberty. So changing that back, I think that's happening politically already where we are beginning to see people understand that actually democratic institutions do have some role to play, the market cannot and will not solve everything.

Then finally, individual consumers have to be more aware and parents have to be more aware of protecting their children. So I see three or four parallel tracks on which we can move, a political track, a consumer track, a civic corporatism or corporate responsibility track. And again there is considerable

evidence out there that those things are happening. There are a lot of firms not just Ben & Jerry's and the Body Shop now that are trying to think about ways in which they can become more green, ways in which their profits do not work in ways that are hurtful to the society. There are kids at universities at Duke and elsewhere who have created an association that refuses to let their universities buy apparel from Third World sweatshops, and that has actually changed the way through the use of civic consumer boycott in which colleges get their athletic apparel.

MR. GALSTON: The consequence of that is that half the campus is running around naked.

MR. BARBER: There's another advantage.

(Laughter)

MR. BARBER: So not only are there a number of possibilities for these reforms, I think we can see things moving this way, and as usual what tends to happen when you write a book about something, usually you're not running ahead of the curve but somewhat behind the curve, that is to say, even as you write it, you're writing it in part because there is a lot of movement out there.

The most hopeful thing I find is actually young people are maybe the main difference. Maybe this is intruding. Do you have kids?

MR. WILKINSON: No.

MR. BARBER: I thought maybe not, but I have a 16-year-old girl. In my book, the 15- and 16-year-old girl is the target, the subject of buzz marketing and everything else. But what is hopeful to me is that she and a lot of

her friends, and she goes to public school, not private school by the way in New York, are both without question vulnerable to marketing and advertising and media savvy and advertising savvy in a way that I think older generations are not. So I think kids themselves whether it's in a search for alternative music or in media savviness are in a position to begin thinking about this maybe weighing your questions of whether this really is a problem or is this just dad being a curmudgeon in ways that I find rather hopeful. So despite the diagnosis, I am actually not pessimistic. I think we're moving in directions where we are beginning to become aware of this and that those who seem most vulnerable as was the case in the Soviet Union with Soviet totalitarianism are the very ones whose resilience allows one to overturn that. After 80 years of living under communist totalitarianism and in a night or two the whole thing comes down, it is not hard to think that maybe to the extent my diagnosis is right it can be reversed by savvy kids who begin to understand what they have been subjected to and reembrace their role as citizens and pluralists and begin to right the situation.

MR. GALSTON: My first-order unreflective, infantile desire is to allow this to roll on for another hour. My second-order adult responsibility is to bring the formal proceedings to a close. I'd like to thank all the people who helped to make this possible, Erin and Karin and others I suspect as well. And I'd also like to thank the people who helped to make it necessary starting with Professor Barber, Will for a very spirited commentary, and E.J. Dionne for his typical searching questions. Thank you very much.

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