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MYRA STROBER, Section Editor

Is Teaching Neoclassical Economics as the Science of Economics Moral?

Manoucher Parvin

Out of idle curiosity or in times of crisis, the following questions may arise for a professor of economics as well as for anyone else. Who am I? What am I doing with my life? Is what I do worth the effort? These are philosophical musings or professional doubts, of course, but they are also good old neoclassical probings. In economic terms, the first question relates to the quest for further information about one's existing preferences. The second inquires into the allocation of time and labor. The third relates to benefit-cost analysis of impending decisions in the light of past experiences. This article is a sort of personal/professional stocktaking—like a business self-auditing before embarking on a new venture. These questions and their probable answers may lead to a change in one's behavior in private or professional affairs. I wish to share such a stocktaking with my colleagues.

Skepticism about assumptions, conclusions, and claims that neoclassical economics is a positive science abounds and is expressed by Marxian, institutional, evolutionary, and even neoclassical economists. My purpose is to discuss the morality of teaching neoclassical theory as *the* science of economics. Criticism of the theory is confined largely to the pedagogical sphere. For example, neoclassicism assumes that the mere existence of a consumer implies autonomous choice. However, when kept in the dark about alternative economic thoughts, do students choose neoclassical theory autonomously? Is not this initiation into neoclassicism similar to being born into it? Do not such value-laden assumptions of the theory (Samuels 1988) dismiss social psychology and how personalities with eco-

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conomic attributes are formed? Moreover, is not the critical influence of class and income on individuals' preference functions thus ignored?

I will attempt to show that value judgments are used in choosing neoclassicism as the superior, or prevailing, economic theory. If this is so, then the exclusive teaching of the theory embodies a normative commitment whose moral dimension implores recognition. The argument used here is straightforward and depends on the juxtaposition of two human conceptual artifacts: scientific theories and moral principles. First, in various degrees, a theory possesses numerous desirable attributes such as realism, relevance, usefulness, predictability, and resistance to falsification. It is not uncommon for rival theories to coexist and prosper simultaneously. Second, individuals' moral principles—systems of ordered values—are consolidated into the four categories of utilitarian, idealistic, social welfare, and Marxian morality. I attempt to show that the exclusive teaching of neoclassical theory violates all of these types of moral principles unless each and every attribute of neoclassical theory is proved superior to the corresponding attributes of all competing theories. I assume amorality (value indifference or value randomness) is impossible because that implies a moral position.

Socialization is an important factor in the creation of moral principles, even though unique experiences and reflections upon them produce specificities among members of a social group. To reproduce an economic structure with the desired property relations, one must ensure that socialization succeeds in varying degrees in embellishing individuals' preference functions with the dominant ideology. Also, value-laden laws, regulations, and norms, as external constraints, corral individuals toward societal normative commitments.

NEOCLASSICAL ECONOMICS AND THE MORAL DILEMMA

The notions of state, ideology, morality, and scientific theory are critical because they enter the process of neoclassical economics schooling in profound and subtle ways.

The State

A state consists of a set of authoritative institutions, all of which adhere to certain norms, laws, procedural rules, and values that create an environment within which individuals and groups operate, relate, and interact (Hamlin 1986).

A state includes local and national governments, big business, media, educational institutions, and hierarchical social organizations such as the American Economic Association. These institutions have formal and informal interactions, including a complex network of feedback and forward feed of influence and power. Despite a noticeable diversity and tension among a state's institutions, they function and survive together—much like an athletic team does despite conflicts among the players. To establish

legitimacy, maintain authority, and produce voluntary (or involuntary) compliance, the state must create a sufficient degree of consensus (or subordination) among its own institutions and between institutions and citizens. To the extent that compliance is voluntary, the state is democratic and, to the extent that compliance is involuntary, the state is undemocratic (Parvin 1973).

Dominant Ideology

Dominant ideology is an invisible guideline by which individuals understand society and participate in it (Fine 1972). Under normal conditions, most individuals internalize the dominant ideology as though it were the result of their own ponderings and independent conclusions based on personal experiences. In actuality, the individuals' perception of the dominant ideology is drawn from social authoritative relations, such as those between parents and children, employer and employee, church and parishioner, teachers and students, the media and the audience, and government and citizen. State institutions and socialization thus induce the internalization of the dominant ideology and establish an ethical, legal, and attitudinal tone between the individual and the state and among the individuals themselves. In turn, autonomous social changes influence state structure and function. Laws and regulations are in general explicit, legitimized expressions of the dominant ideology produced by the state. The U.S. Constitution, in which the sanctity of private ownership of property is stipulated, is such an example. People are brought up to accept and respect the Constitution. Some individuals do reject the dominant ideology, but most individuals during non-revolutionary periods accede to the fundamentals with marginal personal interpretive variations. Such minor differences in beliefs and values of individuals or real inconsistencies in the dominant ideology both within the verbal and practical domains or between the two domains, do not usually produce social upheavals. Only patches of ideological common ground among a sufficient number of individuals are necessary to produce voluntary compliance to, and thus legitimacy for, a state. The federal and state elections in the United States are proof of these assertions. Note how an important part of the state is legitimized by less than 50 percent of the voting-age population.

Moral Principles or Ethics

Moral principles are a system of order ranking of values that guide the behavior of individuals, groups, or states or are used to rationalize behavior. The optimum choice among available means to achieve a given goal is called mean rationality; the optimum choice among competing goals is goal rationality. Actual (vs. verbal) ethics might be deduced from behavior and is called revealed morality.

Four major types of moral principles relate to goal rationality. First, moral principles and behavior can be viewed as *virtues* based on faith or

ideals that are eternal, such as those in holy books, and are independent of the usual benefit-cost considerations. I call this idealistic or faith morality. Possession of all the virtues, such as truthfulness, is required for a virtuous person (Atherton 1988); in many religions, virtuousness also enhances chances for salvation.

The second type of moral principle is the social-welfare-maximizing morality. At the minimum, social-welfare morality implies the embodiment of some standardized societal welfare factors in individuals' utility functions through socialization. For example, truthfulness is now a social-welfare moral because it decreases transaction costs. Two types of information are required to achieve this morality: social data and a social-welfare function. This type of morality is thus based on imperfect information. So, even if a social-welfare function were accepted unanimously, only relative and not global optimum behavior would be possible.

The third type of moral principle is revealed through exploitation-free choice in human relations. Marxian ethic is related to the propriety of transactions within the context of a mode of production (e.g., slavery) from the viewpoint of *transactors* (Wood 1979). Marx rejected the moral principles expounded by exploiters as an aspect of the dominant ideology. Marxian morality is revealed by the actions of the exploited. Class struggles to end exploitation of the majority by the minority are not only a fact of history but are also just (moral) actions. For example, the labor movement is the self-conscious movement of the majority to end exploitation by a minority (Marx and Engels 1948; Wolff 1988).

The fourth type of moral principle is utilitarian morality, in which ethical values are revealed by the maximizing behavior of the individual who is constrained by norms, laws, and resources. Neoclassical economics assumes the dominance of utilitarian morality while implicitly promoting it as appropriate. In this manner, neoclassicism in effect ignores fact-value dichotomy, its own claimed pillar of objectivity (Boulding 1962).

Although idealistic morality, social-welfare morality, Marxian morality, and utilitarian morality differ conceptually, they are not mutually exclusive in practice because an individual may adhere to aspects of each notion at various times. The appropriation of surplus value violates Marxian morality but not necessarily the faith and social-welfare moralities. Robbing a bank for revolutionary purposes is not Marxian immoral, but it is a faith immoral and social-welfare immoral act. However, under socialist rule, such an act becomes illegal and immoral because the stolen money would have belonged to the workers. Note that seemingly rational behavior of atomized (individualized) maximizers can turn out to be irrational even for the maximizers themselves if each and every individual refuses to admit social-welfare factors into his or her utility function (Hamlin 1986). An example is the profit-maximizing air polluters who can mutually annihilate each other but would, of course, benefit if they were to cooperate and control pollution.

These definitions of morality differ temporally, too. The idealistic morality is presumably eternal, whereas the social-welfare morality undergoes change corresponding to changes in social reality and in the social-welfare function that is to be maximized. Marxian morality holds for historical epochs such as feudalism or capitalism from the viewpoint of the exploiters as well as the exploited. Utilitarian morality is time/person specific. I shall use these four notions of morality as broadly representative of numerous conceptual types because teachers and students of neoclassical economics adhere to different notions of morality. I do not claim that any particular individual must or does subscribe to any of these conceptions of morality exclusively but rather that behavior, such as teaching economics, can be revealingly contrasted against such conceptions of morality.

Finally, moral principles offer norms that, in theory, yield a ranking of the alternative institutions, policies, and behavior, when applied in light of existing facts. The validity of such norms or principles, however, should not depend on disputes over factual claims (Miller 1984).

Scientific Theory

One aspect of scientific theory is (or ought to be) a conscious attempt to explain relationships between real entities or processes. Even in mathematics, basic assumptions are rooted in concrete experiences (Aleksandrov et al. 1963). A theory must possess a number of desired/required attributes: (1) the validity of its assumptions; (2) the validity of its internal logic and absence of loose parts or ends in its theoretical structure; (3) the capacity of the theory to withstand falsification by experiment, empirical analysis, and/or historical observations; and (4) a proven record of usefulness, such as predictability. One can think of other desired attributes of theories, such as elegance, simplicity, relevance, realism, and ease of application, that may partially overlap some of the above attributes. For a period, unfalsified theories may coexist and compete side by side. No attribute is primal or should be used singly to compare theories that have not been falsified. The observation of the sunrise in the east and sunset in the west proves a theory of sun rotation around the earth with perfect predictability!

In general, a theory is a multidimensional artifact reflecting a complex reality. Some attributes are inconsonant, for instance, theoretical simplicity may be enhanced only at the expense of realism. A consumption function with several lagged variables can be simplified to a two-variable model with some compromise on realism and explanatory power. It is thus very possible that a theory can be superior in some attributes and inferior to others.

No method yet exists to measure the strength of attributes and assign values to them. Even if the measurability problem is overcome, if a theory is not proved superior in each and every attribute, then weights (value judgment) must be used to construct an index for comparison of theories. Accordingly, theoretical superiority in general will be a function of the chosen attributes, their strength, and the weights assigned to them. The fact that

several economic schools of thought live and prosper in the minds and works of dedicated adherents proves the existence of this problem.

Social science is not the only victim of the dilemma. Even in natural science, theoretical disputes between capitalist and socialist theorists are more pronounced than differences existing within each group (Graham 1972). These conflicts are caused, to some degree, by the biased flow of research funds and an incentive/disincentive structure, both of which stem from the dominant ideology. This problem, however, is accentuated in social sciences because theories suggest policy to transform the object of the theory—the society—which is loaded with vested interests. For example, scientific funding in general and political considerations are dangerously linked together in the United States today (Dickson 1988). Casual observation indicates that successful neoclassical economists are the ones who receive the bulk of research funds and most of the space in distinguished journals.

MORALITY AND NEOCLASSICAL TEACHING

I now apply the concepts of state, ideology, morality, and theory to the morality of teaching neoclassical economics as *the* science of economics.

The Moral Dilemma

What is the moral basis of preferring a theory when no theory is superior to *all* competing ones in *all* attributes, especially when such a choice influences socioeconomic policies? It is well accepted that neoclassicism is impotent in explaining and predicting historical trends and institutional transformations. However, its claim to be a positive science is faulted because of its value-laden assumptions and conclusions (Samuels 1988; Davis 1989; Wolff and Resnick 1988), and its claim to being a science is criticized forcefully from methodological, philosophical, and empirical perspectives (McCloskey 1985).

A two-step value judgment is required to teach neoclassical economics *exclusively* and *uncritically*: that it is the most superior theory, and that the teaching of alternative theories fails an appropriate benefit-cost analysis. Let us now apply the four moral approaches to evaluate the process of teaching neoclassical economics uncritically and exclusively.

It fails idealistic morality because, given the *available* knowledge, neoclassical instruction cannot be classified as teaching the (available) truth, the whole (available) truth, and nothing but the (available) truth. This judgment has been expressed by some prominent neoclassicists and a host of followers of other schools of thought. So, to the extent that existing criticism is brought into instruction, the idealistic morality of teaching neoclassical economics is enhanced or diminished.

The dominance of neoclassical instruction also fails the social-welfare morality test. One essential element of social-welfare moral behavior is the

appropriate use of *all* relevant and important information at hand. The omission of available information functions as a constraint upon economic education and thus limits the future policy options as suggested by economists. This approach also implies the training of an army of intelligentsia whose vested interest appears the same as that of capitalists.

In addition, current economic teaching fails Marxian morality because it fails to inform students of the existence, the processes, and the consequences of exploitation (the knowledge of exploitation by the exploited is a first step in ending it) (Parvin 1987). In Marxian parlance, neoclassical economics, by ignoring class analysis and class struggle, in effect impedes the struggle to end exploitation. Neoclassicism also fails to investigate how an individual's view of his or her own interest is molded by his or her place in society. As a general rule, neoclassical teaching fails to explore ethics in business as though this were not a major market problem (Kaufmann 1962). Moreover, imperfect competition is not only inefficient, but it also gives rise to exploitation, even from the neoclassical perspective. Thus, by purposely not discussing the relationships between class, income, and exploitation, the Marxist conception of morality is violated.

It would appear that the exclusive teaching of neoclassicism does not violate utilitarian morality. In fact, actual individuals' utility maximums may diverge from their potential—the global maximum—to the extent that available information is imperfect. This divergence is similar to the profit maximization of mutually destructive polluters who are ignorant of the damage costs. In the same vein, the impact of pervasive and persuasive commercial advertising on individuals' behavior is ignored in most texts, although the idea of the autonomous agent is promoted as a basic assumption. This omission fails all the aforementioned notions of moral principles.

To minimize the costs of being a nonneoclassicist, in a world dominated by neoclassical economists (ignorance is bliss), one must discount moral and emotional costs. It is a bitter and repeated lesson of history that dissidents rarely taste the fruits of their critical and agonizing efforts.

Finally, to dismiss moral criticism of teaching neoclassical economics as *the* science of economics, one must either assume that the theory has no correspondence to social life, which is filled with preferences and moral functions, or else claim that moral choices—a crucial element of preference functions—are unimportant or irrelevant in decisionmaking and in economics. Neoclassical theorists do claim that the theory has some correspondence to capitalism and market economies. Because moral principles are elements of preference functions influencing behavior with economic causes and consequences, the morality argument cannot be dismissed from a neoclassical discourse that is supposed to theorize behavior.

The Theorist and Teacher as a Reproducer

A theorist and teacher (e.g., neoclassical economist) is potentially a creative element of society, who is molded by that society. The theoretical

questions or problems that reach him or her are system specific. In the United States, economists are encouraged to solve the problems of a capitalist economy, not to refute its basic tenets. For example, the imposition of pecuniary habits of business—through the board of trustees—upon university organizations, administration, teaching, and research is well known (Veblen 1967). Furthermore, to live and prosper in a nonscientific role as a citizen, the theorist must conform to various professional and non-professional norms—the dominant ideology. The desire of scientists and intellectuals to exist, to make a living, and to prosper has often conflicted in history with the search for truth. In many cases, a theory is advanced in order to establish a scientific basis for the dominant ideology or to repair the system that produces the dominant ideology.

HOW AND WHY NEOCLASSICAL ECONOMICS DOMINATES

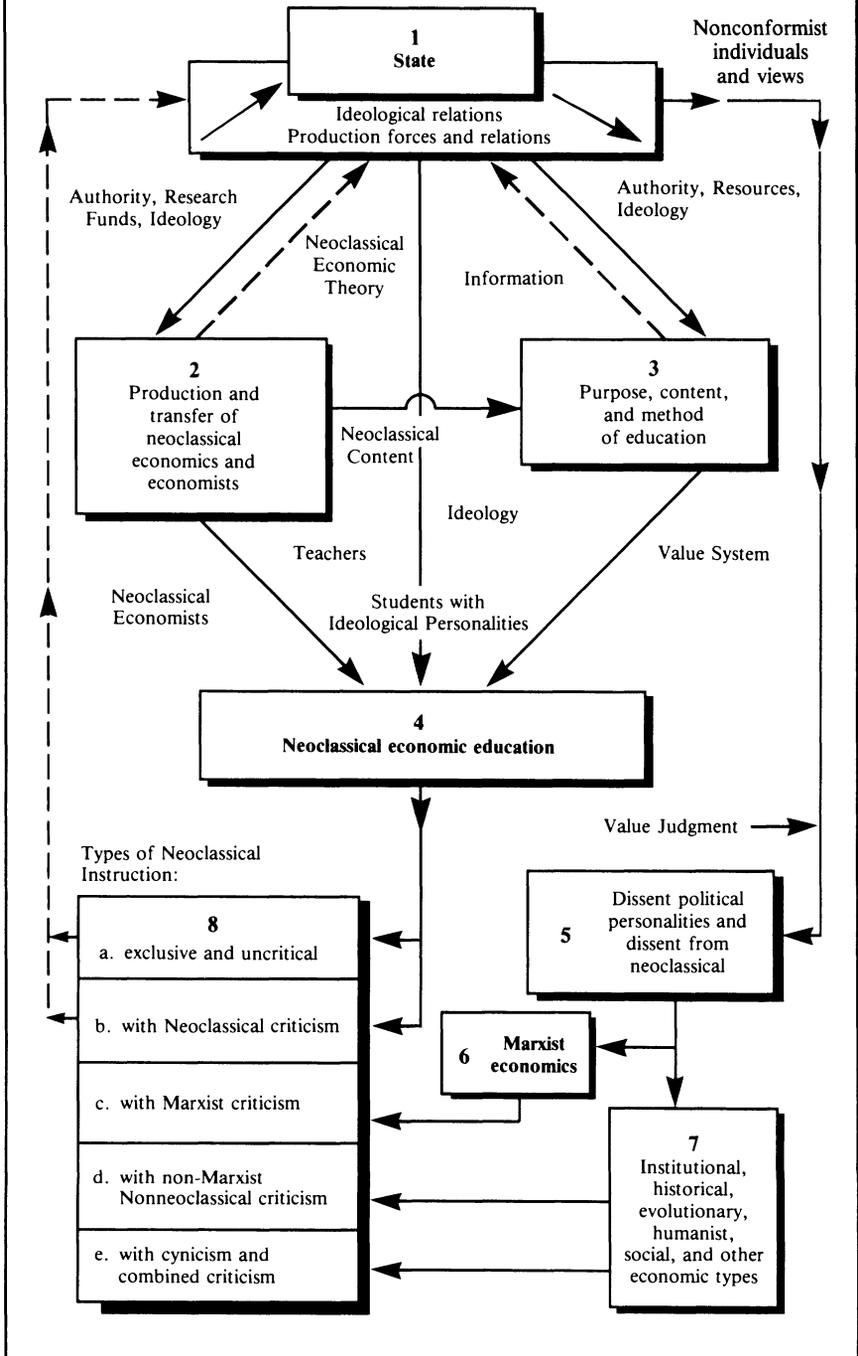
The Model

Figure 1 is an attempt to provide a pictorial summary of a social process that leads to the dominance of neoclassical economics. Starting from the top of Figure 1, the state (square 1) tries to establish an ideological relationship among its own institutions, between institutions and citizens, and among citizens themselves. Variations on the theme of dominant ideology are embodied in most individuals (e.g., Hunt 1987; Lodge and Vogel 1987; Kennedy 1988; and Lane 1962). For example, the sanctity of private ownership and a presumption of workers' inability to manage production at all or efficiently are among the pillars of dominant ideology in capitalism. From the state (1), research funds go almost exclusively for the production and distribution of neoclassical economics (2). It is expected that neoclassicism will provide a theoretical basis for the dominant ideology, (2) to (1). Approved and supported by leading educators and state authorities, the purpose, content, and method of education (3) in general and economic schooling in particular flow from the state (1) to (3) (e.g., Gramsci 1959; Kozol 1975). An informational feedback exists from (3) to (1). As an educational content, neoclassicism flows from (2) to (3). A subtle, decentralized, ideological indoctrination from (1) influences neoclassical economic education (4) and engulfs teachers and students alike, who are destined, in this case, to produce, reproduce, and exchange neoclassicism. Neoclassical teachers from (2), the content from (3), and students influenced by the dominant ideology from (1) flow into (4), where economic instruction takes place. However, the individual ideologies or value judgments of some educators (5) may lead them to teach nondominant economic theories (6 and 7). From here, based on experience and personal specificities of the instructor and the political milieu of the particular academic institution, one of the options in (8) is adopted.

In option (8a), an uncritical neoclassical teaching is imposed on a great number of students. In option (b), a skeptical approach, in which criticisms

FIGURE 1

Simplified Model of Production and Distribution of Neoclassical Economics in the United States



confined within the neoclassical paradigm are allowed, is offered to students (e.g., Boulding 1972; Morgenstern 1972; Shubik 1970; Simon 1983; Robinson 1977). In approach (c), neoclassical economics is criticized from a Marxian viewpoint as a mere axiomatic and deductive analysis of *appearances* of capitalism with certain theoretical loose ends still remaining. Finally, in approach (d), non-Marxist criticisms of neoclassicism such as institutional, historical, evolutionary, and humanistic economics (e.g., Hanusch 1988; Lutz and Lux 1988; McCloskey 1985; Veblen 1919) are presented. In option (e), a cynical, haphazard presentation is adopted. In a few economics departments, neoclassicism is taught as a theory among others, and students are offered the choice of learning competing theories.

Of course, a survey of popular textbooks and casual observation together indicate that the dominant mode of economic education today in the United States is the uncritical and exclusive instruction of neoclassical economics at the course (instructor) level as well as the departmental level. Further studies are needed to quantify the degree of monopolization by neoclassical economics.

Neoclassical Dominance

It is not surprising that a great majority of B.A., M.A., and even Ph.D. graduates in the United States know little or nothing about the existing alternative economic thoughts or criticism to neoclassical economics. Even American homegrown institutionalism is mostly bypassed. The modern Marxian attempt to indicate why reality appears the way that it appears to neoclassical theorists is ignored (Fine 1972). For example, the student is impressed by the dichotomy of inputs and outputs, although in reality many outputs are used to produce their own input factors of production. Also, production relations are given in terms of certain appearances, such as wages, profits, and prices at the atomized level of neoclassical economics, without any reference to underlying socioeconomic causes or consequences for various classes or to available criticism of this approach (Fine 1972).

As a dominant economic thought, neoclassicism persists in our schools not because of proven superiority but because of lack of research and teaching support for competing paradigms. The American Economic Association functions as an informal arm of the state, for it promotes an economic theory that is ideologically sanctioned, and hence it promotes capitalism. The absence of continued debate between proponents of neoclassical theory and its critiques in the *American Economic Review (AER)* and other establishment journals is a testimony to the marginalization of competing theories (Bronfenbrenner 1970). In general, the economists working for the U.S. government do not allow themselves the thought of, let alone the fact of, committing heresy. Because American capitalism is claimed to be both the freest and richest system, critics are castigated as ideologists at best and banished to professional oblivion whenever possible (Kennedy 1988). It is generally not pointed out that capitalism has not done so well in Central and South America.

Interestingly enough, a diagram could be used to explain economic education in the USSR before glasnost, where collective ownership was sanctified, the leading role of the workers asserted (at least in theory), and the dominant ideology was Marxism. It is no wonder that the United States produces mainly neoclassical economics and economists, and the USSR produced Marxist economics and economists. Assuming that it is not in the DNA of individual teachers and students to have such mass tendencies toward one paradigm or another depending on the country of birth, then the ideological and social corraling proposed in this article and in Figure 1 appears to be a plausible explanation for what actually takes place in the two countries—or at least in one. Casual observation indicates that Western European universities, on the other hand, avoid such one-sided normative commitment to an economic theory. In these countries, there exists a greater flexibility in teaching various theories and a lesser degree of domination by any one theory.

On the Difficulty of Teaching Neoclassical Economics

Because it helps my argument, I propose the following riddle that the neoclassical instructor must teach on a regular basis. What is it that is friction free (like space); institution free (like the moon); government, mafia, and media free (like heaven); filled with individuals like us—with tastes claimed to be inbred or to come from nowhere but busy equating marginal this to marginal that (like ants)—all unknowingly for the sake of the best for the most, no one responsible for it all? The answer is the ideal *market*, which is expounded in microeconomic texts.

A more critical student, who inquires how microeconomics deals with the economic causes and consequences of hunger, homelessness, oppression, discrimination, crime, politics, and advertising and how they affect taxes, income, leisure, and tastes, is reminded that the market in textbooks is value free, free from interpersonal welfare comparison, free from class conflicts and politics, and, in sum, free of other bothersome imperfections. If students ask why monopoly in business is discussed as inefficient while monopoly in ideological relations (e.g., media) is not, even though it has a profound impact on the political preference functions of individuals and thus political choice with economic consequences, the neoclassical economists must admit that they have no answer. If the student raises the question that monopoly relations in ideology and politics are harmful to democracy and to the efficient allocation of public funds but are ignored in the texts, the neoclassical teacher must still remain silent because the text is silent about the actual economic system—the commitment to positivism notwithstanding. That neoclassical economics claims to be a positive science yet purposefully ignores exploring certain important and relevant aspects of economic reality violates the moral principles described earlier. More problems and more contradictions exist in teaching neoclassical theory (Lee 1988), but, in my view, the moral dilemma resides at the apex.

Although most of us are brought up with the aforementioned riddle and manage to become, to some extent, expert at teaching it, our nagging conscience hurts still more when we are instructed that the underlying assumptions are necessary and simplifying. How innocent indeed! Current dissenting texts (e.g., Wolff and Resnick 1987; Phillips 1988) are mostly ignored. The exceptions to straight neoclassical teaching do make some impression but only on a very few. It is no wonder that some instructors feel unfulfilled and morally troubled teaching neoclassical economics without criticism, and some perceptive students (even those preconditioned by the superiority of private enterprise) still have a difficult time accepting neoclassical economics as science. The reason is simple, uncritical teaching of microeconomics can prove offensive to common sense and even more so to uncommon and keen sense.

CONCLUSIONS

The flow of authoritative decisions, ideology, and resources from the state permeates and promotes neoclassical economics, which in turn provides the scientific justification for the bourgeois ideology and practical support for maintaining capitalism on a survival course. Neoclassical economics builds on and strengthens the ideological prejudice and the political personalities that most students and teachers bring with them into the course of study. The theory imparts a multidimensional cognitive and ideological impact on the students despite claims that it is only a positive science. We must teach how to think not what to think.

Neoclassical economics, as normally taught in the United States, not only effectively argues away most economically relevant human choice, with the exception of those in the market, but it actually helps to produce or to solidify economic man by reducing virtually all types of human relations to that of market exchange alone. Moreover, rational choice is presented without discussion of the impossibility of the task. The individual may fail to discover what decision furthers his or her own interest, not because of limited information or uncertainty but because of conflicting goals and the impossibility of ranking them consistently.

Neoclassical economics leaves the moral impression that economic man is an autonomous agent and that atomized utility maximization is not only true but natural because it stems from an immutable human nature. The pliability of human behavior based on upbringing is conveniently ignored. So, what appears to be so is used, in effect, to reinforce what ought to be because of a halo of Pareto optimum surrounds the final conclusion.

Neoclassical economics has an ideological impact on students. It enhances political conservatism, individualism, and materialism (vs. communitarianism and humanism).

The neoclassical economists arguing "in non-positivist ways while preaching positivism" (McCloskey 1985, *xi*) baffle keen minds as to the nature of the science and moral position of its practitioners. It is beyond the

scope of this article to discuss and to demonstrate the consequences of the elitism of positivists in general and neoclassicists in particular in the United States.

The main question is, Is the uncritical teaching of neoclassicism as *the* science of economics moral? The answer is no, because it violates various conceptions of morality to which most people claim to adhere.

Empirical work is sorely needed to measure the degree of neoclassical monopolization in high school, college, and graduate school teaching.

Returning to my initial musings—If I am stripped of my moral values (if this were possible) and scientific judgment, what am I? If my professional activities and moral principles do not coincide, then who am I? Is my professional safety endangered by being a conscientious objector? This classificatory note should be considered as a response to such moral/scientific challenges of teaching neoclassical economics as *the* science of economics. Similar dilemmas exist for historians, social scientists, literary personnel, and journalists across time and space. Moreover, economists before and after Adam Smith have advocated implicitly or explicitly their own social policies based on their own mean and goal rationalities. Can we neglect, for example, the impact of Smith, Ricardo, Bentham, Mills, Marx, Pareto, and Keynes on public policy, culture, and morality? Even though economics is reduced largely to optimizing mathematical functions or estimating econometric models, quite a few economists reject the role prescribed to them as experts divorced from normative judgments because this view—a value position itself—has been abandoned in practice (Nelson 1987).

Finally, the current facade of democracy within established professional institutions is apparently insufficient for a genuine competition of contending views in the same market, such as in the pages of *AER*. What the science, the professors, the texts, and the students need is genuine debate. Let a hundred flowers bloom in American economic education!

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