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The Moral Critique of Consumerism in Solzhenitsyn's Economic and Political Thought

Camryn Zeller
Hope College

Steven McMullen
Hope College

Though best known for his literature and critique of Soviet communism, in the 1970s and 1980s Russian novelist and historian Alexandr Solzhenitsyn shook the West with his controversial criticisms of the weaknesses he saw in Western culture, especially concerning the lack of morality and an obsession with material goods. His critique closely follows contemporary critiques of consumerism, particularly among Christian scholars. This article summarizes Solzhenitsyn's critique of the West, and compares his ideas with modern scholarship about consumerism. Solzhenitsyn's work demonstrates the importance of a proper understanding of the purpose of human beings for economic and social thought. Moreover, his work provides an important account of the necessary morality of economic life that prizes individual choice, takes economic culture seriously, and rejects technocratic visions of economics.

Introduction

The Russian novelist and historian Alexandr Solzhenitsyn became famous in the 1970s and 1980s for his critique of both Eastern and Western culture. Solzhenitsyn grew up in the Communist Soviet Union and spent eight years in the gulag system before being exiled to the West. During his time in the gulags and early years of exile, Solzhenitsyn developed a thoughtful critique of the Communist ideology and wrote two of his most famous works, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and *The Gulag Archipelago*, which illustrated the tragic reality of life under a Communist regime. These works gained Solzhenitsyn significant recognition and respect in the West and he was praised for his perseverance and courage

against the evils of Communism. However, Solzhenitsyn's popular support diminished when he began criticizing Western culture for its obsession with worldly pleasures and disregard for its moral obligations to others. He thought that this critique arose naturally from his Orthodox Christian tradition, moreover, which put him at odds with an increasingly secular public conversation in the West. Solzhenitsyn never named the ideology he thought plagued the West, but we believe that his critique is best thought of as an argument against an ideology of consumerism.

Though *consumerism* is a term that has been used in many different ways,[1] in this article, we will use the term to mean a culture of materialism, individualism, and hedonism that parallels Solzhenitsyn's condemnation of the West. As an ideology, consumerism is a set of beliefs about individuals and society that mistakenly posits that a person's telos is the fulfillment of untrained desires. Consequently, the achievement of some desired outcome, usually pleasurable, is the sole end of each choice an individual makes. In public discourse, this ideology would encourage the evaluation of choices and the pursuit of a kind of progress that emphasizes an individual's capacity to achieve material comfort. While only a few explicitly espouse this ideology, many functionally adopt it, and build it into practices and institutions.[2] Behaviorally, consumerism is characterized as an excessive preoccupation, by individuals, with the acquisition of material goods. Ultimately, this ideology can bolster and defend consumerist behaviors, as preoccupation with personal material well-being can result in moral failings, and this individualism can crowd out other moral obligations.[3]

Solzhenitsyn's writing highlighted this consumerist ideology in the West. His speeches from the early 1970s to the early 1980s describe Western society as materialistic and self-centered, unwilling to help others meet their physical needs and unwilling to aggressively promote a worldwide respect for human rights. At the base of Solzhenitsyn's concern with the West is the worry that Western culture offered no incentive for people to live virtuously or act morally. Moreover, he thought this amorality was in direct conflict with the created purpose of a human being as described by the historical Christian tradition.

This article will draw from many of Solzhenitsyn's early speeches and writing to argue that his critique of Western culture was a critique of a consumerist ideology. Then, we will demonstrate the parallels between his writings and contemporary critiques of consumerism, focusing on criticisms based on the immorality of a consumerist ideology and the Christian condemnation of idolatry. The underlying theme of this literature is that a proper anthropology should posit a purpose for humanity beyond material wealth. We will then show how this thinking animates Solzhenitsyn's critique of Communism and his broader thinking

about economics. We argue that Solzhenitsyn offers us a valuable example of a thinker who is able to critique materialism in both Soviet Communism and also in Western market economies, and does so with a clear moral vision of economic life. While he does not engage in sophisticated social scientific analysis, his work can clearly point us toward an appreciation for the importance of sustaining a moral economic culture.

Modern Critiques of Consumerism

Solzhenitsyn's concerns parallel those of Christian writers who worry about consumerism as idolatry. One popular recent account of idolatry frames it as "taking some 'incomplete joy of this world' and building your entire life on it."[4] It is clear from Solzhenitsyn's writing that he believed the West had replaced the authority of God with the fulfillment of their personal desires in search for some sort of sustainable joy. A number of other Christian scholars raise similar concerns. DeYoung, writing about vices, condemns this idolization because it replaces God, in the human heart, with an unhealthy obsession with the gifts God has given.[5] She describes how this leads people to feel entitled and overly attached to these gifts, which, in turn distorts the priorities of people away from their moral obligations to others. Habits built on these distorted priorities become vices.[6] Noell draws out the connection between vices and consumerism[7] arguing that the vices often associated with consumerism, such as avarice, greed, and envy, existed well before people started blaming consumerism for the corruption of mankind, noting that evil and the tendency to sin lives within each human being.[8] Even so, these authors, along with Solzhenitsyn, assert that the individual has the power and the choice to make more virtuous consumption decisions, even if making that choice is hard or is discordant with societal norms.

Another group of scholars blame consumerist habits on wealth, economic structures, and business practices, noting that increased access to material goods might create problematic consumption habits that drive individuals toward a consumerist ideology and away from virtue. Juliet Schor argues that increased availability of consumer credit, combined with a psychological tendency toward upward social comparisons encourage people to consume excessively.[9] Similarly, Frank argues that inequality and competition for status displays accelerate consumption levels beyond what makes people genuinely better off.[10] From this logic, increased wealth and mass media perpetuate consumerism. Sider also pinpoints increased wealth as the main problem with consumerism but does so from an explicitly Christian perspective.[11] He argues that affluence causes people to adopt

consumerist tendencies, encouraging those with excess wealth or material goods to ignore their Christian obligation to help those in need.

Schor, Frank, and Sider all fall into the category of literature that argues that consumerism is partially the result of a Western market economic system. Among this body of literature, some scholars such as Galbraith and Clapp claim, further, that capitalism creates consumers and consumerism[12] and that consumerism drives capitalism.[13] Some of the authors that operate from this assumption also claim that marketing and advertising efforts violate consumer sovereignty and leave the consumer with little power against big businesses.[14] These critiques of consumerism tend to place more blame on the mass production of material goods, marketing, and economic systems for the evils they see in society. Some of what Solzhenitsyn writes seems to fit in this vein, since his rhetoric often pairs affluence with moral weakness and undue material influence. At no point, however, does Solzhenitsyn offer a systematic mechanism to connect affluence and consumerism. Instead, he seems to indicate that Western culture has become too enamored with material prosperity.

Finally, there is a third group of critics of consumerism who frame both wealth and the market economic system as ethically neutral. Schneider defends wealth from a biblical perspective and argues that it is not inherently good or bad nor causes consumerism.[15] Instead, he believes that consumerist behavior is often a temptation of increased wealth but not a guarantee. Similarly, scholars such as Noell,[16] Richards,[17] and Harper and Jones[18] believe the free market to be ethically neutral. In fact, Richards maintains that consumerism is actually detrimental to the development of the free market.[19] However, these authors also note the temptation to orient one's life toward the acquisition of material goods still remains as a possibility in the capitalist system. This type of critique of consumerism is more consonant with the idolatry literature, as it adopts the language of individual temptation and human fallibility.

Solzhenitsyn does not, in his writing and speaking, make clear arguments about economic systems or about what causes the materialism that he critiques. As such, we cannot place his argument clearly into one of these groups. The behavioral questions that motivate modern social scientists were just not central to his thinking. The distinctions between these ways of thinking about consumerism, however, helpfully reveal the balance of concerns that animated Solzhenitsyn's writing.

Solzhenitsyn's Critique of the West

Solzhenitsyn was an Orthodox Christian writer that found himself at odds with both the Communist regime in his home country and the Western culture that surrounded him in later life. Solzhenitsyn believed that the weaknesses in the West stemmed from the fact that men had forgotten God and replaced his authority and doctrines with an empty ideology. Speaking about art, he noted that "the fall has been voluntary, a decline into a contrived and pretentious quest where the artist, instead of attempting to reveal the divine plan, tries to put himself in the place of God."[20] In public affairs, he argued that faith, which had once been "the shaping and unifying force of the nation," lost its jurisdiction over political, social, and economic decisions when people began to "[favor] the economy, the state, and the military at the expense of the religious spirit and national life."[21] This shift led people in the West to believe that "there [were] no higher spiritual forces above [them]" and that "Man with a capital *M*—[was] the crowning glory of the universe."[22] Solzhenitsyn lamented that this philosophy of life did not admit the fallibility or intrinsic evil in man nor did it see "any task higher than the attainment of happiness on earth."[23] The West had abandoned Christianity as a reasonable guide for life and replaced it with an ideology that placed humans' (sometimes mistaken) desires at the center.

Through his speeches and various "warnings to the West," he blamed three distortions of Western thought for the failings he saw in the West, each diverging from historic Christian roots: (1) the dependence on the legal system for moral judgements, (2) the media's rejection of truth in favor of entertainment, and (3) the worship of material comfort as the purpose of humanity. All three of these failings were the result of a twofold weakness: the lack of a moral foundation, and the lack of the character necessary to resist material temptation toward profit and comfort. The next three sections will outline Solzhenitsyn's concerns with each failing and connect his critiques with the development of the Western ideology.

The Legal System

Solzhenitsyn argued that, as Christianity lost its authority over political, social, and economic institutions, the West was left without a concrete idea of the difference between right and wrong, good and evil. He thought that, in the past, the government and legal system had existed in the context of an established Christian metaphysics and thus, a tradition of Christian ethics. Solzhenitsyn reminded the West that "Law is our human attempt to embody in rules a part of the moral sphere which is above us. We try to understand this morality, bring it down

to earth, and present it in the form of law."[24] However, due to the loss of faith in the West, there was no transcendent grounding for legal rulings. Laws became a cheap substitute for morality in the West: anything legal was assumed to be moral, and any moral obligation loses its force unless it is first adopted as a law.

Solzhenitsyn thought that this legalistic moral code was inadequate to fully capture the moral capabilities and obligations of the human being. He noted that in the thinking of the West "the limits of human rights and rightness are defined by a system of laws."[25] Though these laws were important in society, they did not require any sort of conviction or actual sense of right and wrong in the human being. Instead, people lived without moral challenge and thus lived according to a watered-down and unstable set of principles certified by the government. This undermined the incentive for people to act morally beyond what was legally required of them. Solzhenitsyn wrote, "Whenever the tissue of life is woven out of legalistic relationships, this creates an atmosphere of spiritual mediocrity that paralyzes man's noblest impulses."[26] In other words, complete dependence on a legal system for moral guidance led people to only act morally out of requirement rather than genuine conviction and often denied the obligations to others that a traditional Christian morality would otherwise prioritize. This flattening of moral relationships into formal or legal relationships, dictated by contracts and laws, is a key component of moral critiques of consumerism.

Entertainment Media

In addition to a legalistic moral code, Solzhenitsyn argued that without a strong Christian tradition, beliefs were informed by and dependent on the attitude of the media. Solzhenitsyn valued the ability of writing to preserve the truth of experience, memory, and history; this much is evident through his fiction works and dedication to catalog the history of Russia.[27] In contrast, he thought the media lacked a firm commitment to the truth, often sacrificing truth for the sake of entertainment. In particular, he accused the media of cultivating "hastiness and superficiality" in society at large.[28] Without a strong cultural or religious dedication to the truth, the media could publish anything it wanted quickly and with little respect for the actual events and news that transpired.

Solzhenitsyn concluded that these attitudes of hastiness and superficiality contributed to the complacency of the West regarding its obligations to others. He thought the West "[could] no longer remember itself"[29] because of the low quality of writing and news. Without a common foundation and memory in the media, citizens were unable to understand the experiences of one another and instead became isolated in their own lives.[30] This encouraged a self-centered,

individualistic view of the world. People were no longer motivated to discover a common truth or understand one another. This isolation from others frustrated Solzhenitsyn because it ignored the inherently social nature and moral obligations to others that a Christian understanding of the human person requires.

Obsession with Material Comfort

Solzhenitsyn thought the increases in material wealth in the West made it easier for people to ignore and forget traditions of morality and truth. In his view, the West had failed to stand up to the establishment of Soviet communism because "you wanted to rest, you wanted to prosper."[31] He believed that, at its core, the West had become "hopelessly enmeshed" and distracted by the "slavish worship of all that is pleasant, all that is comfortable, all that is material."[32] The West, because they had forgotten God, replaced the given goodness of material wealth with the absolute goodness of material wealth. If wealth is given by God for a purpose, then humans have natural duties to use their wealth accordingly. Absent this metanarrative, wealth is used primarily for gratifying material desires, and the purpose of a person's life becomes more dependent on that person's material well-being. This left the West without the will to pursue anything better than a cheap "pursuit of happiness." The "constant desire to have still more things and a still better life"[33] replaced the desire for spiritual development in the West and continually summoned people toward more physical well-being, possession of material goods, and "an almost unlimiting freedom in the choice of pleasures."[34] This obsession with physical goods and pleasures reinforced the belief that the end of humanity was a kind of individualistic fulfillment of material desires.

Solzhenitsyn's Orthodox tradition embraces asceticism in a much more explicit way than Western traditions, and this made it natural for him to see some of the excesses in Western culture. In particular Solzhenitsyn thought that the West had become averse to any kind of self-sacrifice. Actions that would compromise material comfort or freedom to choose pleasure became less popular. Solzhenitsyn recognized the appeal of this aversion to taking risks on others' behalf, saying that "it's only human that people living in prosperity doubt the necessity of taking steps"[35] that would diminish their prosperity. However, he thought this aversion to discomfort produced poor character and accentuated the idolization of human desires through material means. In fact, Solzhenitsyn said in a BBC radio speech, "I could never have imagined the extreme degree to which the West actually desired to blind itself to the world situation."[36] The only moral concern that people held was that required by the state and that which served their own material well-being. The lengths the people of the West went to in order to protect

their physical well-being was especially problematic; he believed the West's mantra was "give in as quickly as possible, give up as quickly as possible, peace and quiet at any cost."[37] However, Solzhenitsyn firmly trusted that "the human soul longs for things higher, warmer, and purer than those offered by today's mass living habits."[38] This motivated his criticisms of the weaknesses of West; he regarded the purpose of the human being as far exceeding the fulfillment of material desires. Through literature and direct appeal, he hoped to reorient the hearts and souls of people in the West toward God, encourage them to try to live moral lives, and reveal to them a more fulfilling purpose for life in the process.

Consumerism and Solzhenitsyn

As noted above, many contemporary critiques of Western materialism appeal to the phenomenon of "consumerism," but there is little agreement about the nature of the critique. Though a nontrivial portion of the existing literature argues that consumerism is not bad,[39] the vast majority of scholarly work about consumerism is highly critical, whether the authors are theologians, social scientists, or historians. There are a few broad intellectual camps in this literature, and we find it useful to distinguish between those scholars that trace the problems of consumerism back to human responsibility, on the one hand, and those that instead focus on systemic mechanisms.

Solzhenitsyn seems to be in this first group, in that he argues that the problem is a kind of moral failing, rather than an artifact of economics, law, or social structures. Nevertheless, he traces the impact of this moral failing throughout the economic and social life of the West. Solzhenitsyn most often defends the ability of the human being to make moral consumer decisions in the face of temptation to act otherwise. The problem with the consumerist ideology in the West, in his critique, is not that people cannot make moral decisions but rather that they can, but choose to fulfill more trivial desires instead. In short, Western culture inculcates the idea that a person's main preoccupation might rightly be limited to market interactions and the fulfillment of material desires.[40]

Solzhenitsyn's writing emphasized the autonomy of the human person to choose morality or immorality within the world he or she lives, echoing those who think about consumerism as idolatry. Solzhenitsyn understood that human beings were made with the capacity for both good and evil. In perhaps the most famous line in his major work, *The Gulag Archipelago*,[41] he writes that "the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart—and through all human hearts."[42]

Solzhenitsyn consistently argued that in order for an individual to overcome a consumerist ideology and turn toward God, he or she must actively choose a different way of life. His critique closely parallels the literature about consumerism as a form of idolatry, and those social scientific accounts that emphasize human agency and moral responsibility. A vision that assumes the worst parts of modern consumerism are all due to elements of the economic system reduces the real responsibility that individuals have to make moral choices. Similarly, accounts of economic behavior that assume all excesses are "natural," or rational, similarly side-steps the question of whether these choices are moral. Solzhenitsyn points to deep cultural problems while retaining the emphasis on moral responsibility, and, thus, leaving open hope for real individual and institutional progress. In doing so, he illustrates the importance of a Christian anthropology that holds together the recognition of pervasive sin and also the possibility of redemption.

Solzhenitsyn was also, however, a keen observer of culture. The emphasis that he placed on individual moral choice did not dampen his clear argument that there were larger cultural forces at work. This is evident in his critiques of the conflation of moral and legal obligations and his condemnation of the media's role in undermining the moral character of the culture. What his thought exhibits is a focus on a moral individual situated in a particular moral culture. This stands in stark contrast to modern economic arguments that think about humans as rational individuals situated in an economic/social/technological context. The former centers on humanity's moral purpose, the latter seeks only to describe amoral behavior. As such, Solzhenitsyn is more attuned to the metaphysical roots of human culture, and more attentive to the importance of art and literature as places where culture is shaped and connected to ultimate reality.

Solzhenitsyn's Economic Thought

While he does not write about economics in the conventional manner, the critique of a consumerist materialism that animates Solzhenitsyn's work is also inspired by a particular vision of economic life. His concern about the amorality that permeates public life in the West extended to a similar concern about economic systems. Economic growth, technological progress, and commerce (for its own sake) all appear, to Solzhenitsyn, to be giant distractions from the more fundamental moral goals of society. As such, he argues for economic stability rather than growth, and for a set of moral criteria to drive economic decision-making. Unlike some of his contemporaries that criticized Western market economies, however, he also praises the economic freedom that characterizes Western economies and was a harsh critic of socialism.

One of the few places where Solzhenitsyn engages in some direct advocacy of something close to public policy is in his "Letter to the Soviet Leaders,"[43] where he outlines a vision for the reform of the Soviet Union. It becomes immediately clear that he does not favor a wholesale rejection of Communism in favor of Western Capitalism. Instead, he argued that the Soviet leaders should reject the vision of economic progress that drives the West (and likely characterized Soviet goals at that time): "What must be implemented is not a 'steadily expanding economy' but a *zero-growth economy*, a stable economy. *Economic growth is not only unnecessary but ruinous.* We must set ourselves the aim not of *increasing* national resources, but merely of *conserving* them. We must renounce, as a matter of urgency, the contemporary gigantism syndrome—in industry, in agriculture, and in urban development (the cities of today are cancerous tumors)."[44]

Clearly, the material progress that accompanied modern economies was not his main concern.[45] In making this argument, Solzhenitsyn distinguishes himself from many critics of communism by rejecting the argument for the superiority of market growth in production of goods and services. Even among market critics in the disciplines of theology or philosophy, it is not unusual to find an acknowledgement that, materially, markets make us better off, and then argue for some alternative to market economies based on other, usually moral, criteria.[46] Solzhenitsyn, a supporter of markets and democracy and a critic of communism, follows the pattern of the other scholars from the humanities in focusing on moral, rather than purely material, concerns.

This kind of argument does not mean that Solzhenitsyn thought that communism and capitalism were equally bad. His objections to communism are famously embedded into his literature. For Solzhenitsyn, the Communist system is "anti-humanity."[47] In addition to the horrific accounts of the consequences of Communism that implicitly inform his short stories and novels, Solzhenitsyn also believed Communism to be based on a crude and dangerous anthropology, particularly because of its materialism: "[the] whole created being—man—is reduced to matter."[48] While he also critiques Western Capitalism along similar anthropological lines, his condemnation of Communism and Socialism is importantly different because he believes Communism is utterly dependent on this anthropological reduction of the human being.[49] In other words, Western Capitalism is not an ideology that requires a commitment to this materialistic view of humanity (though it does not prevent such ideologies from developing), whereas Marxist communism has this deformed anthropology at its foundation.

Economics and Consumption as a Moral Enterprise

It is common for contemporary economists to imagine the work of economics as a technocratic, morally neutral enterprise, even if this approach has been criticized.[50] In introductory economics textbooks, students are taught to separate the "positive" elements of economic work, which ostensibly includes the modeling, predictions, and data analysis, from the "normative" elements, which would include policy priorities, conceptions of justice, and visions of progress. While this separation need not have the effect of pushing moral priorities out of economic analysis, in practice it usually does. Halteman and Noell, for example, describe the way the practice of economics has moved away from moral philosophy since the nineteenth century, particularly as the discipline embraced formal mathematical methods.[51] This move in the economics discipline was accompanied by a positivist and materialist move across the social sciences and in public discourse. Traditional language about character, moral obligations, and courage became less common. This is the cultural move Solzhenitsyn critiques so strongly, and so it is no surprise that his economic thinking would also exhibit different priorities.

There is a long tradition of scholars insisting that economies ought to be judged on ethical criteria, not unlike what Solzhenitsyn suggests.[52] Solzhenitsyn brings an important new dimension to this literature, however, in emphasizing the way in which the arguably "neutral" priorities of economics, such as growth, efficiency, and production can crowd out our ability to pursue more important moral goals. His main concern, after all, is with the character of a people, as judged by their ability to courageously fulfill their moral obligations. He critiqued Western businesses for doing business with the Soviet government, implying that the businessmen lacked the character necessary to put matters of principle ahead of material gain.[53] If his instincts are correct, then it is not enough to integrate moral and practical concerns in economics, we ought to actively work to prioritize the former over the latter.

The priorities that animate Solzhenitsyn's economics are varied, but they include a respect for Christian tradition, a moral obligation to consider the needs of others, and a love of individual freedom. He consistently framed individual liberty as background for the expression of principled action. His economic thought, then, can be summarized as an utter rejection of materialism, either the Marxist variety or the consumerist variety he encountered in the West. Economic action, in his way of thinking, was one more opportunity to courageously pursue moral ends.

Conclusion

Solzhenitsyn's critique of Western consumerism is animated by a deep concern for moral action and a Christian anthropology. His parallel writing about Western affluence and Communist dictatorships emphasizes the overarching importance of grounding Christian social thought in a rich account of the purpose and end of humanity. He saw this foundation consistently undermined by secular practices in law, media, and the economy. For Solzhenitsyn, this creeping materialism raised substantial concerns. While his work is not systematic or technical, this research should make clear that his thinking is valuable.

If economic thought and practice is going to resist this materialism, Solzhenitsyn's work suggests at least three areas of focus. First, Solzhenitsyn draws a clear line from secularism to materialism to moral weakness. Even if scholars do not embrace his whole narrative, the connection between the penumbra of concerns raised about consumerism and the amorality of economic and public life ought to be the subject of strict critique. Second, the common areas of critique between Western and Eastern materialism should make academics suspicious of easy right-left dichotomies. Solzhenitsyn's perspective was valuable for being able to see parallel versions of materialism advancing in each place. Finally, his work always balanced a strong appreciation for freedom and conscience with a critique of the broad thrust of the dominant culture. This allows Solzhenitsyn to level strong critiques without leaning on the use of state power to bring about his preferred state of the world. This suggests a role for the study of economic culture, perhaps as a complement to the study of economic policy and business practice.

Notes

1. Campbell's account of a hedonistic cultural-economic movement has been very influential. See Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism: New Extended Edition*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

2. See Craig M. Gay, *The Way of the (Modern) World: Or, Why It's Tempting to Live as If God Doesn't Exist* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Victor V. Claar and Greg Forster, *The Keynesian Revolution and Our Empty Economy: We're All Dead* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

3. This account of consumerism as a culture with behavioral, institutional, and ideological components leaves a lot of ambiguity and flexibility. Our purpose is not to make an argument defending this conception of consumerism, however, but only to recognize its prevalence in the scholarly literature and connect it to Solzhenitsyn's thinking.

4. Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2009), xiii.

5. See Rebecca DeYoung, *Glittering Vices: A New Look at the Seven Deadly Sins and Their Remedies* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009).

6. See the chapters on envy, vainglory, avarice, and gluttony in DeYoung, *Glittering Vices.*

7. See Edd Noell, "Capitalism and Consumerism: Delighting in Both Creation and the Responsibilities of Affluence" in *Counting the Cost: Christian Perspectives on Capitalism*, ed. Art Lindsley and Anne Bradley (Abilene: ACU Press, 2017) 241–75.

8. See Noell, "Capitalism and Consumerism," 245–46.

9. See Juliet Schor, *The Overspent American: Why We Want What We Don't Need* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1999).

10. See Robert H. Frank, "The Demand for Unobservable and Other Nonpositional Goods," *The American Economic Review* 75, no. 1 (1985): 101–16. See also, idem, "Positional Externalities Cause Large and Preventable Welfare Losses," *The American Economic Review* 95, no. 2 (May 1, 2005): 137–41.

11. See Ronald Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity*, 5th ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005).

12. See Rodney Clapp, "Why the Devil Takes Visa: A Christian Response to the Triumph of Consumerism," *Christianity Today*, October 7, 1996; John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, 40th Anniversary ed. (Boston: Mariner Books, 1998); James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016).

13. See James Livingston, *Against Thrift: Why Consumer Culture Is Good for the Economy, the Environment, and Your Soul* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).
14. See Monle Lee, Anurag Pant, and Abbas Ali, "Does the Individualist Consume More? The Interplay of Ethics and Beliefs that Governs Consumerism Across Cultures," *Journal of Business Ethics* 93, no. 4 (June 2010): 567–81.
15. See John Schneider, *The Good of Affluence: Seeking God in a Culture of Wealth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).
16. See Edd Noell, "Capitalism and Consumerism: Delighting in Both Creation and the Responsibilities of Affluence."
17. See Jay Richards, *Money, Greed, and God* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010).
18. See Ian Harper and Eric Jones, "Treating 'Affluenza': The Moral Challenge of Affluence" in *Christian Theology and Market Economics*, ed. Ian Harper and Samuel Gregg (Northampton, MA; Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2008), 146–63.
19. See Richards, *Money, Greed, and God*, chap. 5: "Isn't Capitalism Based on Greed?"
20. Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, "Godlessness: The First Step to the Gulag" (Templeton Prize Acceptance Speech, London, England, May 10, 1983).
21. Solzhenitsyn, "Godlessness."
22. Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976), 130–31.
23. Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart" (1975), in idem, *East and West* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 65.
24. Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West*, 45.
25. Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart," 47.
26. Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart," 48.
27. See Solzhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and *The Gulag Archipelago*.
28. Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart," 53.
29. Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, "Nobel Lecture on Literature" (1970), in idem, *East and West*, 20.
30. See Solzhenitsyn, "Nobel Lecture," 20.
31. Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West*, 136.
32. Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West*, 145-146.

33. Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart," 46.
34. Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart," 46.
35. Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West*, 73.
36. Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West*, 126.
37. Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West*, 24.
38. Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart," 58.
39. See James B. Twitchell, *Lead Us into Temptation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); James Livingston, *Against Thrift: Why Consumer Culture Is Good for the Economy, the Environment, and Your Soul* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).
40. See Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart," 46.
41. See Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, III–IV, (New York: Harper & Row, 1974–1978).
42. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, III–IV, 615.
43. Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, "Letter to the Soviet Leaders" (1973), in *East and West*.
44. Solzhenitsyn, "Letter to the Soviet Leaders," 96.
45. This concern for preserving a stable or steady-state economy is hardly unique to Solzhenitsyn. A number of environmental advocates have pursued the same goal. See, e.g., Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, *For The Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994); Tim Jackson, *Prosperity without Growth: Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow*, 2nd ed. (New York; London: Routledge, 2016).
46. See James K. A. Smith, "The 'Ecclesial' Critique of Globalization: Rethinking the Questions," *Faith & Economics* 56 (2010): 6; Daniel Bell, *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 29.
47. Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West*, 59.
48. Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West*, 57.
49. See Solzhenitsyn, "Godlessness."
50. See Milton Friedman, *Essays in Positive Economics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 3–16; Andrew Yuengert, *The Boundaries of Technique: Ordering Positive and Normative Concerns in Economic Research* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004).

51. See James Halteman and Edd S. Noell, *Reckoning with Markets: The Role of Moral Reflection in Economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

52. See Bell, *The Economy of Desire*, 27; Steven McMullen, "Objectivity and Ethics in Economic Methodology: Dialogue with Theologians," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 31 (2019): 73–92.

53. See Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West*, 11.