Jason F. Brennan and Peter Jaworski. *Markets Without Limits: Moral Virtues and Commercial Interests*. Routledge 2016. 240 pp. $140.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780415737340); $39.95 USD (Paperback ISBN 9780415737357).

Anti-commodification Theorists (ACTs) hold that 'there are some things that people are normally allowed to own or possess in some way, but which should not be for sale' (15). In this eminently accessible text, Brennan and Jaworski aim to refute ACTs. Their fundamental thesis is that 'if it is permissible to do X for free, then you may do X for money' (16).

Following the authors' general divisions, the ACTs' objections come in three orders. First, semiotic objections hold that some 'markets can express or communicate certain negative attitudes, or is incompatible with holding certain positive attitudes' (21). Second, corruption objections hold that participating 'in certain markets might tend to cause us to develop defective preferences or character traits' (21). The third sort of objection is broader, though one might tie the objection to issues of justice in outcome and transfer. These objections worry that some markets will either misallocate goods and services or allocate those goods through irrational and/or exploitative means. Thus, goods might not end up where they should and they might end up being held through problematic means.

There are different species of each of the three aforementioned orders. The semiotic objection, for example, might hold that markets make people wrongly treat certain things as mere commodities, or signal disrespect for certain things, or change the nature of a valuable relationship (49). The critical dialectic point is that each order identifies some unacceptable condition to be a necessary result of some kind of market (51). So for some good or service g that it is permissible to have or give away for free, if g is commodified C, then some prohibition-generating condition P will occur (Cg -> Pg).

This formulation of the ACT's argument is the key to understanding the structure of Brennan and Jaworski's arguments. As they observe, they need to find just one means of tinkering with the market that does not yield the prohibition-generating condition in order to overcome the ACTs' arguments (39). Finding the right market configuration would show that P is not actually a necessary condition for the commodification of the good in question. Of course, Brennan and Jaworski want to show that, in fact, most 'markets could be "fixed" rather easily' (41, scare quotes original). They go on to defend the moral permissibility of selling goods and service that might give pause even to friends of the market. They defend the permissibility of selling sex, organs, votes, surrogacy, blood, education, among other things.

The rebuttal of semiotic objections is perhaps the most important part of the discussion. This is because it is tempting to take some semiotic objections as the result of conceptual analysis. Accordingly, one might think that these objections are immune to empirical testing. So when Michael Sandel claims that by giving money instead of non-monetary gifts, one communicates a lack of concern, one might think that the lack of concern follows from conceptual truths about gifts and money (63). Perhaps the serial gift card givers among us are guilty both of not knowing that our gifts signal a lack of concern and of offending our friends and loved ones.

One of the great merits of this text is its engagement with empirical research to test the objections pressed by opponents of the market. Brennan and Jaworski warn against taking semiotic objections as purely a priori (68). There are several reasons for this. First, one must not define the relevant concepts in such a way that the ACT's conclusion follows directly from those definitions (52). Brennan and Jaworski focus on refraining from helpfully redefining 'commodity' so as to make it true by definition that commodification is impermissible. The same is true of 'gift,' 'money,' and other terms relevant to the debate.

Second, contra Sandel and others, the meaning of money and exchange is a contingent social construct (62-68). The authors comb through the literature from the social sciences to show that monetary gifts do not necessarily signal a lack of respect. In some cultures, it is quite the opposite (63). Indeed, 'in the 1870s-1930s United States, monetary gifts were seen as *especially* thoughtful' (64). And, there are many cultures in which money is used to signal respect in ways that might shock many of us. For example, paying one's wife for sex is regarded as means of showing respect by the Merina people in Madagascar (65).

The first two points deny that any particular semiotic conclusion necessarily follows from the commodification of a particular good. The third holds that even if some particular meaning is contingently attached to a specific good, we should keep in mind that there is a cost associated with meaning (68). 'We should subject our semiotics to a kind of cost benefit analysis, and drop semiotics that fail this analysis' (69). If we discover that the meaning we attach to certain practices causes avoidable harms, we should revise our interpretation of those practices (69). We should take neither semiotics (69) nor our repugnance at certain actions or practices for granted (209-23). Brennan and Jaworski offer empirical evidence to show that semiotic objections are misguided, both in their assertions that some markets necessarily signal disrespect, and in their move from X signaling disrespect to X being impermissible.

The middle of the text focuses on corruption objections. Like the section on commodification, it warns against treating corruption objections as a priori arguments. These arguments are susceptible to empirical investigation. Nonetheless, Brennan and Jaworski challenge corruption objections on conceptual grounds. They observe that it is conceptually possible to participate in what looks like a bad market without immoral preferences. One can bet that a terrorist attack will occur, for example, while not hoping that the attack occurs (120-23). After all, doctors routinely predict that bad things will happen. Indeed, their prestige hinges on their accuracy. Yet, doctors presumably do not hope that bad things will happen (121-22).

Beyond this, we can test whether markets corrupt people. The results suggest that markets do not. In fact, people's exposure to market transactions seems to be the best predictor of whether people are motivated by concerns of fairness (97). This portion of the text requires a close reading. Sometimes the authors aim to show that markets do not produce the negative result that ACTs claim. This is what they attempt in their discussion of betting on terrorist attacks. Similarly, paying people for blood seems to have little impact on whether people give it or not (134). So, again, commodification does not necessarily lead to the condition ACTs claim.

At other times, the authors seek to show that when markets corrupt, the result is entirely a matter of framing. Paying students for grades, for example, might slightly diminish intrinsic motivation, but only when the reward is perceived as a means of control. If the student regards the reward as payment for competence, the intrinsic motivation seems to remain (108-9). So commodifying grades does not *necessarily* lead to a decrease in intrinsic motivation. Of course, for students who lack intrinsic motivation, commodifying grades can increase extrinsic motivation (118).

The authors address justice objections in a piecemeal fashion. First, they observe that markets are not *inherently* exploitative (148-56). The defenses of paternalism they consider are not objections to commodification, but to possession. As such, they are not objections to the thesis the authors defend (149). Misallocation objections overshoot their mark. The fact that a market might misallocate a good does not mean that the good should not be sold, but at best that there are reasons to monitor the general market to see that the misallocations do not occur (150).

Insofar as there might be lacunas in the primary argument, it is far from clear that the authors make their case against selling revenge porn. The authors claim that such pornography is stolen, but this is not a necessary trait of such pornography. Courts have returned mixed results about the sale of this kind of pornography. So, if one is opposed to selling such pornography, there is at least one counterexample to their thesis.

The other issue is that the authors do not always offer logically identical formulations of their thesis. At the onset, identify their thesis as ‘if it is permissible to do X for free, then you may do X for money’ (16). However, they later fudge this a bit by saying ‘Our thesis in this book is that if you can give something to someone, then you can normally sell it to that person’ (29). The ‘normally’ here might exclude cases that the unqualified statement of the thesis does not.

Despite these minor problems, this text contains important conceptual and empirical arguments that one must confront in order to have an informed view of what effect markets do and do not have on people. In this regard, the text ends with an explanation of how ACTs might prove the authors wrong (224-25). Those who wish to take up that challenge must track and overcome the many arguments packed into this book. The text is thus a necessary read for both friends and foes of markets.

Lamont Rodgers, Houston Community College