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24. "A market economy offers people no more than a crass, materialistic life."

What market economies offer are choices and opportunities. They allow people to acquire the wealth that brings new things within reach. In some cases these will indeed be material things. If a person can become sufficiently well off to afford decent housing, enough to eat, adequate clothing and shoes, these are all better than their absence.

But a market economy brings more. It allows people to buy the things that make life more rewarding. They can enjoy music, communicate more readily with each other, travel to places previously out of reach. These, too, are the result of material things. They do not represent a crass materialism, however, because they give the chance to improve life's social interactions and its mind-broadening opportunities. It might take material objects to enjoy music and to visit exotic places, but a person with access to them does not lead a crass life in consequence.

Even beyond the personal possessions that can add to life's experiences, the wealth created by a market economy enables people to afford better services such as health and education. It enables them to enrich their surroundings with fine architecture. Better education opens doors to life's opportunities, and good health brings the possibility of activities such as sports and hobbies. They require material goods to become possible, but the opportunities they offer are far from materialistic.

Wealth is a tool. It enables the holder to trade it for the things they value. Some might indeed use it to acquire more possessions; it is their choice. For others it might be for enjoyment of the arts, the theatre and the concert hall. Some might seek satisfaction in beautiful objects such as antiques or works of art. The wealth created by economic growth gives access to all of these, and it allows us to express our personality by the choices we make.

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