

Externalities, Freedoms, & Consequences

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Bad Mutha Booboisie Books

PDF



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Purpose, Scope, & Intended Audience

“You know where it ends,
Yo, it usually depends
On where you start”¹

This work grew from a handful of research projects that I have conducted over the last decade. I have attempted to write accessibly so that anyone can read this work and understand what I am saying, so that readers making free choices can build on these ideas. In order to be accessible, examples are used to illustrate the abstract ideas. Most of my life experience has occurred in the United States, so the US is the focus of most of the examples included herein. Following the idea that «*le mieux est l'ennemi du bien*,»² I am publishing this work now; I doubt I will ever be fully satisfied with the level of completeness, but publishing this much is (hopefully)

1 Everlast. 1998. “What It's Like.” 3:06 - 3:10.

2 “The best is the enemy of the good.”

Voltaire. 2010 January 13 reprint. (1772). «La Bégueule.»

better than publishing none at all.

This work is not intended to be comprehensive. Rather, this work is intended to be a quick guide to some disparate but fundamentally interconnected lines of thought and research. My hope is that the combined resources (*viz.*, time and money) of interested and motivated readers will be able to follow these threads and accelerate the intertwining.

I have attempted to avoid confirmation bias in this research. I started this research a decade ago with a thesis that modern piracy is more of a socioeconomic strain than historical piracy, and that pirates should be given more severe deterrents. The thesis of this work is that tension in the three-way relationship between the Internet, our current economic system, and democracy needs to be resolved by making changes in this complicated system. The thesis evolved with the project. Again, this work is intended to be provocative, and I hope to be meaningfully challenged by knowledgeable people who disagree with my arguments or who know something that I do not know.

This work is intended to be shared freely, expanded freely, updated freely, and modified freely, with the simple restriction that attribution must be given to sources. In the final year of researching for this work, I made an effort to only include widely available resources. Many of the sources referenced here should be available freely online, in a public library, or inexpensively at a bookstore. However, I have not excluded sources made available to me during my years at the University of Evansville, American University, and Indiana University. I apologize that these resources may not be available to

the casual reader. I hope that this work provides some impetus to make these and other similar resources available.

Introduction

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence [sic], promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”³

The United States' founders had the foresight to clearly articulate the ideals their new country's government would strive for: justice, domestic tranquility, common defense, general welfare, liberty for the present and the future. Modern economics was forming concurrently with the United States: Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* and the United States Declaration of Independence were both published in 1776. Smith began his introduction,

The annual labour of every nation is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessaries and conveniencies [sic] of life which it annually consumes, and which consist always either in the immediate produce of that labour, or in what is purchased with that produce from other nations.⁴

Like the convention-goers in America, Smith

3 United States Constitutional Convention. 1787 September 17. *The Constitution of the United States of America*.

4 Adam Smith. 2011 June 5 reprint. (1776). *Wealth of Nations*. Kindle locations 57-59.

articulated the aims of his opus in his introduction: to explain “the causes of . . . improvement in the productive powers of labour, and the order according to which its produce is naturally distributed among the different ranks and conditions of men in the society,”⁵ “the nature of capital stock, of the manner in which it is gradually accumulated, and of the different quantities of labour which it puts into motion, according to the different ways in which it is employed,”⁶ “the circumstances which seem to have introduced and established . . . the policy . . . more favourable to arts, manufactures, and commerce, the industry of towns, than to agriculture, the Industry of the country,”⁷ “those different plans [which] were, perhaps, first introduced by the private interests and prejudices of particular orders of men, without any regard to, or foresight of, their consequences upon the general welfare of the society; yet . . . have given occasion to very different theories of political economy; of which some magnify the importance of that industry which is carried on in towns, others of that which is carried on in the country,”⁸ and “the nature . . . of the revenue of the sovereign, or commonwealth.”⁹ These works and their ideals still stand today while most comparable works have fallen, at least partly due to their clarity and accuracy.

5 Adam Smith. 2011 June 5 reprint. (1776). *Wealth of Nations*. Kindle locations 74-75.

6 Adam Smith. 2011 June 5 reprint. (1776). *Wealth of Nations*. Kindle locations 80-81.

7 Adam Smith. 2011 June 5 reprint. (1776). *Wealth of Nations*. Kindle locations 85-86.

8 Adam Smith. 2011 June 5 reprint. (1776). *Wealth of Nations*. Kindle locations 87-90.

9 Adam Smith. 2011 June 5 reprint. (1776). *Wealth of Nations*. Kindle locations 93-94.

The early 21st century is much different from the late 18th century. The astounding philosophical work of the aforementioned thinkers is still justifiably foundational to our society, but this foundation is insufficient. We have updated the United States Constitution with 27 amendments, and economics has evolved into a robust (if “dismal”¹⁰) science. The Industrial Revolution was happening as these foundations were being developed, but the world has since changed in ways that were, at that time, unimaginable.

Over the past few hundred years, public welfare was replaced by self-care and working classes were constrained to fund their private welfare through private debt, while calibrating their conduct with the demands of precarious labor markets. Debt, no longer a private choice but a structural imperative, became an instrument of control and discipline.¹¹

Automobiles, which alter many aspects of social and economic life, have become so ubiquitous that they are necessities in places. Telephones, which also alter the social and economic fabric of the world, also gained ubiquity. More recently, the rise of digital technologies, including the Internet, fundamentally altered the realities of communication and commerce. These (and other) widespread technological changes in the world could not have been anticipated by 18th century thinkers.

10 We know not whom. In Phelim M'Quirk. 1849. “Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question.” p. 673.

11 Tayyab Mahmud. 2012-2013. “Debt and Discipline: Neoliberal Political Economy and the Working Classes.” p. 5.

Thesis

“We have created new idols. The worship of the golden calf of old has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money and the dictatorship of an economy which is faceless and lacking any truly humane goal.”¹²

A tension exists in the three-way relationship between democracy, consumer capitalism, and free communication. Democracy pulls toward the populous, majority rule without violating the rights of the minority, and equality in the eyes of the law. Consumer capitalism pulls toward existing concentrations of relatively scarce resources, zero-sum calculations, and manufactured needs. Free communication pulls toward dissenting viewpoints, changing the status quo, and away from censorship. All three social forces are abstractions that we impose on ourselves, and the tension between these social forces is unsustainable.

We have inclinations that may or may not be in our best interests as we find ways to relieve the tension in our current system. The socioeconomic structure that we currently participate in is different from the socioeconomic structure we used a decade ago; our societies and economics are fluid and everchanging. We collectively have the ability and responsibility to ensure that the structures change in ways that we want them to.

The goals laid out in the Preamble to the United States Constitution can never be fully attained, but these goals can be better approximated than they are or ever have been. However, these goals cannot be

12 Pope Francis in Philip Pulella. 2013. “Pope rails against 'dictatorship of the economy', urges reform.”

better approximated in the current economic and legal landscape. We have to decide what we most value, because we are at a point in history where some of our long-held social and economic practices are unavoidably changing. We have the ability to direct which ideals are focal in the emerging social and economic landscapes. We have to decide if we want to make any changes to the list of justice, domestic tranquility, common defense, general welfare, and liberty for the present and the future.

Temporal-Discounting

“You know who I think could handle a problem like that?”

'Who?'

'Future Ted and Future Marshall.'

'Totally. Let's let those guys handle it.'"¹³

In a caption for a pair of figures comparing temporal-discounting and risk-taking, Vladas Griskevicius et al. explain, “Preferences for immediate rewards and risky gambles constitute a faster life-history strategy, whereas preferences for delayed rewards and safe choices constitute a slower life-history strategy.”¹⁴ People tend to be risk-averse, preferring the tolerable to the gamble of improvement at the risk of decreased tolerability. People would rather improve or maintain the here-and-now than their respective future. The term 'temporal-

13 Ted Mosby & Marshall Eriksen. In Carter Bays, Craig Thomas (creators), Gloria Calderon Kellett (writer), & Pamela Fryman (director). 2005 November 14. “The Duel.” 4:03 - 4:15.

14 Vladas Griskevicius et al. 2013 February. “When the Economy Falter, Do People Spend or Save? Responses to Resource Scarcity Depend on Childhood Environments.” p. 200.

discounting' refers to the reduction in value (the discount) of a desirable good or service over time relative to the present (the temporal).

Currencies tend to be less temporally discounted than consumables, possibly

because, unlike specific rewards, money retains its utility, despite the inconstancy of desire. When a delayed monetary reward is received, it may be exchanged for whatever is currently needed or desired. In contrast, the utility of a specific, nongeneralized reward may fluctuate. Of course, its utility may fluctuate either up or down. People are risk averse, however, and thus are likely to consider such a commodity to be worth less than one (i.e., money) whose utility does not fluctuate, even when both have the same mean utility.¹⁵

Although currency is exchangeable for consumables, often at a (relatively) fixed price, these types of assets are fundamentally different. We humans are notoriously bad at making sacrifices in the here-and-now to improve our futures, and that trait is amplified when secondary commodities like currency are involved.

Currencies themselves are more complex than we tend to consider when making day-to-day decisions. Although “money retains its

15 Sara J. Estle, Leonard Green, Joel Myerson, & Daniel D. Holt. 2007 January. “Discounting of Monetary and Directly Consumable Rewards.” p. 62.

utility” to an extent, “\$100 today is worth a lot more, thanks to time value of money and the pressures of inflation, than \$100 a year from now.”¹⁶ A considerable segment of our current economy relies on the time value of money. When someone borrows money, (s)he does so because the present value of that money is worth at least as much as that same amount of money's future value plus interest and fees. That difference in value is the margin on which financial institutions rely.

When a financial institution makes a loan, the funds loaned out are added to the “money supply” or M3, which double-counts those funds as an operationalization of the time value of the money lent versus the time value of that same money being saved in the financial institution's reserves.¹⁷ The idea of institutions too-big-to-fail is that those institutions have supplied such a high volume of this operationalized currency into the economy that an unacceptable number of depositors would lose an unacceptable amount of their initial capital in the event of liquidating that institution's assets.

Preferential bias for the present over the future is part of human nature, and speculative abstractions are an extension of this inclination. This structural element in our economy is a useful operationalization: incentive to lend encourages the flow of resources. The danger of this operationalization

16 Zach Cato, personal correspondence, 2013 April 11.

17 Niall Ferguson. 2008. *The Ascent of Money*. pp. 49-52.

is illustrated by so-called too-big-to-fail institutions and their unhealthily large presence in the very core of our economy. In public policy, “one of the best-known problems is the dominance of short-term perspectives and the obsession with short-term profits, often at the expense of the build-up of long-term value.”¹⁸ We must be cognizant of our present bias to avoid allowing others armed with this knowledge to take advantage of us when given the opportunity.

Free Markets

- “1. If you work hard, and become successful, it does not necessarily mean you are successful because you worked hard, just as if you are tall with long hair it doesn't mean you would be a midget if you were bald.
2. 'Fortune' is a word for having a lot of money and for having a lot of luck, but that does not mean the word has two definitions.”¹⁹

Markets are intended to measure and control the value and costs of goods and services. Competitive markets for non-essential goods serve this function remarkably well. “In 1904 . . . Elizabeth Magie . . . patented a board game[, *The Landlord's Game*, the immediate precursor to *Monopoly*,] . . . to educate people”²⁰ about the inadequacy of markets. The game illustrates the economic truth that markets favor parties who begin transactions with greater resources. Iterative market transactions tend to

18 Al Gore. 2013. *The Future*. p. 35.

19 Lemony Snicket. 2011. “by Lemony Snicket.”

20 Michelle Philippe. In Rico Gagliano et al. 2012 February 10. “A History Lesson With Booze: The Monopoly Passes Go and the 'Boardwalk Fizz'.”

exacerbate wealth disparities.

In the real world, the economics illustrated in *The Landlord's Game* and *Monopoly* are apparent by the fact that “if millionaires were a political party... they would have a supermajority in the U.S. Senate, a majority in the House, 5-4 on the Supreme Court, and a man in the White House.”²¹ Public decisions, as directed by markets, favor the needs and desires of the already affluent at the expense of the destitute, predictably and consistently.

Markets have limitations regarding “noneconomic dimensions[,] and . . . equality depends on access to *specific* goods, such as education, health care, and employment.”²² Equality in opportunity to access these specific goods is a necessity for a functioning democracy. Opportunity to access some other specific goods, such as security and democratic participation, is also necessary for a functioning democracy. In the United States, each sector of these five specific goods is controlled to some degree publicly and some degree by private markets.

Each of these specific goods has noneconomic value that cannot adequately be quantified into a price. Markets alone are insufficient to provide the support necessary for us to “always stand firm for the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity; the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance.”²³ Excessive reliance on

21 Nick Carnes. In Kai Ryssdal. 2013 May 9. “If millionaires formed a political party, they’d have a lock on government.”

22 Debra Satz. 2010. *Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale: The Moral Limits of Markets*. p. 17.

23 George W. Bush. 2002. “Address Before a Joint Session of

markets to provide these nonnegotiable necessities conflates value with price and harms democracy. For much of the history of the United States, this conflation was a necessary evil. With the current state and rate of advancement in communications technologies, this evil conflation is surely no longer necessary.

These specific goods on which egalitarianism depends “should be . . . larger and more pervasive than *any* form of economy installed.”²⁴ The right to vote in the United States has tended to be implemented in a way that is agnostic of the economy, but even this basic right has been subject to economic oversight. The United States government once counted 3/5 of each slave in the census of the represented population, meaning that for every 5 slaves owned in a represented area, the free population was over-represented by 3 people. Slave-owning areas therefore had a disproportionately high level of representation compared to non-slave-owning areas.

While votes are not legally directly subject to the economy, the idea that our economy does not manipulate voting rights is a naïve idea. Chicago, Illinois is infamous for corrupt “Chicago-style” political machinations, and financial interests dictate that voters choose between only two viable parties in federal elections. The utility of the two-party system, specifically, or the party system, more broadly, is an example of an obsolete conflation of value and market prices. Prior to the Internet, political parties were a necessary shorthand for political candidates to

the Congress on the State of the Union.” p. 138.

24 Zach Cato, personal correspondence, 2013 April 11.

communicate a vague platform across a massive country to differentiate themselves from their opponents. Today, the task of finding out about specific candidates is perhaps easier than that task has ever been in any state in history. Yet each election the citizens of the United States of America elect either a Democrat or a Republican, with the other taking second place, and a handful of also-rans collect an insignificant number of votes. This predictable situation has much more to do with entrenched financial interests than with the merits of any political party or candidate.

With every essential good, such as education, healthcare, and employment, we now have the technological capacity to provide these without the intermediary of a market, but entrenched financial interests deter the political will. Nonessential goods can continue to be exchanged for prices even if we remove essential goods from the market. We can provide equal access to education opportunities to all citizens, including merit-based admission to higher-learning institutions. We can provide healthcare in a more equitable manner than we do (with or without the Affordable Care Act / Obamacare). We can sever the ties between employment and moneymaking, so that an internship or volunteer post is valued above lucrative financial speculation.

From the Industrial Revolution to the dawn of the Internet, income has been an imperfect but relatively adequate approximation for the value of a person's work. Of course, this approximates volunteerism and unpaid internships as worthless, which is clearly (usually) an undervaluation. More or less, though, (with some powerful exceptions beyond

the scope of this work) income has worked as a way to measure the relative value of a person's (or a company's) societal contributions. Changes unimaginable to early economists have taken place, however, which severely detract from income's ability to represent value.

We have simultaneously increased both the human population and technological efficiency to the point that the current wages-for-work model does not have adequate capacity for workers. In the United States' coal industry, “in the last quarter century, production has increased by 133 percent, even as jobs have decreased by 33 percent.”²⁵ The numbers vary by industry, but the trend is nearly constant. The world still has plenty of problems that could benefit from people working to solve them, but many of these problems have emerged with or since the Internet, and the current work-for-pay model is no longer a viable incentive-to-work machine.

Furthermore, many types of media and information can now be duplicated in perfect fidelity for negligible cost. The value of the media or information can be maintained while reducing its scarcity, which breaks the capitalist link between scarcity and value. This monumental change is explored in the following section; its effects on the ability of markets to regulate valuable employment are immeasurably severe. Tasks of supreme importance can be performed for relatively little cost, allowing relatively unimportant tasks to demand high prices by filling the cash-flow vacuum created by information and communication technologies.

25 Al Gore. 2013. *The Future*. p. 24.

Markets are powerful but imperfect. We are socially and technologically beyond the point where a market-for-everything solution makes sense. In some cases, such as voting rights in the United States, we have a working solution. While voting rights are sometimes violated, the system in which people vote is a beacon of egalitarianism. In other cases, such as healthcare and education, we are working towards solutions. The Affordable Care Act is a small step attempting to address the former, and innovative financing plans attempt to address the latter. For example in Oregon's "Pay it Forward, Pay it Back" plan, alumni fund future students through an education-exclusive pool rather than students funding themselves through private loans.²⁶ Both healthcare and education work by relying only partly on markets. Finding the correct alternatives and balances in these and other essential areas is imperative.

26 Douglas Belkin. 2013 July 3. "Oregon Explores Novel Way to Fund College."

Intellectual Property Rights

“It's called stealing or piracy, as if sharing a wealth of knowledge were the moral equivalent of plundering a ship and murdering its crew. But sharing isn't immoral — it's a moral imperative.”²⁷

Restricted Access

If a person has the means to pay for college tuition, (s)he will find a different set of available resources depending on the university (s)he chooses. “Academic journals' extraordinarily high costs, which,” like tuition, student attraction and retention costs, and grades,

are going through the roof faster than inflation, don't matter much to the rich American universities. But for the rest of the universities in the United States and around the world – universities that don't consider themselves rich – this is a significant cost. Indeed, around the world, even the nominal cost of getting access to these journals is prohibitive, blocking the spread of knowledge globally to people who could depend and build upon that knowledge if they had free and fair access to the knowledge.²⁸

A researcher need not look hard to find scholarly research that exists but is unavailable to him/her. Much scholarly research is available freely, and every university has *some* access to otherwise restricted scholarly research. However, the nature of scholarly

²⁷ Aaron Swartz. 2008 July. *Guerilla Open Access Manifesto*.

²⁸ Lawrence Lessig. 2010 March / April. “Getting Our Values around Copyright Right.” p. 31.

research is that each document is unique, even if a study repeats the methods of a previous study.

Differentiation

While the gist of two particular studies might be the same, the particulars of each study are certain to be distinct. When a publisher (or other entity) holds restrictive rights to a piece of intellectual property, like a journal article, that publisher has a monopoly over the specific information contained in that article, and

one of the things that distinguishes a monopoly from a small business in a competitive market is that while a competitive business has to sell at the price the market dictates, monopolies are so powerful they have a choice. They can fix either the price they want to sell at, or fix the quantity they sell.²⁹

Monopolies fix both price and quantity, particularly in intellectual property like scholarly works, where monopolies are guaranteed by the nature of the products. A recreation of a scholarly work will either have different particulars or will be an exact duplication; distributing the former is distributing a different product, and distributing the latter is a violation of copyright law. One, and only one, entity has the right to sell or give away that particular product. That entity has full control over both price and availability (within the bounds of the law).

Remuneration

Contrasted with “democratic political

29 Raj Patel. 2010. *The Value of Nothing*. p. 57.

systems . . . [which] make claims to legitimacy partly on the basis of their citizens' ability to seek and obtain reliable, credible information,"³⁰ free market consumer capitalism relies on citizens' *unequal ability* to seek and obtain reliable, credible information. While "equitable access to information is, in principle, a fundamental and necessary (though not sufficient) condition for effective personal achievement and social participation,"³¹ a free market consumer capitalist system needs information inequity in order to compensate the people who discover, create, record, and distribute information.

Today, technology affords easy dispersion of information and multimedia properties, and people are happy to perform these tasks without compensation, as evidenced by countless blogs, open source software communities, original music mixtapes, illegally and extralegally shared multimedia, and other intellectual properties with open or nonrestrictive licenses. Academia is struggling alongside journalism, the arts, and private research in determining how to fairly compensate intellectual property creators for their valuable efforts. On the one hand, "data sharing has scientific, public policy, and pedagogical value. . . . Greater openness leads to a better and a more cumulative science."³² On the other hand, some researchers would like "the opportunity to pursue these ideas [(their own intellectual properties)] without fear of competition

30 Leah A. Lievrouw & Sharon E. Farb. 2003. "Information and Equity." p. 504.

31 Leah A. Lievrouw & Sharon E. Farb. 2003. "Information and Equity." p. 504.

32 Mark A. Pitt & Yun Tang. 2013 January. "What Should Be the Data Sharing Policy of Cognitive Science?" p. 217.

from others.”³³ Competition, however, is key to real innovation. Financial compensation can promote evergreening³⁴, which is faux innovation, the repackaging of previous innovations as something new. If we intend to protect businesses from competition, we cannot pretend to have a functional market economy.

Information Equity

When people try to equalize information access, “we tell them they live life against the law, and they recognize that their behavior is against the law. That recognition is extraordinarily corrosive to the rule of law in a democracy.”³⁵ Indeed, these criminals are playing a kind of Robin Hood role, while distributors, playing the role of Prince John and holding the creators of informational works hostage for wages (and thus livelihood) cast the government in the role of the sheriff, maintaining Prince John's tyranny at all costs.

Information inequity is an unfortunate but unavoidable consequence of relying on market forces to distribute fundamentally non-competitive goods such as information, and “the recognition of asymmetric information tends to undermine the presumption that one can know what is immediately relevant to one's decision – something that the original champions of market-based efficiency had

33 Mark A. Pitt & Yun Tang. 2013 January. “What Should Be the Data Sharing Policy of Cognitive Science?” p. 218.

34 Mark Memmott. 2013 April 1. “Patent Ruling In India Could Boost Exports Of Cheap Medicine To Third World.”

35 Lawrence Lessig. 2010 March / April. “Getting Our Values around Copyright Right.” p. 42.

taken to be obvious.”³⁶ Information inequity decreases the effectiveness and efficiency of markets. Players with confidential information have an advantage over players lacking relevant information, and this power advantage can be used to secure even more power.

Crime

“Piracy, like murder, is one of the earliest of recorded human activities.”³⁷

The historical pirates were not necessarily in as much danger from the law as is generally portrayed. Often, a sailing looter could choose a government and fairly easily gain its support. This person would no longer be termed a *pirate*, but a *privateer*. For privateers, plundering, stealing, “attacking women[,] . . . and cheating”³⁸ were basically legal, “often under outright immunity from government officials . . . as long as [the privateers] agreed to ransack only enemy ships.”³⁹ Privateers were useful to governments because the ships could harm competing or enemy nations while simultaneously adding to the economy of the country for which the ship sailed. During World War II, the Axis powers hired some privateers. Some of these privateer “crews were so highly regarded by the German Navy that when word was received about the sinking of one . . . and the survival of most of the crew, six German U-boats and five Italian submarines abandoned all other

36 Amartya Sen. 2003. “Freedom: Procedures and Opportunities.” p. 13.

37 Philip Gosse. 1932. *The History of Piracy*. p. 1.

38 Philip Gosse. 1932. *The History of Piracy*. p. 8.

39 Erin Barrett & Jack Mingo. 2002. *Just Curious About History, Jeeves®*. p. 162.

operations to rescue” those privateers.⁴⁰ Sending eleven active ships to rescue one during a world war seems to indicate considerable importance of the people being rescued.

Historically, many pirates became outlaws simply because no legal option was viable. An eventual pirate “often couldn't find work anywhere else, so [(s)he] hopped aboard with other disreputables and [these pirates] set off to steal their income.”⁴¹ These thieves were largely just trying to make ends meet.

Apart from basic survivalism, piracy was also born of politics. Many pirates decided “to dissolve the political bands which have connected [the pirates] with [their respective governments], and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle [the pirates], a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that [the pirates] should declare . . . separation.”⁴² This passage from the United States Declaration of Independence is obviously taken out of context, yet the passage demonstrates a large similarity between the seemingly dissimilar rebels. Reasons and methods were similar for the pirate and the patriot: discontent fed violent separation.

With the dawn of intellectual property, a new

40 Duffy. 2001. *Hitler's Secret Pirate Fleet*. p. xiii.

41 Erin Barrett & Jack Mingo. 2002. *Just Curious About History, Jeeves®*. p. 161.

42 United States 2nd Continental Congress. 1776 July 4. *The Declaration of Independence. In Congress, July 4, 1776. The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.*

type of pirate emerged. Since piracy is easier now, more people pirate. Intellectual properties—stories, movies, songs, etc.—are intangible, thus much easier to pirate than tangible, material properties—jewels, coins, cars, etc. Because their income is based primarily on the sale of intangible goods,

the entertainment industries are particularly vulnerable to the theft of intellectual property. By the mere act of purchasing a legitimate product, a pirate has a master that can be used for starting up production. No other industry has such a naked vulnerability.⁴³

Although the incomes of most industries are based on the sale of services or tangible goods, both of which are more difficult to steal than ideas and concepts, most industries now rely heavily on intellectual property.

From a legal perspective, adequate laws to regulate distribution of intellectual material would be difficult to create or to enforce. For one thing, “there is not, and never has been, an authoritative definition of piracy in international law”.⁴⁴ Governments have had difficulties enforcing existing antipiracy laws, partly because of territorial issues and partly because “deviant subcultures are secretive by nature.”⁴⁵ As digital technology has advanced, the lines have

43 Paul R. Paradise. 1999. *Trademark Counterfeiting, Product Piracy, and the Billion Dollar Threat to the U.S. Economy*. p. 127.

44 Anne Pérotin-Dumon. 2001. “The Pirate and the Emperor.” p. 26.

45 Kenneth J. Kinkor. 2001. “Black Men Under the Black Flag.” p. 196.

blurred between legitimate sharing and piracy. The social perception of the deviance of intellectual piracy changes over place and time, and with this perception the level of secrecy varies.

Intellectual piracy may sometimes be a Robin Hood role, but often the losses are passed from the Prince Johns to the townspeople. A pirate who bootlegs films “where a movie ticket costs a day's pay”⁴⁶ is a different beast than a mere opportunist. Pirating a film “does affect the producers, but [the effects are miniscule] to the way [this piracy] affects [a set painter, or] the guy working on construction, [or] the lighting guy, [or] the sound guy, because [these workers are] not million-dollar employees.”⁴⁷ Four combinations exist between accessing a document⁴⁸ and paying for access. Hopefully a producer would rank customer behavior as ranked in this table:

	pay for access	do not pay for access
access	1	2
do not access	4	3

Table 1: Hypothetical intellectual property producer's preferable consumer behavior ranking.

A consumer would likely switch the top two rankings, but see the producer's ranking as equitable. However,

46 Ken Bensinger. 2003 December 17. “Film Companies Take to Mexico's Streets to Fight Piracy.” p. B1.

47 David Goldstein. In Patrick Goldstein (no relation). 2003 September 9. “Hollywood Deals with Piracy, a Wary Eye on CDs.” p. E1.

48 The word 'document' is used here broadly, to include all types of accessible intellectual properties.

current intellectual property laws tend to rank the possibilities as follows:

	pay for access	do not pay for access
access	1	4
do not access	1	3

Table 2: Intellectual property law's preferable consumer behavior ranking.

As long as the priorities of intellectual property laws are at odds with the priorities of both the producers and the consumers, enforcement of those laws will be difficult and politically troublesome.

Education

“The world's entire scientific and cultural heritage, published over centuries in books and journals, is increasingly being digitized and locked up by a handful of private corporations.”⁴⁹

In 1947, for a student from New York enrolling in college,

City College was free, and Michigan – then, as now, one of the top universities in the United States – was \$450 a year. 'And the thing was, after the first year, you could get a [full-tuition] scholarship [for successive years] if your grades were high.⁵⁰ . . . [At that] time in America, . . . if you were willing to work hard, you *could* take responsibility for yourself and

49 Aaron Swartz. 2008 July. *Guerilla Open Access Manifesto*.

50 Ted Friedman. In Malcolm Gladwell. 2008. *Outliers*. p. 136.

put yourself through school.⁵¹

Adjusting for inflation from 1947 to 2013, for a student from New York, a year at City College in 2013 should cost \$0 and a year at Michigan should cost \$4,684.96.⁵² In 2013, the minimum tuition (excluding fees) for a full-time undergraduate student from New York for 2 semesters at City College is \$5,430⁵³ and at Michigan is \$38,928.⁵⁴ The cost of tuition has clearly outpaced inflation.

In addition to fiscal inflation, grade inflation has been rapid. While grade inflation is influenced by a variety of factors and varies across institutions, a systemic pattern is evident. Instructors are pressured to keep students happy (enough to stay enrolled); the financial costs associated with attracting and maintaining students has also risen dramatically, and the education market demands a high graduation rate. To ensure a high graduation rate, standards must be lowered to a point at which a large majority of students in each class achieve a satisfactory grade.

Grades must be satisfactory to the paying stakeholders, whether those stakeholders are

51 Malcolm Gladwell. 2008. *Outliers*. pp. 136, 137.

52 US Inflation Calculator, <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com> .

53 Bursar, The City College of New York. No date. "Tuition & Fees Fall 2012."

54 University of Michigan Office of the Registrar. No date. "Tuition and Registration Fees: Effective Fall 2012- Spring/ Summer 2013."

students themselves or other financing entities, in order to encourage a continued business relationship. While this lowering of standards helps to ensure continued funding for schools and value-for-payment financiers, “such grade inflation benefits students of low ability . . . and hurts students from disadvantaged social backgrounds. Moreover, grade inflation may benefit students from favoured social origins because it devalues the good grades earned by aspiring lower class students.”⁵⁵ As educational institutions prioritize monetary income over demonstrated merit, each such institution erodes its own value.

An information-based power strategy is used in (and is arguably the primary objective of) police and military intelligence, but this strategy is also effective in maintaining a one-sided balance of information. Different schools and communities unarguably have different levels of access to information, but standardized tests are used for evaluation. Regardless of an individual's legal ability to acquire the knowledge and information needed to succeed on a standardized test, these tests “are gatekeepers to the benefits of first-class citizenship, . . . reproducing, as well as mitigating, inequality.”⁵⁶ The market amplifies differences that favor the information-rich and mutes differences that favor the information poor.

55 Robert Schwager. 2012. “Grade inflation, social background, and labour market matching.” p. 65.

56 Michael B. Katz. 2010. “Public Education as Welfare.” p. 56.

Advertising is resistant to cognitive defense and is more accessible than accurate information and scholarly research, but “what makes advertising so dangerous and powerful is that it is relentlessly concentrated on producing only one type of behavior, consumption, at the exclusion of all else.”⁵⁷ In our current economic system, we are educated to sacrifice our own well-being for the sake of that system.

Health

“And if medicine is for profit, and war, and the news, and the penal system, my question is: what's wrong with firemen? Why don't they charge? They must be commies. Oh my God! That explains the red trucks!”⁵⁸

Theoretically individuals have choices regarding the goods and services purchased, but in reality, the spectrum of choices covaries with resources already owned. 'Externalities' is the economics term for unintended consequences beyond the scope of a transaction. A frugal consumer would likely choose the lowest costing product that suits his/her need, after considering all of his/her requirements and disregarding the supply chain that brought that product to market. Along the supply chain, many costs, fiscal and otherwise, are hidden from the consumer. Externalities hidden from the consumer in the supply chain include the working conditions and wages in manufacturing and transit of the products, the amount of environmental pollution generated in

57 Lyle K. Grant. 2010. “Sustainability.” p. 29.

58 Bill Maher. 2009 July 23. “New Rule: Not Everything in America Has to Make a Profit.”

producing the products, and the opportunity costs of producing these products instead of others. These externalities are real costs and are often much greater than the monetary price attached to the products.

Literally and individually, “we grow fat by consuming more than we can use.”⁵⁹ Low-income Americans often rely on excesses of “convenient and inexpensive . . . sugary, salty, fatty foods [that] are not good for us in the quantities that we consume them”⁶⁰ because a balanced diet costs more time and more money. The truth of growing fat by excessive consumption applies at a global level as well, for “capitalist freedom to pollute and consume exhaustible resources has led to a deep threat to the global environment.”⁶¹ A causal link between excessive consumption and health problems is apparent at all levels of analysis.

While “the real value of something is not its ability to satisfy a craving, a desire, a vanity, but to meet the need for well-being,”⁶² our current economic system attempts to value all (or nearly all) things in a single, comparable metric: a currency. While various regional currencies exist that can change in price relative to one another, these variations cannot account for the fact that “what is good in one time and place may be bad in another time and place.”⁶³

59 Russell W. Belk. 2004. “The Human Consequences of Consumer Culture.” p. 80.

60 Michael Moss. 2013 February 20. “The Extraordinary Science of Addictive Junk Food.”

61 Peter Nolan. 2008. “Contradictions of capitalist globalization.” p. 129.

62 Raj Patel. 2010. *The Value of Nothing*. p. 174.

63 Russell W. Belk. 2004. “The Human Consequences of Consumer Culture.” p. 74.

The value of a thing will likely not change rapidly between good and bad poles, but that value will fluctuate along a spectrum across situations. On the same city block, a sandwich is much more valuable to someone who hasn't eaten all day than to someone who has had three meals, but the value of that sandwich is operationalized to a set price that is the same for both individuals.

The value of a product or service is operationalized as a price based on pressures from all of Porter's five forces (incumbents, buyers, suppliers, new entrants, and substitutes).⁶⁴ Prices are derived based on aggregated pressures; these prices are operational estimates of average values for a specific time and location. Prices are often set somewhere in the supply line earlier than the merchant-customer transaction, with little room for negotiation at this final transaction. In this way,

all the goods we buy or use—our gasoline, the drugs our doctors prescribe, essentials like water, transport, health, and education, even the new school computers and the crops growing in the fields around our communities—are in the grip of corporations which may, at their whim, nurture, support, or strangle us⁶⁵

by adjusting the price to reflect market forces rather than individual human needs.

Resisting the market by creating niche markets

64 Michael E. Porter. 2008 January. "The Five Competitive Forces that Shape Strategy."

65 Noreena Hertz. 2003. *The Silent Takeover*. p. 7.

to drive down prices is often largely ineffective, for “every niche opened by rebellion against the mainstream is immediately filled by entrepreneurs who figure out how to make a buck off those who are trying to avoid what the majority of people are buying.”⁶⁶ Needs, by definition, must be filled, and by current economic structure, consumption must (almost) always be the method by which needs are filled. This situation is possible partially because

the effectiveness of material reinforcers in advertising is accomplished by differentially associating them with nonmarket reinforcers that people seek: love, friendships, sensuality, joyful emotional experiences, family gatherings, pleasant music, or humor, none of which comes with a price tag attached. . . . This mistaken connection becomes partially self-fulfilling, because when people are compelled to work full time for material reinforcers, their contact with nonmaterial reinforcers is restricted, especially those that require time to be truly effective.⁶⁷

A consumption-based market economy compels us to work so that we can consume so that we can live, but the resources we expend working and consuming often prevent us from living as we would like to live.

⁶⁶ David McRaney. 2010 April 12. “Selling Out.”

⁶⁷ Lyle K. Grant. 2011. “In Response: Can We Consume Our Way Out of Climate Change?” p. 257

Advertising

“You lack vision. I see a place where people get on and off the freeway. On and off, off and on, all day, all night. Soon, where Toontown once stood will be a string of gas stations, inexpensive motels, restaurants that serve rapidly prepared food. Tire salons, automobile dealerships, and wonderful, wonderful billboards reaching as far as the eye can see. My God, it'll be beautiful.”⁶⁸

Consumption and Consumerism

No psychological leverage seems to be off-limits to encourage continued mandatory participation in the consumer market system. Stereotypes are commonly used to sell products (and the economic system),⁶⁹ and for most of the history of advertising “resistance to the 'universal' appeals of modern advertising was often dealt with in racial or national terms . . . that these *less American* elements of the population had not yet been sophisticated to the methods of modern advertising.”⁷⁰ While English was a relative latecomer to the party of languages used in the United States, advertising helped the language to dominate.

In promoting the English language, “rather than arguing that a knowledge of the language would be helpful in conversation and effective communication, the ad[s] argued that being distinguishable from the fabricated national norm, a part of advertising's mythologized homogeneity, was a justification for

68 Judge Doom. In Frank Marshall et al. 2003. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. 1:20:11-1:20:50.

69 Leah A. Lievrouw & Sharon E. Farb. 2003. “Information and Equity.”

70 Stuart Ewen. 1976. *Captains of Consciousness*. p. 43.

social failure.”⁷¹ Advertising indirectly, repetitiously, and intensively tells us all that we are not good enough, but that careful, deliberate consumption can enable us to become good enough. An individual's problems, the messages have conveyed, are always of his/her own making, and “if man was the victim of himself the fruits of mass production were his savior. Ads constantly hammered away at everything that was his own—his bodily functions, his self-esteem—and offered something of theirs as a socially more effective substitute.”⁷² An option outside of consumption is not a (valid) alternative to the market; every option outside of consumption is a deviation from society.

“Once we [mostly] all [mostly] buy into the idea that the car is freedom,” parties invested in us consuming car-related goods are then able to push the message that

not having a car reads as a form of clingy, needy dependency. . . . The list of prominent bicyclists in film history include misfit teens, . . . eccentric Einstein-like scientists, . . . vaguely countercultural types, . . . perpetual man-children, . . . people who refuse to grow up or are out of touch with real life and the working world, . . . virgins or *castrati*, . . . sexual deviants.⁷³

The message is repeated and repeated until we subconsciously make the association, and then the message is repeated some more to make sure we

71 Stuart Ewen. 1976. *Captains of Consciousness*. p. 44.

72 Stuart Ewen. 1976. *Captains of Consciousness*. p. 46.

73 Tom Vanderbilt. 2010 July 30. “Dude, Where's Your Car?”

maintain the association.

One externality of car culture is “urban sprawl to accommodate the space demand for traffic arteries, protective zones and parking. . . . Once in the car, . . . this pushes the concentration of services further, rendering the private car even more indispensable.”⁷⁴ Another externality is reduced safety for pedestrians. As we associate people outside of cars and buildings as dangerous, “people can retreat to gated communities to avoid crime, but they end up prisoners of those communities.”⁷⁵ Some of the street crime is imagined, and some of the street crime is real. The cultural message of non-car-owner-as-social-deviant-outcast is broadcast to everyone, and many of those who cannot or choose not to own a car are duped into casting themselves in that role.

While the act of buying a car clearly does not make a person any less of a criminal, “the culture of the [nineteen-]fifties reiterated the notion of class along the lines of *who could* and *who could not* buy their way to *happiness*.”⁷⁶ Of course no one can actually buy his/her way to happiness, partly because “there is still a finite limit in the ability to buy better health.”⁷⁷ Advertisements encourage us to aspire to acquire an ever-increasing number of products and services while “the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations . . . has estimated the cost of completely ending world

74 Christer Sanne. 2002. “Willing consumers—or locked-in?” p. 277.

75 Arthur Asa Berger. 2011. *Ads, Fads, and Consumer Culture*. p. 40

76 Stuart Ewen. 1976. *Captains of Consciousness*. p. 215.

77 Russell W. Belk. 2004. “The Human Consequences of Consumer Culture.” p. 74.

hunger at \$30 billion dollars [sic] per year, a value U.S. ad spending could pay for nine times over.”⁷⁸ Since that FAO report, the cost of ending world hunger may have risen, but America has also just participated in “the most expensive . . . election . . . in history . . . [in which] a lot of that money went to pay for advertising.”⁷⁹ This arrangement of resources surely is not buying happiness for everyone.

Advertising Revenue

While much information is provided only to those who can pay, much is also provided in a sponsored medium, augmented with advertisements from the information's sponsor(s). The First Amendment to the United States Constitution attempts to curtail censorship, but “despite the potential danger and occasional occurrence of governmental censorship, private entities in general and advertisers in particular constitute the most pernicious 'censors' of media content.”⁸⁰ While sought-after information may not be legally available, advertisements, whether desired or not, are often unavoidable. Nearly every advertisement attempts to sell one or more specific products, but each advertisement also attempts to reinforce free market consumer capitalism as the only legitimate value system.

78 Lyle K. Grant. 2010. “Sustainability.” p. 28. In this quotation, Grant cites:

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. 2008 June 3. “The world only needs 30 billion dollars a year to eradicate the scourge of hunger.”

79 Robert Siegel. 2012 November 30. “2012 Election The Most Expensive In History.”

80 Edwin C. Baker. 1994. *Advertising and a Democratic Press*. p. 3.

Once advertisements began to appear in information and communication technologies like newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet, these media began “carrying corporate culture into what was to become a vast majority of American homes,”⁸¹ including “advertisements [that] transmit in . . . an indirect, repetitious, and intensive fashion . . . messages about the desirable lifestyles and the superiority of the consumer culture.”⁸² The message of “the superiority of the consumer culture” is obscured by its ubiquity. The absence of anticapitalist advertisements draws attention away from the capitalist sales pitch.

“The most effective forms of behavior control,” which is what is needed to maintain a situation in which a minority hold power over a majority, “operate largely without people’s awareness or suspicion, and this is precisely what modern advertising does.”⁸³ Alarmingly, even when a person is aware that someone is attempting to control his/her behavior through an advertisement, the effectiveness of the advertisement is decreased but not depleted.

The idea that awareness of persuasive intent can curb the effects of that persuasive intent is called ‘the cognitive defense view.’ This view suggests

that adults, who presumably are able to recognize advertising and understand its intent, are resistant to persuasive

81 Stuart Ewen. 1976. *Captains of Consciousness*. p. 214.

82 Moshe Cohen-Eliya and Yoav Hammer. 2004.

“Advertisements, Stereotypes, and Freedom of Expression.” p. 166.

83 Lyle K. Grant. 2011. “In Response: Can We Consume Our Way Out of Climate Change?” p. 256.

advertising messages. However, most adults will readily admit they can be seduced by advertising, even when they are aware of the nature and intent of the persuasive message. Moreover, the vast sums of money involved in the advertising industry might also be an indication that advertising can influence adult purchasing behavior.⁸⁴

“The first study that has examined the cognitive defense view explicitly”⁸⁵ was not published until 2009. The study focused on children and found that “children's recognition of advertising and their understanding of its selling intent did not make them less susceptible to the persuasive influence of advertising.”⁸⁶ Considering the aforementioned factors, this finding would likely be found in an adult population as well, and

we wonder whether this process has, for a long time, been well understood and used by professionals who are paid to manipulate opinion. Of course, if it were, it would also be in their best interest not to discuss their use of it. Might this be why it has not been described and

84 Esther Rozendaal, Moniek Buijzen, & Patti Valkenburg. 2009. “Do children's cognitive defenses reduce their desire for advertised products?” pp. 290-291.

85 Esther Rozendaal, Moniek Buijzen, & Patti Valkenburg. 2009. “Do children's cognitive defenses reduce their desire for advertised products?” p. 299.

86 Esther Rozendaal, Moniek Buijzen, & Patti Valkenburg. 2009. “Do children's cognitive defenses reduce their desire for advertised products?” p. 297.

documented before?⁸⁷

Advertising's unseemly manipulativeness is surely no secret, but published research on the subject is scarce.

Manipulative paid advertising, a child of free market consumer capitalism, is a vibrant source of information inequality. Often advertisements are the only source of information a person has access to about a particular product, service, or topic. Advertising and free market consumer capitalism feed one another systemically as

marketing . . . radiates into almost every sector of the economy, constituting a formidable pressure group: in addition to the multi-billion [sic] advertising sector itself—involving many categories of people—marketing virtually finances newspapers and journals including all who make a living out of them (editors, journalists, photographers, artists, printers, distributors) and it pays for (commercial) TV which employs news staff, actors and artists engaged in the programs, technicians and all supporting staff, etc.⁸⁸

Since “advertising, rather than readers/viewers, pay the lion's share of [their] costs,” media producers are more accountable to advertisers than they are to readers/viewers, and consequently “the media

87 Edward J. Russo & Anne-Sophie Chaxel. 2010. “How persuasive messages influence behavior without awareness.” p. 342.

88 Christer Sanne. 2002. “Willing consumers—or locked-in?” p. 279.

promote consumption by making the consumerist lifestyle the social norm.”⁸⁹ While democratic people tend to be intolerant of government and political activism in news and entertainment media, these media have “tended to uncritically embrace the consumer activist. They are the good guys. Unlike politicians, they are not tainted by corruption or self-interest. They are typically portrayed as altruistic and idealistic people whose motives are beyond reproach.”⁹⁰ Distrust in government can be healthy in a democratic society, but only if that distrust leads to citizens involved in societal improvement, not if that distrust leads to misplaced trust in largely unaccountable advertisers and information-withholders.

This advertiser power has naturally led to a situation in which media tend to portray “elite interests as universally shared ones. . . . This construction . . . is also fostered by extensive news coverage of stock market and business news as central concerns”⁹¹ and “insistence that the United States is a classless society and a meritocracy [which] ensures that we avoid engaging in a real national dialogue about class inequalities, even as the distance between the rich and poor threatens to grow even wider.”⁹² National dialogue has begun to open up since the most recent presidential election season,

89 Christer Sanne. 2002. “Willing consumers—or locked-in?” p. 281.

90 Frank Furedi. 1999. *Consuming Democracy*. p. 12.

91 Bernice Lott & Heather E. Bullock. 2007. *Psychology and Economic Injustice*. p. 82.

92 Bernice Lott & Heather E. Bullock. 2007. *Psychology and Economic Injustice*. p. 96.

with talk of the 99% and the 1%⁹³ becoming everyday conversation, and talk of the “47%”⁹⁴ was a factor in that election. While the insistence about classlessness and meritocracy continue, the dialogue about wealth gaps has begun to open.

As a minority of citizens hold a majority of power, the majority of citizens “are drip-fed images that reinforce this capitalist dream. . . . Prevailing norms and mainstream thoughts are recorded, replayed, and reinforced in Technicolor, while any criticism of the orthodoxy is consciously quashed,”⁹⁵ and “those who question the legitimacy of policies that disproportionately benefit the wealthy are labeled as engaging in class warfare, whereas those who support the policies most strongly are not so labeled.”⁹⁶ In advertisements and in the media sponsored by them, “the not-so-subtle message is that anyone can partake of the 'good life' by making the 'right' purchases,”⁹⁷ and “the tacitly understood message is that those who don't 'make it' are not hardworking or do not want to improve their financial position.”⁹⁸ The system that creates and distributes these messages ensures the falsity of the messages.

93 *We Are the 99 Percent.*

94 David Corn. 2012 September 18. “WATCH: Full Secret Video of Private Romney Fundraiser.” *Mother Jones.*

95 Noreena Hertz. 2003. *The Silent Takeover.* p. 6.

96 Bernice Lott & Heather E. Bullock. 2007. *Psychology and Economic Injustice.* p. 80.

97 Bernice Lott & Heather E. Bullock. 2007. *Psychology and Economic Injustice.* p. 84-85.

98 Bernice Lott & Heather E. Bullock. 2007. *Psychology and Economic Injustice.* p. 87.

Employment

“We must always remember the goal is to reduce dependency on government and offer every American the dignity of a job.”⁹⁹

Advertising has informed us, accurately or not, that if we are unhappy or unhealthy, we are inadequate consumers. In this mindset, “to keep a job, people must love it; they must fight against the things *in themselves* which get in the way of job satisfaction. They must consume to keep healthy and stay healthy to keep their jobs.”¹⁰⁰ If I am unsatisfied with my job, I am not vindicated with sympathetic assurances that my job

comes to be confined to a few very simple operations; frequently one or two. . . . The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects, too, are perhaps always the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention, in finding out expedients for removing the difficulties which never occur. He naturally loses, therefore, the habit of such exertion, and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become.¹⁰¹

Instead, I am told that I am *already* stupid and

99 George W. Bush. 2002. “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union.” p. 137.

100 Stuart Ewen. 1976. *Captains of Consciousness*. p. 155.

101 Adam Smith. 2011 June 5 reprint. (1776). *Wealth of Nations*. Kindle locations 12499, 12500-12503.

ignorant and that my job will provide me the means to purchase a remedy.

The media largely ignore the fact that “a culture of working to consume . . . trades leisure time for material wealth,”¹⁰² that

in economic theory, work is a disutility, which makes the utility of consumption possible. . . . The understanding . . . is that the employee is in a position to match the sacrifice with the joy and settle how many hours of work he or she will do, balancing the input of work with the desired consumption.

There is little to support this notion empirically. The amount of work performed per capita is controlled by a social order rather than by individual choices.¹⁰³

For many jobs, work hours and scheduling are largely non-negotiable, and when negotiation is possible, losses of non-wage benefits are often included in reduction of hours. Theoretically, we are free to work as much or little as we choose, but “everyone who lives above the poverty line but isn't wealthy pretty much has no choice but to work for a living doing something which rewards them with survival tokens.”¹⁰⁴ In a way, an employee is like “a peasant [who] may agree to sell his kidney or cornea in order to feed his starving family[:] . . . his agreement is not

102 Lyle K. Grant. 2011. “In Response: Can We Consume Our Way Out of Climate Change?” p. 256.

103 Christa Sanne. 2002. “Willing consumers—or locked-in?” p. 280.

104 David McRaney. 2010 April 12. “Selling Out.”

truly voluntary. His is coerced, in effect, by the necessities of his situation.”¹⁰⁵ The choice to opt out of working for wages has been effectively revoked “as these structural pressures have accumulated, [and] detachment from the global economy has become an increasingly unfeasible and costly option.”¹⁰⁶ Luck, charity, and destitution seem to be the most feasible alternatives to working for wages.

Although *unemployment* is often spoken of as a problem needing solved, “consumer culture is a consumption phenomenon and not a production phenomenon.”¹⁰⁷ The economic trouble about

the poor of today (that is, people who are 'problems' for the rest) [is that they] are 'non-consumers', not 'unemployed'. They are defined in the first place through being flawed consumers, since the most crucial of the social duties that they do not fulfil[l] is that of being active and effective buyers of goods and services that the market offers.¹⁰⁸

The “problem” unemployed population are the unemployed persons without a stockpile of financial wealth. An unemployed Romney or Clinton is not perceived as a problem because each is still able to consume and partake in consumer culture. An unemployed person without fiscal reserves, however,

105 Michael J. Sandel. 2000. “What Money Can't Buy.” p. 94.

106 Ronald J. Deibert. 1997. *Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia*. p. 206.

107 Russell W. Belk. 2004. “The Human Consequences of Consumer Culture.” p. 79.

108 Zygmunt Bauman. 2007. “Collateral Casualties of Consumerism.” p. 33.

is a perceived problem because (s)he cannot purchase goods and services without first receiving a “handout.”

Today's American society emphasizes Weber's “Protestant work ethic”¹⁰⁹, but with a powerful focus on the work itself and a disregard for frugality, or necessity, or social goodness of the work. At the same time, the meaning of “work” has shifted to include many low-effort moneymaking tasks and exclude physically or mentally demanding tasks that do not involve moneymaking. With the current definition of “work” in the emphasized “Protestant work ethic”, we are pressured to make money in order to prove or maintain our own value to society.

In 1930, the same year Weber's *Protestant Ethic* was first published in English, John Maynard Keynes published an essay in which he looked forward to “unemployment due to our discovery of means of economizing the use of labour outrunning the pace at which we can find new uses for labour.”¹¹⁰ Keynes predicted, “In quite a few years—in our own lifetimes I mean—we may be able to perform all the operations of agriculture, mining, and manufacture with a quarter of the human effort to which we have been accustomed.”¹¹¹ Technologically, we have probably long surpassed Keynes' expectations but socially we maintain a value in work with little regard to the real values involved.

109 Max Weber (author) & Talcott Parsons (translator). 1997 reprint. (1930). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

110 John Maynard Keynes. 2010 reprint. (1930). “Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren.” p. 21.

111 John Maynard Keynes. 2010 reprint. (1930). “Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren.” p. 20.

In the Global North, many more jobs provide services than goods, with most goods being produced and distributed by a minority of workers. A cynical explanation is that “in the [Global] North, fears of domination by the formerly dominated closes the labour markets to migrants from the [Global] South and thus deprives commodity markets of additional consumers and industries of innovative brains.”¹¹² A sociohistorical explanation is that “we have been trained too long to strive and not to enjoy.”¹¹³ Likely these factors are two among many contributing to the current socioeconomic system of labor-for-wages. We need not wait for 2030, the earliest year Keynes predicted that we could all work 10 hour workweeks if we so desired, to reevaluate our work-for-pay schema.

As we continue to insist on work-for-pay, we find “increasing competition among . . . candidates for entry-level positions has allowed hiring institutions to raise the performance bar, . . . in short, . . . rising standards at a time of overcapacity in a highly competitive marketplace.”¹¹⁴ The “performance bar” here is not job performance, but rather a hireability performance. Employees and employers are both aware that the size of the pool of entry-level job applicants is much much greater than the number of entry-level positions available at a given time. Once an applicant is hired and establishes himself/herself,

112 Eberhard Kienle. 2010 May 10. “Global competitiveness, the erosion of checks and balances, and the demise of liberal democracy.”

113 John Maynard Keynes. 2010 reprint. (1930). “Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren.” p. 23.

114 Blaise Cronin. 2005. *The Hand of Science*. p. 118. Although Cronin is focused on academia in his research, these statements appear to be broadly accurate.

(s)he builds an incumbency advantage. People tend to heuristically choose the familiar over the unfamiliar,¹¹⁵ even when the familiar is known to be suboptimal and evidence suggests potential superiority of the unfamiliar, and employers are aware of “significant business costs to replacing employees.”¹¹⁶

With the power in the hiring process continually shifting away from the candidates and toward the employers, employees remain in positions in which they fit poorly. In the United States nearly 10% of employees changed jobs each quarter 5 years ago;¹¹⁷ closer to 3% of employees do today¹¹⁸. The idea that 90% of employees are ideally situated is unlikely; the idea that 97% of employees are ideally situated is almost certainly untrue. While employees theoretically have the option to leave their jobs for jobs for which they are better suited, the reality of the marketplace of jobs is that most will satisfice and

115 Volker Thoma & Alwyn Williams. 2013 January. “The devil you know.”

116 Heather Boushey & Sarah Jane Glynn. 2012 November 16. “There Are Significant Business Costs to Replacing Employees.”

117 Caryn N. Bruyere, Guy L. Podgornik, & James R. Spletzer. 2011 August. “Employment dynamics over the last decade.” Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. No date. “Employment, Hours, and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics survey (National).” For the period of 2004-2007, roughly 14,500,000 hires and separations occurred per quarter out of roughly 138,000,000 jobs.

118 Caryn N. Bruyere, Guy L. Podgornik, & James R. Spletzer. 2011 August. “Employment dynamics over the last decade.” Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. 2013 March 12. “Job Openings and Labor Turnover – January 2013.”

keep the jobs (and income and benefits) that they have. People better suited for those jobs are thus prevented from replacing those employees, through no fault of any individuals, but rather through structurally necessitated inefficiencies.

Democracy

“Policymakers and the media are not impartial observers. Nor are we.”¹¹⁹

In modern democratic society, media are largely free from government (i.e., public) censorship but are beholden to market (i.e., private) advertising. In these media, “the claim that economic freedom promotes political freedom has been, and is being, uttered without supporting justification.”¹²⁰ Critics of free market consumer capitalism are written off by most media, with notable exceptions like *Adbusters*, *Democracy Now!*, and *Rolling Stone*. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries,

ads and public relations portrayed the corporation as a function of social intercourse which created positive bonds when all else had failed, . . . and the possibility of collective action was pictured as decrepit, threatening, and basically incapable of providing any level of security.¹²¹

Dissidents have been labeled undemocratic, and “the vision of freedom which was being offered to

119 Bernice Lott & Heather E. Bullock. 2007. *Psychology and Economic Injustice*. p. 97.

120 Valeria Mosini. 2011. *Reassessing the Paradigm of Economics*. p. 98.

121 Stuart Ewen. 1976. *Captains of Consciousness*. p. 102.

Americans was one which continually relegated people to consumption, passivity and spectatorship. Those who questioned this chain of command were labeled 'communist'¹²² and 'terrorist.' Anyone opposed to the hegemony of consumer capitalism has been cast as a criminal.

Moneyed interests are naturally opposed to public interests, and from the former's "perspective, the worse things are, the more opportunities there are to sell products to people, so the market economy may have an implicit stake in social disorganization and the neglect of the political sphere."¹²³ Capital also tends to move more quickly than policy. As the world has gained innerconnectivity, "the modern subordination of economics to politics has been dramatically reversed by this change such that the core values of most all states are now defined in terms of the interests of capital."¹²⁴ Laws are written and enforced to protect these "interests of capital," and "prisons deputize for the now phased-out and fading welfare institutions, and in all probability will have to go on readjusting to the performance of this new function as the welfare provisions continue to be tapered."¹²⁵ When nonconsumptive behavior is effectively criminalized, many victims of the system are literally disenfranchised, at least temporarily, as felons.

While democracy intends to cede its power to

122 Stuart Ewen. 1976. *Captains of Consciousness*. p. 213.

123 Arthur Asa Berger. 2011. *Ads, Fads, and Consumer Culture*. p. 39.

124 Ronald J. Deibert. 1997. *Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia*. p. 206.

125 Zygmunt Bauman. 2007. "Collateral Casualties of Consumerism." p. 39.

the people, a growing accumulation of power has been moving from the people to the market, where

the relation is an uneven one: people are subjected to pervasive marketing efforts of business whereas consumers have a limited power of consumer action against certain brands or firms.

People are also political beings with a (principal) right—in democratic societies—to select their governing bodies.¹²⁶

People and organizations have unequal and limited access to money, and “unions can act and speak today only by spending money, as indeed is true of nearly every organization and even of individuals if their action is to be effective.”¹²⁷ With markets in control, a dollar is more effective than a vote, and “ideology competes with ice-cream. Politicians become salespeople, offering more and more: lower tax, better schools, more funding for the NHS. It is a double switch: politics has entered commerce; consumerism has entered politics.”¹²⁸ Perhaps the biggest problem here is that *ideology* and *ice-cream* can literally be compared in value with just one intervening step (currency). As long as we accept this value system, “the role of nation states . . . [remains] to a large extent simply that of providing the public goods and infrastructure that business needs at the lowest costs

126 Christer Sanne. 2002. “Willing consumers—or locked-in?” p. 281.

127 Felix Frankfurter. 1948. “Mr. Justice FRANKFURTER, concurring.”

128 Noreena Hertz. 1999 June 21. “Better to shop than to vote.”

while protecting the world's free trade system.”¹²⁹
People are not the state's concern when the state is more accountable to the capital market than to the voters themselves.

Money is currently treated legally as speech in many ways, but money is not speech. Money is more accurately speech amplification. The First Amendment says,

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.¹³⁰

When free speech cannot be heard over paid speech, when petitions to the government for redresses cannot be granted to devalued individuals, when the press is dependent on advertising income, the spirit (if not the letter) of the First Amendment is violated. Congress may not have made any laws specifically requiring any of these circumstances, but we have constructed a system of laws that enable and encourage these circumstances.

129 Noreena Hertz. 2003. *The Silent Takeover*. p. 8.

130 1st United States Congress. 1789 September 25.
“Amendment I.”

Other Measures of Value: Information, Time, & Attention

“What the conquistadors failed to understand is that money is a matter of belief, even faith: belief in the person paying us; belief in the person issuing the money he uses or the institution that honours his cheques or transfers.

Money is not metal. It is trust inscribed.”¹³¹

Money was once, and for a long time, a necessary mediator between valuable information and information consumers. Hypermedia, particularly “the Internet . . . [provide] the chance to let all of those ideas compete in the arena, and live and die on the merits.”¹³² Making money is not (or at least should not be) the primary goal of many (any?) occupations. A writer, for example, wants to tell something to other people. Of course, writers have to pay their bills, but so does everyone. What defines a job, or a career, or a profession, or an occupation, is its *raison d'être* apart from making money. We are living in “an age where 'hits,' downloads, 'reads,' citations and impact factors have become the default measures of a man's worth.”¹³³ Popular media rely on advertising and stock futures to convert attention to money, using “clicks and views as a 'currency.’”¹³⁴ This 'currency' is ill-defined, though, and poorly operationalized.

The Super Bowl is consistently an attention magnet: the three most-watched television broadcasts in American history are have all been Super Bowls,¹³⁵

131 Niall Ferguson. 2008. *The Ascent of Money*. pp. 29-30.

132 Ta-Nehisi Coates. 2013 March 9. “Lucrative Work-for-Free Opportunity.”

133 Blaise Cronin. 2005. *The Hand of Science*. p. 7.

134 Kevin Ashton. 2013 March 28. “The Harlem Make.”

135 David Boudier. 2013 February 5. “Super Bowl falls short of

and each year companies consistently spend hundreds of millions of dollars (combined) to show their advertisements during the Super Bowl.¹³⁶ That money includes only the cost of airing the advertisements and excludes the cost of producing the advertisements. During a game-stopping power outage at the stadium during Super Bowl XLVII, “the Super Bowl of real-time marketing,”¹³⁷ companies seized the opportunity for attention on social media. The social media messages literally cost millions of dollars less than the television advertisements and seem to have been more effective, illustrating the disconnection between value and price.

Despite shifts in value and return on investment, “money still flows the same way: to the creators of contracts not creators of content.”¹³⁸ Companies, unlike jobs, careers, professions, and occupations, do tend to exist primarily to make and deal with money. As the necessity for mediation between content creators and content consumers has diminished, content has flowed more directly to consumers, while ISPs, search engines, and (somewhat) transitioning 'old media' companies who provide the media but not the messages¹³⁹ collect payments from the consumers and pass little, if any, on to the parties who made the valuable messages. A writer “need[s] . . . to pay [his/her] . . . rent. Exposure

ratings record.”

136 Kantar Media. 2013 January 14. “Kantar Media Reports Super Bowl Spending Reached \$1.85 Billion Over the Past Ten Years.”

137 Jennifer Rooney. 2013 February 3. “How Advertisers Made The Super Bowl Power Outage Work For Them.”

138 Kevin Ashton. 2013 March 28. “The Harlem Make.”

139 (apart from the often unwanted paid advertisements)

doesn't feed my [his/her] . . . children.”¹⁴⁰ While ISPs, search engines, and old media companies would be worthless without the content these media bring to consumers, the compensation methods we use today suggest the opposite.

Recommendations

“We're never going to wake up and say, 'OK, we licked that problem.' We're going to be working on it for the rest of our careers.”¹⁴¹

Provide the basic essentials to all citizens.

Earlier the annual spending on advertisements in the United States was cited as more than nine times the cost of eliminating world hunger.¹⁴² That figure is for hunger at the world level; these suggestions are for smaller levels of government, that of a single country and smaller. The United States currently administers a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)¹⁴³ that requires an application and specific requirements. All who qualify receive funds earmarked exclusively for nutritious foods. Of course variation exists in the healthiness of

140 Nate Thayer. In Joe Coscarelli. 2013 March 5. “Nate Thayer vs. *The Atlantic*: ‘Exposure Doesn’t Feed My F*cking Children!’

141 Peter Chernin. In Patrick Goldstein. 2003 September 9. “Hollywood Deals with Piracy, a Wary Eye on CDs.” p. E1.

142 Lyle K. Grant. 2010. “Sustainability.” p. 28. In this quotation, Grant cites:
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. 2008 June 3. “The world only needs 30 billion dollars a year to eradicate the scourge of hunger.”

143 United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. No date. “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).”

the foods that SNAP will pay for, but the funds cannot be used for other purposes by the SNAP recipients. Once the funds are used appropriately, those funds are converted to standard currency for the food vendor. The first recommendation here is to expand SNAP to all citizens.

Housing is the other most basic essential. In economics, the term 'rent' is technical, but the common meaning applies to the technical one. Rents, in the technical economic sense, are a drain on an economy in that they necessarily draw liquid funds out of the economy but do not add value during the transaction. Many buildings are in states of disrepair, and the housing market is often used as a scale of economic health. Another recommendation here is for governments (local, state, or federal) to buy unwanted properties, hire workers to renovate those properties, and provide minimum housing to all citizens.¹⁴⁴

For both of these basic essentials recommendations, the existing options for obtaining food and housing (i.e. paying money) should still be in place. People should be able to work to earn their own food and housing, and people should be free to spend their earnings as they wish. Most of the time, most people will use traditional means of obtaining basic essentials, i.e. buying these goods with money. However, if basic essentials were provided to everyone indiscriminately, ill-suited employees would be able to leave their jobs and dedicate their time to finding more appropriate employment. Entrepreneurs could

144 Specific criteria can be set to define an 'unwanted' property fit for governmental purchase. Those criteria can then be adjusted as supply and demand for minimum basic housing fluxuates.

find ways to generate value without the fear of homelessness or starvation. Education, healthcare, and Internet access could (perhaps) be included as basic essentials as well, with passionate volunteers replacing indifferent employees throughout the economy. Value could then take precedence over money, and markets could function more effectively.

Wealthy parties would still be free to consume as they please, but opportunities to become wealthy would be more numerous. Competition can be more about utility and merit of ideas and less about presentation, in that useful goods and services can exist without needing to make money. People can maintain the freedom to make money while also having the freedom to choose to work for free.

Develop and implement alternative widely acceptable currencies.

The difficulties apparent in developing specific alternative currencies to better match the specific values of specific transactions at specific times point to the inadequacies of using a single currency for that purpose. Indeed, nearly as many currencies exist as countries,¹⁴⁵ with variable exchange rates in most pairings. In addition, countless other types of tangible and intangible assets, including stocks, bonds, commodities, futures, goods, and services, are exchangeable for one another and these currencies. With the expectation that anything valuable can be exchanged for a durable currency, “re-trading is . . . extremely high, and not clearly functional.”¹⁴⁶

145 Central Intelligence Agency. No date. “Field Listing :: Exchange rates.”

146 John Dickhaut, Shengle Lin, David Porter, & Vernon Smith.

Implementing a different currency for every transaction, is of course, ridiculous. And regional currencies, at an international level, are already a reality. Virtual currencies like BitCoin are interesting, but seem too like traditional currencies to be revolutionary. The recommendation here is to develop currencies specific to the most essentials, like the aforementioned SNAP, such that these currencies are resistant to unintended exchanges and exploitation.

Simplify the legal code, particularly tax laws.

At virtually every level of government in the United States, the legal code is so lengthy and convoluted that likely no one is even familiar with each law that applies to himself or herself. Organizations like Common Good¹⁴⁷ exist exclusively to deal with this problem. Many laws are outdated, overly complicated, contradictory with other laws, or simply obsolete. I am a partner in the Bad Mutha Booboisie, the creative collective responsible for publishing this work. Tax preparation is the single most time-consuming task I do each year for this (three person) partnership (with few assets or liabilities and little income or expense). The records that we have to keep and use to calculate our taxes are more complicated than all of our annual non-tax transactions combined. A complicated tax code undeniably fuels a robust tax preparation industry, but a simpler tax code would likely be more socially valuable, freeing many current tax workers to pursue other occupations. The recommendation here is to

2010 April. "Durability, Re-trading and Market Performance."

147 Common Good. New York, NY, USA & Washington, DC, USA.

sunset all but the most essential laws. We would want to keep our constitutions and charters, of course, but we should expect our representatives to defend and improve our existing laws rather than just piling new ones on top of the old.

Stop all subsidies to non-individuals.

Readers are perhaps concerned with the lack of financial specifics of these recommendations. I readily admit that these recommendations are untested and difficult to predict the effects of. However, I am confident that we need to make reforms in all of the areas mentioned here because the status quo of each of these topics is unsustainable. An important recommendation paired with any of the other recommendations laid out here is to stop all subsidies apart from the basic essentials provided to all citizens.

Companies need to compete and to demonstrate continued value. Companies that are no longer competitive should die. People, unlike companies, have inherent value that needs to be protected.

I am not suggesting we stop all subsidies cold turkey. Rather, like the other outdated laws that should be sunsetted, so should all of our subsidies. We should let a free(r) market determine which companies live and die, but not which people. We should also hold people accountable for their actions and decisions, letting Philip Morris and BP investors pay the medical bills of cancer patients.

In 80% of states, the highest-paid public employee is a coach (26 football coaches, 13 basketball coaches, one hockey coach, and one

football and basketball coach).¹⁴⁸ These jobs could just as easily be performed by volunteers without any payment from the government. In fact, most of the income of these individuals comes from sources other than their salary.¹⁴⁹ In a sense, these salaries are subsidies that prioritize sports, particularly football and basketball, over non-sport activities. Removing these payments would have negligible long-term effects on the games and would save the government, and by extension, the taxpayers, a lot of money. With necessities provided per the first recommendation listed here, volunteers could fill most government roles by negotiating for the positions. With equally qualified candidates, a candidate willing to do the job for free tends to be most appealing.

Reform bankruptcy.

Theoretically bankruptcies allow entrepreneurs the opportunity to try again after a failed venture. In practice, “98 percent of [bankruptcy] filings are classified as non-business.”¹⁵⁰ An extraordinary number of bankruptcies come from medical expenses. Each bankruptcy is tailored by a court to the specific situation of the person or company filing bankruptcy, such that some debts are voluntarily reaffirmed, some are settled for a discount, and some are forgiven in exchange for a credit report indicating more risk than before the bankruptcy. This recommendation is dependent on the first two: severely limit the availability of loan forgiveness and discount

148 Reuben Fischer-Baum. 2013 May 9. “Infographic: Is Your State's Highest-Paid Employee A Coach? (Probably).”

149 Reuben Fischer-Baum. 2013 May 9. “Infographic: Is Your State's Highest-Paid Employee A Coach? (Probably).”

150 Niall Ferguson. 2008. *The Ascent of Money*. p. 61.

settlements in bankruptcies. Apart from the cases of death, disability, and acts of God, terms could be extended and ceilings could be set for total interest for all debts claimed in bankruptcies. If our basic necessities are guaranteed by our society, we can take as long as we need to make our creditors whole.

Operationalize more externalities.

Taxes on carbon emissions¹⁵¹ and sugary drinks¹⁵² are hotly contested topics these days. Reductions in both would be beneficial to the health of individuals, societies, and the planet, but whether taxes would be an effective or ethical method of regulation is unclear. Government spending tends to be overenthusiastic and underplanned. At the same time as we are trying to figure out how to deal with negative externalities like the negative effects of carbon emissions and sugary drinks, we are trying to figure out how to deal with positive externalities, like the positive effects of research, art, and education. Costs hidden from the consumer in the supply chain should be made apparent. We should develop more robust means of comparison shopping than monetary pricetags.

The recommendation here is to arbitrate a timeframe in which externalities can be claimed by those affected, and establish standards for operationalizing externalities. For example, education can be provided for free at the time of instruction and repaid as a percentage of each student's future income for a set number of years. Soda

151 The Experts. 2013 March 29. "Should There Be a Price on Carbon Emissions?"

152 Alice G. Walton. 2012 May 31. "Will Banning Sugary Drinks Really Save Us From Obesity?"

manufacturers and media outlets that ran their advertisements can pay for research and treatment for diabetes and gum disease. Intellectual property holders can be paid a portion of ISP profits commensurate to some value metric (such as usage time). When a worker is injured in an unsafe factory, each company that included that factory in its supply chain at the time of the incident can pay a portion of the costs of caring for and rehabilitating that worker.

Disallow consecutive terms in public office.

Typically public servants are compensated, financially and through other benefits. In *An [impassioned] ex-congressman's proposal to end legalized bribery*, former United States Congressman¹⁵³ Cecil Heftel claims,

Without money and lots of it, success is next to impossible in American politics. A candidate either has to be independently wealthy . . . or have the ability to raise money from people who have wealth. And the latter ultimately means doing the bidding of those who give large campaign contributions. Big donors are essential to electoral success. That is why so many politicians . . . often wind up in the pockets of fat-cat funders.¹⁵⁴

Removing pay from elected offices could discourage personal wealth as a motivation for office seeking individuals.¹⁵⁵ Removing the opportunity to serve

153 From 1977 until 1986.

154 Cecil Heftel. 1998. *An ex-congressman's proposal to end legalized bribery*. p. 3.

155 Removing pay would not necessarily remove the motivation

consecutive terms, however, would almost certainly reduce the amount of electioneering while governing. Altering the election cycle to one in which no incumbents are running for office could provide incumbents the opportunity to work for their constituents' best interests without tailoring their actions to answer "What have you done for me lately?"¹⁵⁶ Politicians interested in reelection would be free to run again in the following cycle, and could use the time between terms to electioneer.

Realign existing institutions.

When particular institutions arose, those institutions filled previously unfilled niches. As we have progressed socially and technologically, substitutes have been intruding into niches and institutions have found themselves overlapping. Libraries, bookstores, the Internet, and the postal service have become overlapping competitors.¹⁵⁷ Outdated intellectual property laws and norms set these potential allies at odds. All four of these institutions should be able to duplicate media on demand if they have the technological capability and a customer wanting to pay a fair price. No value is lost, apart from opportunity cost, in making a digital copy; a customer could determine a fair price after use. Regardless of the duplication method, the

for personal financial gain, however. The exposure from the public platform has helped many non-elected and ousted politicians grow their finances.

156 Janet Jackson (album artist, writer, performer), James Harris III, & Terry Lewis (writers). 1986. "What Have You Done for Me Lately."

157 I chose these institutions simply because of familiarity. I am sure there are dozens if not hundreds of similar cases in other societal niches.

proceeds of the sale could be passed to the rightful intellectual property holders without any lawsuits or ill will. The recommendation here is to work for reform where the old way of doing things no longer makes sense. If we just go along with the outdated methods, we are complicit in the problems we are causing.

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