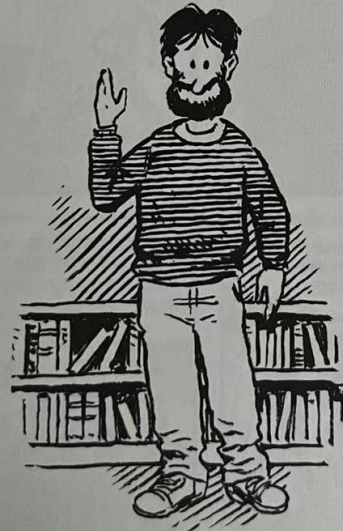
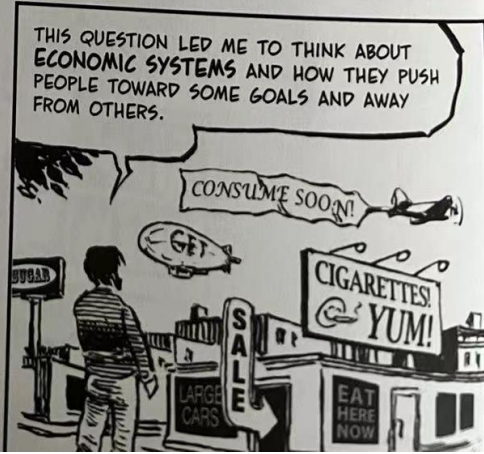
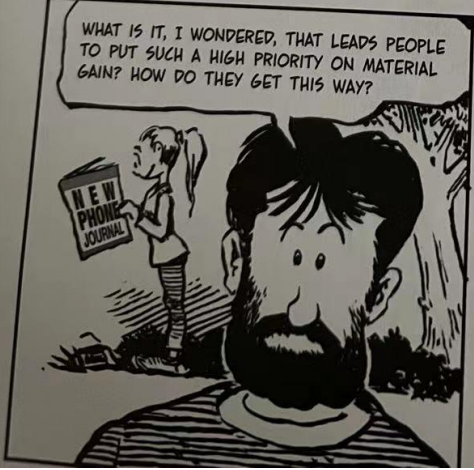
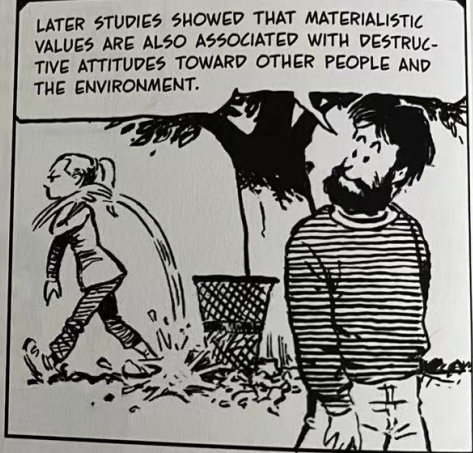
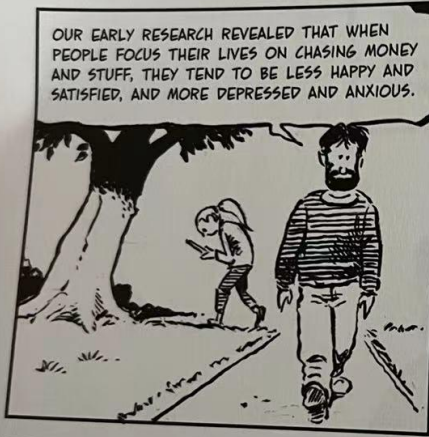
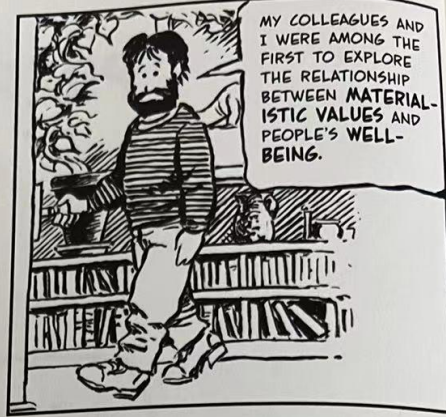


PREFACE

HI, I'M TIM KASSER,
AND WHEN I'M NOT A
CARTOON CHARACTER,
I'M A PSYCHOLOGY
PROFESSOR AT KNOX
COLLEGE IN ILLINOIS!





IT CERTAINLY SEEMS TO BE TRUE THAT MATERIALISTIC TENDENCIES ARE A BASIC PART OF THE SPECIES HOMO SAPIENS, BUT THAT ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY.



SINCE THE LATE 1800S, AND ESPECIALLY SINCE THE 1950S, MUCH OF THE WORLD HAS BEEN LIVING UNDER A SYSTEM THAT CELEBRATES MATERIALISM, CONSUMPTION, AND STATUS.



IN THIS BOOK, WE CALL THAT SYSTEM HYPERCAPITALISM.



IT'S OVER THE TOP! OUT OF CONTROL! BLOATED! MISSHAPEN! FREAKISH!

THAT'S MY CO-AUTHOR, LARRY GONICK, THE CARTOONIST. HE HAS HIS OPINIONS, TOO... NOW WHERE WAS I?

OH, RIGHT! I WAS ABOUT TO SAY THAT HYPERCAPITALISM DEPENDS FOR ITS VERY SURVIVAL ON MATERIALISTIC VALUES.



WITHOUT BUYING, IT'S DYING!

AS EXTENSIVE RESEARCH HAS SHOWN, THE MORE THAT PEOPLE AND SOCIETIES PRIORITIZE MATERIALISTIC VALUES, THE LESS THEY CARE ABOUT PROMOTING WELL-BEING, FAIR TREATMENT OF OTHERS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.



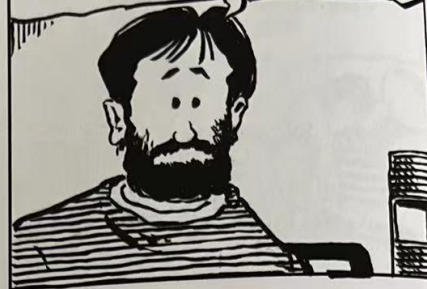
OUR ACCOUNT OF HYPERCAPITALISM IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS, ONE DARKER AND ONE LIGHTER.



IN PART I, WE'LL DESCRIBE THE INTERPLAY OF HYPERCAPITALISM AND VALUES. WE'LL EXPLAIN THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CAPITALISM AND TRACE THE GROWTH OF ITS CURRENT "HYPER" INCARNATION.



WE'LL ALSO INTRODUCE YOU TO WHAT PSYCHOLOGISTS HAVE LEARNED ABOUT HUMAN VALUE SYSTEMS, AND WE'LL SHOW HOW THESE FINDINGS HELP TO ACCOUNT FOR HYPERCAPITALISM'S ASSAULT ON PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND ECOLOGICAL WELL-BEING.



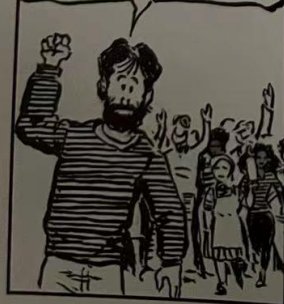
PART II OF THE BOOK IS ABOUT ACTION!!



WHEN I STARTED MY CAREER, I WAS MOSTLY INDIFFERENT TO POLITICS. BUT THE MORE I LEARNED, THE HARDER IT BECAME TO IGNORE THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF MY WORK. IN TIME, I BECAME AN ACTIVIST AS WELL AS A SCIENTIST.



PART II, THEN, WILL PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE MANY WAYS THAT PEOPLE ARE, RIGHT NOW, ACTIVELY WORKING TO RESIST HYPERCAPITALISM.



THESE PEOPLE ARE CREATING LIFESTYLES AND INSTITUTIONS ORIENTED AROUND HEALTHIER VALUES...



SO WHAT DO YOU SAY? LET'S GET STARTED!!



Chapter 1

A REVOLUTION OF VALUES

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary to dissolve the political bands which have connected us with Great Britain, that we should, in a solemn manner, declare our independence, and in a free and open manner, present our grievances to our fellow-creatures, that we should, in a firm and unshaken manner, maintain the rights which we hold as free men, and in a just and equitable manner, seek our future peace and safety.

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary to dissolve the political bands which have connected us with Great Britain, that we should, in a solemn manner, declare our independence, and in a free and open manner, present our grievances to our fellow-creatures, that we should, in a firm and unshaken manner, maintain the rights which we hold as free men, and in a just and equitable manner, seek our future peace and safety.

BRILLIANT!



WHEN THOMAS JEFFERSON WROTE "THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS" IN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, HE WAS MAKING A STARK DEPARTURE FROM AN EARLIER REVOLUTIONARY SLOGAN.

UNTIL THEN, THE CHANT OF BOSTON'S ANTI-TAX PROTESTORS HAD BEEN "LIBERTY AND PROPERTY," A PHRASE ECHOED IN THE 1774 DECLARATION OF COLONIAL RIGHTS.



JEFFERSON, HOWEVER, DECIDED TO EDIT "PROPERTY" OUT.



IT SOUNDS SO... CRASS...

HE WANTED A DIFFERENT PRINCIPLE TO DESCRIBE PERSONAL ASPIRATIONS, SOMETHING MORE INTRINSIC TO HUMAN WELL-BEING.

AND BETTER NOT TO MENTION SOME OF MY PROPERTY, EH, SALLY?



WITH HIS CLASSICAL EDUCATION, THE VIRGINIAN HARKENED BACK TO AN ANCIENT GREEK IDEAL OF THE GOOD LIFE, IN GREEK EUDAEMONIA.

eu·daemonia

TRUE

SPIRITUALITY

THAT'S THE STUFF!

EUDAEMONIA MEANT LIVING A LIFE IN PURSUIT OF VIRTUE, MEANING, AND UNDERSTANDING.



AND THE PHILOSOPHERS AGREED: THIS VALUE RAN OPPOSITE TO THE PURSUIT OF PROPERTY!

"WHY DO YOU CARE SO MUCH ABOUT LAYING UP THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF MONEY AND HONOR AND REPUTATION, AND SO LITTLE ABOUT WISDOM AND TRUTH AND THE... IMPROVEMENT OF THE SOUL?"

"UNHAPPY ARE THOSE WHO HAVE MANAGED TO ACQUIRE MORE EXTERNAL GOODS THAN THEY CAN POSSIBLY USE AND ARE LACKING IN THE GOODS OF THE SOUL."

"IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A MAN HAPPY, ADD NOT TO HIS RICHES, BUT TAKE AWAY FROM HIS DESIRES."

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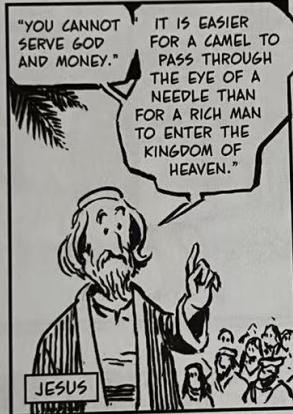
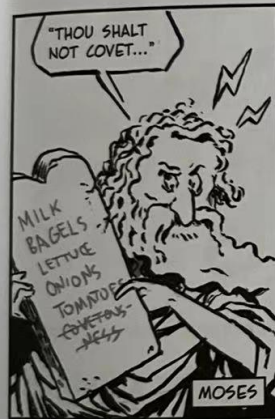
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ONE HUNDRED NINETY-ONE YEARS AFTER JEFFERSON'S EDIT, AMERICANS STILL HADN'T GOTTEN THE MESSAGE... THE PROFIT MOTIVE STILL REIGNED SUPREME... AND ON APRIL 4, 1967, IN THE MIDST OF A U.S. WAR IN VIETNAM AND A TUMULTUOUS STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AT HOME, THE REVEREND MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. HAD THIS TO SAY:

"WE AS A NATION MUST UNDERGO A RADICAL REVOLUTION OF VALUES. WE MUST RAPIDLY BEGIN THE SHIFT FROM A THING-ORIENTED SOCIETY TO A PERSON-ORIENTED SOCIETY. WHEN MACHINES AND COMPUTERS, PROFIT MOTIVES AND PROPERTY RIGHTS, ARE CONSIDERED MORE IMPORTANT THAN PEOPLE, THE GIANT TRIPLETS OF RACISM, EXTREME MATERIALISM, AND MILITARISM ARE INCAPABLE OF BEING CONQUERED."



KING, A BAPTIST MINISTER WHO ADMIRED GANDHI, NATURALLY HAD SOME BIBLICAL REFERENCES IN MIND, AND HE MAY HAVE BEEN THINKING OF THE BUDDHA, TOO...



DESPITE THESE PRECEDENTS, KING'S WORDS SEEMED SO CONTRARY TO CURRENT AMERICAN VALUES THAT FBI DIRECTOR J. EDGAR HOOVER CALLED THE MINISTER "A TRAITOR TO HIS COUNTRY AND HIS RACE."



DR. KING'S REFERENCE TO VALUES WAS DIRECT. HE CHALLENGED AMERICANS TO SUBORDINATE THE PURSUIT OF MONEY TO SOMETHING MORE HUMANE. JEFFERSON EXPRESSED THE SAME VIEW IMPLICITLY. WHAT ARE THESE OTHER VALUES? WHAT DO PEOPLE AND SOCIETIES PURSUE WHEN THEY PURSUE HAPPINESS?

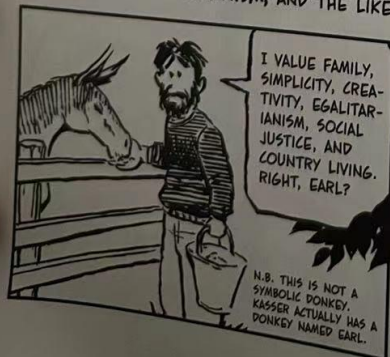


THE IDEA OF VALUES

TO PSYCHOLOGISTS, A VALUE IS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE, ANYTHING A PERSON HOLDS IN HIGH REGARD, BELIEVES IN, ASPIRES TO, OR CRAVES. VALUES ARE THE AIMS PEOPLE FIND WORTHWHILE TO PURSUE.



VALUES MAY BE PERSONAL, SUCH AS INNER HARMONY, PHYSICAL PLEASURE, A SENSE OF BELONGING, CREATIVITY, INFLUENCE OVER OTHERS, SELF-DISCIPLINE, OR WEALTH; OR SOCIAL, LIKE A DESIRE FOR CONFORMITY, DIVERSITY, NATIONAL SECURITY, FREEDOM, EGALITARIANISM, AND THE LIKE.



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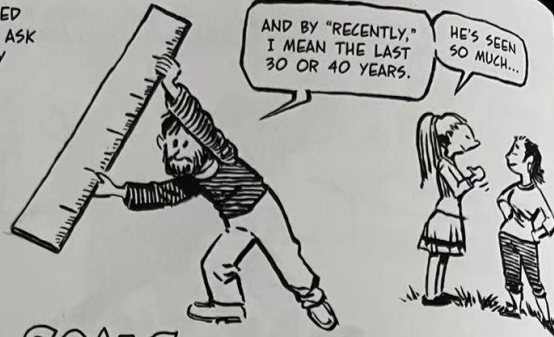
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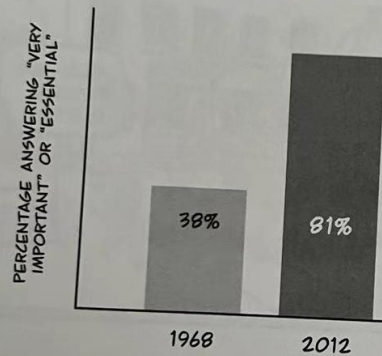
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NOW THAT WE'VE CLARIFIED WHAT VALUES ARE, LET'S ASK IF THEY HAVE SHOWN ANY MEASURABLE CHANGES RECENTLY.



PERSONAL GOALS:

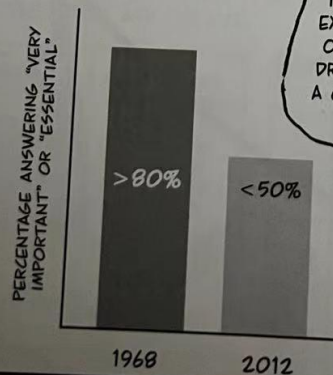
SINCE THE LATE 1960S, FIRST-YEAR AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS NATIONWIDE HAVE BEEN SURVEYED ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE THEY PLACE ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LIFE.



ASKED TO RATE THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING VERY **WELL-OFF FINANCIALLY**, THE PERCENTAGE WHO RESPONDED "VERY IMPORTANT" OR "ESSENTIAL" HAS RISEN STEADILY FROM UNDER 40% TO OVER 80%.



ON THE OTHER HAND, THOSE WHO REGARDED "DEVELOPING A MEANINGFUL PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE" AS VERY IMPORTANT OR ESSENTIAL HAS FALLEN STEEPLY.



THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF ONE VALUE DRIVING OUT A COMPETING VALUE!



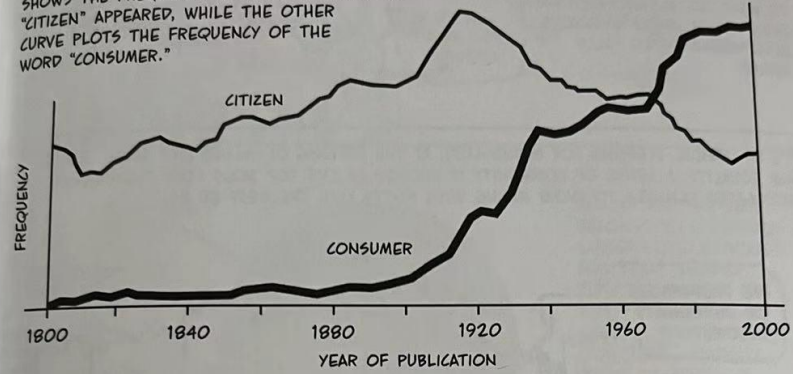
SEEN MUCH...



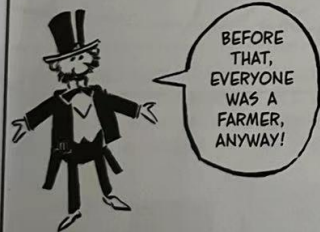
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HOW WE DESCRIBE OURSELVES

THIS GRAPH SHOWS A GOOGLE NGRAM OF FIVE MILLION ENGLISH-LANGUAGE BOOKS PUBLISHED BETWEEN THE YEARS 1800 AND 2000. ONE CURVE SHOWS THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE WORD "CITIZEN" APPEARED, WHILE THE OTHER CURVE PLOTS THE FREQUENCY OF THE WORD "CONSUMER."



AS YOU SEE, REFERENCES TO CONSUMERS WERE VERY RARE BEFORE 1900, WHEN THEY STARTED TO CLIMB.



MEANWHILE, MENTIONS OF "CITIZEN" PEAKED AROUND 1920 AND HAVE FALLEN EVER SINCE, WITH AN ESPECIALLY STEEP DROP AFTER 1970.



THE CURVES CROSSED BEFORE 1980, AND NOW PEOPLE ARE CALLED "CONSUMERS" NEARLY TWICE AS OFTEN AS "CITIZENS." CLEARLY, WE NOW THINK OF EACH OTHER MORE AS BUYERS OF STUFF THAN AS PARTICIPANTS IN A SHARED SOCIETY.

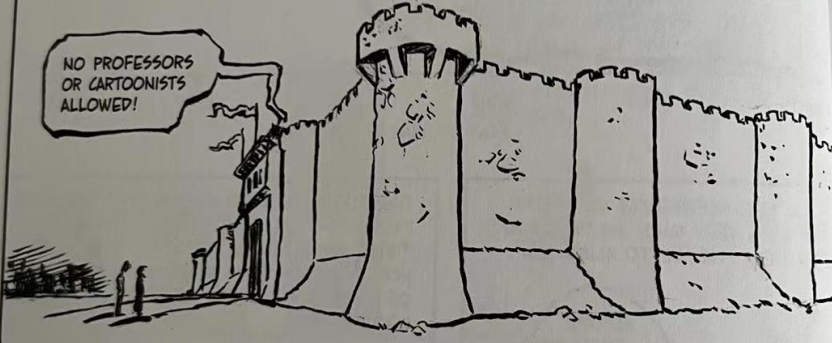


WEALTH & INCOME INEQUALITY

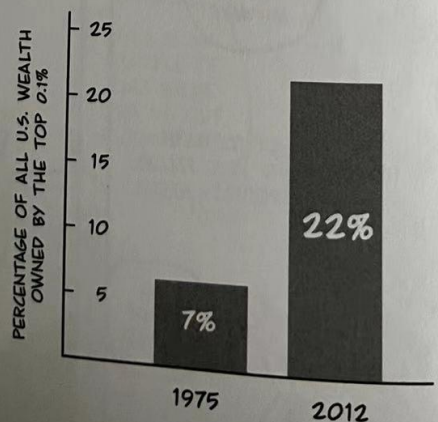
PROMOTING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IS ANOTHER SIGN OF SOCIAL VALUES. GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PRIVATE BEHAVIOR COMBINE TO HELP THE ALREADY-RICH GROW EVEN RICHER, WHILE EVERYONE ELSE STAGNATES OR FALLS BEHIND.



IT'S AN OFFICIAL BLESSING FOR MONEY-LUST, AT THE EXPENSE OF VALUES LIKE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY. A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IS ERODED AS THE TOP DOGS LOCK THEMSELVES INTO GATED KENNELS TO AVOID MIXING WITH MUTTS LIKE THE REST OF US.



HOW BAD HAS IT GOTTEN? CONSIDER THE FRACTION OF ALL WEALTH—STOCKS, BONDS, REAL ESTATE, CASH, ETC.—OWNED BY THE RICHEST 0.1% OF THE AMERICAN POPULATION. ACCORDING TO A STUDY BY THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, THIS FRACTION TRIPLED BETWEEN 1975 AND 2012, TO 22% OF THE TOTAL.

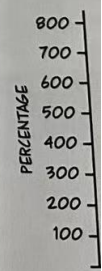


TO PUT IT ANOTHER EVERY FIVE IS NOW 300,000 AMERICAN



THE T OWN
THE BOTTOM OWN THIS.
THE MIDDLE 20 OWN THIS.
THE SECOND 20% OWN TH
THE S 10% C

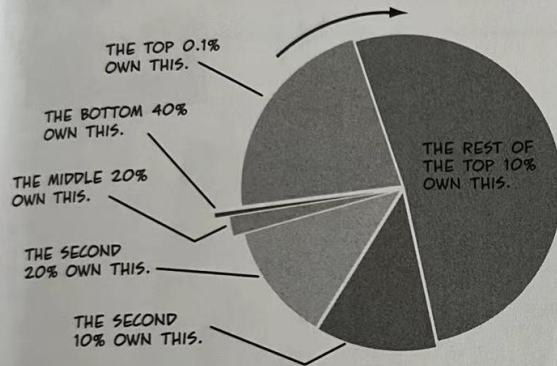
OTHER MEASU OF THE TOP 2013, WHILE AN AVERAGE



TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, MORE THAN ONE DOLLAR IN EVERY FIVE IS NOW OWNED BY A GROUP OF AROUND 300,000 AMERICANS (0.1% OF 300 MILLION).

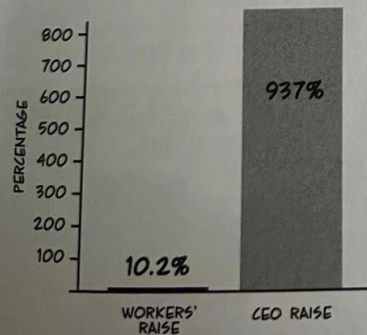


WE ALL HAVE OUR BURDENS.

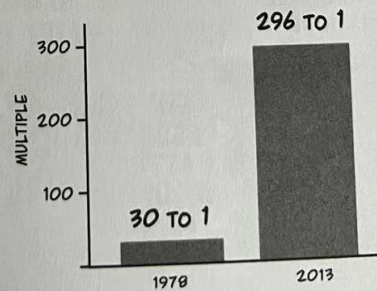


ALMOST ALL THE REST BELONGS TO A SLIGHTLY LARGER ELITE. ESTIMATES FOR 2007 SHOWED THAT THE RICHEST 10% HAD **73%** OF THE WEALTH; THE NEXT 10% OWN **12%**, MAKING A TOTAL OF **85%**; OF WHAT REMAINS, THE BOTTOM 40% OWN A SHOCKINGLY TINY **0.2%**.

OTHER MEASUREMENTS SHOW A SIMILAR TREND. THE INCOME OF CEOs (CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS) OF THE TOP 350 COMPANIES, FOR EXAMPLE, ROSE MORE THAN **NINEFOLD** FROM 1978 TO 2013, WHILE WORKER PAY STAGNATED. IN 2013, THE AVERAGE CEO MADE ABOUT **300 TIMES** AN AVERAGE WORKER'S PAY, UP FROM A RATIO OF **30 TO 1** IN 1978.



INCREASE IN COMPENSATION 1978-2013 (INFLATION-ADJUSTED)



LARGE-COMPANY CEO PAY RELATIVE TO WORKER PAY

WHY HAVE AMERICANS TOLERATED (AND SOMETIMES EVEN CHEERED) THIS RISE OF MATERIALISTIC, COMPETITIVE VALUES? THAT QUESTION HAS MANY ANSWERS, BUT SURELY ONE OF THEM IS THIS: IT'S BEEN HEAVILY SOLD. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT



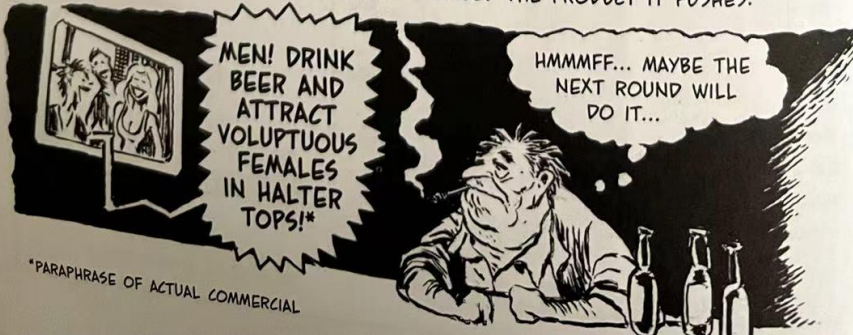
ADVERTISING!



MORE THAN JUST A WAY TO SELL STUFF, COMMERCIALS ALSO ADVERTISE A VISION OF THE GOOD LIFE AS ONE FILLED WITH GLISTENING NEW TOYS. ADS PROMOTE THE IDEA THAT BUYING PRODUCTS WILL MAKE US HAPPY.



THEY ALSO KEEP US FROM THINKING TOO MUCH. ADVERTISING IS DESIGNED TO AROUSE INSTANT RESPONSES, TO MANIPULATE, TO ASSOCIATE OBJECTS WITH VIEWERS' PRIMAL EMOTIONS. RARE IS THE AD THAT HONESTLY DESCRIBES THE PRODUCT IT PUSHES.



IT'S POSSIB
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IT'S POSSIBLE, WE SUPPOSE, THAT ADVERTISERS THINK THEY ARE DOING SOMETHING GOOD, CONTRIBUTING TO THE HEALTH OF SOCIETY, AND PROMOTING PRODUCTIVE, HEALTHY VALUES. JUDGING BY THEIR OWN WORDS, HOWEVER, PROBABLY NOT.

"IF YOU OWN THIS CHILD AT AN EARLY AGE, YOU CAN OWN THIS KID FOR YEARS TO COME."

-MIKE SEARLES,
FORMER PRESIDENT
OF KIDS "R" US

"YOU CAN MANIPULATE CONSUMERS INTO WANTING AND THEREFORE BUYING YOUR PRODUCTS... IS IT ETHICAL? I DON'T KNOW. IT'S A GAME. OUR ROLE... IS TO MOVE PRODUCTS."

-LUCY HUGHES,
MARKETING CONSULTANT



MS HUGHES, BY THE WAY, IS CREDITED WITH INVENTING THE "NAG FACTOR," WHICH MEASURES HOW MUCH KIDS CAN BE PERSUADED TO PESTER THEIR PARENTS.



THE TOTAL VOLUME OF ADVERTISING DEFIES BELIEF. IN 2016, AMERICAN BUSINESS WILL SPEND AN ESTIMATED

\$550

ON ADVERTISING FOR EVERY INDIVIDUAL MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD IN THE U.S.—MORE THAN DOUBLE THE TOTAL OF 50 YEARS AGO, AND STILL RISING STEEPLY. SEE HOW THEY VALUE US?

**So Pure
You can eat it**



BUT... these charms may be wasted if she uses the **WRONG DEODORANT**



**COCAINE
TOOTHACHE DROPS**

Instantaneous Cure!
PRICE 15 CENTS.

Prepared by the
LLOYD MANUFACTURING CO.

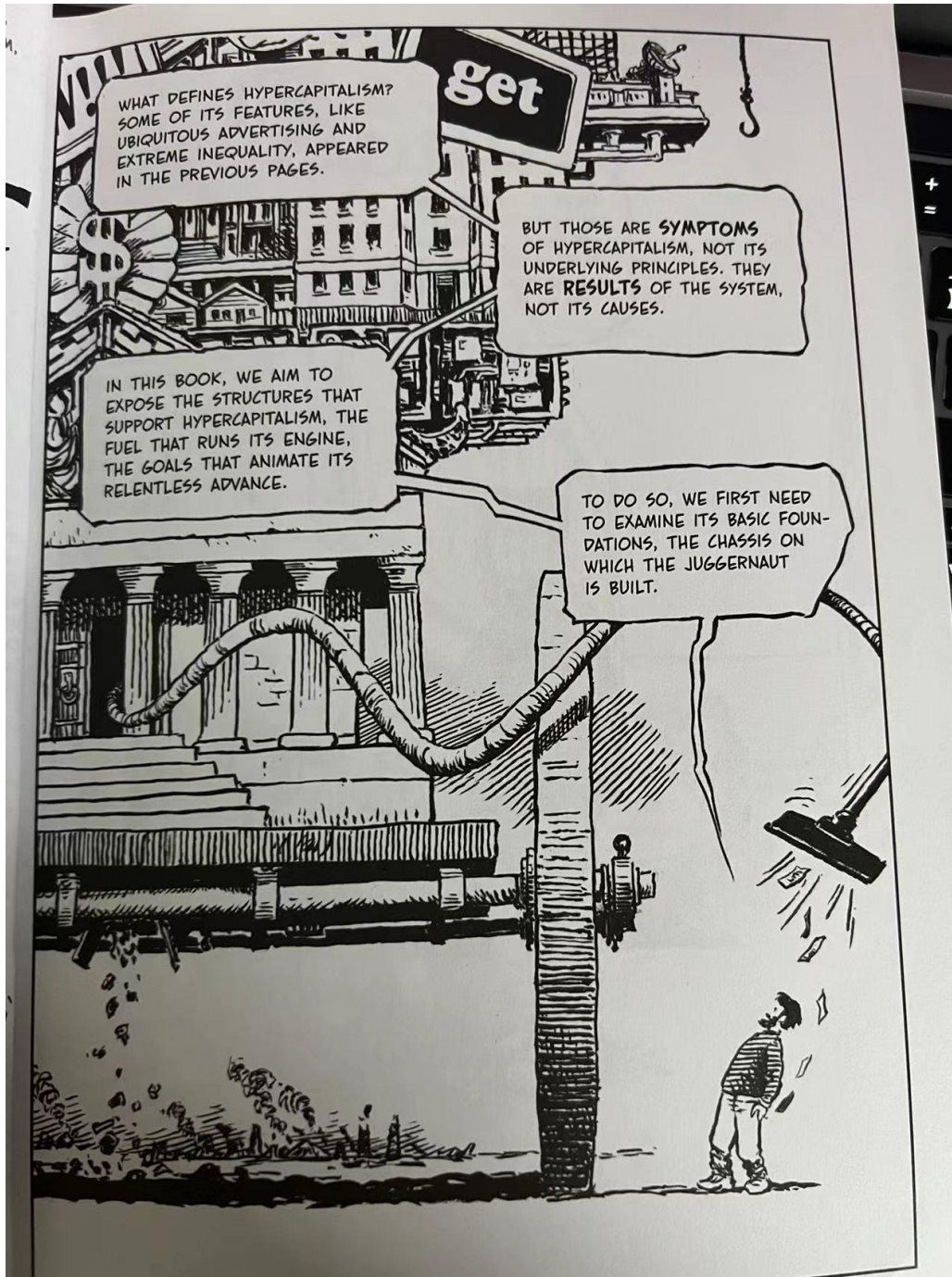
219 HUDSON AVE., ALBANY, N. Y.
For sale by all Druggists.

(Registered March 1885.) See other sides

ALL THESE TRENDS SUGGEST THAT THE COUNTRY—AND WITH IT THE WHOLE WORLD—HAS ENTERED INTO SOME CRAZY, EXTREME, OVERPOWERING STAGE OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM. NOW IT'S CAPITALISM ON STEROIDS... CAPITALISM EVERYWHERE ALL THE TIME... IT'S THE JUGGERNAUT WE CALL

HYPER CAPITALISM.





WHAT DEFINES HYPERCAPITALISM? SOME OF ITS FEATURES, LIKE UBIQUITOUS ADVERTISING AND EXTREME INEQUALITY, APPEARED IN THE PREVIOUS PAGES.

get

BUT THOSE ARE SYMPTOMS OF HYPERCAPITALISM, NOT ITS UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES. THEY ARE RESULTS OF THE SYSTEM, NOT ITS CAUSES.

IN THIS BOOK, WE AIM TO EXPOSE THE STRUCTURES THAT SUPPORT HYPERCAPITALISM, THE FUEL THAT RUNS ITS ENGINE, THE GOALS THAT ANIMATE ITS RELENTLESS ADVANCE.

TO DO SO, WE FIRST NEED TO EXAMINE ITS BASIC FOUNDATIONS, THE CHASSIS ON WHICH THE JUGGERNAUT IS BUILT.

FIRST, IN OTHER WORDS,
WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND
PLAIN, OLD, ORDINARY
CAPITALISM; ONLY THEN
CAN WE SEE HOW IT GOT
TO BE SO HYPER!

