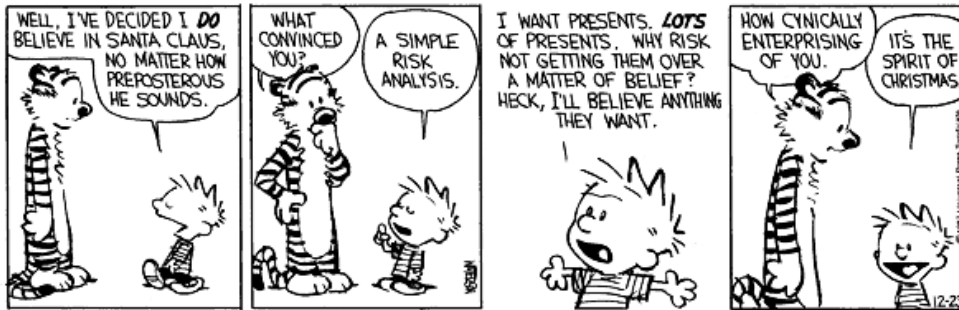


Name:
Consumerism, Commercialism and Altruism

Date:
Mrs. Seemayer



Unit Objectives

Know

-Students will know the terms consumerism, commercialism, altruism

Understand

- Students will understand how consumerism developed and impacts us as individuals
- Students will understand how commercialism and advertizing affects our choices and expectations
- Students will understand the concerns about altruism from a Christian perspective

Do

- Students will be able to read and annotate complex text
- Students will be able to make informed choices about purchasing
- Students will be able to discuss worldly deceptiveness through the perspective of a biblical worldview
- Students will be able to write a persuasive essay

The Culture of Consumerism

Christopher Lasch

During the early stages of industrialization, the provision of basic necessities absorbed most of the nation's productive capacity. Railroads, iron and steel, foundries and machine shops, lumber, textiles, and meat packing ranked among the leading industries in 1900.

By the middle of the twentieth century, however, the shift from heavy industry to consumer goods—automobiles, household appliances, radios and television sets, ready-made clothing, prepared food—was unmistakable. At the height of the postwar boom, consumer debt (excluding real estate loans) increased from \$27.4 billion to \$41.7 billion (52 percent) in the four years from 1952 to 1956 alone. Half of the families in the middle-income range carried installment payments.

Their ancestors had been taught that "he that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing," in the saying of Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard. In the "affluent society," as John Kenneth Galbraith called it in 1958, this homespun philosophy seemed as archaic as homespun clothing. The morality of thrift, it seemed, was hopelessly misplaced in an economy based on immediate gratification. "Buy now, pay later" sounded like a more appropriate axiom. Who could object to a little everyday extravagance when it helped to sustain unprecedented prosperity, an outpouring of goods? In supermarkets, shoppers chose from "thousands of items on the high-piled shelves," according to an excited report in *Life* magazine, "until their carts became cornucopias filled with an abundance that no other country in the world has ever known."

The Celebration of Waste

In the United States, a mass market in consumer goods began to take shape in the 1920s, collapsed in the Great Depression, and finally became the dominant fact of economic life in the 1940s and 1950s, thanks to the combined effects of government spending and the improvements in workers' standard of living achieved by labor unions. These developments in consumer culture tended to weaken moral traditions that stressed the value of hard work and self-command, cautioned against extravagant expectations of a trouble-free existence, and held individuals strictly accountable for their actions. In the 1920s, permissive moralities spread from elites to the masses. The postwar "revolution in manners and morals," much discussed at the time, in retrospect can be understood as the flowering of a consumer culture. The advertising industry, which first achieved prominence in the 1920s, allied itself with movements of cultural liberation or at least exploited liberationist ideologies for its own purposes. Edward Bernays, one of the founders of modern advertising and public

relations, boasted of having broken the taboo that kept women from smoking in public. Seizing on cigarettes as "torches of freedom" and invoking the memory of pre war parades for woman suffrage, he persuaded a contingent of women to join New York's Easter parade in 1929, ostentatiously smoking "as a protest against women's inequality," as he put it (Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness*, pp. 160–161). The flapper, who personified both the emancipation of women and the revolt of youth, appealed to advertisers as the personification of consumption as well. She embodied the spirit of change, the restless craving for novelty and excitement recognized by advertisers as the most important stimulus to consumption. Since young people were presumably more receptive to change than adults, advertising psychologists stressed the importance of introducing innovations by addressing them to the young. The rapid, pace of change made even children more knowledgeable about the new world of commodities than their parents. "Were it not for the children, some of you parents would not know even now what a tremendous change for the better Paramount has [made] in motion pictures" (Ewen, p. 148). Such advertisements had the effect of elevating the young to arbiters of taste, whose consumer preferences had to be respected by adults struggling to keep up with the changing times.

Advertisers made no secret of their intention to promote novelty for its own sake, in the hope that consumers would exchange perfectly serviceable goods for goods that conformed to the latest fashions. Earnest Elmo Calkins (1868-1964), one of the first to grasp the principle of "artificial obsolescence," distinguished between goods "we use" and "those we use up." It was the second category that fascinated advertisers and the manufacturers who followed their lead. "Artificial obsolescence," Calkins explained, meant the continual redesign of products, "entirely apart from any mechanical improvement, to make them markedly new, and encourage new buying, exactly as the fashion designers make shirts longer so you can no longer be happy with your short ones." The taste for "better things," as William L. Day pointed out, required an "ideal of beauty that happens to be current." "The world depends on obsolescence and new merchandise," said the industrial designer John Vassos (Jeffrey L. Meikle, *Twentieth-Century Limited*, pp. 16, 70, 83).

Resistance to Creative Waste.

This open celebration of waste, so obviously incompatible with the ideals of thrift and saving in which most Americans had been raised, met with a good deal of initial resistance in the business world. Henry Ford (1863–1947), a pioneer in the technology of mass production, took an unfashionably narrow view of consumption. In 1926, he declared that Ford owners represented the "vast majority [who] cling to the old-fashioned idea of living within their incomes." A year later, he brought out the

Model A and immediately froze its design, to the dismay of the advertising industry. His intention, he said, was to manufacture a car "so strong and so well-made that no one ought ever to have to buy a second one." But Ford's rival Alfred P Sloan (1875–1966) had already pointed the way to the future by introducing annual model changes at General Motors. By 1927, his Chevrolet was outselling the Model T; the introduction of the Model A, notwithstanding Ford's hatred of extravagance, was itself a concession to the principle of "creative waste," as the advertising consultant Christine Frederick called it (Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, pp. 157–159). Eventually Ford capitulated to fashion and allowed his designers to introduce new models every year, like his increasingly successful competitors.

The Great Depression forced millions of Americans to spend less freely than before, but it did not revive respect for the simple life. Walter B. Pitkin (1878–1953), a Columbia professor, warned advertisers that hard times might encourage a "return to the primitive, a back-to-the-soil type of living" (Marchand, pp. 300–301). Instead of deploring such a prospect, a handful of prominent figures actually welcomed it. Senator John H. Bankhead (1872–1946) of Alabama called for an agrarian revival, a "restoration of that small yeoman class which has been the backbone of every great civilization." Ford himself, still unreconciled to the culture of consumption, launched an abortive movement back to the land in 1932: "The land! That is where our roots are. No unemployment insurance can be compared to an alliance between a man and a plot of land" (Schlesinger, *The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal*, pp. 361–363).

Spending for Prosperity.

But nothing came of these appeals. Those who set the terms of public discussion argued that spending, not saving, held out the best hope of prosperity. Advertisements and motion pictures continued to admire the rich, dwelling in loving detail on their pearls, yachts, and luxurious mansions. Advertisements designed to exploit the "whole ground of feminine longing and feminine envy," as the Hoover Company explained to its salesmen, encouraged middle- and working-class women to aspire to opulence and ease. "You see her wearing a plain little house dress, but she sees herself someday in velvet and ermine." In the meantime, she used a vacuum cleaner "that the richest woman in the world can't outdo her in." The idea behind its advertising campaign, Hoover pointed out, was to picture the "woman of wealth and the woman of little means," to "contrast their situation" and reveal the "gulf" between them, and then to "bridge that gulf" by showing that both owned a Hoover. A trade journal, *Advertising and Selling*, held up the Hoover campaign as the epitome of psychological insight. "Ordinary folks are always pleased to know they

can have the products good enough for Vanderbilts, Astors, Huttons, Mellons, and Fords" (quoted in Marchand, pp. 292-295).

World War II, in spite of shortages and rationing, did nothing to reduce the social prestige of goods or the appeal of consumption. On the contrary, wartime propaganda explained the war essentially as a defense of the high standard of living Americans were privileged to enjoy. The "American way of life" was now identified so closely with the American standard of living, and freedom with a wide choice of competing consumer goods, that appeals to any larger war aims seemed almost superfluous, unlikely to succeed in any case. The postwar migration to the suburbs, even more clearly than the war effort, indicated how completely the consumerist ideal had eclipsed older conceptions of the American dream. Any lingering sense of a common civic identity was unlikely to flourish in communities populated by rootless, transient individuals and organized around the pursuit of private pleasures. Single family dwellings and private motorcars, not to mention the absence of civic amenities, made this commitment to privacy unmistakable. Physically removed from the workplace, suburbs were devoted to leisure by definition, and the vast housing tracts that grew up on their fringes, pushing farther and farther into the countryside, announced in every detail of their design that leisure was to be enjoyed in private more often than not, in front of a television set.

In 1946, only six thousand television sets were manufactured in the United States. By 1953, the figure had risen to seven million. The number of sets in use rose from seventeen thousand in 1946 to ninety million in 1971. This seductive new medium promoted consumption not merely in advertising but in programs that typically showed suburban families surrounded by their possessions. Its imagery of abundance, however fantastic and dreamlike, had a firm basis in fact. In the 1950s, the number of Americans owning their dwellings surpassed the number of renters for the first time in the twentieth century. By 1960, a quarter of those dwellings had been built during the previous decade—striking evidence of the postwar housing boom. Only 12 percent of them lacked a bathtub or shower, as compared to 39 percent in 1940. Ninety-eight percent had a refrigerator. Thirteen percent had air conditioning, and by 1968 this figure had risen to 37 percent.

In the 1920s, most industrial workers still enjoyed neither paid holidays nor vacations. By 1963, eight holidays and a two-week vacation were the norm. Leisure spending accounted for 15 percent of the gross national product by 1950. The emergence of a youth market further testified to the shift from a production to a consumption ethic. In 1963 American adolescents spent \$22 billion—an amount, as William E. Leuchtenburg

points out, that was double the gross national product of Austria (A Troubled Feast, p. 65).

It was no wonder that America was now admired-when it was not hated or feared-less for its democratic institutions or its championship of democratic revolutions abroad, as in the old days, than for its vast and seemingly inexhaustible wealth. A lavish display of American products in a Swiss department store, accompanied by the injunction to "live like an American," left no doubt about the meaning of that slogan. When Vice President Richard M. Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev debated the merits of capitalism and communism at the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959, it was entirely fitting that their argument took place in a model kitchen full of labor-saving appliances. What Nixon and Khrushchev said on that occasion was of no importance; the goods spoke for themselves.

The Affluent Society.

Consumer goods spoke so loudly, in fact, that social critics began to fear that the voice of moderation and sobriety was in danger of being completely submerged in the clamorous invitation to buy, to borrow, and to spend without a second thought, and to indulge every whim as quickly as it came to mind. When Dwight Eisenhower engaged an advertising firm to promote his campaign for the presidency in 1952, many commentators objected to this packaging of a candidate by Madison Avenue-a practice that threatened to replace political discourse with advertising slogans. Mass promotion, it was now clear, would not stop with the marketing of washing machines and refrigerators. In *The Image* (1962), Daniel Boorstin pointed out that images of reality threatened to replace reality itself, so that politics came to revolve not around events but around "pseudo-events" staged for the benefit of the mass media. Paul Goodman argued that American youth were "growing up absurd," unable to look forward to useful, honorable work that made some lasting contribution to society instead of producing goods no one really needed. Galbraith's *Affluent Society* (1958) called attention to the contrast between "private affluence and public squalor." According to Galbraith, neither economists nor politicians and administrators admitted the "diminishing urgency of wants" in the age of abundance. Instead they sought to engineer a constantly rising level of private consumption, while public services and amenities were allowed to decay.

Materials Cited

Boorstin, Daniel J. *The Image: The Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (rev. ed., New York: Atheneum, 1972).

Ewen, Stuart. *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1976).

Galbraith, John Kenneth. *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).

Leuchtenburg, William E. *A Troubled Feast: American Society Since 1945* (rev ed., Boston: Little, Brown, 1979).

Marchand, Roland. *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1985).

Meikle, Jeffrey L. *Twentieth-Century Limited. Industrial Design in America, 1925-1939* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979).

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr. *The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the Flew Deal* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959).

Excerpted from Mary Kupiec Cayton, Elliott J. Gorn, and Peter W Williams, eds., *Encyclopedia of American Social History* (New York: Gale Group, 1993, pp.1381–90.)

Selected Bibliography

Historical Studies of Consumption, c. 1920–c. 1970

Blaszczyk, Regina Lee. *Imagining Consumers: Design and Innovation from Wedgwood to Corning* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

Glickman, Lawrence B., ed. *Consumer Society in American History: A Reader* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1999).

Lears, T. J. Jackson, and Richard Wightman Fox, eds. *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1983).

Lee, Martyn J., ed. *The Consumer Society Reader* (New York: Blackwell, 2000).

Lubar, Steven, and Kathleen Kendrick. *Legacies: Collecting America's History at the Smithsonian* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

Miller, Daniel. *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (New York: Blackwell, 1987).

———ed. *Material Culture: Why Some Things Matter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Mullins, Paul R. "Race and the Genteel Consumer: Class and African-American Consumption, 1850-1930," *Historical Archeology* 33 (1999).

Ownby Ted. *American Dreams in Mississippi: Consumers, Poverty, and Culture, 1830-1998* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

Roszak, Theodore. *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1969).

Schor, Juliet B., *The Overspent American: Upscaling, Downshifting, and the New Consumer* (New York: Basic Books, 1998).

Spears, Timothy B. *100 Years on the Road: The Traveling Salesmen in American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

Strasser, Susan, Charles McGovern, and Matthias Jut, eds. *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/idealabs/ap/essays/consume.htm>

Reading Beyond the Labels

An introduction to being an ethical consumer

What is ethical consumerism?

Put very simply, Ethical Consumerism means adopting a different perspective on our disposable income. Instead of seeing money as a means to buying us status, luxury goods or an improved quality of life, we also need to consider our money as a vote which we use every time we go shopping. Buying cheap clothes which have been made in sweatshops is a vote for worker exploitation. Buying a gas guzzling 4X4, especially if you are a city dweller, is a vote for climate change. Even small, everyday purchases, such as coffee, tea, breakfast cereal, bread or bin-bags are a vote for something. Favouring organic produce is a vote for environmental sustainability and Fairtrade, a vote for human rights.

Taking other costs into account

In the UK, the cheapness of our food, clothing and electrical appliances can make headline news. Yet it's important to remember that while we might be saving money, there's always a cost somewhere down the line. It could be an environmental cost – cheap, throwaway electrical goods cost us dearly in terms of landfill, chemicals leaching into our soil and in their environmentally destructive production. It could be a human cost. Cheap clothing produced in East Asia or Central America comes at a cost to those making the clothes, earning barely enough to survive. Factory farmed animals, meanwhile, may make cheap meat but it comes at a price of the quality of life of the animal. When it comes to supermarkets, the cost can be to our high streets and local shops. Considering ethical issues when we go shopping means taking impacts like this into account.

Putting the pressure on

It's not just the links between the product and its impact that ethical consumers need to consider, but the activities of the company behind the brand. A small number of multinational companies own a large proportion of our favourite brands. Many of these companies are involved in a range of unethical activities. By withdrawing our custom from those companies, we can let them know that we don't approve of those activities – especially if, at the same time, we let them know WHY we're withdrawing our custom.

Using the power in our wallets

As consumers, we have a great deal of power in our pockets and we've already effected change. We just need to look at the example of how the supermarkets and food companies responded on the issue of genetically modified food. The threat of withdrawing our custom can, and already has, changed company policy.

Yet, even if it doesn't change a company's ways, your choices are no less worthwhile, especially if you are supporting smaller, more ethical companies at the same time. And happily, despite mergers and takeovers of smaller brands, there are still plenty of alternatives and a growing number of smaller companies which are as concerned with making the world a better place as they are with making profits. This is the positive side of ethical consumerism. It is just as much about supporting the 'good' companies and products as it is withdrawing our support from the 'bad' ones.

Making your vote count

It's often easy to get overwhelmed by the scale of the problem and by the number of changes that you could make. This is where Ethical Consumer comes in. By pulling together and evaluating all the different kinds of advice and information that we get from campaigners and companies, we can present clear conclusions about the best options. It's important to remember that small steps can lead to bigger ones, and it's better to take a few small steps than no steps at all. Every vote counts. Awareness of global poverty, animal welfare and green issues are at an all time high. If we can carry this awareness into our shopping basket, we can all work together to help make the world a better place, and make sure that companies start treating it, and us, with more respect. While money may make the world go round, deciding how we spend our money might just save it.

What is ethical?

There's no one universal definition of 'ethical', but broadly speaking when Ethical Consumer talks about an ethical product, we mean something which has not harmed or exploited humans, animals or the environment. Sometimes, we would go further and say that an ethical product or company is one that actively benefits humans, animals or the environment.

Four types of ethical buying

Positive buying.

This means favouring particular ethical products, such as energy saving lightbulbs.

Negative purchasing.

This means avoiding products that you disapprove of, such as battery eggs or gas-guzzling cars.

Company based purchasing

This means targeting a business as a whole and avoiding all the products made by one company. For example, the Nestlé boycott has targeted all its brands and subsidiaries in a bid to get the company to change the way it

markets its baby milk formula across the world.

Fully screened approach

This means looking both at companies and at products and evaluating which product is the most ethical overall. This is exactly what we do in the magazine and the Best Buys that we recommend are essentially the most ethical, ‘fully-screened’ products that we can find.

What to prioritise when I go shopping

Obviously, we all know that price is important when we go shopping. But to be an Ethical Consumer, you need to start taking other factors into account when you buy things. There are, of course, many different issues to consider. Just like religion, ethics aren’t universal, and what may be important to one person, may not be as important to another.

Not black and white

Sometimes the choices aren’t always straightforward – is it better to buy organic vegetables flown in from overseas, or nonorganic vegetables from a local farmer? In these cases, you often have to decide which is more important to you right now. It’s also important to realize that sometimes, there is no one right answer.

What issues are important to me?

You want to start to try and shop a bit more ethically, but don’t know where to start? Your first step is to decide what issues you are most concerned about. You might decide that one area or issue (such as climate change or animal welfare) is of utmost importance to you, or you might decide that all are equally important. Everyone’s priorities are different.

The difference between an ethical product and an ethical company

This is where it gets a little more complicated. When Ethical Consumer first started, things were a lot clearer because, in the main, companies who made ethical products did so because they had belief in those issues. These days, it seems that everyone has jumped on the bandwagon. This isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It’s encouraging that the big companies are making ethical products and investing in ethical brands. Some products might be considered ‘ethical’ – such as an organic t-shirt – but the company that owns the brand might not be. This can make it a bit harder to sort the wheat from the chaff for those consumers who want to avoid big companies which have dubious ethical records. This is where the tables in the magazine, or our online databases, come in. You can see which companies own each brand, and their ethical record across all the different categories. To help you find the most ethical product, we also have special product sustainability columns on our table. These columns let you know which products have positive qualities – such as being

fairtrade, organic or made from recycled paper.

What should I look for when I shop?

At the moment there isn't one universal 'ethical' label, although companies that receive 'best buys' in our magazine may be invited to use our logo on those products. The main labels to look for are becoming more and more widespread. These are:

Organic



The jury may still be out as to whether organic foods are demonstrably better for your health, but organic crops are far superior for our environment. Organic farming improves biodiversity and is more beneficial for local wildlife. It isn't just edible crops that benefit from organic farming. Cotton is a major consumer of pesticides, using around a quarter of the world's insecticides and more than 10% of the pesticides. Pesticide use isn't just detrimental to the environment but also has serious health implications for those working with these crops. Organic products, including organic clothing, are more readily available than ever before. Find out more from the Soil Association www.soilassociation.org

Fairtrade



The Fairtrade mark is an independent label which guarantees that disadvantaged producers in the third world are getting a better deal than they would do otherwise. For a product to display the mark, it must meet special Fairtrade standards, which are the same all over the world. These standards are inspected and independently assessed. Those producing Fairtrade products receive a minimum price which covers the cost of sustainable production. This is because these prices can often fluctuate on the open market, meaning that sometimes, especially with commodities such as coffee or chocolate, producers can get paid less for their crop than it costs them to produce it. As well as the set minimum, with the Fairtrade logo, producers also receive an extra premium which is invested in social or economic development projects. The Fairtrade symbol is found on over 3000 UK products from coffees to flowers. Find out more from www.fairtrade.org

Vegetarian Society



This symbol, licensed by the Vegetarian Society, tells you that a product is suitable for vegetarians. It is found on over 6400 products in the UK. The Ethical Consumer 'best buy' logo is only available for products which have received a best buy in our magazine. It was registered as a Trade Mark in September 2007. Like other labels it should make life easier for people who want to consume more responsibly. Unlike other labels, it's more holistic. A product displaying the best buy logo will have been produced

by a company with the best environmental, social and animal ratings, and the product itself should also sustainable too.

Vegan Society



This symbol is licensed by the Vegan Society and means that a product is suitable for vegans. A vegan is someone who in addition to not eating any meat, fish or poultry, doesn't eat or use other animal products, including eggs, dairy products, honey, leather and fur. Find out more from the Vegan Society www.vegansociety.com

Forest Stewardship Council



Old-growth forests around the world, from the Amazon in Brazil to ancient forests in Indonesia, continue to be logged, often illegally. The best way to ensure that a wood or paper product has come from a sustainable source is to look out for the Forest Stewardship Council's logo or buy recycled products. You'll find the FSC logo on a range of products including garden furniture, shelving and even toilet paper. Visit www.fsc-uk.info for a list of FSC certified products

The Leaping Bunny



This 'bunny' logo is awarded by Cruelty Free International and is found on cosmetics and household cleaning products which haven't been tested on animals. In order to be approved companies have very strict guidelines to follow, rather than just issuing a policy statement. The standards require companies to prove their claims and to undergo independent audit through the supply chain to make sure that the criteria are met throughout. For more information visit www.gocrueltyfree.org

The Czech Dream?

Pavel Seifter 20 June 2005

Whenever I arrive in Prague these days and see the city encircled by Europe's biggest hypermarkets, a comparison with the old grey days of Communist Czechoslovakia comes to mind. I suspect all Czechs of a certain age have that stark contrast lying around somewhere in their unconscious. Filip Remunda & Vit Klusak, two young Czech filmmakers, get it absolutely right in their film *Czech Dream* ([Český Sen](#)) by starting with flashbacks.

We used to have a colourless land with everybody waiting to get something they needed or for something to happen. It was a grey place where time got stuck. The film opens with black-and-white reminders of the omnipresent police, slogans everywhere and people standing in queues waiting ... waiting for a kilo of bananas, half a kilo of oranges. The clever ones, the well informed, those who bribed and had the money knew when and where to be to get what everybody wanted but not everybody could have.

Suddenly, with the [velvet revolution](#) in 1989, colour, sound and life broke into the country. Markets, supermarkets and hypermarkets were standard-bearers of this new life and more welcome than anyone in the west can probably imagine, because of the freedom and prosperity they symbolised. But where do we find ourselves fifteen shopping years on?

Czech Dream is an 87-minute spoof documentary exploration of the absurdities the nation now finds itself caught up in. Remunda & Klusak describe it as "a subversive penetration into a world that an ordinary person usually doesn't have the chance to enter, the playground of the CEOs of international corporations, marketing consultants, but also politicians." They commissioned a campaign to promote a hypermarket that didn't exist in reality and watched how both manipulators and manipulated reacted. They hired a top advertising company, visited style consultants for a personal makeover, invested in psychometric tests about consumer choice. The professionals obliged with a brilliant plan.

"The advertising campaign was built on the principle of the so-called 'teaser'. In other words suspense and mystery," explain Remunda & Klusak. "The adverts said 'Don't go there! Don't spend your money! Don't queue up! Opening 31 May at 10am. Where? You'll find out soon.'"

More than 4,000 people certainly did. Come 31 May the campaign in the street, on radio and TV, in the metro, was so successful that young and old, fit and disabled, customers ranging from the vaguely interested and

the passionately keen, turned up for the opening of a non-existent hypermarket on the outer ring road. They found themselves beating a path through the long grass to a façade labelled *Czech Dream – The Hypermarket for a Better Life*.

The film has already carried off several international awards. It's a documentary, but immediately reminiscent of the “[new wave](#)” of [Czech films](#) in the 1960s, which famously included [Miloš Forman](#)'s *The Firemen's Ball*. Remunda & Klusak were not working in a genre where they could create characters at will. Forman could, but his work with non-actors doing their real jobs produced disarmingly similar results. What both sets of directors did was touch on the very uneasy relationship between reality and fantasy in daily life, nothing to do with art. The fallout from both films was extraordinary and once again similar.

In Forman's case firemen, the length and breadth of Czechoslovakia felt offended. Remunda & Klusak's film provoked national outrage. What happened in both cases was that the material of daily life, taken at face value in public debate, transcended its own role in the film. Remunda & Klusak, posing as hypermarket managing directors, became real actors in a rich Czech tradition. The amateur comedy duo is as much part of Czech tradition as [Laurel & Hardy](#) and [Morecambe & Wise](#).

When a hoax becomes art

One of the film's revelations was the way the marketing professionals were willing to be complicit in the farce. In fact they gave their services for nothing. When asked why, an executive of the leading advertising agency said:

“Why am I doing it? I love my job. I know it is me who can move the world. When Michelangelo was commissioned to paint the Sistine Chapel, he was simply doing what we are doing. He was not commissioned to do art, he was there to deliver an advert”.

He went on to explain that the advert was the real thing, not the product being promoted. A vague sense of moral unease was all one leading researcher into consumer behaviour felt, although, having passed the buck to the filmmakers – “it's your responsibility what you do with our findings” – she ended by putting her hand up to block the lens.

So, the hungry 4,000 are running – or hobbling – to be first through the door of *Czech Dream: The Hypermarket for A Better Life*. How do they react to finding nothing there? The camera catches immediate reactions of embarrassment and disappointment. A few are angry; many are resigned, just as they would have been in the old days. Remarkably, apart from a few boys who throw stones at a hoarding, no one is violent. Having

consulted the army on crowd behaviour, Remunda & Klusak risked exposing themselves to close contact with the crowd, but contrary to military wisdom, no one so much as laid a hand on them.

What are Czech [people](#): decent and peaceful or fearful, cowardly, and used to fitting in? For one reason or another, time and again, when others in the world react violently, they don't. The closing scenes of this film reminded me poignantly of the velvet revolution.

When the hoax hit the press, reactions were extraordinary for other reasons. Politicians and the media declared this low-budget film had wasted public money. Supported by [Czech Television](#), it had received 1.5 million Czech Crowns (£35,000) from the State Fund for the Support and Development of Czech Cinematography. Meanwhile 20% of the nation still believed the hypermarket existed. Thus the film continued in reality.

In familiar fashion the humiliated consumers at the end of the film diverted their anger into blaming someone or something: the filmmakers for lying, “us Czechs for being a nation of idiots”, and, indirectly, politicians “who make fools of us every day.” But the most absurd aggression was reserved for the European Union. The hoax coincided with the government campaign for a yes vote – and many people were quick to see both as equally fraudulent. “They’re lying to us. Is that how we are going to enter the EU?” On the spot, a Eurosceptic decided to vote against accession.

The real social reality that only peeps through the film is chilling. The prime minister of the day and top politicians used the same advertising agency and style consultants. The popularity of the *Czech Dream* theme song prompted not only another far more upmarket chain but also the country's strongest political party, the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), to steal it.

Meanwhile, amongst the tricked consumers were desperately poor pensioners who needed a bargain or just something to do. Czech characteristics continued to give the question of reality a twist to the very end. OK, said one older man out with his wife, so they had been deceived, but here they were in the middle of a field on a sunny day: what could be better?

https://www.opendemocracy.net/arts-Film/czech_2617.jsp

Brand Identification

Directions: Label the name of the company that goes with each logo below.



What's behind the culture of Photoshop in advertising

[Susan Krashinsky](#) - MARKETING REPORTER

The Globe and Mail

Published Thursday, Mar. 21 2013, 7:29 PM EDT

Last updated Friday, Mar. 22 2013, 11:47 AM EDT

For years, Dove has pulled off a neat trick: criticizing beauty industry advertising to advertise its beauty products.

The most famous example was its “[Evolution](#)” video, which showed how a regular woman could be given supermodel looks through Photoshop, which digitally manipulated her face to look slimmer and her neck longer; eliminated even the smallest imperfection; and exaggerated features such as plush lips and doe eyes to an unrealistic scale. The campaign was an early example of a viral video, attracting plenty of attention for parent company Unilever, and netting two Grand Prix awards for Ogilvy & Mather Toronto at the Cannes advertising festival in 2007.

Since then, the company has panned the use of young models in [anti-aging ads](#) (in an ad for its Pro-Age product line,) and has also run self-esteem education programs for young girls as part of its long-running “[Campaign for Real Beauty](#).”

On International Women’s Day earlier this month, Ogilvy Toronto once again turned to criticizing Photoshop in an online campaign – and targeted colleagues in the advertising and design industry in the process.

In its “[Thought Before Action](#)” video, Ogilvy chronicled how it created a Photoshop tool called “Beautify,” which claimed to give a skin glow effect to models in photographs. It then promoted the tool on websites such as online forum Reddit, offering it for free download. The trick? When a user clicked the button to use the tool, instead of brightening skin it reverted all the changes in the image to its original.

The video has since racked up just over 800,000 views on YouTube – a relatively strong showing. It has also raised some eyebrows for its claim that art directors, graphic designers and photo retouchers are the ones who are “responsible for manipulating our perceptions.” But it raises the opportunity for a discussion – just where does the demand for photo retouching come from?

“It’s a good message, but it seems mis-targeted,” said Dan Strasser, an art director and associate creative director at Bensimon Byrne in Toronto. “Anybody who is one of those guys knows that we’re not the ones pushing

for that. But we are the ones doing it. It's just who they aimed at to generate buzz and try to get more of a general response."

When asked whether handing in a photo that had not been retouched would elicit a negative reaction from a client, Mr. Strasser said, "hands down."

"It's just expected. Everything gets retouched ... even if you're just taking a photo of a natural setting. You're going to tweak the colour balance."

Indeed, retouching affects all types of advertising. McDonald's Canada attracted attention last year with a [set of videos](#) answering people's not-so-flattering questions about the food. By far the most popular video dealt with why burgers look so perfect in ads. The [video](#) revealed the Photoshop tricks used to cover cracks in the bun, correct sagging cheese slices, and generally create unrealistic expectations of burger beauty.

But the subject of retouching in beauty advertising is considerably more fraught.

Many of us like to think that we're smart enough not to be reduced to shivering masses of insecurity simply because we see a David's Bridal ad in which the model's waist is magically [smaller than her head](#). In 2008, researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that women who saw images of very thin actresses and models experienced a negative effect on their body image.

Citing evidence that skewed beauty images can promote eating disorders, Israel passed a law last year prohibiting advertisers from using models with a body mass index of 18.5 or less, and requiring a disclosure in ads where models had been Photoshopped to look thinner.

"Art directors and designers don't work in silos ... there is a discussion as to what needs to be done to the image. That discussion happens with the client and the agency," said Linda Carte, vice president and associate creative director at BBDO Toronto, who has done work for Holt Renfrew and Hudson's Bay, among others. "The majority of images you see in fashion and beauty have been retouched ... you have to tell kids that not everything you see or read is fact."

Most often, the retouching Ms. Carte does focuses on removing awkward-looking shadows, correcting skin discoloration, and erasing blemishes. "I've never been asked to do something I don't agree with." (She also noted that while she will sometimes download a typeface, she has never sought out a Photoshop tool on Reddit – though Unilever says its fake tool was downloaded more than 9,000 times.)

But, she emphasized, the demand for retouching is not created by advertising agencies.

“I’m not blaming anybody, or criticizing art directors. ... It’s an entire culture, the entire industry,” said Sharon MacLeod, Unilever Canada’s vice-president of marketing. “If I could find some clever way of getting [marketers] to think differently, I would do that too. ... Hopefully, all that Dove has done for years is sparked debate for clients and advertising agencies.”

On the same day its latest video was released, Unilever Canada also launched a Facebook campaign called “[ad makeover](#),” criticizing the weight-loss ads that are prevalent on the social network. On the company’s Facebook page, visitors could send out ads with positive messages. So far more than 2,000 people have created ads.

It’s also brought up an old criticism of Unilever, used since the Real Beauty campaign began – that it is rather ironic to see these feel-good messages from the [same company that owns the Axe product line](#). Ms MacLeod sees no issue with it, saying that Axe’s ads are “intentionally over the top” and humorous.

The issue of retouching gets at a core concept of advertising, however.

“You cannot court consumers without creating some gap of where you are and where you want to be. Advertising is precisely aimed at that gap,” said Sasha Grujicic, executive vice-president and head of strategy at Aegis Media Canada. He has watched advertising dollars – and consumer attention – flow into social media, and sees a consumer-centric shift in place that informs this issue as well. “There’s a desire to move past the veneers with brands, and buy into the authentic truth behind a company. ... This is the big struggle that agencies now face.”

There are so many examples of fashion and beauty advertising abusing Photoshop that there are blogs devoted to the subject. Here are some examples of its use, and misuse:

Dior

Jennifer Lawrence cemented her Hollywood sweetheart status at Oscar time with an endearing joke about her fall on the way to the stage, a [down-to-earth demeanour](#), and generally for [not being Anne Hathaway](#). But she also took a moment on the red carpet to reflect on digital retouching. When an *Access Hollywood* host showed her the photos of her new campaign for Dior handbags, she declared, “That doesn’t look like me at

all. I love Photoshop more than anything in the world.” When her interviewer tried to disagree, she replied, “Of course it’s Photoshop. People don’t look like that.”

H&M

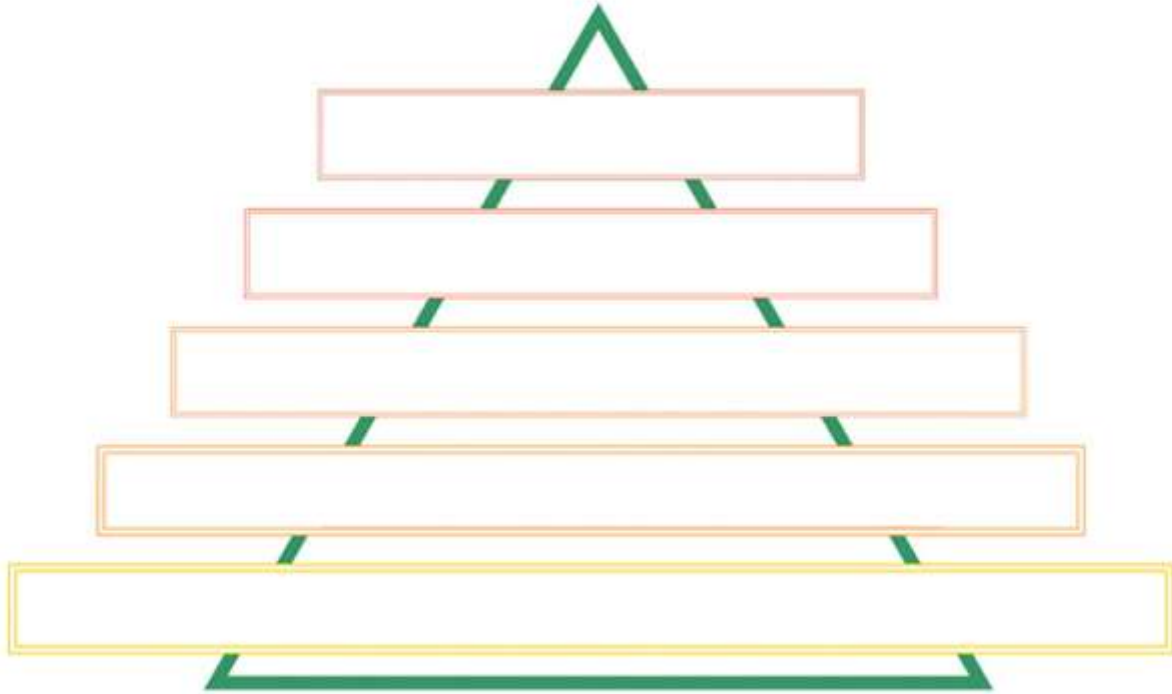
Proving that “people don’t look like that,” the Sweden-based retailer courted controversy in 2011 when a Norwegian website revealed that its online store was pasting models’ heads on to a single perfect digitally-generated body. The flawless body was adjusted only to match the model’s skin colour, and appeared over and over in the [identical pose](#) with one hand on its hip. A spokesperson for the company [said at the time](#) that the “virtual mannequin” pictures would appear alongside photos of real models. “This is not about ideals or to show off a perfect body, we do this to demonstrate an item of clothing. This is done for all clothing, not just for underwear, both male and female clothing,” the spokesperson said.

Ralph Lauren

In 2009, the fashion house threatened legal action against the websites [Boing Boing](#) and [Photoshop Disasters](#) after they posted an ad for its Blue Label line featuring a model digitally retouched to be completely out of proportion, including an impossibly thin waist. The company later issued a statement about “the poor imaging and retouching” and saying it would “take every precaution to ensure that the caliber of our artwork represents our brand appropriately.” More [examples](#) continued to [surface](#), however.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/marketing/whats-behind-the-culture-of-photoshop-in-advertising/article10111740/>

Mazlow's Hierarchy of Needs



Opinion: Does Mazlow's Hierarchy of Needs explain people who lead a lifestyle of sin? Why, or why not?

Is Pure Altruism Possible?

By [Judith Lichtenberg](#)

October 19, 2010 5:17 pm

Who could doubt the existence of altruism?

True, news stories of malice and greed abound. But all around us we see evidence of human beings sacrificing themselves and doing good for others. Remember [Wesley Autrey](#)? On Jan. 2, 2007, Mr. Autrey jumped down onto the tracks of a New York City subway platform as a train was approaching to save a man who had suffered a seizure and fallen. A few months later the Virginia Tech professor [Livi Librescu](#) blocked the door to his classroom so his students could escape the bullets of Seung-Hui Cho, who was on a rampage that would leave 32 students and faculty members dead. In so doing, Mr. Librescu gave his life.

Still, doubting altruism is easy, even when it seems at first glance to be apparent. It's undeniable that people sometimes act in a way that benefits others, but it may seem that they always get something in return — at the very least, the satisfaction of having their desire to help fulfilled. Students in introductory philosophy courses torture their professors with this reasoning. And its logic can seem inexorable.

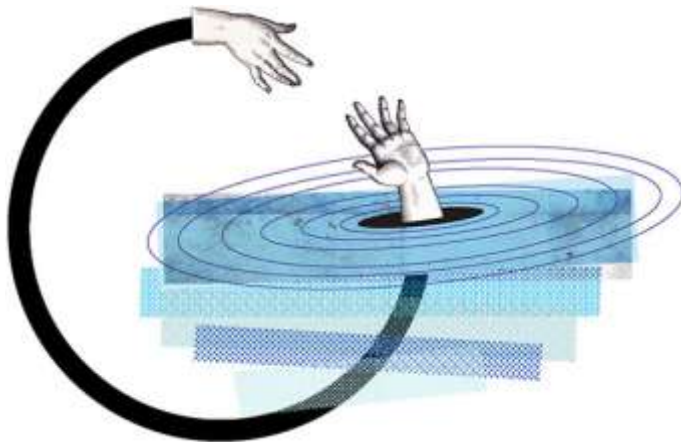
The view that people never intentionally act to benefit others except to obtain some good for themselves still possesses a powerful lure over our thinking.

Contemporary discussions of altruism quickly turn to evolutionary explanations. Reciprocal altruism and kin selection are the two main theories. According to reciprocal altruism, evolution favors organisms that sacrifice their good for others in order to gain a favor in return. Kin selection — the famous “selfish gene” theory popularized by [Richard Dawkins](#) — says that an individual who behaves altruistically towards others who share its genes will tend to reproduce those genes. Organisms may be altruistic; genes are selfish. The feeling that loving your children more than yourself is hard-wired lends plausibility to the theory of kin selection.

These evolutionary theories explain a puzzle: how organisms that sacrifice their own “reproductive fitness” — their ability to survive and reproduce — could possibly have evolved. But neither theory fully accounts for our ordinary understanding of altruism.

The defect of reciprocal altruism is clear. If a person acts to benefit another in the expectation that the favor will be returned, the natural response is: “That’s not altruism!” Pure altruism, we think, requires a person to sacrifice for another without consideration of personal gain. Doing good for another person because something’s in it for the do-er is the very opposite of what we have in mind. Kin selection does better by allowing that organisms may genuinely sacrifice their interests for another, but it fails to explain why they sometimes do so for those with whom they share no genes, as Professor Librescu and Mr. Autrey did.

When we ask whether human beings are altruistic, we want to know about their motives or intentions. Biological altruism explains how unselfish behavior might have evolved but, as Frans de Waal suggested in his [column in The Stone](#) on Sunday, it implies nothing about the motives or intentions of the agent: after all, birds and bats and bees can act altruistically. This fact helps to explain why, despite these evolutionary theories, the view that people never intentionally act to benefit others except to obtain some good for themselves still possesses a powerful lure over our thinking.



Erin Schell

The lure of this view — egoism — has two sources, one psychological, the other logical. Consider first the psychological. One reason people deny that altruism exists is that, looking inward, they doubt the purity of their own motives. We know that even when we appear to act unselfishly, other reasons for our behavior often rear their heads: the prospect of a future favor, the boost to reputation, or simply the good feeling that comes from appearing to act unselfishly. As Kant and Freud observed, people’s true motives may be hidden, even (or perhaps especially) from themselves. Even if we think we’re acting solely to further another person’s good, that might not be the real reason. (There might be no single “real reason” — actions can have multiple motives.)

So the psychological lure of egoism as a theory of human action is partly explained by a certain humility or skepticism people have about their own or others' motives. There's also a less flattering reason: denying the possibility of pure altruism provides a convenient excuse for selfish behavior. If "everybody is like that" — if everybody *must* be like that — we need not feel guilty about our own self-interested behavior or try to change it.

The logical lure of egoism is different: the view seems impossible to disprove. No matter how altruistic a person appears to be, it's possible to conceive of her motive in egoistic terms. On this way of looking at it, the guilt Mr. Autrey would have suffered had he ignored the man on the tracks made risking his life worth the gamble. The doctor who gives up a comfortable life to care for AIDS patients in a remote place does what she wants to do, and therefore gets satisfaction from what only appears to be self-sacrifice. So, it seems, altruism is simply self-interest of a subtle kind.

The kind of altruism we ought to encourage is satisfying to those who practice it.

The impossibility of disproving egoism may sound like a virtue of the theory, but, as philosophers of science know, it's really a fatal drawback. A theory that purports to tell us something about the world, as egoism does, should be falsifiable. Not false, of course, but capable of being tested and thus proved false.

If every state of affairs is compatible with egoism, then egoism doesn't tell us anything distinctive about how things are.

A related reason for the lure of egoism, noted by Bishop Joseph Butler in the 18th century, concerns ambiguity in the concepts of desire and the satisfaction of desire. If people possess altruistic motives, then they sometimes act to benefit others without the prospect of gain to themselves. In other words, they desire the good of others for its own sake, not simply as a means to their own satisfaction. It's obvious that Professor Librescu desired that his students not die, and acted accordingly to save their lives. He succeeded, so his desire was satisfied. But *he* was not satisfied — since he died in the attempt to save the students. From the fact that a person's desire is satisfied we can draw no conclusions about effects on his mental state or well-being.

Still, when our desires are satisfied we normally experience satisfaction; we feel good when we do good. But that doesn't mean we do good only in order to get that "warm glow" — that our true incentives are self-interested (as [economists](#) tend to claim). Indeed, as de Waal argues, if we didn't desire the good of others for its own sake, then attaining it wouldn't produce the warm glow.

Common sense tells us that some people are more altruistic than others. Egoism's claim that these differences are illusory — that deep down, everybody acts only to further their own interests — contradicts our observations and deep-seated human practices of moral evaluation.

At the same time, we may notice that generous people don't necessarily suffer more or flourish less than those who are more self-interested. Altruists may be more content or fulfilled than selfish people. Nice guys don't always finish last.

But nor do they always finish first. The point is rather that the kind of altruism we ought to encourage, and probably the only kind with staying power, is satisfying to those who practice it. Studies of rescuers show that they don't believe their behavior is extraordinary; they feel they must do what they do, because it's just part of who they are. The same holds for more common, less newsworthy acts — working in soup kitchens, taking pets to people in nursing homes, helping strangers find their way, being neighborly. People who act in these ways believe that they ought to help others, but they also want to help, because doing so affirms who they are and want to be and the kind of world they want to exist. As [Prof. Neera Badhwar](#) has argued, their identity is tied up with their values, thus tying self-interest and altruism together. The correlation between doing good and feeling good is not inevitable— inevitability lands us again with that empty, unfalsifiable egoism — but it is more than incidental.

Altruists should not be confused with people who automatically sacrifice their own interests for others. We admire Paul Rusesabagina, the hotel manager who saved over 1,000 Tutsis and Hutus during the 1994 Rwandan genocide; we admire health workers who give up comfortable lives to treat sick people in hard places. But we don't admire people who let others walk all over them; that amounts to lack of self-respect, not altruism.

Altruism is possible and altruism is real, although in healthy people it intertwines subtly with the well-being of the agent who does good. And this is crucial for seeing how to increase the amount of altruism in the world. Aristotle had it right in his "Nicomachean Ethics": we have to raise people from their "very youth" and educate them "so as both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought."



Judith Lichtenberg is professor of philosophy at Georgetown University. She is at work on a book on the idea of charity.

http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/19/is-pure-altruism-possible/?_r=0

Don't Do God's Will Like an Atheist

September 24, 2013

by [John Piper](#)

After [my message to the Liberty University student body](#) last week, a perceptive student asked this clarifying question: So you don't believe that altruistic acts are possible or desirable?

I asked for his definition of altruism so that I could answer what he was really asking. He said, "Doing a good deed for others with no view to any reward." I answered: that's right, whether or not it's possible, I don't think it's desirable, because it's not what the Bible teaches us to do; and it's not what people experience as genuine love. Because it isn't genuine love.

When God Is Glorified

I had said in the convocation message: Doing right for right's sake is atheistic. Christians should do what's right for *God's* sake; because the Bible teaches us to do everything for *the glory of God* ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#)). But God is not glorified if we leave him out of account, and say that doing a right deed is its own justification. Nothing is its own justification, if God is left out.

Christians should do what God says is right because in doing it we enjoy more of God. Jesus was motivating us to be generous to others when he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" ([Acts 20:35](#)). I'm simply saying that this motivating, promised "blessedness" is not mainly more money, but more God. God delights to reveal more of himself to the generous than to the stingy ([John 14:23](#)).

This motive glorifies God. God is glorified when he is desired as a treasure. If we want a deeper fellowship with him because he makes us happier than anyone else, we glorify him. So to be motivated to do right by the desire for more of God glorifies God.

How Jesus Motivates

Jesus said that when we are slandered as Christians we should rejoice ([Matthew 5:12](#)) and love our enemies ([Matthew 5:44](#)) "for great is your reward in heaven" ([Matthew 5:12](#)), and "so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven" ([Matthew 5:45](#)). The motivation he appeals to is that the path of sacrificial love leads to an increase of joy in our relationship to God as Father.

Jesus motivated us to “invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind” to our feast “because they cannot repay [us].” Then he added: “For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just” ([Luke 14:13–14](#)). In other words: Be generous; make sacrifices in this world; because great is your reward in heaven.

This reward, of course, includes everything in God’s inheritance. You will be an “heir of the world” ([Romans 4:13](#)). “All things are yours” ([1 Corinthians 3:21](#)). The meek “shall inherit the earth” ([Matthew 5:5](#)). Yes, the reward includes earthy things. But in that day there will be no danger of idolatry. The earth and the heavens and all things will declare the glory of God, and the essence of our joy in them will be joy in him. What makes our reward truly great is the greater fullness of our fellowship with God: “in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” ([Psalm 16:11](#)).

This “fullness” and this “forever” are behind the motivation of the early Christians when they did what was right and suffered for it. They visited fellow Christians in prison because they saw this reward: “You had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, *since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one*” ([Hebrews 10:34](#)). They rejoiced in persecution because their reward was great in heaven. That’s where they got the courage to risk their lives: It “had great reward” ([Hebrews 10:35](#)).

So I answer again: “Doing a good deed for others with no view to any reward” is unbiblical and atheistic. It dishonors God. He offers more joy in his fellowship to those who do right “for his sake” than “for right’s sake.” If we don’t embrace the offer of this reward in doing good, we belittle him. But if do embrace the offer, we show him as our supremely desired treasure — above all the rewards of doing wrong.

Our Joy in Loving Others

Finally, I said to the student’s good question: Not only does trying to do right for right’s sake dishonor God, it doesn’t show love to others. People don’t experience it as love. But why would they experience the good we do for them as love, if we are seeking our greater joy in God? Aren’t they just being used?

No. It’s because part of the greater joy we seek in God, by doing them good, is the inclusion of them in our joy. Our joy in God would be expanded by their joy in God. We are not using them for our greater joy. We are wooing them into our greater joy, and desiring that they become part of it.

Persuasive Essay

5 Paragraph Essay

Our culture often tries to take the idea of goodness and make it into something that is internally motivated. Discuss the argument of consumerism and commercialism vs. basic human needs and altruism, by biblical standards. What does our culture have right? What does it have wrong? How should we approach it as Christians?

Ideology of consumerism and commercialism	Ideology of basic human needs and altruism
Ideology of biblical standards of doing right	