

# The Greed Myth



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# What This Is About

There's a view: humans are primarily economic beings. The main driving force is the pursuit of gain. Economics determines values, relationships with the world, relationships with people. This view is so widespread it became the foundation of an entire science. In 2024, 40% of students in Germany enrolled in economics programs. For comparison: 5% in medicine. Germany produces 8 economists for every doctor. This is typical.

Economics is built on a story about a human who seeks gain in everything. This is the founding myth of economics. It's confirmed by neither anthropology nor history. That's normal for a myth. The myths of Sisyphus or Hercules aren't confirmed by anything either. But this myth isn't harmless: it provides moral cover for very specific immoral practices.

This article is about those practices and what can be done against them.

## 1. The Myth

If you look at this civilization from a slight distance, the first thing that jumps out is the story they tell about humans.

The story goes like this. Humans by nature are beings who compare, exchange, and seek maximum gain. It's always been this way. First people traded directly — barter. Then they invented money for more convenient exchange. Then markets grew, economics, banks, stock exchanges, and bitcoin. All this is the natural development of human nature.

This story is taught in schools. Textbooks repeat it. Economic theory is built on it. It's presented not as one hypothesis among many, but as a sober view of things. Realism. Anyone who thinks otherwise is a naive romantic.

The problem is: it's a fairy tale.

Anthropologist David Graeber calls it "the founding myth of economics." And shows: anthropology doesn't know a single actually documented society where a "pure barter economy" existed, from which money then grew. Not one. This scheme — barter, then money, then credit — isn't history. It's an ideological construct that textbooks have been repeating for three hundred years.

So how is human life actually organized?

Ask a colleague for a wrench — he won't ask "what do I get for this?" Help your neighbor carry a sofa — you won't send him an invoice. Feed a hungry friend — he won't sign a contract to return the calories.

Graeber calls this "baseline reciprocity": if people don't consider each other enemies, they usually help when the need is great and the cost of helping is low. This isn't sentimentality. It's the foundation on which communal life is possible at all. Without it there's no family, no neighborhood, no team, no society.

Economics is built on a different model. A model where a human is a walking profit calculator.

Why does the myth persist? Not because it's true. But because it's needed. It's needed to support the entire construct of economic thinking. Without it, the worldview collapses — the one where the market is the natural state and everything else is a deviation.

And here's what's important: the myth isn't a harmless error.

If humans "by nature" seek gain, then greed isn't a vice but a norm. Then helping without calculation is stupidity. Then crushing the weak isn't villainy but "competition." Then a system that rewards predators isn't sick but "natural" and "rational."

The myth about human nature provides moral cover for very specific practices. "This isn't cruelty — it's the market. This isn't exploitation — it's incentives. This isn't war (even economic war) — it's competition. This isn't greed — it's just how people are."

## 2. The Absurdity of Competition

Adam Smith expanded the founding myth of economics into a whole chain:

1. People are naturally inclined to exchange
2. Exchange leads to division of labor
3. Division of labor increases productivity
4. The market coordinates exchange
5. Competition selects the best
6. Progress is guaranteed

Sounds coherent. The invisible hand of the market.

Let's say it out loud, without the reverent tone.

If ten carpenters fight over the right to hammer one nail, then in the heat of the fight they'll accidentally invent the perfect hammer, and the house will somehow turn out stronger by itself.

This is so stupid it's embarrassing to explain why it's stupid.

A house isn't built by fighting. A house is built by coordination. One digs the foundation, another calculates the load, a third cuts the beams, a fourth runs the wiring, a fifth knows where you can't cut corners. They work together. Not against each other — together. Complex things are structured this way. A bridge. A hospital. An orchestra. A spacecraft. Everywhere the same: cooperation, division of labor, common goal, trust.

Now the market wisdom: no-no, better let everyone fight. Something good will grow from the fighting by itself.

This isn't just an error. It's common sense turned inside out.

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Fine, let's say it's just a bad way to build. But what does competition as a principle say about

humans?

Competition as a principle is the direct opposite of humanism.

Humanism says: support the weak. Competition says: weed out the weak.

Humanism says: a person has inherent worth. Competition says: a person has worth while winning.

Humanism says: help the one falling behind. Competition says: finish off the one falling behind, they're slowing the race.

And this meat grinder is called the foundation of civilization? Seriously?

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But wait. If competition is the weeding out of the weak, then what supports the market itself?

For the market to work at all, it needs things it doesn't create and can't explain. Trust. Law. Courts. A ban on direct violence. Honesty. Common standards. Education. Language. Morality. Limitation of monopolies. Protection of the weak. Punishment for fraud.

Remove these — and in a week the market turns into a pigsty.

Meaning: a theory that declares gain the main driver of the world secretly relies on morality, law, and cooperation as free props. It doesn't explain the world. It parasitizes on it. Like someone who spends hours proving friendship doesn't exist, then asks friends to help with moving.

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And the final touch, purely cartoonish.

Know what the winner of the competitive race actually wants? He wants competition to end. Wants nobody else in the way. Wants to sit on top alone and collect tribute from everyone else.

Victory in competition is always movement toward monopoly. Toward rewriting the rules for yourself. Toward closing the gates to others. Toward the right to set prices and dictate terms.

The cult of competition glorifies the struggle but rewards the one who managed to end it in his favor.

This isn't economic theory. It's a bad joke told with a straight face.

### **3. Blood**

Logical stupidity — fine. People believed in a flat earth too. But the myth doesn't just err. It demands blood. And gets it reliably.

Because if gain is the highest principle, then someone else's weakness stops evoking compassion and troubling the conscience. It becomes a business opportunity.

Someone else's hunger — that's a market. Someone else's dependency — that's an asset. Someone else's poverty — that's a pressure lever. Someone else's labor — that's raw material to buy cheaper.

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Someone else's country — that's a resource base.

From there it's just a question of packaging: whip, contract, license, or army.

### **3.1. The Slave Trade**

The slave trade wasn't an outbreak of medieval savagery. It was excellently organized business. 12.5 million were delivered to America — that's just from ship records. Roughly twice as many died during the hunt for people and transport. This wasn't organized by some thugs from the roadside. This was gentlemen's business. London, Amsterdam, Nantes. Royal charters, monopolies, Lloyd's insurance, shares on the exchange. Accounting, dividends, board of directors. People in wigs, with positions, with impeccable reputations. The commodity was human beings. Not chaos — system. Not savagery — civilization in its honest form.

### **3.2. Congo. 19th Century**

Congo. End of the 19th century.

Not the Dark Ages. Not a horde of savages. Not a random civilizational collapse.

The opposite: Europe fully conscious, wearing ties, with conferences, papers, and seals.

Belgian King Leopold II receives a huge territory in central Africa — essentially as his personal possession.

Then comes the rubber fever. And with it — a very modern system: administrators, officers, quotas, enforcers, control, reporting.

Village didn't meet quota — hostages, flogging, killings.

Bullets must be accounted for. Hands become proof.

They were cut off from the dead. They were cut off from the living. From adults. From children.

The count ran into millions.

This is what civilization looks like when profit matters more than people.

### **3.3. Congo. 21st Century**

The same Congo. 130 years later.

Now they mine cobalt here — 70% of world production. Without cobalt, batteries don't work. Without batteries, Tesla, Apple, Microsoft, Samsung don't work.

Children work in the mines. Six years old, seven, ten. No gloves, no masks, in cobalt dust. The dust eats away skin and lungs. Tunnels are dug by hand — they collapse. 12-hour shifts. Pay — a dollar or two a day. Formally — no coercion. Nobody stands with a whip. It's just that the family is in debt, there's no work, and the middleman gives an advance to the parents. The child goes to the mine to work it off. This is exactly what the free choice of free people looks like. Those who don't die

become crippled.

Meanwhile at the other end of the chain, Tesla robots dance at presentations, pour champagne, and prepare to fly to Mars.

Amnesty International documented this. Families of the dead sued Tesla, Apple, Microsoft, and Samsung. The court dismissed: supply chain too long, direct connection unprovable.

Leopold — rubber — hands. Musk — cobalt — children.

Different century. Same country. Same scheme.

### 3.4. Bengal

Bengal, 1943. British India. World War II is on. Japan captured Burma — that's where rice came from. The British, fearing Japanese invasion, implement scorched earth policy: destroy boats and rice supplies in coastal areas. A cyclone finishes off part of the harvest.

Then the market kicks in. Speculators buy up grain. Prices soar. Those without money can't buy food. Food exists — money doesn't. The market works perfectly: goods go where they pay more.

About three million people died.

London knew. Indian authorities requested emergency grain shipments. Requests were denied. Churchill — future Nobel laureate in literature — responded: "their own fault, breeding like rabbits." When asked about the scale of the famine, he allegedly said: "If it's that bad, why hasn't Gandhi died yet?"

Nobel laureate on top, millions of corpses below, and between them — cold imperial accounting.

### 3.5. Ireland

Ireland, 1845. An island under British rule. Land belongs to English landlords. Irish peasants are tenants on tiny plots. The only thing you can grow on such a patch and feed a family — potatoes.

Then comes blight. A fungus. Potatoes rot right in the ground. The 1845 harvest died. And 1846. And the following years.

But here's what's interesting: Ireland at this time produced enough food. Grain, meat, butter, cheese. It just all belonged to landlords and went for export. To England. Under guard. While the Irish starved, ships with food left Irish ports.

The British government held to a sacred principle: the market must not be touched. Laissez-faire — let it run its course. Aid was minimal. Tenants who couldn't pay rent were thrown off the land — straight into famine, in winter, with children.

Over a million people died. Another two million emigrated. Ireland's population fell by a quarter.

Contract is more sacred than person. Export is more sacred than life. The market doesn't ask who's dying. The market asks what's paid for.

## 3.6. Factories

And when the market was actually let off the leash in Europe — what happened? Heroic freedom of craftsmen?

No. What happened: child labor, 14-16 hours a day, pauper wages, sweatshops, slums without water or light, profit above safety, above health, above the human body.

Everything that was later torn away through unions, laws, and blood — was torn from the "free market." Not received as a gift. Torn.

The market doesn't become humane on its own. It has to be made less predatory — by force.

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This is the true face of the myth. Not cheerful lectures about incentives. Not fairy tales about the invisible hand. But a calm readiness to turn someone else's pain into a line of revenue.

And call it normal.

## 4. Concentration

Fine, they'll say — that's history. Slavery was abolished, colonies ended. Things are more civilized now.

Maybe. But even without whips and armies, the system works in one direction.

Simple example. Two people play a game. Coin flip — heads or tails. Bet — 1 coin. One has 100 in his pocket, the other — 2.

The one with 100 can lose 99 times in a row and stay in the game. The one with 2 is out after two failures.

Rules are identical. But the rich one has a margin for errors, and the poor one doesn't.

This is mathematics. Early advantage feeds itself. And this is with perfectly fair rules.

Now remember that real business doesn't aim for fair rules. It aims to rewrite the rules for itself, close the gates to others, and turn its win into the ability to keep winning.

Even without cheating, the system drifts toward concentration. With cheating — it flies.

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Concentration is a mechanism. But how exactly is the ready-made seized?

One of the most famous examples — the conquest. Conquistadors in the popular mind are thugs with swords. But Cortés's expedition was a commercial enterprise. Investors. Loans. Participants received shares of the loot — like shareholders. 20% to the crown. Merchant-bankers from Seville gave loans against future gold.

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The conquest was 16th-century venture capitalism.

Five centuries later — same scheme. Only instead of Aztec gold — the internet.

## 4.1. The Internet Conquest

Google didn't create the internet. It came to ready-made.

The internet was built by free people for themselves. Every computer could be a network node. Anyone could run a mail server at home. Anyone could launch a site, manage a DNS zone, be a full participant. The protocols IP, TCP, DNS, HTTP — free, open, shared. HTML, CSS, JavaScript — free standards. Email, forums, chats — all existed before Google.

Search engines? Yahoo and AltaVista were before Google. Maps? MapQuest. Email? Hotmail and Mail.com. Translators? Babelfish. Ad networks? DoubleClick. Mobile OSes? Symbian, Palm, BlackBerry. Android — Google bought from a startup. Before the iPhone announcement, prototypes looked like BlackBerry. After — rapidly redesigned to match iPhone. Google's CEO at that time sat on Apple's board of directors. YouTube? Bought in 2006. Content is created by millions of people for free. Money is collected by Google. Chrome? Built on someone else's engine, captured 65% of the market, now dictates web standards.

Google invented nothing. It took what already existed and built a money-and-control extraction machine around it.

This isn't innovation. This is conquest.

Today: want to be found — pay Google. Want to advertise your business — pay Google. Want to earn from your site — pay Google. And the rules are rigged so the small can't break through. SEO works for giants with millions of pages — even if technically it's a garbage dump. For a small site with ten perfect pages — doesn't work. Gates open only for those already big.

With Meta — same story.

Before Facebook, online communication was free. Forums — thousands, millions. phpBB, SMF, myBB — free, open, your own. Chats, IRC, web messengers. Anyone could launch a platform for their community. Communication belonged to people.

Facebook brought nothing new technologically. It brought the technology of destroying free communication. The technology of centralization. Today for millions of people it's unthinkable to message a friend without sharing this with Zuckerberg. Unthinkable to get through a day without swallowing a portion of content that an algorithm selected for you.

And here's how that algorithm works: everything that engages rises. Everything that doesn't engage sinks. What engages best? Scandal, fear, anger, stupidity, emotional garbage. Quality content takes effort — it sinks. Shit spreads fast — it floats. This isn't a bug. This is a business model.

It's a factory for extracting human time. Runs on micro-doses of dopamine. A drip. Addiction harder than many drugs, because it's woven into every minute of life. The Opium Wars are a children's party compared to this.

And the people who created the free internet lost it. A network that engineers, scientists, enthusiasts built — for communication, for knowledge, for freedom — became a private plantation for extracting attention and money.

A network created for everyone was seized by those who didn't build it.

## 5. Creativity for Sale

The internet really did democratize music. Every musician got the ability to upload their music to their own site and reach listeners worldwide. That's how it was — in the free internet.

In the new internet, a musician's site will be visited only by those they personally gave the address to. Google won't bring anyone for free. Meaning mom, grandma, and a couple of friends — and those under pressure.

So the musician goes to Spotify. And there they tell a beautiful story: anyone can record a track in their bedroom and upload it. Thousands of artists, millions of songs, endless choice. Freedom!

Now look at the numbers.

Three labels — Universal, Sony, Warner — control about 70% of the market. But that's not 70% of songs. That's 70% of money. And that's putting it mildly, because the remaining 30% is spread among millions of artists who divide crumbs.

Streaming didn't change the distribution of power — it changed the mechanism of tribute collection.

Before, a musician recorded an album, pressed discs, sold them. Could tour, sell merch, live off that. There were independent labels, distributors, stores. Many gates — many paths.

Today there's one gate: streaming. If you're not on Spotify — you don't exist. Period.

And here's how those gates work. You upload a song. It falls into an ocean of a hundred million tracks. To be heard, you need to get into a playlist. Playlists are controlled by Spotify editors and algorithms. Who do they promote? Those already popular. Those backed by a label with money for promo. Those who pay to get into a playlist — yes, that exists.

An independent artist can record a brilliant album — and get 47 plays. Not because the music is bad. But because the algorithm doesn't see them, playlists don't take them, there's no promo budget.

And how much does Spotify pay per play? About \$0.003-0.004. To earn a thousand dollars, you need 300,000 plays. For an independent artist, that's outer space.

Where does real money go? To labels who own catalogs. To Spotify who owns the platform. To the artist — scraps.

This isn't democratization. This is feudalism with a user-friendly interface. Before, labels controlled recording and distribution. Now they control recording, and streaming controls distribution and attention. There are fewer gates, not more.

And here's what matters: 70% for three labels isn't "well, there's still 30%." It means three companies decide what the planet will listen to. What music gets promo. What artists get into playlists. What sound becomes mainstream. The remaining 30% is noise behind a wall that almost nobody hears.

Free music market? Show me where it is. I see three towers and millions of people paying them for entry.

## 5.1. Copyright

Maybe at least copyright protects the musician?

In theory — yes. It was created to protect the author. So the creator gets rewarded for their work. So nobody can steal their work.

In practice, copyright is a machine for separating authors from their money.

How does it work? A musician signs a contract with a label. Gives away rights to their songs — sometimes forever. The label owns the catalog. The label gets most of the revenue. The artist gets pennies — if anything at all. How many musicians died in poverty while their songs made millions — just not for them?

Same with books. Same with films. Same with software. The author creates. The corporation owns. The author gets scraps or a fixed sum once. The corporation collects rent for decades.

Copyright protects not the author. It protects whoever bought the rights from the author. Most often — at the moment when the author was young, poor, and had no bargaining position.

This isn't a bug in the system. It's its main function. An instrument allegedly created for the creator works against the creator — and this is an integral part of the modern market. Same as platform control, network effects, and gates.

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## 5.2. Those Who Don't Play

Then again, there are those who never played this game.

Punk from the start was about Do It Yourself. You write, you record, you print covers, you organize shows, you sell tapes from your backpack. No labels. No gates. No algorithms deciding whether you deserve to be heard.

Your own fanzines instead of music magazines. Your own venues instead of clubs that take 80% of the take. Your own distribution networks — hand to hand, city to city.

What today is called "punk" on Spotify — that's the MTV version. Groomed, approved, safe. Passed through gates, meaning — no longer punk. Because punk isn't a sound or a haircut. It's a refusal to stand in line at someone else's gates.

And here's what's interesting: the DIY scene exists to this day. Worldwide. Basement shows,

bedroom recordings, distribution through Bandcamp and personal sites, communities that live outside algorithms. You can't see them from the mainstream — but they're there. And they prove that music is possible without three labels and without the streaming drip.

It's just that this path doesn't scale to billions. Which means for the market, it doesn't exist.

## 6. Skinner's Pigeons

So how are decisions actually made in the corporate world? Rationally?

In 1948, psychologist Skinner ran an experiment. Put pigeons in cages with feeders. Food was dispensed automatically, at random intervals. No connection to the bird's behavior — just random.

After a while, the pigeons started performing rituals. One spun counter-clockwise. Another poked its head into the corner. A third flapped its wings a certain way. Each "believed" that this particular action caused food. Because once it did that — and food appeared. Post hoc ergo propter hoc. Superstition.

Now look at the corporate world.

Meta laid off 11,000 people in November 2022. Then another 10,000 in spring. Stock didn't crash. Musk bought Twitter and fired 80% — from 7,500 employees down to fifteen hundred. The service didn't die. At least not immediately.

And what happened? A wave of layoffs across the industry. Google, Amazon, Microsoft — everyone rushed to cut staff. Not because programmers became unnecessary. Not because they calculated and understood. But because Meta did it — and nothing happened. Musk did it — and nothing happened. So it's allowed. So it must be done. And following them — smaller companies. Those without Meta's scale or Google's cushion. But if the big ones are cutting — must be the right thing. Copying the pattern without understanding why.

The pigeon spins counter-clockwise. Food appears. It works.

Amazon went into cloud and made billions. Five years later, half the industry moved to AWS. Not because it's technically the best solution for every case. Not because they sat down and compared. But because "Amazon did it and made money." Post hoc ergo propter hoc.

Companies copy each other like pigeons copy a random pattern. Open space — because Google. Free snacks — because Google. Agile — because someone said it works. OKR — because Google. Layoffs — because Meta and Musk. Return to office — because everyone's returning.

Nobody asks: is this actually the cause of success? Or correlation? Or coincidence?

Amazon makes money on cloud. But Amazon is also a giant store, Prime, logistics, a thousand other things. Maybe cloud works for Amazon because it's Amazon? Not because cloud is magic?

Musk fired 80% of Twitter — and the service works. But maybe the service works because those same people he fired built it for years? And the system's inertia carries on for another year or two, until everything starts falling apart?

(Spoiler: it fell apart. Advertisers left, revenue crashed, company valuation dropped threefold, quality users fled, spam and bots multiplied)

But who cares? The pigeon spins. Food appears. Must be working.

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Corporate culture is a machine for producing superstitions. Success is random — but will be explained in hindsight. Failure is random — but a guilty party will be found. And everyone will copy the winner, not understanding what exactly they did right. Or whether they did anything right at all.

Post hoc is not propter hoc. But that's too complex a thought for a pigeon.

## 7. Despite

After all this filth, you want to ask: what actually works? If the market is concentration, conquest, superstition, and blood, then what does civilization actually stand on?

The answer is simple: on what works despite the market. Or without it entirely.

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A child isn't raised by the market. Parents don't get up at night for the baby after calculating ROI. Don't feed them because it's a good investment. Don't teach them to walk expecting dividends. A child is years of work, sleep deprivation, worry, and love. For free. Without a contract. Without KPIs.

Language wasn't created for profit. Nobody patented Russian and collects license fees for every word. Language is thousands of years of collective work, passed on for free. Everyone receives it for free and passes it on for free.

Science didn't grow from greed. Copernicus was a church canon — did astronomy in his spare time. Galileo lived on a university salary and court patronage. Newton was a professor, then a civil servant. Einstein wrote about relativity while working at a patent office — not at a venture fund called "Space-Time Monetization."

Fundamental science still stands on universities, government grants, public institutions. Not on the market. The market comes later — when there's something to monetize, patent, lock up, and sell.

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Now look at technology.

Linux. One of the most important foundations of the modern world. Servers, clouds, Android, supercomputers, routers, TVs, refrigerators — all run on Linux. Billions of devices. Trillions of dollars of business built on this foundation.

Who created this? A corporation with KPIs and performance bonuses?

No. Thousands of people around the world. Wrote code, argued, fixed bugs, documented, tested —

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for years, for decades. Not because a bag of gold dangled before each of them. But because they wanted to make a good, working, free thing. Because they loved craftsmanship. Because they wanted to share. Because they believed knowledge shouldn't sit under lock and key.

This isn't charity. This is a different value system. A parallel universe where quality, freedom, and common benefit matter more than quick profit.

SQLite — another example. A small, reliable, embeddable database. No hype, no marketing. Just a well-made thing.

What does it run on? Every Android. Every iPhone. Every Mac. In Chrome, Firefox, Safari. In Adobe, in Skype, in thousands of applications. Billions of devices. Billions of dollars earned on products that use SQLite.

How much of those billions did the creators get? Almost nothing. They didn't make it for money. They made it so there would be a good, reliable, free database for everyone.

And this is what the digital world actually stands on. Not on market magic. On the work of people who decided to share, not sell.

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The market loves to claim credit for all this.

The scheme is simple. First enthusiasts, scientists, engineers, communities create something useful. Out of curiosity, out of professional pride, out of wanting to make the world better. For free or for modest salaries.

Then the market arrives. Takes the ready-made. Builds a platform, service, product on top. Puts a cash register at the entrance. Closes access. Monetizes. Patents. Licenses.

And then still tells everyone it created all this. That without the sacred motivation of profit, nothing would exist. That the market is the source of innovation.

It's like a looter coming into a built house, hanging a lock on the door, and declaring himself the architect.

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And so a strange picture emerges.

Everything most important in human civilization was created either outside the market or despite it. Language, science, child-rearing, basic technologies, fundamental knowledge, open standards, free software — all these are fruits of cooperation, curiosity, professional pride, and the desire to share.

The market knows how to do something else. It knows how to arrive at the ready-made, put up a cash register, and declare itself the source of everything. Knows how to close access, build gates, collect rent. Knows how to rewrite history as if without greed nothing would exist.

But that's a lie. Greed is a bad builder. It's a good conqueror. A good parasite. But it doesn't build.

Building is done by those who give a damn.

## 8. What To Do

Here's where it gets unpleasant.

After all this anatomy, you want to say something uplifting. Let's put the market back in its place as a tool. Limit greed with law. Build a fair system. Everything will be fine.

It won't.

The problem is deeper. This isn't a breakdown you can fix. This is the prisoner's dilemma spread across all of civilization.

The prisoner's dilemma is a classic problem from game theory. Two are arrested. Each can stay silent or rat out the other. If both stay silent — both get little. If both rat — both get a lot. But if one stays silent while the other rats — the traitor walks free, and the honest one gets the maximum. The rational choice for each is to betray. Even if both understand that mutual silence is better for both.

The system is structured to punish nobility. Don't lie — you lose to the one who lies. Don't crush the weak — you lose to the one who crushes. Don't trade your conscience — you lose to the one who trades. Play fair — you lose to the one who cheats.

A person who refuses to be a predator, in this system, too often looks not like a hero but like an idiot. Not because they're bad. But because the mechanism itself is designed to grind decent people into raw material for the brazen.

There's no elegant technical solution. There's no button after which a predatory system suddenly agrees to be kind. There's no law that will cancel the cult of gain if it already sits in heads, in habits, in the language of success, in school dreams, in the idea of what a "strong person" means.

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But this doesn't mean everything should be blown up.

That would be too simple and too stupid. History shows clearly: when large systems are torn down in blind rage, power doesn't disappear. It crawls to the even more cruel, dumb, and hungry. New predators replace the old ones, usually worse than before. Chaos rarely becomes paradise. More often — a feeding ground for the next butchers.

Revolutions devour their children. That's not a metaphor. That's statistics.

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So the way out isn't destruction. And it isn't submission.

The way out is corrosion.

Like rust corrodes iron. Like roots crack concrete. Like a different logic slowly makes the old logic not the only one.

Linux is one of the best examples of how this works.

The IT world without Linux, without Git, without free libraries, without open code would be much angrier, dumber, more expensive, and harsher. Much more power would sit in closed towers. Commercial software would be much worse — because it wouldn't have a living competitor nearby. Not just technical — moral.

Linux corroded the digital world not because it beat the market with its own weapons. But because a huge number of people said a very simple "no."

No to the cult of closure. No to the idea that knowledge should sit under lock and key. No to the notion of humans as creatures who only move for money.

They just started making good, beautiful, needed things. Because they loved craftsmanship. Because they wanted to share. Because they didn't want to live in a completely paved-over world of corporate filth.

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This is the real way out.

Not the final victory of good with fanfares. Not a magic reform from above. Not a great day after which humanity suddenly stops being itself.

But something simpler and harder.

More and more people are starting to understand that valor isn't making a million by twenty-eight. Isn't learning to beautifully sell emptiness. Isn't becoming a successful predator with a polite smile.

Valor is remaining human in a world that every day talks you into becoming a function of gain.

Not betraying yourself for comfort. Not accepting filth as normal. Not starting to admire what should cause disgust.

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Then comes the most important part.

When such people don't just understand this inside themselves, but start living this way. Every day. In their small space.

In their family. Among friends. In their school.

In their club. In their workshop. In their code.

In their small professional environment. In their treatment of the younger, weaker, dependent, newcomers. In how they explain, share, teach, fix, build, hire.

This is how small worlds are born — their own micro-universes.

At first they're tiny. Sometimes just two or three who agreed not to live by bestial rules. Sometimes a project. Sometimes a community. Sometimes a professional ethics. Sometimes a corner of the internet where you can still breathe. Sometimes a family that doesn't reproduce the market at its

kitchen table.

Most of these worlds won't become empires. And good. Their task isn't to capture the planet. Their task is to prove in practice that humans aren't reducible to gain. That good work can be done not only out of fear and money. That knowledge doesn't have to be hidden. That strength can be limited. That the weak don't have to be crushed.

Then such worlds start recognizing each other. Connecting. Exchanging people, meaning, tools. From clubs grow communities. From communities — ecosystems. Some grow to the scale of Linux. Some grow beyond.

And then the world of predators gets a truly dangerous enemy. Not another tyrant. Not another party. Not another cult of strength. But a parallel civilization of values that knows how to live without worshipping greed.

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This isn't a fast path. This isn't a spectacular path.

This is the path of stubborn, steadfast people, often thanklessly busy. Those who build not a tower for themselves but an environment for others. Those who understand that sometimes the main political act isn't seizing a ministry but not letting one more patch of world turn into a market of humiliation.

Not destroying for the pleasure of destruction — history has shown too often how that ends. Not dreaming of chaos from which freedom will supposedly be born — from chaos usually comes a new butcher.

But growing worlds around yourself where a person remains a person. Where not everything is for sale. Where not every weakness is defeat. Where knowledge isn't only a commodity. Where the strong isn't always right. Where decency isn't declared a form of stupidity.

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This is the real work.

Not hysteria. Not the romance of barricades. Not a new religion.

Slow construction of worlds where dignity matters more than gain.

Such worlds first seem small. Then it turns out they're exactly what holds up the sky.

So it shall be.

Oi!