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Ethical Dimensions of the commercialization of social life

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Abstract

Minimal state, unfettered markets and consumerism have occupied the center stage of modern thinking and critical analysis. In the new framework, economic motivations, relationships, conventions and so on are the fundamental thing and rest is window-dressing. The language of customer and provider has found its way into practically all areas of our social life, even education and health care. Markets leave their imprint and often deep imprints. Using tattooed body for advertisements and commercial gains objectify and demean human body. There may be consent in consensual cannibalism but it does not morally justify the demeaning effects of cannibalism. Selling kidneys may be a potent sign of post-modern freedom but it cannot overshadow the commercial element inherent in it. Economic activity is something people do, one kind of activity among others, and as such it is subject to same moral considerations as other activities. It has to be thought about in connection with what we actively want for our humanity. This paper is an attempt to highlight the rising pace of consumerism and commercialization of social life in the name of human freedom squarely overlooking the ethical dimensions.

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Introduction

It is part of life and business to question ourselves about where the future is leading. Where possible, we all make an attempt at it (Eric Hobsbawm, 2000). No social phenomenon unfolds in a regular, continuous, and unlimited manner. The evolution of any society thus necessarily goes through phases of expansion, stagnation, and even regression (Samir Amin, 1998; p.13). Monetary exchange is simply one of the things people do. It can be carried out well or badly, honestly or dishonestly, generously or meanly. It is one of those areas of life in which our decisions show who we are, and so it is a proper kind of raw material for stories designed to suggest how encounter with God shows us who we are (Rowan Williams, 2012; p.225).

The experience of the twentieth century made highly problematic the claims of progress on the basis of science and technology. For the ability of technology to better human life is critically dependent on a parallel moral progress in man (Francis Fukuyama, 2006; p.6). In fact, neo-classical economics is founded on some core assumptions about human nature. It assumes that human wants are potentially unlimited. It also assumes that man is a rational consumer who endlessly seeks maximum value for himself (Vijay Mehta; 2012; 159).

The concept of unlimited and unregulated human freedom has come up with its own problems. Libertarians favour unfettered markets and oppose government regulation not in the name of economic efficiency but in the name of human freedom (Michael Sandel, 2009; 59). Markets are typically praised for generating incentives, and indeed, they very often do just that. But there are contrary considerations related to the effectiveness and impact of cash incentives (Jean Dreze & Amartya Sen, 2013; 199). Mahatma Gandhi is reported to have said that there is enough on this earth to meet the needs of all, but not the greed of all. If greed as has been argued by some is the root of the crisis, then tackling it is a task beyond finance and indeed even economics as we understand these subjects today (Y.V.Reddy, 2011; 71).

The meta-problem confronting global society is that dominant and expanding money sequences have come into ever sharper and more destructive contradiction with social and environmental life-organisation (John Mcmurry, 1998; 190). The financial crisis did more than cast doubt on the ability of markets to allocate risk efficiently. It also prompted a widespread sense that markets have become detached from morals and that we need some how to reconnect them. Some say that moral failing at the heart of market triumphalism was greed, which led to irresponsible risk taking (Michael Sandel, 2012; 6). Many historic events are influenced by ideas, institutions, interest, individuals and integrity. The global crisis can be traced to the influence of all five factors, though there could be legitimate disagreements about their relative contributions (Y.V.Reddy, 2011;71).

Individual people and indeed whole societies, can differ radically on wider ethical issues; the importance of propinquity versus universalism; need versus the rights of possession. These differences essentially concern how societies allocate their created assets. But they can all recognize greed and plunder as unethical (Paul Collier, 2010; 31).

The most basic financial impulse of all is to save for the future because the future is so unpredictable. The world is a dangerous place. Not many of us get through life without having a little bad luck (Niall Ferguson, 2008; 177). This future fear leads to accumulation of wealth by individuals, institutions and societies which is often unending. Accumulation, indeed, knows no limits and most crushing defeat is that of moral and human values in the quest for more and more money. The commercialism of the last two decades has displayed a distinctive kind of boundlessness, emblematic of a world in which everything is for sale (Micheal Sandel, 2012 ;).

Commercialization of social life is objectionable as it degrades social life itself. Commercialism does not destroy everything it touches. Nevertheless, imprinting things with corporate logos changes their meaning. Product placements spoil the integrity of books and corrupt the relationship of author and reader. Tattooed body ads objectify and demean the people paid to wear them. Commercial in classroom undermine the educational purpose of the schools.

Objectives of the study

The present paper aims to fulfill the following objectives:-

- 1) Ascent of money has been essential to the ascent of man.
- 2) Is commercialization of certain practices degrading in itself?
- 3) Is there anything unfair about economic inequality, provided it arises without force or fraud?
- 4) If I own my body, my life, and my person, I should be free to do whatever I want with them.

2) Methodology

Simple and straight method is adopted. It is doctrinal and analytical in nature.

3) Discussion

Liberalism truly announced the end of hisrory¹ and paved the way for market-driven societies. In market-driven societies, ambitious people are expected to pursue their interests vigorously, and the line between self-interest and greed often blurs. But the line between success and failure is etched more sharply.² Market, ambition, self-interest and greed lie at the heart of materialism. Crass materialism leads necessarily to the domination of market values, which penetrate all aspects of social life subject them to their logic. Science, technology, and organization as ideologies find their place here. At the same time, this philosophy pushes to the limit of absurdity its affirmation of a separation-in fact, opposition-between humankind and nature.³

Global social and environmental life-organisation are now pervasively invaded by a money-to-more money sequence which reproduces and grows money-demand for transnational corporations as an end in itself, with no commitment of these corporations or their regulating code to the life-hosts which bear them. This pattern of aggressive and uninhibited multiplication of non-life cycles of appropriation and growth as carcinogenic in character, and systematically destructive of social and environmental hosts in effect.⁴

Only a minimal state – one that enforces contracts, protects private property from theft, and keeps the peace-is compatible with the libertarian theory of rights, any state that does more than this is morally unjustified. The libertarians reject three types of policies and laws that modern states commonly enact:-

- 1) Libertarians oppose laws to protect people from harming themselves. Seatbelt laws and motorcycle helmet laws are good examples. Even if riding a motorcycle without a helmet is reckless, and even if helmet laws save lives and prevent devastating injuries, libertarians argue that such laws violate the right of the individual to decide what risk they should assume. As long as no third parties are harmed, and as long as

motorcycle riders are responsible for their own medical bills, the state has no right to dictate what risks they may take with their bodies and lives.

- 2) Libertarians oppose using the coercive force of law to promote notions of virtue or to express moral convictions of majority. Prostitution may be morally objectionable to many people, but that does not justify laws that prevent consenting adults from engaging in it. Majorities in some communities may disapprove homosexuality, but that does not justify laws that deprive gay men and lesbians of the right to choose their sexual partners for themselves.
- 3) The libertarian theory of rights rules out any law that requires some people to help others, including taxation for redistribution of wealth. Desirable though it may be for the affluent to support the less fortunate – by subsidizing their health care or housing or education such help should be left up to the individual to undertake, not mandated by the government. According to libertarian, redistributive taxes are a form of coercion, even theft. The state has no more right to force affluent taxpayers to support social programmes for the poor than a benevolent thief has the right to steal money from a rich person and give it to the homeless.⁵

In fact, the heart of libertarian thinking and ideas is materialism in its most potent form and consequently it entirely disregards the moral element in law and policy. Many proponents of welfare state hold libertarian views on issues such as gay rights, reproductive rights, freedom of speech, and separation of church and state.

In *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), the American economist Milton Friedman (1912-2006) argued that many widely accepted state activities are illegitimate infringements on individual freedom. Social security or any mandatory government run retirement programme, is one of his prime examples: “If a man knowingly prefers to live for today, to use his resources for current enjoyment, deliberately choosing a penurious old age by what right do we prevent him from doing so?” Friedman asks. We might urge such a person to save for his retirement, but are we entitled to use coercion to prevent him from doing what he chooses to do?”⁶

Friedman objects to minimum wage laws on similar grounds. Government has no right to prevent employers from paying any wage, however low, that workers are prepared to accept. The government also violates individual freedom when it makes laws against employment discrimination. If employers want to discriminate on the basis of race, religion or any other factor, the state has no right to prevent them from doing so. In Friedman’s view, such legislation clearly involves interference with the freedom of individuals to enter into voluntary contracts with one another.⁷

Unfortunate is the fact that libertarians in their search for total freedom miserably overlook the significance of equally important virtues such as equality, fraternity economic justice and above all morality which have, indeed, been distinguishing elements of civilizations and modernity. We cannot forget the fact that pre-civilization societies were totally free and absolute freedom was the law that governed such societies? Did not slavery emerge as very powerful institution in such societies? Did not humanity yearn desperately for equality, fraternity, justice and moral values in such suffocating atmosphere?

The loss of a sense of appropriate time is a major cultural development which necessarily changes how we think about trust and relationship. Trust is learned gradually, rather than automatically deliverable according to a set of static conditions laid down. It involves a degree of human judgment, which in turn involves a level of awareness of one’s own human character and that of other- a degree of literacy about the signals of trustworthiness; a shared culture of understanding what is said and done in a human society avoid this learning entails unavailable in security.⁸

Although people have spoken greed as the source of our current problems, I suspect that it goes deeper. It is little too easy to blame the present situation on accumulation of individual greed exemplified by bankers or brokers, and to lose sight of the fact that governments committed to deregulation and to the encouragement of speculation and high personal borrowing were elected repeatedly in the UK and US for a crucial couple of decades.

John Dunning, a professional analyst of the business world, wrote as long ago as 2004 about what he called ‘crisis in the moral ecology’ of unregulated capitalism; ‘and he and other contributors to his book discussed how ‘circles of failure’ could be created in the economy by a combination of moral indifference, institutional crisis and market failure, each feeding on the others. Yet warnings went unheeded; people’s rational capacities, it seems, were blunted, and unregulated global capitalism was assumed to be the natural way of doing things, based on a set of rational market processes that would deliver results in everyone’s interest.’⁹

This was not just about greed but some apologists for the naturalness of the unregulated market pointed out to the apparently infallible capacity of the market to free nations from poverty. Acquisitiveness is associated with pride which is the root of all human error and failure. Pride is most clearly evident in the refusal to acknowledge my lack of control over my environment, my illusion that I can shape the World according to my will. And if that is

true, then the origin of economic dysfunction and injustice is pride, pride that is manifest in the reluctance to let go of systems and projects that promise more and more secure control, and so has a bad effect on our reasoning power.

This in turn suggests that economic justice arrives only when everyone recognises some kind of shared vulnerability and limitation in a world of limits and processes that can not be bypassed. We are delivered or converted not simply by resolving in a vacuum to be less greedy, but by understanding what it is to live as an organism which grows and changes and thus is involved in risk. We change because our mindsets are changed and steered away from certain powerful but toxic myths.

According to Nozick, the moral stakes go beyond money. At issue, he believes, is nothing less than human freedom. This line of reasoning takes us to the moral crux of the libertarian claim of the idea of self ownership. If I own myself, I must own my labour. But If I own my labour, I must be entitled to the fruits of my labour. The notion of self-ownership is appealing, especially for those who seek a strong foundation for individual rights. The idea that I belong to myself and not to the state or political community, is one way of explaining why it is wrong to sacrifice my rights for welfare of others. The idea that we own ourselves figures in many arguments for freedom of choice.¹⁰ If I own my body, my life and my person, I should be free to do whatever I want with them. Despite the appeal of this idea, its full implications are not easy to embrace.¹¹ The following issues are prominent examples of rising Commodification of body and commercialization of social life:

3.1 Self-Ownership and Selling kidneys :

Most Countries ban the buying and selling of organs for transplantation. In the United States, people may donate one of their kidneys but not sell it on the open market. But some people argue that such laws should be changed. They point out that thousands of people die each year waiting for kidney transplants-and that the supply would be increased if there existed a free market for kidneys. They also argue that people in need of money should be free to sell their kidneys if they wish.¹²

One argument for permitting the buying and selling of kidneys rests on the libertarian notion of self-ownership: if I own my own body, I should be free to sell my body parts as I please. Most proponents of market in kidneys emphasize the moral importance of saving lives, and the fact that most people who donate one of their kidneys can manage with the other one. But if you believe that your body and life are your property, neither of these considerations really matters. If you own yourself, your right to use your body as you please is reason enough to let you sell your body parts. The lives you save or the good you do in beside the point.¹³

It is possible, of course, to permit only those organ sales that save lives and that don't imperil the life of the seller. But such a policy would not rest on the principle of self-ownership. If we truly own our bodies and lives it should be up to us to decide whether to sell our body parts, for what purposes and at what risk to ourselves.

3.2 Euthanasia or Medical Termination of Life

Medical Termination of life or assisted suicide involves issues of dignity, compassion and morality. Many who favour assisted suicide do not invoke property rights, but argue in the name of dignity and compassion. They say that terminally ill patients who are suffering greatly should be able to hasten their deaths, rather than linger in excruciating pain. Even those who believe we have a general duty to presume human life may conclude that, at a certain point, the claims of compassion outweigh our duty to carry on.

In 2007, Dr. Jack Kevorkian emerged from a Michigan prison having served eight years for administering lethal drugs to terminally ill patients who wanted to die. As a condition of his parole, he agreed not to assist any more patients in committing suicide. During 1990,, Dr. Kevorkian, who became known as Dr. Death; campaigned for laws allowing assisted suicide and practiced what he preached, helping 130 people end their lives. He was charged, tried and convicted of second degree murder only after he gave the CBS television programme 60 minutes a video that showed him in action, giving a lethal injection to a man suffering from Lou Gehring's disease.¹⁴

In fact, assisted suicide is illegal in Michigan and other states except Oregon and Washington. Many countries prohibit assisted suicide and only a few (most famously the Netherlands) expressly permit it. Libertarians argue that laws banning assisted suicide are unjust for the following reasons:- if my life belongs to me, I should be free to give it up. And if I enter into a voluntary agreement with someone to help me die, the state has no right to interfere.

The case for assisted suicide does not necessarily depend on the idea that we own ourselves, or that our lives belong to us. With terminally ill patients, the rationale for assisted suicide is hard to disentangle from compassion rationale. To assess the moral force of self-ownership idea, consider a case of assisted suicide that does not involve a terminally ill patient. It is, admittedly, a weird case. But its weirdness allows us to assess the libertarian logic on its own, unclouded by considerations of dignity and compassion.

3.3 Consensual Cannibalism

If consent is considered as the basis to determine the legality or illegality, morality or immorality of human actions, some people would go to the extent of justifying intolerable and inhumane act of cannibals. In 2001, a strange encounter took place in the German Village of Rotenberg. Bernd Jurgen Brandes, a fifty three years old software engineer, responded to an internet advertisement seeking someone willing to be killed and eaten. The advertisement had been posted by Armin Meiwes, forty two, a computer technician. Meiwes was offering no monetary compensation, only the experience itself. Some two hundred people replied to the advertisement. Four traveled to Meiwes's farmhouse for an interview, but decided they were not interested. But when Brandes met with Meiwes and considered his proposal over coffee, he gave his consent. Meiwes proceeded to kill his guest carve up the corpse and store it in plastic bags in his freezer. By the time he was arrested, the cannibal of Rotenberg had consumed over forty pounds of his willing victim, cooking some of him in olive oil and garlic.¹⁵

When Meiwes was brought to trial, the lurid case fascinated the public and confounded the court. Germany has no laws against cannibalism. The perpetrator cannot be convicted of murder, the defence maintained, because the victim was a willing participant in his own death. Meiwes's lawyer argued that his client could be guilty only of "killing on request", a form of assisted suicide that carries a maximum five years sentence. The court attempted to resolve the conundrum by convicting Meiwes of manslaughter and sentencing him to eight and a half years in prison. But two years later, an appellate court overturned the conviction as too lenient, and sentenced Meiwes to life in prison.¹⁶

Cannibalism between consenting adult poses the ultimate test for the libertarian principle of self-ownership and the idea of justice that follows from it. It is an extreme form of assisted suicide. Since it has nothing to do with relieving the pain of a terminally ill patient, it can be justified only on the grounds that we own our bodies and lives and may do with them what we please. If the libertarian claim is right, banning consensual cannibalism is unjust, a violation of the right to liberty. But should this inhumane practice be allowed in the name of liberty and consent? If it is so, what about the precious right to life? What if cannibals start eating people without consent and putting consent as mere defence if and when caught? Libertarians fail to answer and will, indeed, never be in a position to answer.

3.4 Naming Rights

Consumerism has not spared even player's autographs and their paraphernalia from the ambit of sale. So too are the names of ballparks. Although some stadiums still bear their historic names- Yankee stadium, Fenway Park-most major league teams now sell stadium naming rights to the highest bidder. Banks, energy companies, airlines, technology firms and other corporations are willing to pay hefty sums for the visibility that comes from having their name adorn big- league ballparks and arenas.¹⁷

The selling of stadium naming rights is now so common place that it's easy to forget how recently the practice came in vogue. It arose at about the same time that ballplayers began selling their autographs. Corporate naming rights do not end with a sign on the stadium gate; increasingly, they extend to the words that broadcasters use in describing the action on the field.¹⁸

The civic teaching of sports is eroded even more powerfully by a trend that has accompanied the rise of corporate naming rights- the proliferation of luxury skyboxes. The advent of skybox suites high above the field of play has separated the affluent and the privileged from the common folk in stands below.¹⁹

High commercialization and consumerism in big capitalist centers like United States even engulf death in its commercial fold. In the United States, it has long been common practice for companies to take out insurance on the lives of their CEOs and top executives, to offset the significant cost of replacing them if they die. In the parlance of the insurance business, companies have an "insurable interest" in their CEOs that is recognized in law. But buying insurance on the lives of rank-and-file workers is relatively new. Such insurance is known in the business as "Janitors insurance" or "dead peasants insurance." Until recently, it was illegal in most states; companies were not considered to have an insurable interest in the lives of their ordinary workers. But during 1980s, the insurance industry successfully lobbied most state legislatures to relax insurance laws, allowing companies to buy life insurance on the lives of all employees, from the CEO to the mailroom clerk.²⁰

3.5 Free Choice, Abortion and Stem Cell Debates

Abortion and embryonic stem cell research are two familiar political questions that cannot be resolved without taking a stand on an underlying moral and religious controversy. Some people believe that abortion should be banned because it involves the taking of innocent human life. Others disagree and argue that law should not take sides in the moral and theological controversy over when human life begins." Since the moral status of the

developing fetus is a highly charged moral and religious question, they argue, government should be neutral on that question, and allow women to decide for themselves whether to have an abortion.²¹

The second position reflects the familiar liberal argument for abortion rights. It claims to resolve the abortion question on the basis of neutrality and freedom of choice without entering into the moral and religious controversy. Those who would defend the right of the women to decide for themselves whether to terminate a pregnancy should engage with the argument that the developing fetus is equivalent to a person, and try to show why it is wrong. It is not enough to say that the law should be neutral on moral and religious questions. The case for permitting abortion is no more neutral than the case for banning it. Both positions presuppose some answer to the underlying moral and religious controversy.

The same is true about the debate over stem cell research. Those who would ban embryonic stem cell research argue that whatever its medical promise, research that involves the destruction of human embryos is morally impermissible. Many who hold this view believe that personhood begins at conception, so that destroying even an early embryo is morally on a par with killing a child.²²

Proponents of embryonic stem cell research reply by pointing to the medical benefits the research may bring, including possible treatments and cures for diabetes, Parkinson's disease, and spinal cord injury. And they argue that science should not be hampered by religious or ideological interference; those with religious objections should not be allowed to impose their views through laws that would ban promising scientific research.

With abortion and embryonic stem cell research, it's not possible to resolve the legal question without taking up the underlying moral and religious question. In both cases neutrality is impossible because the issue is whether the practice in question involves taking the life of a human being.

3.6 Outsourcing Pregnancy:

There is an old dictum that God cannot be everywhere and therefore he created mother but extreme materialism and market-driven societies have now started even selling mother's womb. Making mother's womb a subject of commercial consideration shows where we are and what we want? The contracts of surrogacy have become common thing in the recent past.

The argument for upholding the surrogacy contract draws on the two theories of justice libertarianism and Utilitarianism. The libertarian case for contracts is that they reflect freedom of choice; to uphold a contract between two consenting adults is to respect their liberty. The Utilitarian case for contract is that they promote the general welfare; if both parties agree to a deal, both must derive same benefit or happiness from the agreement otherwise; they would not have made it.²³

Commercial surrogacy amounts to baby-selling which is wrong, however voluntary it may be. It also degrades women by treating their bodies as factories and by paying them not to bond with the children they bear. It replaces "the parental norms which usually govern the practice of gestating children with the economic norms which govern ordinary production." By requiring the surrogate mother "to repress whatever parental love she feels for the child," Anderson writes, surrogacy contracts convert women's labour into a form of alienated labour.²⁴

Many European Countries ban Commercial surrogacy. In United States, more than a dozen States have legalised the practice, while about a dozen other States prohibit it, in some other States its legal status is unclear.²⁵ Anderson says that in the surrogate contract, the mother agrees not to form or to attempt to form a parent child relationship with her offspring. Her labour is alienated because she must divert it from the end which the Social practice of pregnancy rightly promotes- an emotional bond with her child.

3.7 Homosexual Unions and Same Sex Marriage

The issue of same sex marriage cannot possibly be considered without entering into moral and religious controversies about the purpose of the institution of marriage and the moral status of homosexuality. The proponents of same sex marriage support it on liberal grounds that individuals should be free to choose their marital partners. To allow heterosexual but not homosexual couples to get married wrongly discriminates against gay men and lesbians, and denies them equality before law. They plead for same sex unions on the basis of free choice and equality before law.

Aristotle reminds us to argue about the purpose of a social institution is to argue about the virtues it honours and rewards. The debate over same-sex marriage is fundamentally a debate about whether gay and lesbian unions are worthy of the honour and recognition that in our society, state sanctioned marriage confers. So the underlying moral question is unavoidable. Proponents of gay marriage complain that restricting marriage to heterosexual is a kind of discrimination. Opponents claim that if the state sanctions gay marriage, it goes beyond tolerating homosexuality to endorsing it and giving it a government stamp of approval.²⁶

The real debate in the gay marriage is not freedom of choice but whether same sex unions are worthy of honour and recognition by the community-whether they fulfill the purpose of social institution of marriage. So when we look closely at the case for same sex marriage, we find that it cannot rest on the ideas of non-discrimination and freedom of choice. In order to decide who qualify for marriage, we have to think through the purpose of marriage and the virtues it honours. And this carries us onto contested moral terrain, where we can't remain neutral toward competing conception of the good life.²⁷

European Union countries are the champions of gay rights but are now grappling with asylum claims from people in more than 100 countries who face punishments such as "corrective" rape (mostly for lesbians), torture, jail and even death. Interestingly enough, anti-gay laws in Africa and elsewhere are said to be the legacy of European colonial rule. But policies vary. Italy automatically gives refuge to anyone from more than 75 countries that formally outlaw homosexuality. Spain makes it a lot harder. The Netherlands turned down three men from Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda in a case which has now reached the EU's highest court. European countries want to limit immigration and in such a situation, gays may be hounded in countries where homosexuality is legal, such as Russia.²⁸

The European court of Justice, in a ruling on November 7th, tried to set a common rule. It did not say that refugees from countries which outlaw homosexuality automatically deserve asylum. What should count is how harshly the laws are enforced. A jail sentence is persecution while a fine is not.

In conservative Asia, Taiwan has given the warmest embrace to gays and lesbians. Before he became President in 2008, Ma Ying-Jeou was mayor of Taipei and he boasts that he made it the most gay friendly city in Asia, even devoting a portion of the municipal budget to homosexual causes. Taiwan routinely holds Asia's largest gay-pride march; the latest one, in October, attracted over 60,000 people. Recently a Bill allowing same sex marriage and gay couples to adopt children passed its first reading in the island's legislature. But there is resistance to this move against nature and people are demanding a referendum on this issue.²⁹

Of course western civilization is far from flawless. It has perpetrated its share of misdeeds, from the brutalities of imperialism to the banality of the consumer society. Its intense materialism has had all kinds of dubious consequences, not least the discontents Freud encouraged us to indulge in. And it has certainly lost that thrifty asceticism that Weber found so admirable in the Protestant ethic.³⁰

Conclusions

Modern jurisprudential studies consider concepts of ownership and possession to be exclusively within the domain of property law and as such governing principles of property law apply to whatever is owned or possessed considering the fact that a person owns his or her body as he or she owns a house or a car or other property indicates a dangerous trend where human body is bound to be commercialized.

Human life is, indeed, a tapestry of diverse activities, not reducible to each other. It is not the case that all motivation is really economic that all relations are actually to do with exchange and the search for profit. Instead of estimating that what it is that we owe to truth or to reality or to God as the source of truth, we calculate what we need to do so as to acquire, retain or at best placate power. But when we begin to think seriously about ethics, about how our life is to reflect truth, we do not consider what is owned to weakness, to powerlessness.

Our ethical seriousness is tested by how we behave towards those whose goodwill or influence is of no 'use' to us. Hence the frequently repeated claim that the moral depth of a society can be assessed by how it treats its children, disabled, elderly, economically vulnerable and terminally ill.

Once the social structure of humanity's life are framed in the same way as inanimate objects and forces, and their modes of life are conceived as governed by laws as falling objects or heating gases are, then no choice is permitted entry into the structure of the system.

Commercialization of human body leads to commercialization of social life which in turn leads to commercialization of human emotions and feelings. Thus there starts a vicious cycle of commercialization and consumerism where human emotions become the unfortunate casualty leading to a suffocating atmosphere all around.

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