

Living in a morally corrupt society

Society



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Brandi Smithers 18 October 2012 Professor James Essay #1 Final Draft Living in a Morally Corrupt and Market Driven Society Our society is a corrupt one, without a doubt. Built on morals and ethics that have lost prominence and importance, our society and the people who it is composed of have quickly made our market economy something awful that was never intended. A market economy is essentially a harmless, productive way of organizing activity and trade; unfortunately, society has lost sight of the good intentions and has “ drifted from having a market economy to being a market society (Sandel 10).

People have let greed for money and for success consume them. No longer is the market a tool for organization. Instead, it is now a way of life. Having the upper-hand in the market, means one is better off. What caused this change in society? Greed. Market triumphalism became the goal of many when they let greed overpower integrity (Sandel 6). Greed is the devil inside the market. It creates a moral dilemma by causing people to have a desire from market triumphalism so strong that they are “ led to irresponsible risk taking” as means of obtaining what they long for (Sandel 6).

People start to question if the morals instilled in their mind can be stretched farther and farther until they become “ morally vacant” (Sandel 13). The market has put a price on things never meant to be associated with a dollar sign such as time and ultimately, our lives. Historically, the need to “ organize the production and distribution of goods” generated the idea of a market economy; though once widely accepted, “ markets... have come to govern our lives as never before” (Sandel 6).

In today's society the market has a negative impact on a majority of adults and a surprising amount of children. It is becoming more and more common to see adults using incentives to motivate children to the right thing. For example, parents and schools often offer cash incentive for good grades (Sandal 51). Not only is it surprising to some that parents pay their children for a good report card, but " it never occurred to anyone that the school itself might pay for good grades" (Sandal 51).

Though some may argue that money incentive for grades " transforms the culture of schools and the attitudes of students towards school" (Sandal 54) for the better, the children's desire for cash replaces the traditional and responsible thought that doing good in school meant that one would not only better themselves, but that they would be a productive member of society. The incentives, or bribes, " bypass persuasion and substitute an external reason for an intrinsic one" (Sandal 59).

This shift in mindset not only instills greedy habits in children, but also creates irrational expectations for incentive given when one did nothing above and beyond what should be expected of any child. In essence, parents and adults are manipulating a child's sense of duty and obligation by putting a price on good behavior. The market and the common use of bribery undermine " obligation and commitment," which ultimately are " ideals that can't be reduced to monetary terms" (Sandal 50).

When one hears the word " greed," more often than not, money comes to mind; however, money is not the only asset people seek with greedy minds. The concept of time is one part of people's everyday lives that the market has dramatically manipulated in such a way that time is more valuable than

money. Corporations and franchised businesses have noticed this growing trend and they have taken advantage of people's greed for time. They have found that adding "fast-track schemes" to their marketing plans adds to their profit margin and also increases customer satisfaction.

They stand firm in the belief that "letting people pay for faster service at airports, at amusement parks, and on highways improves economic efficiency but letting people put a price on their time" (Sandel 20). It is not surprising that the moral importance of equality is thrown under the table by the same people that saw dollar signs when handling the ultimatum of profit vs. equality. For instance, people with excess money are able to jump to the front of the line at amusement parks and they also have the ability to pay extra to sit First-Class on an airplane (Sandel 17-18).

Sure, the convenience for the consumer of the "fast-track schemes" is considerable, but the schemes are extremely "unfair to those left languishing" waiting patiently for their turn (Sandel 27). Today's market society has not only added an extreme factor to inequality amongst citizens of society, but yet again, people are letting their morals of fairness slide in order to gain selfish convenience. The market has driven businesses and consumers alike into forgetting that one of the key factors to coexistence with one another is equality. The market has made time, once an element of life considered unchangeable, an easily manipulated tool for profit gain and also another reason why people of our society are so morally vacant. Out of all the ways market has driven the people of our society mad by giving priceless aspects of life monetary value, one aspect of life that should never be a part of market economy, is life itself. Project Prevention, founded by

Barbra Harris, is a program that offers drug addicted women \$300 cash if they will undergo sterilization or long-term birth control (Sandel 43).

Offering drug-addicted women money for sterilization is coercive, thus already making it morally wrong (Sandel 45). Not only does the organization use means of coercion for their gain, but the ultimatum that the drug-addicted women are faced with is one that no woman should ever have to encounter. She has to choose whether she wants to have children in the future, or if she is to take the money to satisfy the “ necessity of her situation” (Sandel 45). When “ a drug-addicted woman agrees to be sterilized for money, she is not acting freely” (45).

Project Prevention is a perfect example of how today’s free market has labeled our bodies (and the ones yet to be born) are merely “ possessions that we own and can use and dispose of” (Sandel 47). Since the market has stepped over the moral boundaries of viewing humans as possessions, it is clear that “ we need to rethink the role that markets should play in our society” (Sandel 7). Human life is one of the things that money can’t buy. Market economy is a great tool for organization in the way trade is handled, but a tool is what it should be; unfortunately, the market has consumed our society and it is the very air we all breathe.

Children are not only submerged in the ideas of a morally corrupt market, but they are being taught how to follow in the footsteps of the morally corrupted. As they develop, the corrupt ideas intensify, and money becomes air. Functionality is impossible in the absence of market. Intangible aspects of life, such as time, form a monetary value, leaving the once innocent child as a money hungry adult. Despite the morals once instilled in that child’s

mind, the child finds the ultimate victim to a morally corrupt society: an unborn child. When will he realize that there are some things that money can't buy?