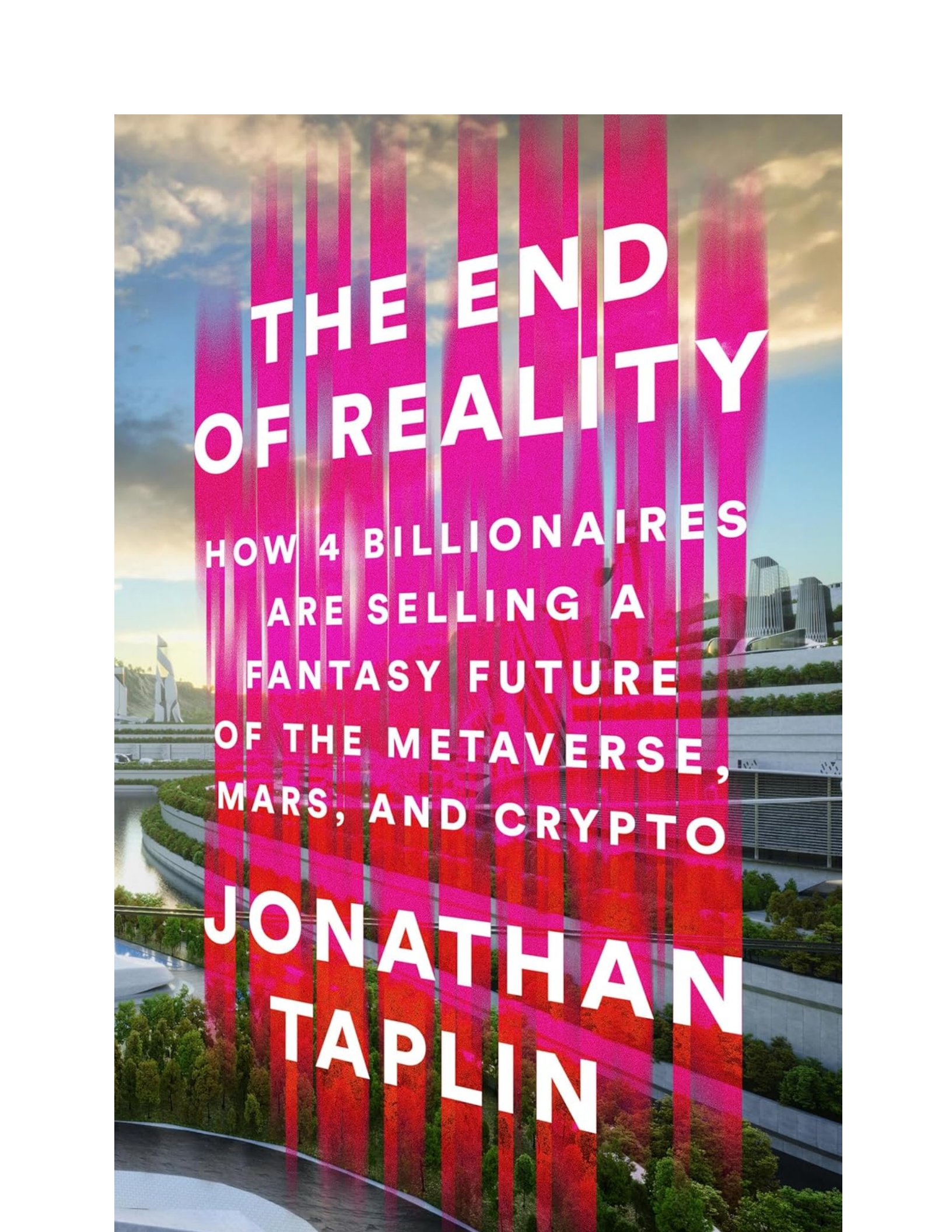


[The End of Reality](#)," by Jonathan Taplin. Book review on wide scale deception and greed by the super wealthy 4 horseman,

by Donald Harvey Marks, physician scientist and 3rd generation veteran

I really enjoyed reading this thoughtful, provocative, well-documented book: The End of Reality, by Jonathan Taplin. The author criticizes the sale of what are in his opinion 4 totally unrealistic scams: the metaverse, crypto, space travel, and transhumanism by four billionaires: **Peter Thiel, Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, and Marc Andreessen**. Taplin is a professor of communication and digital media at the University of Southern California.



THE END OF REALITY

HOW 4 BILLIONAIRES
ARE SELLING A
FANTASY FUTURE
OF THE METAVERSE,
MARS, AND CRYPTO

JONATHAN
TAPLIN

The book's main points are:

The 4 billionaires **Peter Thiel, Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, and Marc Andreessen** are:

- selling fantasies while the world is burning,
- diverting attention away from issues like income inequality, climate change, and the erosion of democracy,
- capitalizing on the low quality of life among America's poor and working classes,
- hyping schemes that are designed to divert our attention away from issues that really matter,
- selling a fantasy future where artificial intelligence and robots will do most of the work,
- Selling a future where a large portion of the population will sit at home, living a fantasy life in the Metaverse for at least 7 hours every day, subsisting on government-paid crypto Universal Basic Income,

The book is a reform agenda that seeks to replace the warped worldview of "The Four" with a vision of regenerative economics that seeks to build a sustainable society with healthy growth and full employment.

Chapter 6 is a discussion of the Metaverse, where it came from, what it consists of, what you can get from it, what you need to make it work, and who controls and profits from it.

Chapter 7 provides an exhaustive history refresher on Crypto, where it came from, the crashes and scams, and should give cheer to anyone who didn't get involved or exited while intact.

In Chapter 10 of the book, Tolpin provides perceptive insight into the personal backgrounds and cultural power of these four influential billionaires: **Peter Thiel, Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, and Marc**

Andreesen (referred to as “The Four”). These tech moguls have been hyping various schemes that divert attention away from critical issues:

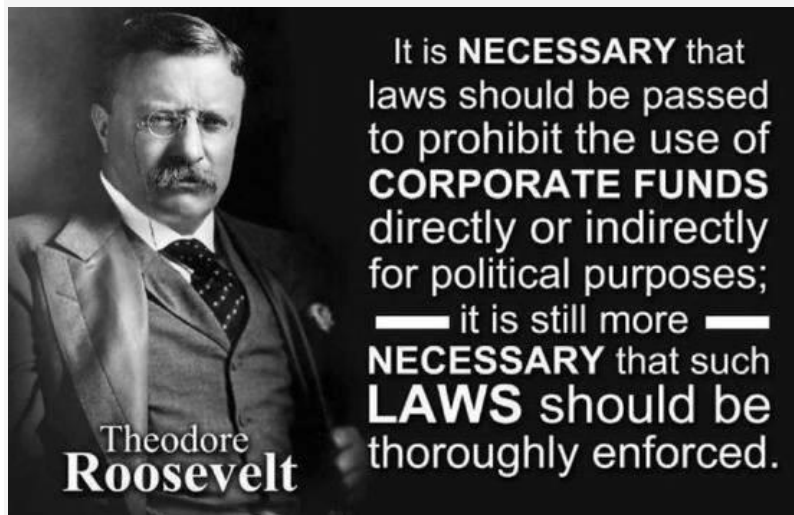
The schemes:

1. **Metaverse:** The concept of the metaverse, a virtual shared space, has been popularized by these billionaires. However, Taplin argues that this concept poses moral, political, and economic threats.
2. **Cryptocurrency:** The rise of cryptocurrencies, championed by some of these billionaires, has implications beyond financial markets. Taplin critiques how these digital currencies can exacerbate income inequality and other societal challenges.
3. **Space Travel:** The ambition to explore space, led by figures like Elon Musk, is portrayed as a grand but ultimately unnecessary and unachievable endeavor. However, Taplin highlights the enormous amount of taxpayer money funneled into supporting these ventures, often benefiting these billionaires disproportionately.
4. **Transhumanism:** The idea of enhancing human capabilities through technology (such as brain-computer interfaces) is another scheme. Taplin questions the ethical implications and the potential impact on society.

Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act is a federal law that protects online platforms from liability for content posted by their users. It was enacted in 1996 to encourage the growth of the internet and protect free speech online. It also allows online platforms to self-moderate content according to their own policies and standards. Taplin argues that Section 230 has enabled the rise of a “post-truth” era, where anyone can create and spread their own version of reality online, without any accountability or consequences. This book discusses the following principles concerning Section 230:

1. Section 230 is not a free speech issue, but a power issue. It grants enormous power to online platforms to shape public discourse and influence public opinion, while shielding them from legal challenges and public scrutiny.
2. Section 230 is not a neutral or objective law, but a political and ideological one. It reflects the values and interests of the tech industry, which favors innovation, growth, and profit over social responsibility, democracy, and human rights.
3. Section 230 is not a permanent or immutable law, but a contingent and historical one. It was enacted in 1996, when the internet was still a nascent and experimental medium, and it has not been updated or revised since then, despite the dramatic changes and challenges that have emerged in the digital age.
4. Section 230 is not a universal or global law, but a national and exceptional one. It is unique to the United States, and it contrasts with the laws and regulations of other countries, which impose more obligations and restrictions on online platforms and content.
5. The platforms are not neutral intermediaries, but active participants in shaping the online discourse and influencing public opinion.
6. The platforms have created a surveillance economy that exploits user data for profit and manipulates user behavior through algorithms and recommendation systems. The platforms have contributed to the erosion of trust in facts, science, and institutions, and the polarization of society along ideological lines.
7. The platforms have failed to adequately moderate harmful content such as hate speech, harassment, extremism, and disinformation, and have resisted regulation and oversight.
8. The platforms have stifled competition and innovation by acquiring or copying potential rivals, and have leveraged their market power to extract rents from creators and consumers.

As Pres. Teddy Roosevelt has said,



The author concludes that Section 230 is a flawed and outdated law that needs to be reformed or repealed, in order to restore trust, truth, and accountability in the online world. Section 230 has enabled the rise of powerful tech monopolies that manipulate information, spread misinformation, and undermine democracy. Taplin argues that Section 230 should be reformed or repealed to hold the platforms accountable for the harms they cause and restore a more diverse and trustworthy media landscape.

Taplin proposes several solutions to address these Section 230 problems, such as:

1. **Revising Section 230 to make the platforms liable for certain types of content, such as illegal or defamatory content, or content that incites violence or interferes with elections.** I recommended this several years ago, supporting and advocating for:
 - Return of #FairnessDoctrine to all media, public and private, to enable fair and balanced reporting and opinion,

- repeal of the **Communications Decency Act of 1996, Section 230(c)(1)**, to hold social media responsible for malicious, harmful and false posts,
- [Breaking up the platforms or imposing structural separations to prevent them from dominating multiple markets and engaging in anticompetitive practices,](#)
- Establishing a digital bill of rights that protects user privacy, data ownership, and consent, and gives users more control over their online experience,
- Supporting public and nonprofit media that provide high-quality, diverse, and independent journalism and information,
- Promoting digital literacy and civic education that equip users with the skills and knowledge to navigate the online environment and participate in democratic processes.

In essence, “**The End of Reality**” serves as both a scathing critique and a reform agenda. [It challenges the worldview propagated by these billionaires and advocates for regenerative economics that prioritize sustainability and full employment](#)

References

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