

A number is just a number until you print it on official-looking money, then we accept it as truth. I chose to make a series of dollar bills illustrating minimum wage, natural resources and student debt. We question and criticize that the minimum wage is too low, that the rich get a monopoly on land and as such natural resources and the atrociousness of student debt, but we do not question the value of money itself. In reality, money and the value we assign to it is fake and artificial, something that we chose to believe just because it was published and “official.” And so, I made fake bills and published them in a newspaper as if these social issues were printed on actual dollar bills and made into a form of currency. The newspaper uses radical language to justify the prices of the bills (while the phrases from articles criticizing these issues were implemented). At first I only did the manipulations of the bills but I felt like the project was missing something so I made the bills an addition to the newsletter

I used an editing software to manipulate all the bills. I put the minimum wage \$7.25 on a dollar bill with a minimum wage worker’s cartoon found online. The dollar represents the core of our economy, the most basic form of currency in the U.S, much like how workers are the core of our economy. Also, it being on the one dollar bill shows that it is severely undervalued and the lowest it can possibly be. I put infinity for the price of natural resources, or more specifically land, on a \$100 dollar bill. Natural resources, mainly land, is a monopoly in the modern world. If we wanted to take resources from an area, in most cases, the area would have been already owned by individual(s). And as time goes on, the prices for land also go up, leading to the poor having no access to it, much like the prestigious \$100 bill. I put 1.814 trillion dollars on the obsolete \$500 bill. The \$500 bill was discontinued but still holds value. Student debt shows the modern form of indentured servitude, something that should be obsolete but is not.

For the newsletter, I chose to pick sources from progressive articles regarding how minimum wage has harshly affected our population, how monopolizing natural resources only serves certain individuals and goes against equality, and how student debt is a stress that hinders students’ life after college. For the sources that I chose, I just picked the ones that I felt were credible and had language that would normally promote empathy. I wanted to put a hard twist on these sources and turn them into one big radical newsletter promoting these issues. I wanted the newsletter to take a stance of a tyrannical government that supported absolute control over its people and cared more for the greater good of the economy.

I feel like there can be different views to whether or not my work is original. In a sense, this is simply patchwriting because I am copying and pasting phrases from articles and just incorporating them around my words. But somehow I feel like it is original because I am putting a dramatic twist on the main intentions of the articles. I gave the phrases a whole new meaning like from white to black. I also thought I was being original when I was making the bills. Even though I did not start entirely from scratch with the bills and illustrations, I still spent a lot of effort into making my art. I think passion and being authentic are the best definitions of being original. I spent hours struggling over this project and finding ways to make one language totally transform into another—because of that, I would be proud to author this as my own.