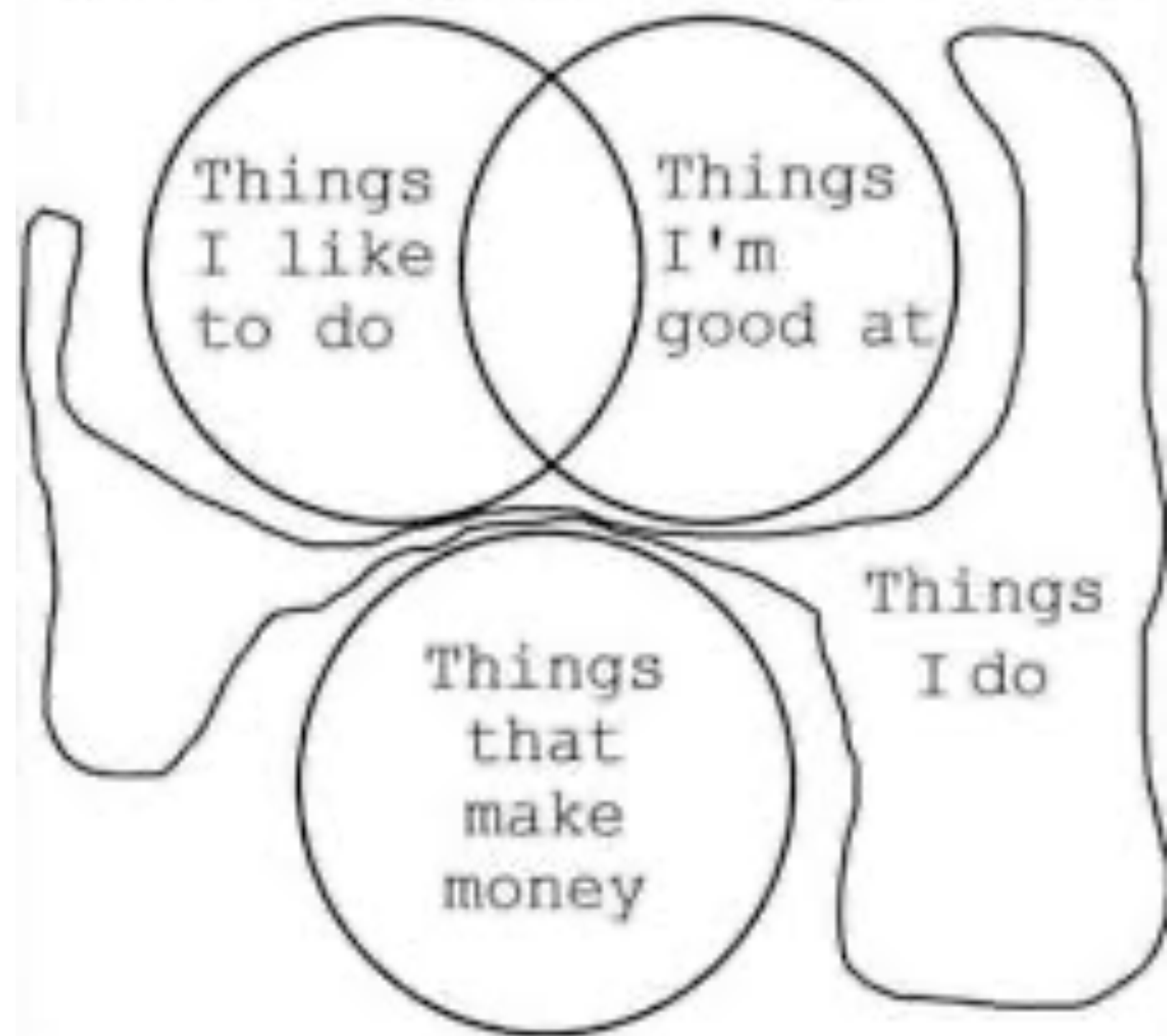# The Comedy of the Commons

Lessons of hope from an open-source software development community

Anastassia Vybornova // Historical Materialism 2024 // London, Nov 7, 2024
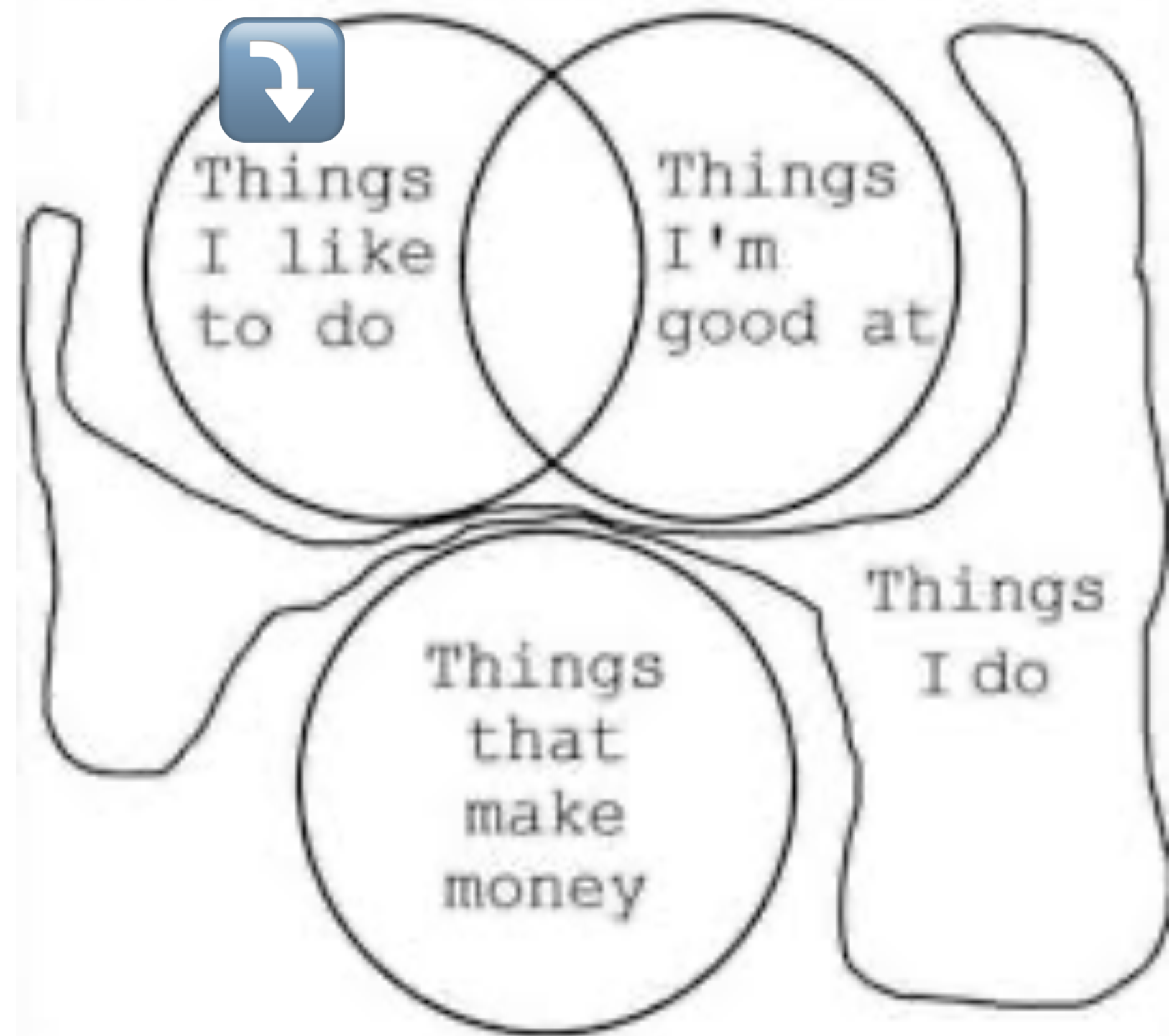
Why am I talking?
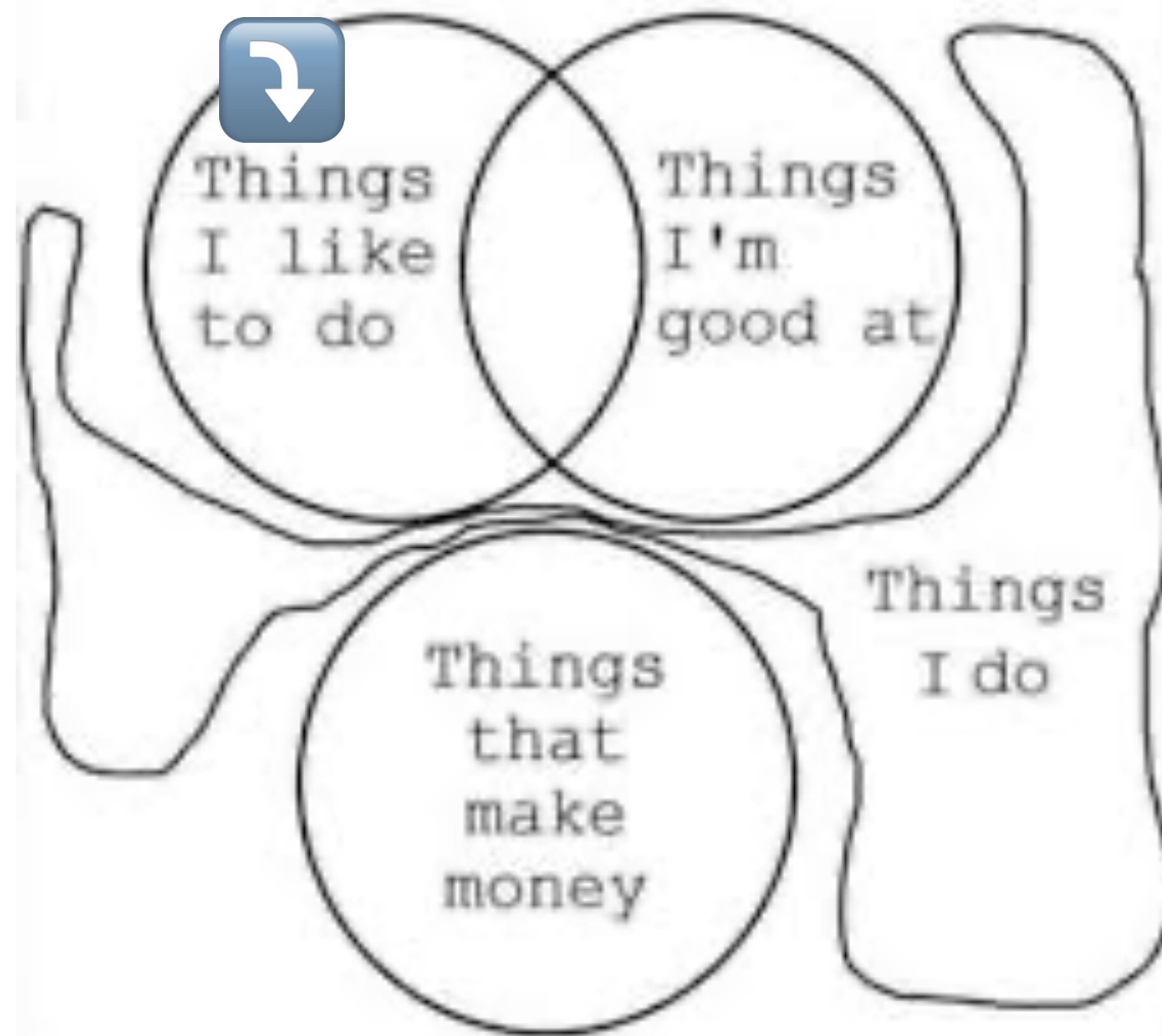

Venn Diagram of my life:

- Things I like to do
- Things I'm good at
- Things that make money
- Things I do

Why am I talking?

Venn Diagram of my life:

Things I like to do

Things I'm good at

Things that make money

Things I do

Why am I talking?

Venn Diagram of my life:

Things I like to do

Things I'm good at

Things that make money

Things I do

& friendship.

"Let me tell how tweets like this, affect open source developers like me. (…) We treat our projects as our babies and this simply hurts me. I am eager to hear constructive criticism (…) But pure hate is just destructive."

(@martinfleis on Twitter, 2022)

What is "open" source?

FLOSS

FREE LIBRE "OPEN" SOURCE SOFTWARE

Code that is publicly available,
may be freely redistributed and modified

What is "open" source?
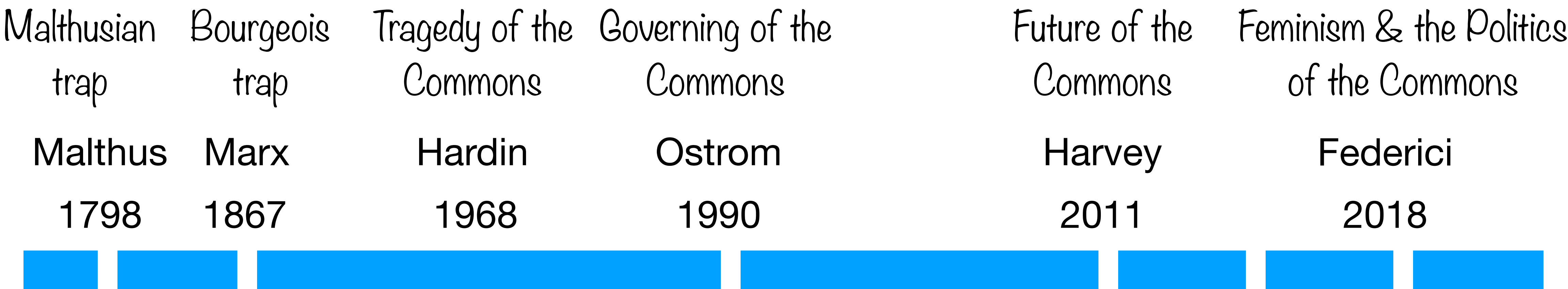
FLOSS & **CBP2P**

FREE LIBRE "OPEN" SOURCE SOFTWARE
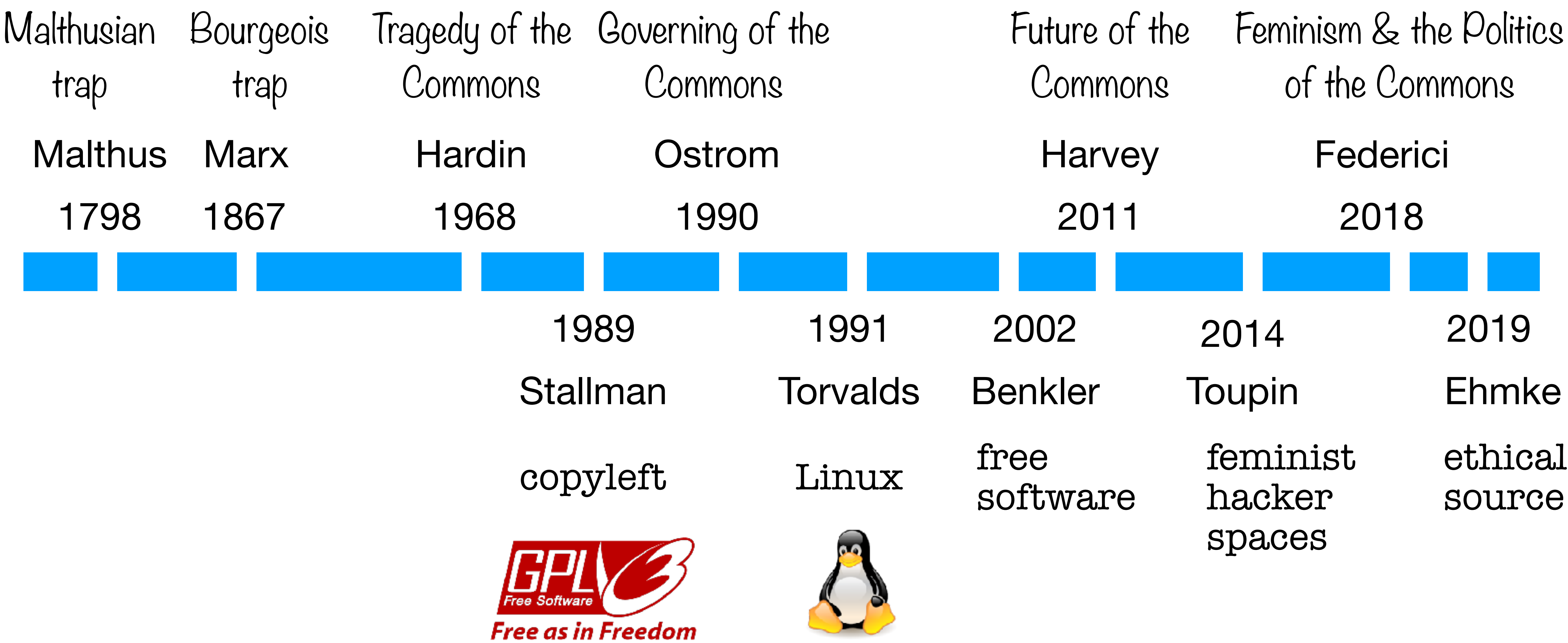
COMMONS-BASED PEER TO PEER PRODUCTION

Code that is publicly available,
may be freely redistributed and modified

Self-organized, networked production
with collective decision-making

What is so funny about the commons?

Malthusian trap	Bourgeois trap	Tragedy of the Commons	Governing of the Commons	Future of the Commons	Feminism & the Politics of the Commons
Malthus	Marx	Hardin	Ostrom	Harvey	Federici
1798	1867	1968	1990	2011	2018

What is so funny about the commons?

Malthusian trap	Bourgeois trap	Tragedy of the Commons	Governing of the Commons	Future of the Commons	Feminism & the Politics of the Commons
Malthus	Marx	Hardin	Ostrom	Harvey	Federici
1798	1867	1968	1990	2011	2018

		1989	1991	2002	2014	2019
		Stallman	Torvalds	Benkler	Toupin	Ehmke
		copyleft	Linux	free software	feminist hacker spaces	ethical source

GPL 3
Free Software
Free as in Freedom

Why put "openness" in quotation marks?

💰 for-profit repurposing 👼 ignoring ethical concerns of applications

🥩 AI SALAMI* parasitarian practices ❌ exclusionary community practices

* Systematic Approaches to Learning Algorithms and Machine Inferences (Quintarella 2019)

Why should we be hopeful?

✊ social change within OS communities

⭐ inspiration for analogue commoning practices

Ethical source

1. Our work benefits the commons.

We grant permission to modify, create derivative works, use and reuse it, in the spirit of openness and bounded by ethical constraints.

Ethical source

1. Our work benefits the commons.

We grant permission to modify, create derivative works, use and reuse it,
in the spirit of openness and bounded by ethical constraints.

AntiRacist Ethical Source License https://github.com/AtTheRoot/ATR-License/

Hippocractic License https://firstdonoharm.dev/ (anti-tech-neutrality!)

Ethical source

1. Our work benefits the commons.

We grant permission to modify, create derivative works, use and reuse it,
in the spirit of openness and bounded by ethical constraints.

AntiRacist Ethical Source License https://github.com/AtTheRoot/ATR-License/

Hippocractic License https://firstdonoharm.dev/ (anti-tech-neutrality!)

Ethical source

1. Our work benefits the commons.   https://ethicalsource.dev/

We grant permission to modify, create derivative works, use and reuse it,
in the spirit of openness and bounded by ethical constraints.

open source initiative®   https://opensource.org/osd

6. No Discrimination Against Fields of Endeavor

The license must not restrict anyone from making use of the program in a specific field of endeavor. For example, it may not restrict the program from being used in a business, or from being used for genetic research.

AntiRacist Ethical Source License https://github.com/AtTheRoot/ATR-License/

Hippocractic License https://firstdonoharm.dev/ (anti-tech-neutrality!)

Ethical source
... and Codes of Conduct

https://ethicalsource.dev/

1. Our work benefits the commons.

We grant permission to modify, create derivative works, use and reuse it, in the spirit of openness and bounded by ethical constraints.

https://opensource.org/osd

6. No Discrimination Against Fields of Endeavor

The license must not restrict anyone from making use of the program in a specific field of endeavor. For example, it may not restrict the program from being used in a business, or from being used for genetic research.

AntiRacist Ethical Source License https://github.com/AtTheRoot/ATR-License/

Hippocractic License https://firstdonoharm.dev/ (anti-tech-neutrality!)

Ethical source
... and Codes of Conduct

1. Our work benefits the commons.

We grant permission to modify, create derivative works, use and reuse it, in the spirit of openness and bounded by ethical constraints.

"Make no mistake; we are under attack. If we do not recognize the nature of the attack and reject it, we risk watching the best features of the open-source subculture be smothered by identity politics and vulgar Marxism."

Eric S. Raymond, founder of OSI,
after getting banned from OSI

open source initiative®

6. No Discrimination Against Fields of Endeavor

The license must not restrict anyone from making use of the program in a specific field of endeavor. For example, it may not restrict the program from being used in a business, or from being used for genetic research.
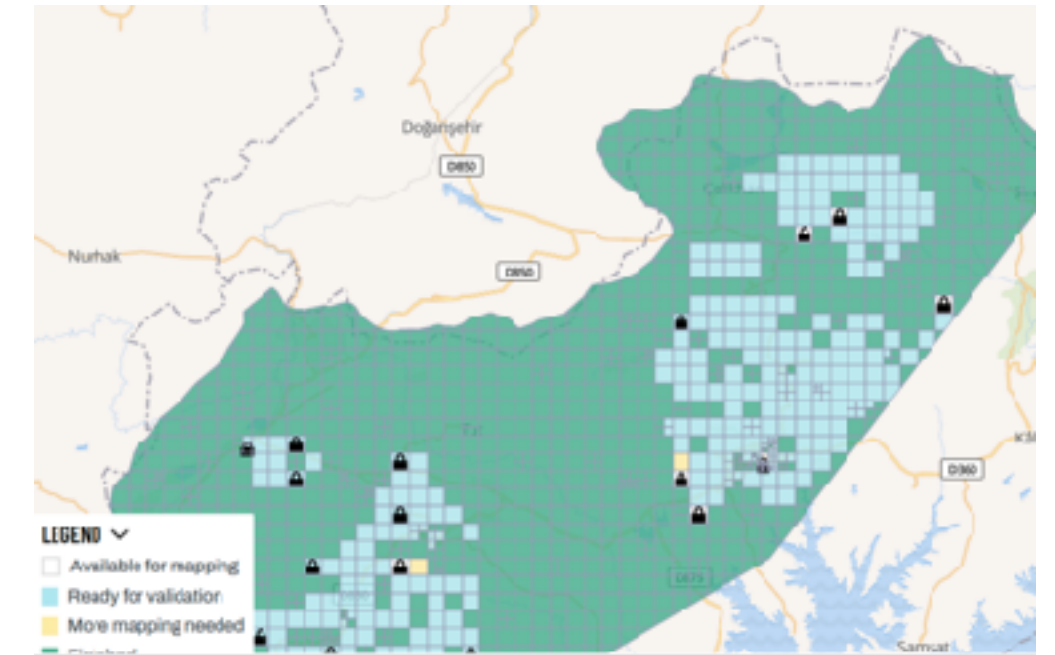
& digital commoning beyond coding…

Humanitarian OpenStreetMap
Turkey & Syria 2023 Earthquake Response

https://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/2023_Turkey_Earthquakes

Mia Landsem
Image-based abuse investigator

https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/oct/19/they-said-arent-you-that-porn-star-the-woman-hunting-down-image-based-abuse
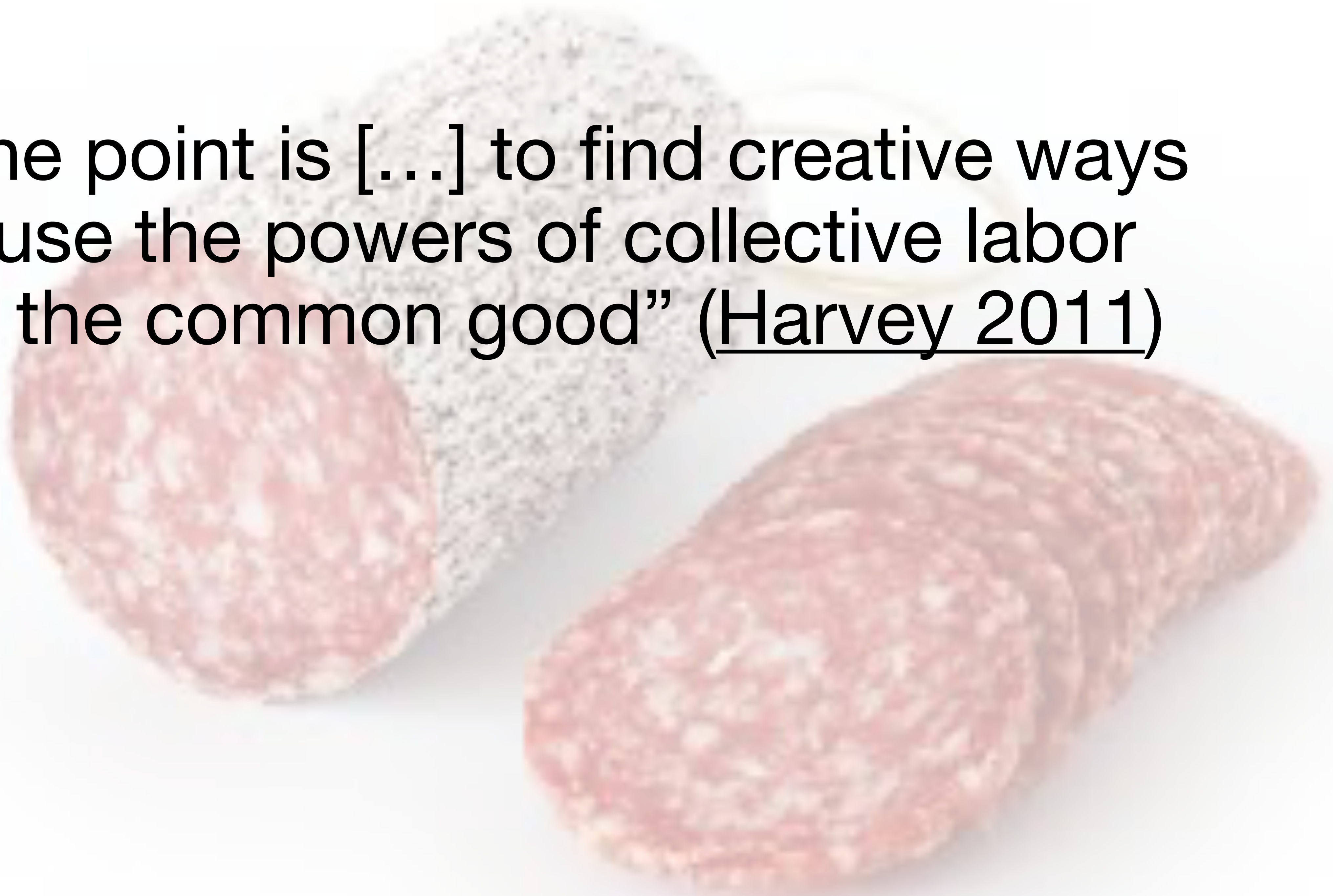
Data Workers Inquiry

https://data-workers.org/

Alexandra Elbakyan - SciHub

https://radiolab.org/podcast/library-alexandra

"The point is […] to find creative ways to use the powers of collective labor for the common good" (Harvey 2011)

"The point is […] to find creative ways to use the powers of collective labor for the common good" (Harvey 2011)

What should we be asking?

Work in progress. Please join! anvy@itu.dk