

Meme Mania and Secular Stagnation of the Mind

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An insidious particle of stupidity called meme has gone viral among those that pass for the with-it crowd of a degenerating society. Few are probably aware of the reactionary origin of the term which has often been used in support of racism and sexism. It's a creation of Darwin popularizer Richard Dawkins and appeared in his *The Selfish Gene*; a metaphorical application of Darwinian terminology to the historical development of human culture. That the author is such a raging fool as to be unaware that his notion of a selfish gene was imposed upon him by an entirely human created artifact known as the capitalist system does not say much for the intellectual level of the people he has managed to impress.

The concept was also promoted by ant expert E.O. Wilson whose excessive admiration of ant life could not prevent the ant model from being used as an explanation for the way humans lived. But his sociobiology was so thoroughly trashed by critics that its promoters had to come up with a new term, evolutionary psychology. Any expert that assists the ruling class in shifting responsibility for the damage that it inflicts upon the class that it exploits is sure to have a life time job as long as the system continues to exist.

Fortunately few scholars in this field can stomach such crass and demeaning submission to the ruling ideology. How humans made a clear break from our primate cousins and developed what some call an autocatakinetic system, or a cognitive niche, has yet to be determined although recent research in alternate versions of the Second Law and Entropy have opened up interesting possibilities.

Relatives of the meme in economics are statistical models and algorithms. They create projections of what humans will do (even though possibilities are infinite) via mathematics. Like the meme people they reject or diminish any notion of free will forgetting that even the oppressed have a memory of what freedom is and will always seek and find pathways to subvert their oppressor. Those efforts have produced the economic and political disorder now manifest the world over.

A booming Friday because Trump announced new measures to return capitalism to recent freewheeling criminal pass. Dodd-Frank is expected to be weakened giving banks and hedge funds more room to roam. Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan Chase rose 4% and 3% respectively. Trump also signaled the return of the right for financial advisors to steer their clients toward investments that yield the highest commissions and fees regardless of the risk for the client.

January jobs came in at a higher than expected 227,000. The increase of 75,000 from the previous month should have caused a decent increases in average wages. It didn't. It was a miserable 2% higher than the previous year. Jeffrey Snider noted that nothing is actually counted. It's all part of a model that concluded if it was run 100 times in 90 cases it would pick a number between 131,000 and 314,000. Given that the job number doesn't jibe with the wage number they should have kept running the job number down.

A group financed by the extreme right wing Koch brothers called Americans for Prosperity has come out in opposition to Trumps plan to tax American companies sales and imports in exchange for cutting corporate taxes to 20%.

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