**David Corzo - 20190432 - 2021/03/22**

**Socratic Discussion #8 – (1) Creative Destruction. (2) Matt Ridley TED Talk. (3) "Ayn Rand's Literature of Capitalism.**

**Synthesis (200):**

(1) In the first article we are introduced to Schumpeter's concept of creative destruction, which is the process by which new innovations (creative) destroy old products, processes, firms, and even entire industries by making them obsolete, this drives important technological change that otherwise would not have any good reason to develop. As a necessary consequence of this creative destruction there are some effects, first there are changes in the sociopolitical landscape such as job loss and second cultural effects.

(2) In the second article Ridley makes the case that the only way the human species has managed to make such great advances in technology is because 'ideas have sex', this basically means that we are constantly mixing ideas and the best ideas reproduce. Progress is almost completely due to the collective brain that society has managed to create, the process by which ideas mix with each other via communication, which has enabled us to not have to know everything but rather specialize in one thing while others 'work for us' which is the result of cooperation.

(3) The third article talks about Ayn Rand's literature and its effect on the world. While her rivals called her literature 'immoral' and 'selfish', the books she wrote (especially 'atlas shrugged') were incredibly influential, the people they influenced quickly realized that public benefit and private ambition are not mutually exclusive. While she herself had experienced communism firsthand in Russia, she when to America where she fell in love with the freedom and liberty that roamed. In her novel 'atlas shrugged' she glorifies the individual and makes the argument that government destroys the 'prime movers' of society, which in the novel are the entrepreneurs and the inventors, she advocates that the only way forward is to let loose the individual, to stop big government and to let entrepreneurs be. While at the time controversial Rand's literature has undoubtedly helped shape the future of economics and entrepreneurship.

**New concepts (30 c/u):**

* **The collective brain:** "Individuals connected in collective brains, selectively transmitting and learning information, often well outside their conscious awareness, can produce complex designs without the need for a designer—just as natural selection does in genetic evolution."

Source: <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rstb.2015.0192#:~:text=and%20social%20networks.-,Our%20societies%20and%20social%20networks%20act%20as%20collective%20brains.,selection%20does%20in%20genetic%20evolution>.

* **Randian Selfishness:** "concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself : seeking or concentrating on one's own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without regard for others. This in Rand's view is the correct way to live since you cannot live for anyone else but yourself"

Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/selfish>

**Author description (50):**

* Harriet Rubin: "founded the prestigious Doubleday business imprint Currency and she, as its editorial director, published dozens of notable bestsellers. She is the author of the international bestseller The Princessa: Machiavelli for Women. She is on USA Today‘s editorial board and is a consultant to many media companies. She currently lives in Manhattan."

Source: <https://www.grandcentralpublishing.com/contributor/harriet-rubin/#:~:text=Harriet%20Rubin%20founded%20the%20prestigious,The%20Princessa%3A%20Machiavelli%20for%20Women>.

* Matt Ridley: "is a British journalist and businessman. He is best known for his writings on science, the environment, and economics. Ridley is a libertarian, and a staunch supporter of Brexit. He has been a Conservative hereditary peer since 2013, with a seat in the House of Lords."

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matt_Ridley>

* John T. Dalton and Andrew J. Logan: "Dalton has a PhD in economics. Professor Dalton’s areas of expertise include international trade, growth and development, macroeconomics, and economic history." " Andrew Logan graduate from Glasgow Caledonian University in 2010 with a 1st class honors degree in Optometry. Following a period of practicing as an optometrist, Andrew returned to GCU to undertake a PhD in vision science. Andrew's PhD investigated face perception and led to the development of a new clinical test of face discrimination. His research interests include psychophysics, visual perception, face perception and clinical tests of high-level vision."

Source: <http://economics.wfu.edu/faculty-and-staff/john-t-dalton>

Source: <https://theconversation.com/profiles/andrew-j-logan-212440>

**Context description (50):**

The first article was written in 2021, the second was recorded in 2010 and the third one was written in 2007. All within 14 years. The context of the articles where mainly in the political landscape, mainly how to influence politicians and legislators to respect the individual, grant brilliant people the possibility of engaging in creative destruction and how ideas combine or 'have sex' to deliver better and more ingenious ways of pushing innovation and bettering human life. All this while protests break out calling for the punishing of entrepreneurs and the limitation of innovation so as to not create job loss.

Source: <https://qrius.com/the-first-two-decades-of-the-21st-century-have-been-defined-by-one-thing-protest/>

**Questions to the author:**

1. How can we teach the opposition that entrepreneurs are the heroes and not the villains?
2. Can creative destruction be such that humans themselves create the situation where no humans are needed to work and to produce? Can innovation at an extreme level create this? Is there an upper limit of innovation that allows this to happen?

**Sources of information:**

**Source in the article (50): "Lump the labor fallacy":** Used to describe the belief that increasing labor productivity, immigration, or automation causes a permanent increase in unemployment. This is a fallacy, as the number of jobs in the economy is not fixed, and typically new innovation create new markets and new demands, thus creating more jobs or at least creating a neutral effect.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lump_of_labour_fallacy>

**External sources (75): "The virtue of selfishness":** is a collection of essays by Ayn Rand and Nathaniel Branden that expose a rational and ethical justification for egoism, and how altruism is immoral and creates problems in the socioeconomic landscape. It was written in 1964 and it was one of the first expositions of Rand's philosophy of 'objectivism'.

Sources:<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Virtue_of_Selfishness>