

Genismo: A philosophy of happiness and reality

Abstract

We will address a new philosophy of life that will try to make the DNA code (and its mental algorithms such as feelings and instincts) compatible (as much as possible) with our culture.

Keywords: Genismo, Happiness, Gene, DNA, Philosophy, Doctrine

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Introduction: The pursuit of happiness and the genetic imperative

“Genismo,” a philosophy developed by João Carlos Holland de Barcellos (Jocax), has its roots in the “Genetic Philosophy” he created in the 1980s. This doctrine arises from the observation that while human genes are immutable and fixed at conception, culture and beliefs are flexible and can be changed. According to Jocax, much of human suffering stems from the dichotomy between cultural values (such as religiosity, habits, and customs) and biological instincts (desires and drives). The core proposal of Genismo is to align culture with biology as much as possible—not the other way around—since acting against biological imperatives only results in greater suffering and unhappiness.

The reading of Richard Dawkins’ *The Selfish Gene* around 1990 deepened this perspective, showing that all living beings evolved to perpetuate their genes. Organisms are metaphorically seen as “survival machines” programmed to ensure their genes are passed on to future generations. Genismo, coined around 1997, posits that happiness is achieved by following the path of genetic perpetuation, minimizing conflicts between culture and instinct, and integrating culture with our deepest biological essence.

Fundamental concepts of genismo

1. Happiness as the path to genetic perpetuation

The essence of Genismo is that maximum happiness, naturally, lies in acting in accordance with genetic perpetuation. All living beings evolved through natural selection under this filter. This means that instead of fighting against genetically programmed instincts and desires, culture should adapt to work in their favor. This approach aims to reduce suffering and give new meaning to life, offering a form of immortality based on real entities—genes—rather than illusions.

2. Genes as our highest value and genetic immortality

For Genismo, genes are considered the most precious assets. Accepting our condition as “gene-perpetuating machines” requires a reevaluation of values, many of which may be based on religions. Immortality, in Genismo, is achieved through the perpetuation of genes (“we are our genes”), which are real entities, unlike the soul. This sense of immortality via genes is a source of happiness with factual support.

3. Genetic sharing and altruism

Genismo emphasizes that genes are not confined to individual bodies but are spread across humanity and even other species. We share a large percentage of genes with our descendants (86%) and

with any other member of the same species (68%). *This genetic sharing should promote greater altruism, leading to the recognition of others as part of oneself.* Human selfishness, on the other hand, is attributed to the belief that consciousness is an individual, unsharable essence. The “selfishness” of genes, paradoxically, can induce altruistic behaviors—for example, a mother risking her life to save her children.

4. Genismo and atheism: commitment to science and truth

Genismo is a branch of atheism, firmly committed to science, logic, and truth. Beliefs disconnected from reality—such as religions, mysticism, and esotericism—are seen as “alienating and dangerous memes” that can distort one’s view of the world, leading to contradictions, injustices, and unhappiness. Genists are encouraged to tolerate believers, understanding that their minds may have been “contaminated” by “memetic viruses” since childhood. For a Genist, happiness and pleasure must be found “here, in this universe, on our own planet,” without the expectation of an afterlife paradise.

5. Genist Ethics: Scientific Meta-Ethics (MEC)

Genismo transforms the biological goal of genetic perpetuation into a cultural goal. Genist ethics is based on *Scientific Meta-Ethics (MEC)*, which postulates *that individual happiness is limited by group happiness, and the total happiness of the group takes precedence over individual happiness.* Thus, gene-perpetuating actions that cause suffering to others and reduce the group’s overall happiness should be avoided.

6. “We are our genes”: The evolution of the concept

By April 2003, Genismo evolved to the understanding that consciousness is not the essence of the individual—genes are. Consciousness, like other parts of the body, is seen as an “appendage” of the true self: the genes, which permeate nearly every cell. This perspective unifies culture and biology, integrating the individual with their immutable genetic programming.

7. Genetic induction mechanisms and reason

Genes induce organisms to act in gene-perpetuating ways through various mechanisms:

- Rigid, biologically coded mechanisms: Automatic actions (e.g., plants turning leaves toward the sun).
- Hyper-primitive instincts: Near-mechanical behaviors (e.g., breathing control).
- Instincts that generate desires or drives: Impulses and feelings the organism seeks to satisfy (e.g., anger, love).

- d) Reward mechanisms: Learning through pain or pleasure (e.g., pain from touching fire).
- e) Epigenetic rules: More refined instincts, activated by environmental assessment, which led to the neocortex (the seat of reason).
- f) Meme absorption: The ability to store and use cultural knowledge, driving brain and cultural evolution.

Reason, created by genes for more efficient perpetuation, can paradoxically lead to “genetic betrayal” through “harmful memes” (e.g., consumerism or celibacy) that reduce happiness and genetic perpetuation.

Conclusion: A paradigm for earthly happiness

At its core, Genismo is an invitation to reevaluate the human condition through a genetic and evolutionary lens. By proposing that

happiness is maximized when acting in accordance with the imperative to perpetuate one’s genes—and grounding this pursuit in science and truth—Jocax’s philosophy offers an alternative to traditional paradigms. It argues that following Genismo produces more happiness than not following it, as it aligns cultural goals with biological goals while providing an extra ideological pleasure: *a sense of immortality based on the reality of genes*. Genismo presents itself as a kind of “vaccine” against “harmful memetic viruses” that undermine human happiness. The philosophy advocates for the pursuit of justice and happiness on Earth, as it is the only place where they can be achieved.

References

1. The Selfish Gene.
2. Genismo: Um novo paradigma.