

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE

This zine is part of a series of footnote zines to the project “Memetic Engines of Anticapitalism.” Due to a whole lot of complications (mainly involving chronic illness) the version of this zine is at some stage of draft, not the polished and complete edition.

All of these zines will be available for free online and in perpetuity when they're finished, and updated regularly in the meantime.

If you want to follow up, the QR code on the front of this zine will take you straight to the most recent web page edition and an archive of each iteration that was separately published.

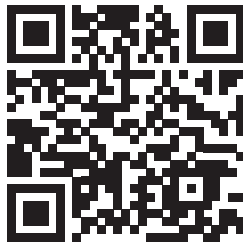
For more general updates and information on the whole project, this QR code will take you straight to memeticengines.com, where you can see the overview and any news about the works, sign up for the mailing list, or get in touch with me to ask clarifying questions.

ZINES IN THE SERIES:

Replicate, Mutate, Select
The Memetic Landscape
This Is Propaganda
Ethical Hypocrisy
Little Ideas in Memetics
Capital's Not Capitalism
What Are Pacta
Some other awful things that are inevitable under capitalism
The Third Derivative of Value
This Is George
Self-Destruct, LLC.

AND COMING SOON,

My Chronic Illness as a Case Study in the Shortcomings of Capitalism



MEMETICENGINES.COM

Some other awful things that are inevitable under capitalism

Note: Due to complications surrounding a chronic illness (see upcoming zine “My Chronic Illness as a Case Study in the Shortcomings of Capitalism”) the text of several of these zines, including this one, is incomplete. Where this is the case, I've done my best to make a pamphlet that gives the general idea. As these works are completed, you'll be able to find them online at memeticengines.com.

By T.X. Watson

version β1



Environmental destruction

Al Gore's documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" was aptly named: shifting out of fossil fuels would be a massive inconvenience for most, and flat out deadly for some. Every part of the process involves spending more money to get less stuff.

So they don't. And to avoid being called out on their inaction, they sow a narrative -- propaganda -- in which their behavior is good and okay. They support the idea that climate change is a hoax because from their perspective dealing with climate change and getting people to ignore climate change are both solutions to the problem as they experience it.

This is true of every environmental resource. There's nothing about any resource that makes it stop being valuable when you take an environmentally destructive amount of it.

Over time, as humans interact with the environment, their relationship would stabilize. However, in terms of biological evolution (which is a significant part of this equation) that stabilization will take a time scale that's orders of magnitude larger than the amount of time we have before carbon emissions cause definite-extinction-level events.

On those long biological evolutionary timescales, humans have barely existed for any time at all. Nothing in the world is environmentally stabilized to deal with them.

Worker exploitation

The obvious scale of this is stuff like sweatshops: humans who are necessary to do huge amounts of labor get kept at just barely the level of subsistence so that they, as a material resource, don't die off -- and get pushed for every iota of work possible.

This is extreme, but it happens -- and it's always going to happen, because it's the basic model of capitalism: profit.

Profit is what it's called when people do labor and generate value, and

then something else takes that value and distributes to the laborers a fixed amount which is less than the total amount they produced.

From the worker's perspective, the wider that margin the better. One way to widen the margin is to get a lot more money for the product. Another is to push down the share given to the laborers.

Social distrust

I'll be talking about this a lot more in the upcoming zine "My Chronic Illness as a Case Study in the Shortcomings of Capitalism," but for people whose qualities shift them to the outside of most-employable, lying-by-omission is a necessary precondition for survival.

Chronic illness is a good example, but this includes people whose sexuality or gender identity, race, resource access, support system, or any of an infinite list of other qualities are maligned or less-valued by the norms of the job market at any given time.

If I were being honest -- not just truthful but really honest -- with any potential employer, I would have to warn them that I have Meniere's Disease -- an incurable, unpredictable vestibular disorder that may sometimes take me fully out of commission for days with no warning. That fact is extremely relevant to their decision about whether to choose me or someone else to fill a position.

Legally, I'm not obligated to disclose that. And that's good, because I need to have a job in order to make money in order to pay rent in order to not die of exposure next winter.

But it's not great that our economic system is structured to force marginalized people to mislead others to avoid dying.

Because of this -- because everyone's survival is always conditional -- trust is fundamentally compromised. It doesn't have to be. The world could be structured to encourage honesty. But it isn't.