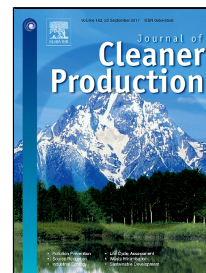


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The Rise and Fall of American Growth – Robert J. Gordon

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Let me begin the brief attempt to outline the main themes of the book by Robert J. Gordon "The Rise and Fall of American Growth" via an excursion into an interesting psychological micro-topic. It seems that at a certain age or in a particular mental setting (for example, in a moment of deep personal crisis), our mind (taken in a broad sense) is not always capable to 'chew' (sift through our critical apparatus) and reflectively integrate information, interpretation of information, or even a general attitude. On contrary, the previously mentioned information, interpretation or general attitude, our mind uncritically ingest and then thoughtlessly internalizes it. These ingested opinions, interpretations or attitudes, which have been coined with a term introject, then continue their own life within us. Until the moment of examination and critical 'chewing' (processing/reflection), it is not easily discernable, yet at the same time it has a profound and often negative affect on us. In this sense, the concept of introject can be seen as a personal "blind spot".

Let us ask ourselves whether a similar mechanism of the "introject" and subsequently the "blind spot" can exist on a level other than a personal one; whether it is possible under certain circumstances to appropriate/digest something and uncritically follow the introject even at a group or society-wide level; whether many unseen problems are not a consequence of the group or even social level of internalized introjects. (A small advantage for a person who grew up in the atmosphere of late Communism is the memory of what was then life experience – but what today are clearly dead and in hindsight well-illuminated micro-introjects of the mental world of the late socialism of that time. That the ridiculousness of the phrases "the necessity of a fierce struggle against a savage subjective idealism" or "With the Soviet Union for eternity and in no other way" replaced thinking is obvious from today's point of view.)

Thus, if we admit the existence of introjects and, moreover, the fact that they exist at the level of social groups or even society as a whole, we can ask another heretical question. How is it possible that the introject of faith in the unconditional benefit of unlimited economic growth has been able to survive, critically undigested in the mental capacities of Western societies, for over a hundred years, and even today is not – with few exceptions – critically reflected upon? What makes it so light-deflecting and deeply absorbed by the black hole of (not only) our social-

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