**THE SKEPTIC ARENA.COM**

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**Good news:**

**According to Michael Mandel,**

**The robots may not destroy us after all**

**by David Horsey, L.A. Times**

***A few weeks ago, I wrote a column that outlined the worries of big thinkers such as Stephen Hawking and Andrew Yang who are predicting a wave of job destruction caused by automation, robots and artificial intelligence.***

**David, it is not necessary to predict. Simply open up any history book and you can read about the effects of automation for yourself. Every job that a machine takes, is one less job available to humans. Simply carry that thought out to its logical conclusion.**

***Michael Mandel begs to differ. Mandel is chief economic strategist at the Progressive Policy Institute. He and Bret Swanson, president of Entropy Economics LLC, just completed a study for the Tech CEO Council that foresees a rather bright economic future brought about by technological innovation.***

***I recently interviewed Mandel and he made a compelling argument that the application of technology to the physical economy will, in time, produce more jobs, higher wages, greater productivity and all kinds of as-yet-unimagined business activity.***

**David, replace Mandel's name in the paragraph above with Trump or Ryan. Would it read any different?**

**The only difference would be your reaction to it.**

**Because this guy plays on your team (Liberals), you are willing to suspend critical thinking.**

***The two doomsday narratives that are currently circulating — that robots will steal jobs and that productivity will lag more or less permanently — are as wrong as the 19th century fears that electrification would put people out of work, Mandel said.***

**David, how was that wrong? Weren't jobs lost?**

**The fact that other jobs were created does not mean that jobs were not lost.**

***In fact, Mandel suggested, we are on the edge of a technological transformation every bit as revolutionary as the advent of electricity. Already, a dynamic new digital economy has arisen (think Microsoft, Apple and Google). The next step is to apply information technology to industries that deal with physical things.***

***Mandel pointed out that this is already happening in two areas. The first is fracking. Technological innovations have enabled extraction companies to access heretofore unreachable energy reserves and, though this progress comes with a controversial environmental cost,***

**David, the environmental cost of fracking is proven scientific fact. There is nothing controversial about scientific fact. There are only manufactured controversies from the side that lost the scientific debate (global warming being another example).**

***there is no question fracking has created good-paying jobs***

**David, that must explain why there are so many more jobs in that industry now, huh?**

**Statistics also don't back up your claim of good-paying jobs. We know that wages have stagnated for decades (except for the Plutocrats and CEO's).**

***and enhanced economic activity.***

**David, getting energy from renewable resources would produce economic activity; so how is fracking enhancing economic activity in ways that could not be enhanced in less destructive ways?**

***The second is e-commerce. Beyond the digital component, e-commerce is about getting physical products shipped and delivered and the result is jobs for a lot more folks than just those who write computer code.***

**David, yeah like the ones who used to deliver products before we had drones. And the workers on the production line before automation. And ... (you get the picture).**

**As for computer code, you can find most of those good-paying tech jobs overseas where companies pay employees pennies on the dollar to produce products that would cost them far more if they had to pay Americans.**

***Mandel points to Kentucky,***

**David, this guy Mandel's best examples are fracking and Kentucky?**

**That's like starting the World Series with your worst pitcher.**

***where the big rise in e-commerce employment is transforming the state’s economy.***

**David, well, it's not like they could do much worse, could they?**

[**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\_of\_U.S.\_states\_by\_GDP\_per\_capita**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._states_by_GDP_per_capita)

**I guess we'll just have to take Mandel's word for it, on his abilities to emulate Miss Cleo.**

***It is an early example, he said, that the blessings of technology are “breaking out of the digital ghetto of the coastal states.”***

***What about the jobs that will be lost to technological change, such as the truck and taxi drivers who will be put out of work once autonomous vehicles take to the road? The transformed economy will create many new and more stable jobs, Mandel insisted.***

**David, like what?**

**(I mean besides apprentice drone dispatcher)**

***Disruption is unsettling, he agreed, but it is wrong to focus only on disruption and not on the large gains and unimagined opportunities that await in the new economy.***

**David, well, we're still waiting. Like what?**

***“Dystopia does not have a historical precedent,” Mandel said. Instead, there are repeated examples of the reinvigorating power of new technology.***

**David, when did any of those historical precedents include robots that replaced people?**

***During the first half of the 20th century, General Electric and General Motors became industrial giants offering high-wage employment thanks to innovations in technology and production methods.***

**David, we're still waiting. How can you compare creating jobs for humans to creating jobs for robots?**

***There may no longer have been jobs for whalers, blacksmiths and woodcutters, but most people were happy with the change.***

**David, so Mandel finally admits to lots of job losses, but that's okay because most people were happy with it?**

**And he knows that ... how?**

***Americans rightly perceive the period just after World War II as a time of prosperity and abundant employment when the country’s middle class was solidified, but Mandel pointed out that the 1950s economy was built on innovations that came in the decades before and was preceded by the Great Depression and a lot of postwar talk about stagnation.***

**David, the reason for the prosperity that Americans enjoyed between The Great Depression and The Empire Strikes Back (1980) was that America was in its golden age of Socialism.**

**That is now a word that Plutocrats have successfully managed to convince most Americans is an evil word.**

***He believes we are now at the beginning of another cycle that will lead to dramatic economic growth.***

**David, wasn't George Bush promising the same thing?**

***It won’t happen tomorrow, he said, and, in fact, it may take an additional 15 years.***

**David, by then it will be way too late. Plutocrats now control all branches of the U.S. government and are in the process of beginning the greatest transfer of wealth in human history from the savings accounts of Americans into the offshore bank accounts of the ultra rich.**

**And the saddest part of all - is that we did this to ourselves.**

***“The future will take longer to come than you expect, but then it will come in a rush,” Mandel said. Mandel does not have nightmares about robots. Instead, he told me, “I wake up each day to see what we’ll be capable of tomorrow.” Not a bad way to start the day or to develop smart policies for the future.***

**David, if I didn't know better, I would swear this guy was employed by the CATO Institute.**

[**http://www.latimes.com/opinion/topoftheticket/la-na-tt-robots-economy-20170428-story.html**](http://www.latimes.com/opinion/topoftheticket/la-na-tt-robots-economy-20170428-story.html)

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**Scientists Halt Growth of Colon and Stomach Cancers**

**Researchers have discovered a "revolutionary" new way to stop the growth of colon and stomach cancers, which could lead to a new cancer-fighting drug within 3 years. White blood cells called macrophages help to heal wounds and remove damaged cells in the body. But those with a protein called hematopoietic cell kinase (HCK) can also be hijacked by cancer cells to fuel its growth. The more HCK activity a macrophage has, the more it nurtures cancer cell growth and survival. Inhibiting the HCK protein could prevent cancer cells from taking over.**

**When researchers used a drug-like molecule to inhibit the protein in animal tests, existing colon and stomach cancers stopped growing. The appearance of new cancers was also reduced.**

**This discovery could potentially offer a new and complementary approach, to chemotherapy and immunotherapy, as an option for treating gastrointestinal cancers, which is especially important as colon cancers are usually resistant to most immunotherapy treatments. It is being hailed as a revolutionary development with the potential to save thousands of lives.**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**Lao-Tzu (4th, 5th, or 6th century B.C.E.)**

**He was an ancient Chinese philosopher and writer. He is known as the reputed author of the Tao Te Ching, the founder of philosophical Taoism, and a deity in religious Taoism and traditional Chinese religions.**

**"If you do not change direction,**

**you may end up where you are heading."**