

## Re: What do geneticists think of memes?

---

*Source:* <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.bio.evolution/2005-12/msg00330.html>

---

- *From:* "JoeSP" <olegp@xxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Sat, 24 Dec 2005 14:35:31 -0500 (EST)
- 

"Perplexed in Peoria" <jimmenegay@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message  
[news:dodh67\\$1k6u\\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:dodh67$1k6u$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

>

> "Lupus" <ihowllikeawolf@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message

> [news:docukl\\$1c30\\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:docukl$1c30$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

>

>> What are the major disanalogies between the two concepts which make it

>> untenable to give a rigorous scientific treatment of memes?

>

- > 1. Genes are inherited almost exclusively vertically (parent to offspring). Memes are transmitted from a variety of sources and are acquired at a variety of times within the lifecycle.

Generally true, but there is a lateral transfer via recombination, albeit a more "angular" route. There is also some "pull" similar to meme adoption in some traits such as a peacock's tail. The mating partner is attracted to the trait (perhaps for no good reason) but nonetheless, it becomes concentrated in the population similar to a memetic idea or phrase.

>

- > 2. Genes are transmitted by a mechanism which takes no account of what a gene DOES. Useful and useless genes are equally likely to be inherited from a parent. That produces a BIG simplification of the math. Memetic transfer depends in a complicated way upon what the meme does.

>

- > 3. Genes are usually selected indirectly – but their impact on the fitness of the 'vehicle' carrying the gene. The beneficial or detrimental effect of a meme on its bearer may have little to do with whether a meme propagates. Memetic selection probably has to be modeled at the meme level, not the vehicle level.

As I said in my previous example, some genes are selected by other than natural forces.

The exception does not of course disprove your statement of the general rule.

>

- **References:**

- ◆ **Re: What do geneticists think of memes?**

- ◆ *From:* Perplexed in Peoria

- Prev by Date: **Re: Gaia's place in Evolutionary Biology**
- Next by Date: **Re: What do geneticists think of memes?**
- Previous by thread: **Re: What do geneticists think of memes?**
- Next by thread: **Re: What do geneticists think of memes?**
- Index(es):
  - ◆ **Date**
  - ◆ **Thread**