

On emanations, eructation, polysemy and the right to de...

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David Quentin tweeted during a tax discussion yesterday that companies "really are emanations of the state; creatures of statute".

David was absolutely right and he used the word emanation correctly, meaning something which originates or issues from a source. Given that there is no company that can exist without statute law then it should be beyond dispute, one would have thought, that companies emanate from the state.

Not to the tax trolling pedants it was not: far from it in fact. Ben Saunders, a key member of that tribe, was straight into action, arguing that David had to be wrong as there was a legal definition of '[emanation of the state](#)' and as such no other could be used - and as it disagreed with the use David was making of it he had to be wrong.

This means Sanders missed a fundamental [polysemic point](#) - which is that a word can have many meanings. But not to the tax trollosphere they can't. In their puritanical fervour everything has a precise and certain meaning, even if it is known only to a few of whom they think they are amongst the chosen few, and woe betide anyone who might challenge their perception of the status quo.

David acted with good grace, as he always does. Jolyon Maugham made clear he thought David was right. And David had the last word - [posting](#):

I am very happy to admit that it was a grave error to use the word "emanation"; should have said "eructation"

For those not familiar with eructation, the politest interpretation is burping.

I admit I think I might have used the word flatulation - the coincidence of source with the commentary offered would have been too strong for me to have resisted.

But the real point is what really went on here. David used a term correctly - and in the context of his political economic thinking surrounding these issues - and was jumped upon not because he had made a valid point - which he had - but for three other

reasons.

The first was to try to discredit him using a narrow interpretation of a phrase which would be familiar to only a tiny number of people.

The second was, no doubt, to narrow debate to the terms of reference the tax trollosphere wanted it to be engaged upon.

And the third was to consequentially suppress discussion of alternatives to a current situation where reform is needed.

This is this groups standard modus operandi. It is, no doubt, deliberate. It is largely effective - these people do very clearly discourage debate - and it therefore suppresses free speech by many so that the very narrow view of these very limited number of people appears to have more support than any reasonable analysis might suggest appropriate. That is why I will not have anything to do with them, and will not let them respond here to this post (they will have plenty of other places to do so).

But there is something else to note as well. The ten (or less) people I would associate with this activity have between them, as far as I can see, never once come up with a single notable contribution to debate or a single original idea of any sort whatsoever. Their aim appears to solely be to deter others from considering reform to a system that is patently not working.

And that's why anyone who wants serious tax debate has to exclude them from contributing because fair and open discussion is not possible when they are determined to prevent it. Which is why I won't be on Jolyon Maugham's blog again, because much as I admire his ambition his terms of engagement do at present prevent any possibility of success.