

The 2022 Drake Lecture

**Ridicule in Real Time:
How Memes Can Undermine
Totalitarianism and Save the World!**

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Today's address is going to take more the form of a story than a paper. It might be a bit of a wild ride and it might be rough. My hope is we will all still be the same dear friends we have been for these many years and are in this moment when I reach its end. Because from what may seem a light-hearted title springs all the fear and hope I have for what has been happening, for what will happen next, and who and how we will be in future.

I chose to tell this story today for a simple reason: I cannot bring myself to think about anything else. This has been true for some time now. Because the information and ideas I talk about today are what I think about much of my day, every day; they are what I study, whom I read, what I strive to learn, to whom I listen; they are even what I dream about. I suppose at its essence my talk today is about a hugely powerful, intensely difficult proposition, particularly in this sociopolitical moment: it's about the difficult but absolutely vital process of changing one's mind about fundamental beliefs, about questioning deeply, about ardently trying to become aware of and challenge one's blind spots, and about how we must use what we find, and seek truth in ways that challenge what we think—and what the state narrative wants us to think.

To pan back a moment to the wide shot, I believe we are living amidst the most ambitious, wildly successful, and dangerous worldwide propaganda campaign that humans have ever known. We are living in an era of unprecedented censorship, particularly of science and scientists.



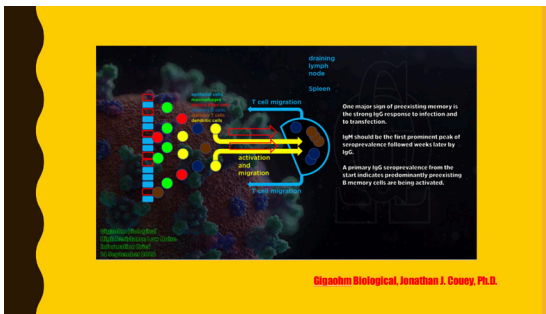
None of this could ever have been possible were it not for social media, this coup never could have been pulled off had we not consented (moreover paid for outright) to carry in our pockets, bags, and hands powerful and powerfully addictive electronics—and before you protest, let me say I am as addicted as anyone.



I'm different from the last time you saw me. I know we all are. But something happened to me, alone in a little house on the prairie for well over two years without even a pet to keep company. I have always been a learner, a tryer, a hard worker. I've always been curious and a person who falls down rabbit holes while trying to get my head around an idea. But when covid happened, I became a person who *had to know*. In part because I was on sabbatical leave when lockdown happened, I started spending time every day trying to understand what was happening and what I should do as a medically complex body to keep myself alive. Like many, I was afraid for my life for a good long time: too long. In fact, my fear for my life should I get covid proved to be a terrible blind spot that took and has taken its toll. I should say that I have always been largely trusting of medical science, indeed I believe I owe my life to physicians and procedures

many times over, and I have worked hard to be an informed consumer of medical science and pharmacology. I have participated in short term and longitudinal studies; I've participated in clinical trials. I didn't go to medical school (even though, especially now, I wish I had), but I've picked up quite a bit of useful information over the years, enough to make me think I might like to be a medical advocate in my next career, and I've learned to ask questions and advance hypotheses. I've been going to classes in microbiology because I *have to know*.¹

I feel lucky to have come into this with some basic and a couple of areas of specialized knowledge in those early days of the age of covid. For instance, I knew from the start that it takes an average of 12–14 years for a vaccine to be developed and properly tested. I knew that there had never, ever been a vaccine for any coronavirus (I didn't know then that that's because coronaviruses generally cannot be cultured or passaged, or that coronaviruses cannot replicate competently, that is without making “mistakes” in the genome). And I knew the difference between a sterilizing and non-sterilizing vaccine. You know, in the beginning the state and its media made no bones about the fact that these so-called vaccines were of the non-sterilizing variety. It said so right in *The New York Times*,² in an article and schematic that explained how the jabs (I usually call them transfections,³ because that is their function; the covid jabs are not technically “vaccines”) were designed to work. Practically, I also knew that once done, this jab could not be undone.

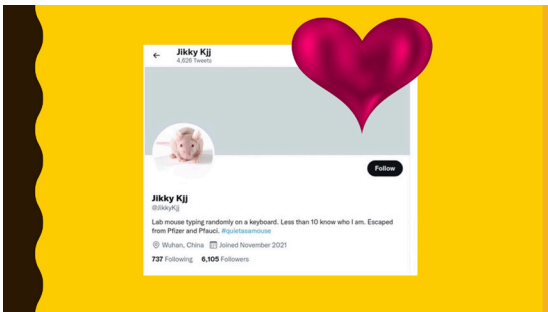


As you likely recall, there was intense pressure to get the jabs, particularly for the “vulnerable,” since the state and pharma told us outright the jabs would “stop the spread.” I am vulnerable and could receive the first jab in the second wave. Briefly, here’s what happened. I studied that schematic many times. A voice in my head said, plain as day, “that’s how you get thrombocytopenia.” I heard that voice loudly; I listened to and heeded it. Since I already have thrombocytopenia that’s in remission, I refused the jab, even though my institution threatened to mandate it for employment (they didn’t mandate it in the end, but our new [and now former] biologist and mRNA-expert university president endlessly shills for the jabs, even

as I speak). So, I remain unjabbed. This past summer I finally got back to my beloved Maine, where I was a real curiosity at a little backyard party. A number of people asked me (with kindness) why I didn't get the jabs, so I told the story of the voice in my head. A woman who herself is vaccine injured and whose husband is a medical researcher and doctor in Boston said to me, quietly, "that voice, that was God." I've never been very religious, but the moment she said it I knew with certainty the truth—and the weight—of her words.



I figured out very early on that covid was coming and, being “vulnerable,” I was motivated by fear, so I was stocked up and locked down by mid-February 2020. I told a few others in texts that began, “you’re gonna think I’m crazy, but...” So, there I was, in the middle of a pandemic, personally bucking “The Science™,” and developing a healthy fear of what the state was going to do to me because of my refusal. I felt keenly how little I knew. But one of my besties, an old beau, had put me on to youTube videos by a financial advisor and peak-oil guru who also holds a Ph.D. in pathology from Duke, Dr. Chris Martenson,⁴ a brilliant guy who, like many, stopped his whole life to turn to digging and analyzing and vetting the data and regularly making youTube videos to instruct those of us who *had to know*. Chris was so far ahead of the curve that he sounded the alarm—put out an APB, more like—to his subscribers on January 23, 2020. I watched his scientifically detailed daily episodes like a religion. His analysis was spot-on, his prognosticating almost always came to pass.





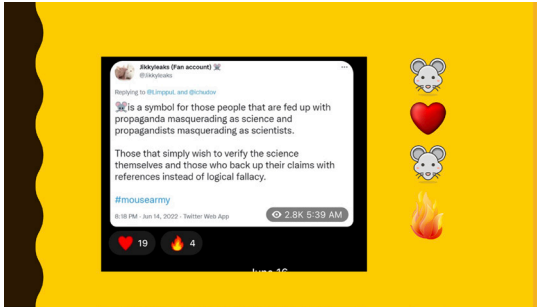
It's through Chris that I learned of an anonymous character on the twitter who went by the curious handle Jikky,⁵ a person who I immediately saw as having the eye and the respect of a good many scientists working on the covid puzzle.⁶ Jikky is a truth-teller, a truth-finder, a person who digs relentlessly and exposes fraud, corruption, and propaganda like no one I've ever seen. Jikky with a mouse-head emoji and more scientific superpowers than I can count. I'll admit it; I was crushing. I still am.

Jikky is nothing short of a wonder: a self-professed lab mouse (with a Ph.D. in microbiology, no less), a scientist digging at the cellular level, and a working M.D. Jikky was calling bullshit on the "official" story we were being fed in ways that I immediately recognized as brilliant, scientifically meticulous, brave, and very dangerous to the state narrative that covid was: 1). a novel virus; 2). arose from a wet market in Wuhan; and 3). going to kill us all if we didn't lock down to "flatten the curve."

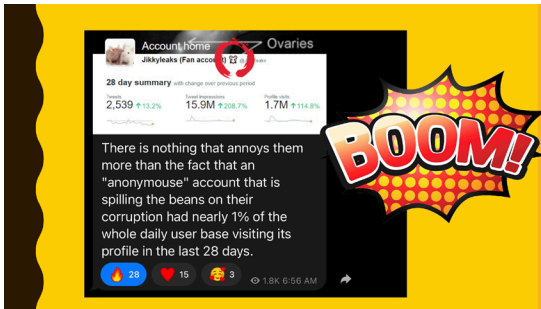


Remember that? If we just stayed inside our homes for two weeks, it was all magically gonna be okay. Needless to say, stopping a virus was not what lockdowns were about. The anonymous "anony-mouse" Jikky came to be the leader of a ragtag, worldwide band of folks, largely scientists and physicians. They are microbiologists, practicing physicians, neurobiologists, crazy-knowledgeable laypeople, research scientists, historians, actual investigative journalists (those who are not just mouthpieces for the state narrative), and a few people like me who aren't doctors and who don't

know the cellular-level biology, but who *have to know*, and who are willing to fight to get the truth out there in the open. Jikky's truth-seeking, hard-fighting, truth-finding, ragtag group is called the #mousearmy.



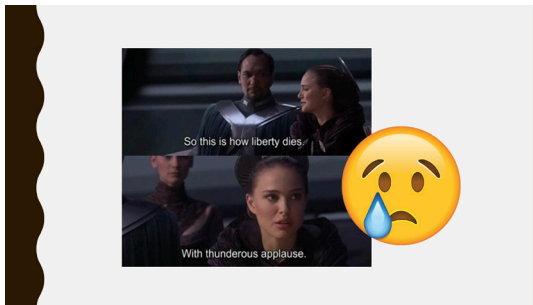
Mouse army members can be recognized by the addition of a mouse-head emoji next to their twitter handle, although the mouse head has been lately appropriated by trolls, impostors seeking to infiltrate the mouse army; many of these impostors have been proven to work for government agencies pushing the vax or are shills for pharma. As Jikky explains, “[the mouse-head emoji] is a symbol for those people that are fed up with propaganda masquerading as science and propogandists masquerading as scientists. Those that simply wish to verify the science themselves and those who back up their claims with references instead of logical fallacy [make up the mouse army].”⁷⁷



Jikky has been banned from twitter repeatedly, reincarnated in many forms (this is a kind of a “test” for mouse army members, by which I mean when someone is kicked off twitter how fast the rest of the mice locate the “reincarnated” account; my personal fave was “Chairman Maouse”), and now resides under another pseudonym on both Substack and Telegram, which are alternative media platforms committed to free speech. The mouse army included me even though their knowledge awes me and dwarfs my own on a moment-by-moment basis; I’m a proud member. #inmousewetrust



If you are not following and discussing covid on social media in ways that challenge the state narrative, you may not realize the current extent of U.S.-government-inflicted censorship across mainstream social media platforms. Cutting-edge researchers are being banned from twitter for doing no more than posting published, peer-reviewed research articles that just happen to counter the state narrative. The mouse army repeatedly, relentlessly has shown its ability to damage the state narrative; this loosely associated group has worked together and separately to break resounding bombshells: through painstaking reanalysis of published data in highly influential, absurdly faked peer-reviewed publications such as covid's "origin story" published in *The Lancet*⁸; by endlessly poring over and exposing gross scientific fraud and misconduct in tens of thousands of pages of Pfizer clinical-trial documents that, until a judge ordered them released, were to remain sealed for 75 years with the fed's approval; by requesting, reading, and archiving tens of thousands of FOIA'd documents; and by conducting original empirical research. Indeed, you may not realize it, but some incredibly important independent science on the jabs' ingredients and effects, for instance, is now being crowdfunded, not grant supported. Many hundreds of scientists, doctors, investigative journalists, and interested laypeople were permanently banned from twitter during 2022 alone for posting empirical evidence on covid, speaking truth to power, and daring to question the state's motivation and all-court jab push.



[Natalie Portman is in a whole lotta memes.]

Bots have been engineered and programmed to troll researchers who seek nothing more than to uncover truth and, through a lawsuit by journalist Alex Berenson, we recently discovered the U.S. government has forwarded individual names of those they wanted to silence directly to social media companies who cheerfully carried out the fed's orders in the months before Elon Musk bought twitter.⁹ There are other bands of scientists, historians, and laypeople who have founded groups to research covid and to expose the state's and big pharma's lies, among those DRASTIC Research (drasticresearch.org), PANDA (pandata.org), the FLCCC (flccc.net), and Children's Health Defense (childrenshealthdefense.org) headed by attorney [and now presidential candidate] Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Worldwide an astonishing number of scientists and physicians have been fired from their academic posts, institute jobs, or hospitals for daring to challenge the state narrative and for refusing the jabs. If you're not asking by now, "what exactly is our government hiding?" you ought to be. This is not how free speech dies, it is how it is exterminated: through targeted, rampant censorship of voices that dissent and diverge from the state narrative.



Many of the world's most brilliant, critical, scientific researchers censored by mainstream social media have been pushed to new, anti-censorship media platforms like *Substack*.¹⁰ These authors and those who started out in the mouse army on twitter (and, during 2022 in particular, what was left of the mouse army on twitter) are running scientific circles around the state's appointed "experts," getting the word out, and have the state narrative, big pharma, and their relentless hawkers on the run, their many lies and obfuscations now subjected to the beady eyes and brilliant scientific knowhow of a million mice.

This is where memes come in. What's a meme? Well, memes are imagery and text combined in a way that flips cultural messaging on its head and ultimately are used not only to expose truth, but to ridicule the lies that memes attack. The *OED* says a meme is "an element of a culture that may be considered to be passed on by non-genetic means, esp. imitation."¹¹ I think this is a fancy way of talking about something "going viral" without being "viral."



In his introduction to Susan Blackmore's book, *The Meme Machine* (from back in 1999), Richard Dawkins presciently explains how, "memes travel longitudinally down generations, but they travel horizontally too, like viruses in an epidemic."¹² The wicked cunnin' anon Substacker el gato malo¹³ explains memes as

...anti-propagandistic gold. their informational density is surreal and they lay plain not only how shabby [a] trick is but how the trick is done so you can more easily spot the next one. best, they teach away from the provocative image that previously evoked fear or rage and invert it so that the same image in the future now screams "they are manipulating you" instead.

While memes can be funny and fun-making, they are really razor-sharp provocations, certain of which are created to reveal and crush the state's propagandistic narrative.



During the pandemic, memes have been used to lampoon and spear mainstream media's propaganda circus and various nation-states' attempts to criminalize so-called "misinformation" and "disinformation" that push against or dismantle the propagandistic state narrative.

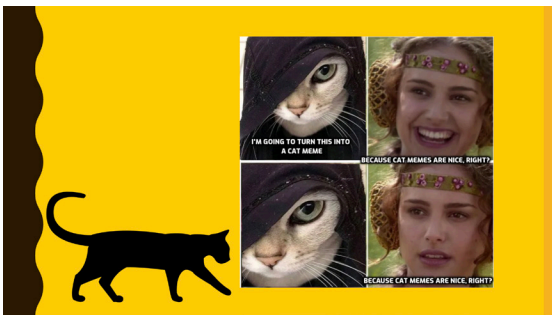
Memes are used to expose politicians', pharmaceutical industry skills', and public health officials' lies—their denials of empirical science—when that science plainly shows that the state's narrative has no clothes: clown world elevated to the n^{th} degree.



But let me be clear, memes are not jokes, even though they may well make us laugh. According to neurobiologist and 2022 twitter refugee Dr. Kevin McCairn,¹⁵ memes are a form of warfare—and we are at war.



You don't have to be a cool kid to “get” memes, you just have to be inside the culture. You do have to be quick, tho, because meme-world manufactures its propaganda sledgehammers in real time. Herein lies meme-world's superpower. If you're a politician or state mouthpiece or public-health “expert,” you can lie, but you can't hide. A battalion of memers are poised with clips and gifs and clicks at the ready, some of which have become classic meme templates, like those swiped from *The Hunger Games* or starring Natalie Portman in *Star Wars*, or the “how it started vs. how it's going” memes.



Memes are meta...they appropriate and tap into all the many layers of postmodern ghosts of cultures past, hat-tipping to the past, and the thing that thing in the past tipped its hat to. At their best, most biting, memes reel back and forth in time to make layered references that are immediately recognizable. A meme is “an entire argument, indictment, and informational immune booster in one simple medium.”¹⁶ Meme-world is a modern-day, justice-focused Wonderland; we are all its Alices.



you can now distill an entire ethos into 10 seconds of attention by evoking myriad connections by utilizing familiar content repurposed,” [indeed,] “memes comprise a serious shift in the informational arms race. [although] pictures and soundbites are ruled by emotion...memes rule by informational density and the power of analogy.¹⁷

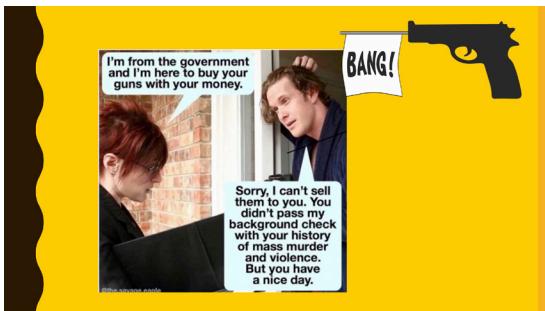
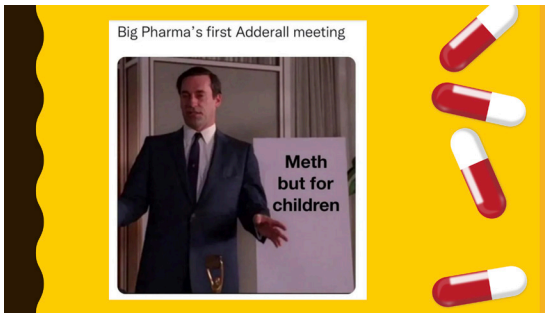
you know the pattern, so you pick up the rest. you fill in the gaps, draw the associations. the true meme does not carry in it all the information it expresses, it's a shorthand code to show you the linkages between things you already know. ... welcome to the age where you can devastate a whole movement with one well-chosen flourish...and cut to the marrow of the flaws and managed mendacities faster than they may be promulgated. **for perhaps the first time in history, we have the template to refute big lies more quickly and more comprehensively than they can be told.**¹⁸





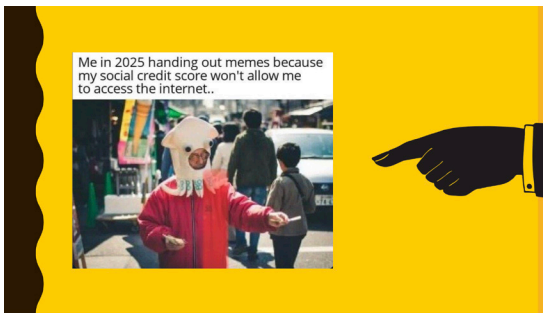
This historical shift, the one ushered in by meme-world, is nothing short of astonishing in its ability instantly to reveal truth, delivered via a cultural slap so savage, so stinging, it has the power to debunk—moreover to ravage—propagandic untruth. Memes reveal in painful seconds exactly how what's behind an image and the accompanying text in the mainstream media are wholly mismatched.

That's why memes are heckling elevated to the status of warfare: *memes are the blitz and the shit, all at once*. And big pharma and government are getting spectacularly punked in meme-world every day, all day. To wit:





[This next one's an Intermission meme... so y'all can catch your breath.]



Why does the use of memes in information warfare change everything? Because not only do memes “spread a different message that cannot be controlled, but [they link] the initial image to the new, repurposed expression. this renders the original image streisand effect, not signal.”¹⁹ Memes are more powerful than the original images they war against because they are intensely memorable. They mutate, not only by retweeting or reposting, but memes become new templates for future memes faster than lightning. In fact, “no sooner do you utter the phrase ‘malign creativity’ than there are 200 memes that have adopted it as their own, gleefully boomeranging it back at you.”²⁰ Perhaps most clever of all, memes win the war because, for those maimed by memes, “fighting humor with stridence is a terrible look; never bring outrage to a meme fight,”²¹ for you will come off so much worse and infinitely dumber than with the initial lie you told that turned the memers on you in the first place. In fact, memes are nothing short of “irrepressibly fecund”—and “the house of lies is [now gloriously] on fire.”²²

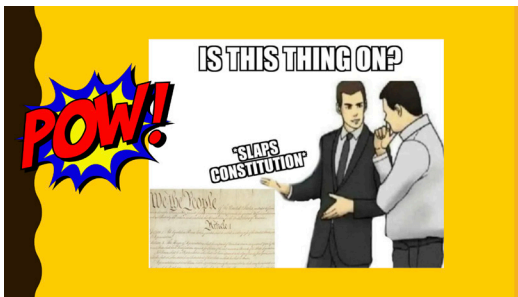
once, the powers that be needed fear only a few cartoonists and voices and could easily suppress their spread. now you must fight against the full force of the insight and creativity of the global myriads and the relentless upvote of the informational

instantiations which best work to convey meaning as infallibly adjudicated by an audience of billions that play off one another like jazz night at birdland.²³



Let me put this as succinctly as possible: I believe memes have the power to save us from totalitarianism, maybe not in themselves, but they signal the formation of a group or groups who are pushing against the propagandistic, oppressive state narrative and, importantly, ridiculing it. Meme-world knows the truth. And memes evidence resistance, *they foretell fight*.

When I talk about the state's power to move and mold us, and memes' power to reveal the state narrative's lies and manipulations, this may be obvious, but I want plainly to say that this phenomenon is not unique to our time, to the era of covid. It's not. But the scale and gall of the covid-era economic/scientific/psychological operation is unprecedented, the massive cover-ups of fraud and greed (and, it seems increasingly possible, *evil*), the cold-war-era censorship on steroids, and the way this phenomenon seems to be coordinated across the first-world world stage has never heretofore been accomplished. The current phenomenon used covid as its launchpad, but we must be aware of this phenomenon as an ongoing governmental enterprise fascistically aided and abetted by industry and particularly featuring the influence of authoritarian-aspiring world leaders affiliated with ghoulish grandpa and anti-pleb Klaus Schwab and his World Economic Forum crew—even though knowing full well it's unlikely that Schwab is the mastermind many give him credit for.



While the covid operation provided a kind of perfect storm, the danger of certain kinds of power grabs is ever-present.

We, the resistance, the dissidents, can take our script, in part, from the Civil Rights Movement and heroes like John Lewis and others who never wavered from the path of preaching diligent attention, the need to search for and know one's blind spots, and to practice the bedrock of the movement: nonviolence and abiding love for our fellow man. We must love one another if we are to get through this. And we have to try with all our might to wake up all those who are still asleep, who still think everything is okay—*because it is not.*

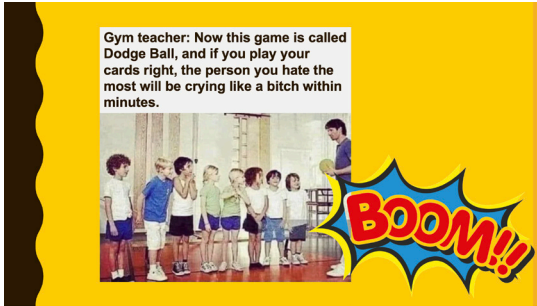


It's also very difficult for a country's people to recognize their homeland as a worldwide villain. We in the U.S. like to fancy ourselves heroes, the ideal, the dream, the good guys in a world of bad guys, the rescuer—a potent blind spot indeed. But now is not the time to get along to get along. The alarming facts and evidence of subterfuge and fraud are coming out in spite of relentless, well-funded government-sponsored censorship, suppression, and relentless propagandizing.



Right now people are divided politically as never before, simmering violence and feeding hatred against the unvaccinated, against those who refuse to buy into the state narrative. These days, people don't ask questions of those on the opposing side to learn more about them as humans or to find commonalities across the divide, they ask questions (or, more often,

make assumptions) in order to gauge how much they should hate one another.



Consequently, instead of interrogating the actions and intent of fascistic and unholy state and industry alliances we blame and set upon each other. Dividing people in this way is fundamental to the handbook of totalitarianism and a hallmark of authoritarian rule. I passionately believe we must wake up, we must come together, or we're done for.



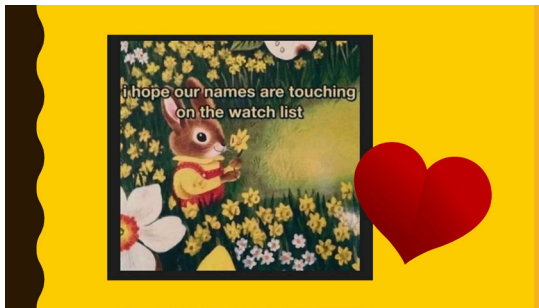
Joost A. M. Meerlo argues, “we must learn to treat the demagogue and aspirant dictators in our midst with the weapon of ridicule. The demagogue himself is almost incapable of humor of any sort, and if we treat him with humor, he will begin to collapse.”²⁴ Václav Havel²⁵ theorizes the formation of alternative social structures that exist within totalitarianism, but which are morally opposed to totalitarianism. Such parallel structures, he observes, have been more effective at combatting totalitarianism than trying to bring about societal change from inside political structures. Parallel group structures, when they emerge en masse, can then join to form a kind of free society, parallel to the totalitarian society, in which the parallel society operates as a creative refuge.

Now, I think it's entirely possible that, at this point, Sam [Stack] would call me a conspiracy theorist,²⁶ and maybe I am.



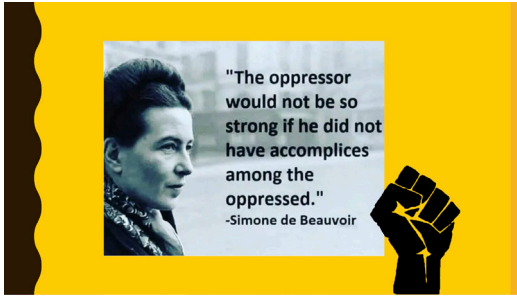
But I want us to consider something, and not just the idea that, these days, conspiracy theories seem to come true at an astonishing rate. It's this: in the U.S., when citizens of other countries disagree with government propaganda and fight back, we call them dissidents and U.S. media regards them as heroes. When those of us in the U.S. disagree with our government's propaganda, the media calls us conspiracy theorists and wackos. This example is the exact sort of contradiction that shows the state narrative's bones as clearly as x-ray vision.

By the way, while we're on this point, let me tell you that these days this is what I consider to be true love:



I was very afraid—for a long time—and I believed if I didn't figure it all out, didn't try as hard as I could to understand the virus and what to do about it, couldn't know the truth and act upon it, I couldn't survive it. In a way I still believe that, and I struggle every day to find the time and the bandwidth to read and digest material that is way, way over my head in terms of the cellular-level biology, and, additionally, is oftentimes soul-withering.

I haven't been truly "afraid" of the virus for a long time, but I have come to be wary and fearful of the ways nation-states all over the world—particularly "democratic" nation-states—are exerting and mandating powerful control mechanisms—controls with no basis in science and increasingly with no basis in democracy.



If you are paying attention, you already know we are in scary territory, but I've learned that above all we must not be afraid, must not become mired in fear. Fear is the state's most efficient, most diabolical weapon used against us, the weapon used most effectively to control us, and the weapon that pits us against each other when we should be joining together, for social isolation is the key ingredient in totalitarianism's receipt (that's Southern for recipe, y'all). Fear will make people do even what they know factually—and morally—is wrong. As Charles Eisenstein argues,



The habits of authoritarianism run deep. Obedience is only the most superficial. Deeper is to look to authority as a source of truth. Deeper still is to look first for “who is in charge” when seeking to understand and change a given situation. ... However, when that outlook becomes a habit, one looks for someone-in-charge as the explanation for every injustice and the key to righting every wrong.²⁷

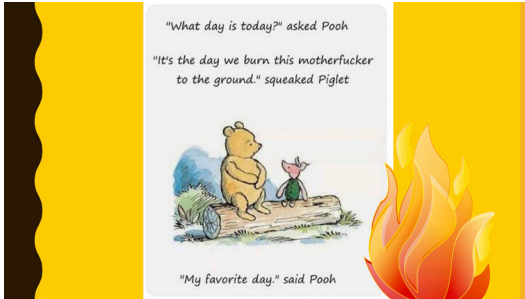


The line of logic Eisenstein lays out is a trap tho, because “fixation on the villain conjures one phantom after another that distracts attention from a broader matrix of causes”²⁸ and leads us to ask what turns out to be absolutely the wrong question: “who can fix this for me?” We cannot allow ourselves to be locked into this simplistic view of looking outside of ourselves to locate either salvation or blame.²⁹ As critical historian and covid sleuth extraordinaire Mark Kulacz, a.k.a. Housatonic, recently wisely cautioned, imagined justice for the injustices inflicted upon us by the nation-state and big pharma is not coming. Kulacz says, speaking to his YouTube audience on the 21st anniversary of September 11th:

Now what? We could put [all the evidence] together on a silver platter. Do you think all the bad people are going to get arrested? ... Where do we take this? I'm a little bit confused myself about this. I know that...we will become as bad as all [that's happened to us] if we are filled with fear and filled with anger. ... Is it a dead-end because we're not going to charge in and try to get the bad people arrested? I don't believe so...because I know I'm not filled with fear. It's heavy, but I'm not filled with fear. ... I know it's anxiety-causing. But I know many of you are not filled with as much fear as you might have been. You've been trying to figure out what's going on and you need that knowledge. If you don't have it, you ARE going to be filled with fear. And while you're filled with fear and you're reacting and it may feel better, may feel like you have direction, you're actually going in the worst direction possible. ... I don't think this ends with getting the bad people arrested or getting the right guy in the presidency or whatever. ... In the short run, I don't know where this goes, I do know in the long run that those people who can keep their cool, who aren't going to act out of anger and fear...people who can reach out to each other and support each other, this will become a bigger and bigger movement [for truth]. Don't define [our work] as trying to take down the bad guys, don't define it as “we're going to win in the end.” ... Winning is how you live your life...it's not being filled with anger, it's not losing track of the priorities of your family and your health and the local community. And don't believe it's country above anything else, don't believe that. They burned that opportunity.³⁰

So, I implore of you: seek knowledge that emerges from a creative parallel group operating against the state narrative. Seek knowledge that supports the biology—and don't be fooled otherwise. Seek knowledge because knowledge kills fear. When you possess such knowledge, you can make uproarious fun of the lies and subterfuge that permeate the state's narrative. You can keep yourself and your family safe. You can ridicule the lies in the state's narrative in real time, becoming a hero to those happy inhabitants of meme-world...and a hero to democracy.

Of utmost importance, your television is not going to bring you this kind of knowledge, nor is your radio or newspaper. Biologist Dr. Jonathan Couey calls this “skilled tee-vee watching”³¹ and it will enslave you to the state narrative, not free you to find truth.



We all have blind spots, but I think this is one time in history that it's never been more important that we fight to recognize them and how they are shaping our response to this sociopolitical moment and its implications for the future of democracy. For, even when we catch a glimpse of or even come clearly to see evidence of our blind spots, it is ever-so-difficult to change our minds about fundamental beliefs we hold. Why is that? Well, they don't call them “fundamental beliefs” for nothing. They go deep. Take as an example the belief that the U.S. government has its citizens' best interests at heart. Or that the pharmaceutical industry's whole *raison d'être* is to cure us of disease. These are both pretty fundamental beliefs and they hum in the background of all our activities having to do with health, happiness, wellness, security, and even belonging. But, for many, the covid pandemic and the unprecedented mandates, fraud, controls, and censorship exercised over citizens and patients has raised enormous, fundamental questions about the motivations of both the state and big pharma: questions that might have seemed blasphemous in the past—but only if you've never been duped or harmed by either of these institutions. Put simply, it seems today the majority are coming to know the very injustices so long suffered by the minoritized.



Blind spots proliferate wildly, obscuring one's vision during times of extreme political polarization such as in the times we now find ourselves. Some of you know that starting during the early pandemic, I have done a radio show, a music show I do once a week on a community radio station in Maine, WERU. In summer 2021, because I am a volunteer programmer, the station invited me to attend the National Federation of Community Broadcaster's (nfcbr.org) annual meeting, held virtually.³² A keynote session was given by David Isay, founder of Storycorps. He spoke on how Storycorps came to recognize and fear the growing culture of contempt arising from the U.S.' current extreme political polarization. He grimly acknowledged that, historically, democracy has had great difficulty surviving such extreme polarization. Isay was joined by Dr. Peter Coleman, Professor of Psychology and Education at Columbia, who explained political polarization's toxicity and how, when people follow leaders during these times, *they think less*. Most concerning, during such times, like now, people physically move into tribes, self-sort along ideological lines, and this movement predicts intergroup violence, rising hate crime, and political violence. In order to help counter this threat, Storycorps launched a new initiative where people of similar life circumstances but opposing political ideologies have one-on-one conversations conducted in pairs, not to change the other's mind, but to tell each other their life stories, to find commonalities, to meet across the vast political divide. These conversations, recorded, archived, and available to listeners, are emotional; they're incredibly powerful. These conversations were envisioned as one way for exhausted people, alienated from and angry at "the other side" to begin again to see one another as people, as neighbors, as respected friends with meaningful ideological commonalities. Extreme political polarization is a disease, a condition that creates dis-ease, distrust, fear, and that feeds the heinous fire of hate.



The truth is that this vast divide didn't just magically materialize, it was manufactured to divide us, to conquer us, to busy us with hating so we are too afraid, exhausted, and angry to look beyond our differences, too exhausted and afraid to see what the state and the world's evil billionaires have in mind for the rest of us. We can't fall for it. Memes used to ridicule

totalitarian state narratives and practices are a tool that will help us to bridge this divide, to locate our humanity.



I want to close this morning by invoking the wise words of biologist Dr. Jonathan Jay Couey, patch clamp jedi and former faculty member fired from Pitt’s medical school for talking the truth, using data and cleaving propaganda from biology about covid on the youTube. At the end of nearly every Gigaohm Biological stream, where he teaches microbiology to those who remain curious, like myself—and like you—Jay reminds us, and quite rightly so, to:

*Stay focused,
Don't take their bait,
and to
Love your neighbor.*

Endnotes

- ¹ Jonathan J. Couey, *Gigaohm Biological: Cutting Edge Biology for All* (2022), gigaohmbiological.com
- ² Jonathan Corum and Carl Zimmer, “How the Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine Works,” *The New York Times*, May 7, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/health/pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine.html>; this article has been updated since I first read it.
- ³ I was introduced to this terminology attending “biology class” with Dr. Jonathan J. Couey of Gigaohm Biological. A transfection is “the process of artificially introducing nucleic acids (DNA or RNA) into cells,” in this case in order to force the body to make a protein. I draw this brief definition from “Introduction to Transfection,” ThermoFisher Scientific, <https://www.thermofisher.com/us/en/home/references/gibco-cell-culture-basics/transfection-basics/introduction-to-transfection.html>
- ⁴ Chris Martenson’s youTube channel can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/@PeakProsperity>

- ⁵ Jikky's original twitter account can be accessed at <https://twitter.com/JikkyKjj>; Jikky's current twitter account handle is @Jikkyleaks.
- ⁶ Let me say unequivocally, and with love, that I owe my growing skepticism of the state's narrative and its motives to my nightly talks during covid times and since with Dr. Frank Grill, who not only helped my thinking by introducing me to the work of Chris Martenson, Ph.D., but also to Charles Eisenstein and other learned, witty cynics like James Howard Kunstler who runs the wonderfully candid, oftentimes-wise blog, *Clusterfuck Nation* (<https://kunstler.com/writings/clusterfuck-nation/>). My deep gratitude to Dr. Grill for his good thinking and generous comments on drafts of this address. Additionally, sincere gratitude to Dr. Virginia Worley, who also substantively commented upon drafts.
- ⁷ Jikkyleaks, twitter post, June 14, 2022, 5:18 am, <https://twitter.com/Jikkyleaks/status/1536654334867681281>
- ⁸ For instance, Mandeep R. Mehra, Frank Ruschitzka, and Amit N. Patel, "Retraction—Hydroxychloroquine or Chloroquine with or without a Macrolide for Treatment of COVID-19: A Multinational Registry Analysis," *The Lancet* (2020) (published online May 22), [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31324-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31324-6/fulltext)
- ⁹ Ryan Lovelace, "Writer claims Biden team pushed for his ban from Twitter," *The Washington Times*, August 12, 2022, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/12/alex-berenson-claims-biden-team-pushed-his-ban-twi/>; evidence for Berenson's claims comes from Elon Musk's release of the "twitter files." A recent suit evidences how the Biden administration colluded with social media platforms to target individuals for censorship. See Michael Nevradakis, "Big Victory: CHD Lawsuit Alleging Key Biden Officials Colluded with Tech Giants to Censor Free Speech Consolidated with Missouri Censorship Case," *The Defender: Children's Health Defense News & Views*, July 25, 2023, <https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/chd-lawsuit-consolidate-censorship-big-tech/>
- ¹⁰ <https://substack.com/>
- ¹¹ *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* quoted in Richard Dawkins, "Foreword," in Susan Blackmore, *The Meme Machine* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), viii.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, ix.
- ¹³ el gato malo, "the revenge of the shape rotators (part 1)," *bad cattitude*, July 22, 2022, https://boriquagato.substack.com/p/the-revenge-of-the-shape-rotators?utm_source=profile&utm_medium=reader2; el gato malo pens his missives in all-lower-case text.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*

- ¹⁵ Communicated during one of his live streams. His academic work can be accessed here: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kevin-Mccairn>
- ¹⁶ el gato malo, part 1.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., emphasis added.
- ¹⁹ el gato malo, “the revenge of the shape rotators (part 2),” *bad cattitude*, July 22, 2022, https://boriquagato.substack.com/p/the-revenge-of-the-shape-rotators-735?utm_source=profile&utm_medium=reader2; in case you are unfamiliar with the term, “Streisand effect” refers to the media phenomenon of “when someone decides to ban or censor something, and that attempt to make something go away, makes it even bigger than ever before, or ever planned,” <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Streisand+Effect>
- ²⁰ el gato malo, part 2.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ el gato malo, the revenge of the shape rotators (part 3), *bad cattitude*, July 22, 2022, https://boriquagato.substack.com/p/the-revenge-of-the-shape-rotators-a5e?utm_source=profile&utm_medium=reader2
- ²⁴ Joost A. M. Meerloo, *The Rape of the Mind: The Psychology of Thought Control, Menticide, and Brainwashing* (Cleveland, OH, World Publishing Company, 1956), 111.
- ²⁵ Václav Havel, *The Power of the Powerless* (New York and London: Routledge, 1985), <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/wp-content/uploads/1979/01/the-power-of-the-powerless.pdf>
- ²⁶ Samuel F. Stack, Jr., “Conspiracy Theory and Pragmatic Inquiry: Is There a Role for Education?,” *Journal of Philosophy & History of Education* 72, no. 1 (2022): 71–84, http://www.journalofphilosophyandhistoryofeducation.com/jophe72_individual_files/Stack_jophe72.pdf
- ²⁷ Charles Eisenstein, “There’s No One Driving the Bus,” *Charles Eisenstein* [Substack post] (2022, September 20), <https://charleseisenstein.substack.com/p/theres-no-one-driving-the-bus>
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Mark Kulacz, Episode 91.M: 21 Years after September 11, 2001, *Housatonic Live* (September 11, 2022), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ea3BIQaJSX8> or on *odysee* at <https://odysee.com/@Housatonic:0/462-ep-91-m:6>
- ³¹ Couey, *Gigaohm Biological*.

- ³² David Isay, “Session IV: David Isay and One Small Step” (Keynote presented at the National Federation of Community Broadcasters 2021 Conference, virtual via zoom, July 21, 2021, <https://nfcbo.org/2021-nfcb-unconference-update-and-news/>)