

The Only Way To Fight Disinformation Is To Fight Political Censorship

April 18, 2022

If outfits like the Aspen Institute's "[Commission](#) on Information Disorder," along with Big Tech's faceless "fact-checkers," ever get a total monopoly on dictating reality, the result will be a 24/7 mix of falsehoods with the occasional [limited hangout](#) to cover up their lies.

The icing on this fake cake is the use of conferences *about* disinformation, such as the [recent stunt](#) at the University of Chicago that served as cover for justifying political censorship. There former President Obama presented the perfect picture of psychological projection: a panel of propagandists accusing others of wrongthink.

The Atlantic's Anne Applebaum, for example, [sought to censor](#) the reality of the Hunter Biden laptop scandal by [announcing](#) she didn't find it "interesting." See how that works? Truth depends upon how our elites personally *feel* about what should be true.

But it gets much worse, because political censorship creates deep dysfunction in society. In fact, the surest way to kill a democracy is to practice political censorship under the guise of protecting society from disinformation.

Censorship *causes* disinformation. It's the granddaddy of disinformation, not a solution to it. The sooner everyone recognizes this obvious fact, the better off we'll be.

Whenever a self-anointed elite sets up a Ministry of Truth, the link between censorship and disinformation becomes clear. Before long, they invent reality and punish anyone who expresses a different viewpoint.

So, it's no small irony that those who claim to be protecting "democracy" from disinformation are the biggest promoters of disinformation and greatest destroyers of real democracy. Their dependence on censorship obstructs the circulation of facts. It prevents any worthwhile exchange of ideas.

Unchecked Censorship Isolates People

Consider what happens if a society is only permitted one propagandistic narrative while all other ideas and information are silenced. People start self-censoring to avoid social rejection. The result is a form of imposed mental isolation. Severely isolated people tend to lose touch with reality. The resulting [conformity](#) also perpetuates the censorship.

This is unnatural and dangerous because human beings depend on others to verify what's real. People weren't able to verify reality in Nazi Germany, during Joseph Stalin's Reign of Terror, or during Mao Zedong's brutal Cultural Revolution. All were societies in the grip of mass hysteria because of ruthless censorship to protect a narrative.

As psychiatrist Joost Meerloo noted in his book "[The Rape of the Mind](#)," no matter how well-meaning political censorship might be, it creates dangerous conformity of thought: "the presence of minority ideas, acceptable or not, is one of the ways in which we protect ourselves against the creeping growth of conformist majority thinking."

The only way we can strengthen ourselves against such contagion is through real freedom of speech that allows fully open discussion and debate. However, if we're confined by Big Tech to a relentless echo chamber and punished for expressing different thoughts, we'll just keep getting more and more disinformation.

In fact, we are now drowning in the distortions produced by "fact-checkers." Take, for example, narratives that promote the gender confusion and sexualization of children. Public school teachers routinely [post TikTok](#) videos of themselves spewing forth their [gender confusion](#). And if someone calls out Disney for its open grooming of children, Twitter [suspends](#) them.

If we never push back against such absurdities, we ultimately end up in a state of [mass delusion](#), each of us a cell in a deluded hive mind, obedient to commands about what to say, how to act, and what to think. To get an idea of what that looks like in a population, check out this clip from North Korea:

Censorship-Invoked Social Contagion Is Real

One of the most telling incidents of censorship over the past year was

YouTube and Twitter's take-down of virologist and vaccine inventor Dr. Robert Malone, claiming he was "spreading misinformation"—i.e., spreading a second opinion—about Covid vaccines and treatments.

But big tech saw an even bigger threat in Malone's discussion of [Mattias Desmet's](#) study of Mass Formation Psychosis (MFP) on [Joe Rogan's popular podcast](#). This is a big reason [Spotify](#) was under pressure to de-platform Rogan entirely. Open discussion of such things would erode the illusions big media and big tech so doggedly prop up.

Malone explained how a propaganda-saturated population can end up in a state of mass hypnosis that renders people incapable of seeing reality. He described Desmet's theory about how social isolation, a high level of discontent, and a strong sense of free-floating anxiety are keys to the development of this psychosis.

The anxiety is so painful that it causes people to cling, trancelike, to *any* narrative that seems to offer stability. Once all other views are censored, people become so invested in the narrative that they cannot consider any alternative views. They will even mob anyone who endangers the narrative. This phenomenon was prevalent in the German population under Nazism. Their obedience to the propaganda rendered them incapable of understanding any opposing narrative.

Mass psychosis should not sound farfetched. There's nothing new about it. Hundreds of instances of mass hysteria are documented. In the 19th century, Scottish journalist Charles Mackay wrote up [a whole catalog of them](#). In 2015 medical sociologist Robert Bartholomew co-authored a [compendium](#) of popular delusions or "mass sociogenic illness."

Most past incidents of mass hysteria have been confined to geographic regions, such as the witch trials in 17th century Salem, Massachusetts. But with the internet accessible and addictive in the 2020s, the possibility of mass delusion on a global scale is upon us. Censorship—in the name of protecting “democracy” from disinformation—is the key to creating it.

Propagandists Guard Their Illusions Like Magicians

By definition, propaganda aims to psychologically affect people and change their attitudes. So our social survival depends upon becoming aware of such phenomena. Building self-awareness about our vulnerability to crowd psychology would serve as a sort of psychological vaccine.

Of course elites do not want us even entertaining the possibility that we can be manipulated or vulnerable to social and psychological pressures. Propagandists are illusionists by nature. If their illusion falls apart, then the game is over for them. This is why they depend so heavily on the slur “conspiracy theorist” to distract us from the truth and from their use of censorship to cut us off from other ideas.

The late Nobel laureate Doris Lessing spoke against the dangers of [social conformity and censorship](#) in 1986. She noted there was a great body of knowledge that was continuing to be built about the laws of crowd psychology and social contagion. It was odd that we weren't applying this knowledge to improve our lives.

Lessing concluded that no government in the world would willingly help its citizens resist group pressures and learn to think independently. We

have to do it ourselves. Fast forward to the twenty-first century, and it sure looks like the keepers of this secret knowledge use it as a means of social control.

No sane person would want to live inside the boxes that the censors who claim to be fighting disinformation are building around us. If we want to escape this Twilight Zone existence, we must destroy that canard and insist on real freedom of speech everywhere.

Stella Morabito is a senior contributor at The Federalist. Her essays have also appeared in the Washington Examiner, American Thinker, Public Discourse, Human Life Review, New Oxford Review. In her previous work as an intelligence analyst, she focused on various aspects of Russian and Soviet politics, including communist media and propaganda. She has also raised three children, served as a public school substitute teacher, and homeschooled for several years as well. She has a B.A. in journalism and international relations from the University of Southern California and a Master's degree in Russian and Soviet history, also from USC. [Follow Stella on Twitter.](#)