

Mass Formation Psychosis?

The term **mass formation psychosis** has been popularized as a way to explain a perception that an inevitable march towards totalitarianism is being accelerated by adherence to the precautions that public health required during a global pandemic.

Measures to control the spread and consequences of viral infection have been linked to violations of protected rights and freedoms, with claims that those who can't see this "truth" have been manipulated by mass media into irrational sheep, playing their part as the compliant masses, in the looming draconian governmental oppression to come. This begins with what is described as a fake public health emergency created by our corporate overlords to extract the last measure of our individual autonomy, as their mercenary greed dictates, in the pursuit of absolute control.

There is no doubt that the measures deemed necessary to thwart the now *less-than-novel* virus and its unpredictable consequences has led to a social dilemma. In general people don't react well to enforced isolation and mandates. And far too many don't understand that as time passes, ongoing research modifies the details of expert opinion.

Mental health, already at risk in the dysfunctional social economy we live in, has now become even more tenuous. Anxiety, frustration, fear and aggression become more common as economies are disrupted, activities are curtailed, orders are issued and the relative quality of lifestyles are questioned.

It is also generally true that personalities that practice political power and avaricious greed have in fact culminated through history to the detriment of people and morality. Despite this, just as with the often cited **Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System**, correlation still does not conclusively imply causation.

Mass Formation is a psychological theory of crowd behavior that seeks to explain the occurrence of irrational beliefs and actions adopted by a mass of people, **it's not a blueprint for oppression**. The phenomena is often described by non-experts as the equivalent of hypnosis, with no understanding that a necessary element of successful actual hypnosis is the willing consent of the subject. Your subconsciousness simply cannot be programmed to do something against your will that your conscious mind would reject.

Perhaps those using the term, warning of the consequences of an engineered crisis, fail to understand that the same theory could easily be used to explain their own adamant paranoia and rejection of public health measures like masks and vaccines.

There are of course reasons to refuse vaccination: it is still a personal choice, albeit, one that has carried the consequence of limited access or participation. But that choice still carries a requirement of social responsibility. Personal choice is not a license to impose belief with confrontational demands that **'sheeple wake up!'** to resist the nefarious machinations behind prudent public health measures.

When opinion leaders advocate easily debunked "facts" and are then blocked from social media for spreading misinformation, that "censorship" reinforces paranoia, more "proof" of the existence of an overarching agenda of manipulation and control, fueling dismissive rejection of contrary evidence. Placing trust in hunches and anecdotal personal experience over any authoritative consensus, fosters logical fallacies and leads to *ad hominem* attacks.

Four psychological precursors of Mass Formation have been identified as:

- *Lack of social bond & isolation*
- *Experiencing life as meaningless*
- *Anxiety*
- *Frustration & aggression*

The theory is, when the above four conditions are fulfilled, (and as the prevailing model of doom would have it- encouraged) then a narrative distributed through the mass media identifying an object of the anxiety and providing a strategy to deal with that object can cause mass psychosis. Providing "the masses" a sudden connection to a heroic struggle can give them a new social bond and meaning that has been lacking. Their psychological discontent can then be released by participating in a strategy, one that may not make sense to each individual if they were psychologically healthy and were thinking critically without the mass influence of the group or media. In order to preserve the social bond created by fighting together to defeat the object of their collective anxiety and frustration, people will cling to irrationality, confirmed with information provided from any source that confirms their belief.

Flat Earth anyone?

This confirmation bias makes it easy to become argumentative, dismissive and illogical in support of that concept, and the strategies it demands. Participation in the strategy has nothing to do with facts or logic.

People absorbed in mass formation are not aware of what's happening outside the small focus of attention that their narrative provides. This theory has been used to explain how the dominant narrative of Covid danger was embraced by "the masses," and has become a tool in the narrative of resistance, a way to reclaim personal agency, rejecting any practices that limit the dire consequences of a still spreading and mutating global viral infection that continues to cause widely unpredictable acute illness, potentially long term health consequences, and so far, a million+ dead in the U.S. in just two years.

Mass psychosis can easily describe other aspects of our society, where overarching delusions are engineered into structures that exert influence and drive profits. But it can also emerge organically with irrational fear formed by a lack of information about the nature of reality, or the craven propaganda of common narcissists.

Then there is the common psychosis that is the base-line of our society. People easily speak of freedom as an aspirational ideal, then will resign themselves to the need to spend the majority of their days in the service of an economy that then enables them to deposit their earnings in institutions that allow the fortunate to survive with minimal suffering. Those who embrace this psychosis are allowed some measure of leisure- supported by toys marketed to them through the propaganda of advertising. The world we face requires self-delusion as a coping mechanism with many shades in an increasingly dangerous landscape of social media. Remember at all times: think clearly, question authority, and be kind.

***No one knows all the answers,
the reasons, or the hidden secrets
that make sense of it all.
If they tell you that they do,
that is a warning sign of delusion
moving beyond self.***

- Joshua Golden



We Skipped our Winter edition & memorializing the passing of:

Desmond Tutu, Mort Sahl, Bell Hooks, Robert Bly, Joan Didion, Stephen Sondheim, Chick Corea, E.O Wilson & More... Ah Life!

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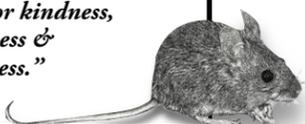
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*"One thing about being narrow-minded:
you'll never be lonely."
- Mort Sahl*

*"We have to be militants for kindness,
subversive for sweetness &
radicals for tenderness."
- Cornel West*



Eight Reasons to Stand Up Against Abortion Bans

"When the penalty for rape is less than the penalty for abortion after the rape, you know this isn't about caring for women and girls. It's about controlling them."

1. "Through forcing them into motherhood before they're ready, these bans steadily sustain the patriarchy, but also chain families in poverty and maintain economic inequality."
2. "Pregnancy is a private and personal decision and should not require the permission of any politician."
3. "For all time, regardless of whether it's a crime, women have and will always seek their own reproductive destinies. All these penalties do is subdue women's freedom to get healthy, safe services when they most need them."
4. "Fight to keep *Roe v. Wade* alive. By the term 'overturn *Roe v. Wade*', the main concern is that the Supreme Court will let states thwart a woman's path to abortion with undue burdens."
5. "One thing is true and certain: These predictions aren't a distortion, hypothetical, or theoretical. Women already face their disproportion of undue burdens when seeking abortions. If the sexes and all people are to be equal, abortion has to be actually accessible and not just technically legal."
6. "Despite what you might hear, this right here isn't only about women and girls. This fight is about about fundamental civil rights. Women are a big part of it, but at the heart of it are freedom over how fast our families grow goes farther and larger than any one of us. It's about every single one of us."
7. "This change can't wait. We've got the energy, the moment, the movement, and the thundering numbers."

"The alt-right's biggest blunder is that most Americans aren't under their impression that a woman's body is up to them to decide. So when you're outraged, these lawmakers are terrified. They want our tide to lose hope, to back up, pack up, and go home, so don't. We won't.

We are never alone when we fight fire with feminism.

"So go, be unafraid. We will not be delayed, we will not be masquerade to the tale of a handmaid. We will not let *Roe v. Wade* slowly fade because when we show up today, we're already standing up with the tomorrow we made.



Amanda Gorman
National Youth Poet Laureate