

Guarding Against “Fake News”

(The following letter was rejected as being too “dangerous” by the editor of *The Psychologist*)

For me, the most important lesson for psychologists to learn from the activities seemingly precipitated by the arrival of COVID-19 is how easy it is for governments to create climates of fear which enable them to introduce policies which lead their citizens to march toward their own destruction¹.

It follows, that it is incumbent on us to work out how to build resistance to this process.

Unfortunately, the above observation can only be made once one has become aware of the quantity and nature of the vast amounts of misinformation being generated by governments worldwide, and the World Health Organisation in particular, and the devastating consequences of the policies being pursued².

Perhaps the first indications of the deep-seated nature of this process came from the publicity given to the crazy, hysteria and panic-inducing, projections of modellers at Imperial College. But these have been quickly succeeded by wave after wave of ever more misleading “science”^{3 4} and alarmist statements.

Unfortunately, it seems to me that most of those who have written about “the pandemic” and related issues in *The Psychologist*⁵ have fallen prey to the perspective (mental virus) being promoted by governments and the WHO.

Most disturbingly, this seems to have been particularly true of those who have written⁶ about trying to develop mental vaccines to guard us against fake news⁷. They seem to have joined the uncountable and unaccountable censors of Google, Youtube, and Facebook in a crusade to delete posts which challenge government misinformation⁸.

This has come to a head in an editorial column entitled *Game vs Fake News* in the current issue⁹.

This takes the reader to two links. One leads directly to a game <https://www.goviralgame.com/en> and the other to an article which includes a link taking one to a second game <https://www.getbadnews.com/#intro>. Both are intended to develop the disposition to resist false information coming from non-governmental sources.

But here is the catch: Neither my wife nor I have been able to engage in these games! The version that came up on our first¹⁰ visit struck us as bizarre. The tasks/questions that came up just did not make sense to us¹¹.

Yet the column above the links says that the games have been translated into numerous languages and promoted by the WHO.

How can this be?

What kind of twittering Orwellian world have we fallen into – one in which people will spend their time playing with words in games that not only don't make sense but seem, in the end, to be designed to contribute to a deeply disturbing, but pervasive, process of undermining rational discourse¹² with a view to creating a world that I can only dimly discern but fear beyond almost anything else?

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¹ Lord Sumption <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-syjnHYST-4>

² E.g. Yanis Varoufakis on worldwide spread of serfdom and role of banks
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crgqHPCd5SE>

³ Raven, J. (2020). *Some abuses of "science", logic, and authority illustrated from responses to the COVID-19 threat and especially in the Dynamic Systems Models being used by policy consultants*. <http://eyeesociety.co.uk/resources/Abuses-of-Science-and-authority-COVID-19.pdf>

⁴ For a couple of accounts see Yeadon, M. (2020) Lies, Damned Lies and Health Statistics – the Deadly Danger of False Positives <https://lockdownsceptics.org/lies-damned-lies-and-health-statistics-the-deadly-danger-of-false-positives/> and <https://lockdownsceptics.org/pcr-based-covid-testing-has-failed-us/>. Also Swiss Policy Research (2020). *Facts about Covid-1.9*. <https://swprs.org/a-swiss-doctor-on-covid-19/> (An early list of 30 fully documented facts.)

⁵ Eg in the April and Summer issues and on line.

⁶ Robson, D. (2020) Vaccinating against viruses of the mind. *The Psychologist*, Summer 2020 41 – 43, but see also on-line discussion.

⁷ Particularly interesting from the point of view of developing a mental vaccine to insulate against such disinformation was the fact what was going on was very quickly apparent to the beggar who sits outside our local branch of TESCO and had lived through the SARS episode and been decanted from hospital into the street to free up his bed for prospective COVID patients.

⁸ See: "Interlude: The Impact of Tech". in Murray, D. (2020) *The Madness of Crowds*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

⁹ *The Psychologist*, December 2020, p15

¹⁰ On re-visiting the site several days later a much longer game came up and I was able to force myself to participate for a while. But, in the end, I gave up. The experience resembled that of being forced to participate in the mad game of lockdown which seems to me to be being played by someone else's crazy rules to achieve an end I fear but at the nature of which I can only conjecture.

¹¹ One could describe the experience as being hit in the face by "post-modernism".

¹² See the main chapters in Murray, *opus cit.* and James Lindsay *How Trump mainstreamed Critical Race Theory* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t40zD1NZKMk&t=2599s> Then consider what we might do, as psychologists, to help stem the onslaught.