

## Censorship, Truth, and the Facebook Doctor by Rich Norman

- a. Censorship is the emasculation of Knowledge.
- b. Consensus delineates the limits of Knowledge, and demarcates a boundary, past which truth is excluded. This is our hypocrisy: our "good taste."
- c. Truth is off' insult to beauty.

I have begun a graduate education in psychology with a twist. Today, one can get a doctorate online, and become a PhD., a doctor, with years of work spent typing and researching papers from home. How amazing! To discover this opportunity has allowed me to begin the path leading to a job doing the most specific sort of neuropsychological research. I entered the educational program with the highest of hopes, and have found the staff to be most expert and knowledgeable, although, the way one learns has acquainted me with one of the oldest enemies of intellectual endeavor and integrity: Censorship.

I have never understood Facebook. Everyone loves it, but I never got it. There are no lectures in my educational program, instead, one reads and interacts with the other students in a Facebook-like online "chatroom." Today, the words are more important than the meaning, and in politically correct language, students are now called "learners," transsexuals are called "gender reassigned persons," and everything that you know well enough, is now too shameful to be understood in daylight, and needs a new label. The students are bright, but the conversations in the chat room never even glanced upon psychology, but instead were self-congratulatory and non-critical of the other student posts and the reading material, which one and all received no analysis or psychological thought, but only praise! I decided to act like a psychologist and figure out why.

Soon the answer was clear, and I constructed my analysis of the similarity between the modus operandi of the Facebook phenomenon, which coincided nicely with the psychology behind the social control exerted by Alcoholics Anonymous, and in turn, how this reflected the role of unconscious wishes in crowd psychology. Psychology does not judge, it dissects and understands. These mechanisms work a certain way to whatever ends, some "good" some not. To analyze is to see and understand, not to judge.

It appears that our logic, our reasons precede our actions, but nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, our facts, our logic, trails behind our true motivations as a footman behind his master with a dust pan cleaning up crumbs. In specific: If one is hypnotized and the suggestion planted to raise one's arm on cue, the subject will perform the behavior, responding to a hidden stimulus which causes him to raise his hand for reasons he does not grasp, reasons affecting his actions dynamically from unconscious sources of suggestion, and the first thing he does is use his logic to create a "reason" for his inexplicable behavior. "I needed to stretch, etc." Human behavior is rarely what it seems to observe the surface. To penetrate beneath the surface of our well defended ego

presentation, resistance must be overcome. Therefore, psychological insight is by nature uncomfortable, deeply irritating. Insight is insult. Beauty comes of Truth only later. A pearl begins as a pit of sand in a tender place, an irritation.

As I researched Facebook I discovered that chemicals known as endorphins, chemicals like those produced during sexual activity or cocaine use, are released into the blood stream as Facebook users reveal the trivial details of their lives, and gain social acceptance. [go to: <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/brill/beh/2011/00000148/F0020009/art00001>, or just enter "Facebook endorphins" in Google and search]. Here we see the use of our natural social hardwiring to create an addictive response. One caters one's words so as to gain more drug, more social acceptance! No wonder all the posts in the chat room are uncritical and seek only approval... the "like" button is everything on Facebook, and although there is no button, *being liked and accepted* is how the "buzz" is administered in my educational chat room too! An addiction to social acceptance and its attendant endorphins shapes the responses which are tailored to produce social acceptance rather than critical or analytical thought. The same applies to AA, as the subject achieves social acceptance once he admits himself as an alcoholic before the group in a sort of ritualized "performance," which must create the same chemical response. The subject receives massive additional group support and acceptance with a multitude of various social supports in addition to his "performance," and is thusly rewarded chemically for right thinking and action. An addiction to the chemicals secreted through acceptance by other people is substituted for an addiction to a substance. AA works by way of substitute addiction.

No wonder I cared nothing for Facebook! I was a performer! The performer is the other people addict "par excellence!" Performers take their social acceptance "intravenously." I could not even feel the Facebook buzz! A matter of "tolerance" to the drug in question. After connecting the ideas together with the unconscious and crowd psychology, I proposed that my fellow students attempt to think psychologically, and step *away* from social acceptance, and *toward* critical analysis of the causes of behavior. My high spirited challenge to think was posted, and I waited. Soon the truth was known... that the truth could not be known! My post was taken down as offensive. Censorship and the politically correct produce a certain sort of injury to truth. I call it a "soft assault." I became nervous to put up my next post. The censorship worked, and shame took the place of truth. I had to escape! An answer must be found! Now when I post a point which verges too closely upon an irritating psychological topic, I say, "If you want to understand this in greater detail, please contact me through private channels outside of this sensitive forum." I have been censored, but I will not be silent. Fascism and the Nazis burned books. Shame knows: Censorship may well keep them from being written. "I will make it a point not to listen." That is censorship. Well Hear This! I, will censor—shame.

Oregon resident Rich Norman, is a writer and musician with degrees in philosophy and music. Known as "The Laughing Recluse," he is the author of books spanning

philosophy, psychology, and novels, with topics ranging from psychoanalytic theory to existential philosophy, verse and fiction. All text in this column is printed with the permission of, and remains the sole property of, the author, Rich Norman. Contact: [rich@richnorman.com](mailto:rich@richnorman.com)