

MEME WARFARE

**HOW TO OVERTHROW
THE POWERS THAT BE
ON A LOW BUDGET**

Stephen DeVoy

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Introduction

To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first serious attempt to produce a book on the subject of meme warfare. Meme warfare is not a new phenomenon. What is new about meme warfare is that, for the first time, an understanding of what meme warfare is and how it works has been identified. Just as electricity existed and played a role in history before it was understood, meme warfare has been underway since the dawn of intelligence. Meme wars have been waged, won, and lost for millennia. They have shaped history and they have created the many cultures, political ideologies, and religions of the human species.

The first step towards understanding the role of the meme in human behavior was realized when Richard Dawkins published his book *The Selfish Gene* in 1976. Dawkins proposed a parallel between the gene and the behavioral script. Behavioral scripts, the outward expression of an idea, he theorized, are like genes in that they replicate from person to person, they evolve, and their primary motivation is their own reproduction. He called this newly identified class of self replicators: the meme.

The parallel between the meme and the gene struck many as a brilliant observation. Many, including the author of this book, became fascinated with the idea of the meme and its similarity to the gene. In time, new words based on Dawkins' meme entered the English lexicon, many inspired by biological concepts associated with the gene. The word memplex, a complex of mutually supporting memes, sprang up.

The author's first exposure to the concept of the meme was through references to the term in Daniel Dennet's book *Consciousness Explained*. Dennet considered the role that meme's play in creating consciousness through the evolution of human thought passed from generation to generation by socialization and instruction. This inspired me to think about how memes might be created, engineered or modified intentionally to shape human behavior and motivate individual humans to promulgate memes which could alter the power structure within society. I began writing about this concept at the end of 2001 and

it became the fundamental revolutionary tool in my nascent philosophy of rational anarchism. I coined the term “meme warfare” during the first months of 2002, using it in an article on my former website Rational Anarchism¹. The hope was to provide a non violent means of social change that could be waged by those without economic backing and without material resources. What I proposed was a means of warfare through ideas alone.

The “meme warfare” meme spread and soon it became the name of a computer based game. Interest in the concept has spread and it has acquired additional names (e.g. “culture jamming”).

Like all memes, the “meme warfare” meme is evolving. As it evolves, I expect it to become the subject of other books by other authors. It is my hope that this present work, Meme Warfare, will be confronted by better books by better writers as time marches forward. This specific book is being written with the desire to spur on such activity.

Some chapters in this book may seem technical. For those of you adverse to technical articles, I urge you to persevere. The purpose of the initial chapters is to put forth a definition and description of just what meme warfare is before moving onto the more enjoyable chapters about how to wage meme warfare.

I wish you the best in your pursuit of meme warfare and encourage you to improve upon my ideas and techniques.

¹ Shortly after writing for the first time about “meme warfare,” I became the subject of online harassment by the Defense Intelligence Agency. This harassment continues up to the present moment. The harassment began with an anonymous email from an individual who commanded the online harassment operation. In it, he declared that he believed my effort to spread the idea of “meme warfare” made me an enemy of the state and a danger to “his way of life.” He put up a website to smear me, recruited others to carry out his harassment campaign, provoked my employer to fire me, and leveled death threats against me, along with threats against my wife and daughter. The harassment made maintenance of the website time consuming and I abandoned it in favor of other mechanisms to spread the concept of meme warfare.

What Are Memes And Memeplexes?

Within nature, we can divide all things into two categories: replicators and non replicators. The first category can be further divided into two categories which are not mutually exclusive: self replicators and replicators of others. The living cell is an example of a self replicator. A rock is an example of a non replicator. A human being is an example of a self replicator and replicator of others². That is, humans can procreate and humans can create.

All self replicators are subject to evolution. To be a self replicator, a thing must contain within itself a set of instructions which, when followed, result in a new instance of its species. The new instance, like the original instance, must also contain within itself a set of instructions which, when followed, result in yet another new instance of its species. Copying is subject to errors and when errors are made, an instance that does not conform perfectly to its progenitor's species results. This new instance may become the basis for a new species, provided it too is able to self replicate.

The process of replication, in addition to a set of instructions, requires the consumption of resources, for the new instance which is generated must be made of something or hosted by something. Thus, replication consumes resources. When resources are limited, competition for resources arises and those self replicators that endure long enough, acquire the necessary resources, and have the opportunity to pass their instructions onto the next generation, while those that cease to exist before self replication do not. Thus, there is competition between self replicators. A self replicator's future is determined most by its instructions. Instructions that lead to successful acquisition of resources and greater opportunities to replicate out compete instruction sets that lack these qualities. Indeed, the survival of the self replicator's instructions is what drives the process of evolution³. Consequently, the survival of the instruction set is primary. Memes exist, first and foremost, to perpetuate themselves. Therefore, the long term survival of any

² Humans replicate themselves through reproduction and replicate other things through manufacture.

³ The concept of both memes and the self meme is credited to Richard Dawkins.

specific instance of a self replicator is secondary to the reproduction of the self replicator. The instructions concern themselves first with copying themselves into the next generation and secondarily with the survival of the host.

Most of us are familiar with biology. We study biology in high school and we learn about DNA, genes, chromosomes and the process of cell replication (mitosis). However, biological entities are not the only entities that self replicate⁴. Indeed, it may be the case that human life is ruled more by a second class of self replicators than by the biological class. This second class is known as the meme.

A meme is a mental construct that copies itself from mind to mind. It reproduces by inducing its carrier to engage in behavior that causes the meme to copy to other minds. It is a mental construct conjoined with a set of instructions which compel its host to engage in activities that increase the probability of the entire instruction set being copied from a host's mind into the minds of others.

Some memes are very simple. For example, consider the custom of children in the United States to make choices by reciting the chant “eenie meenie minee mo.” This is a meme that copies itself by inducing children to use it in selecting other children to participate in games or to make choices others perceive as fair on the false perception that the behavior results in random choices (a belief that holds up only if the child reciting it remains ignorant of its deterministic nature). When other children hear the meme recited, they too learn to repeat the meme and engage in the same behavior. This imitation spreads the meme⁵.

Some memes are more complex. Many steps may be necessary to affect replication. For example, if a corporation wishes to introduce a new product to the market, it may wish to

⁴ An example of a LISP program that self replicates:
`((lambda (x) (list x (list 'quote x)))
 '(lambda (x) (list x (list 'quote x))))`

⁵ The “eenie meenie minee mo” meme is a perfect example of a meme. Over the ages it has evolved. In its earliest version it made reference to racist terminology. As racism became unacceptable, mutations of the original out competed the original through natural selection and resulted in the current version of the meme.

create a fad. Fads are a class of meme often used to induce others to purchase an item. Creating a fad may involve a great deal of marketing research, the authoring of art work, and the publication of that art on broadcast media. If the process results in a fad, the act of copying may involve inducing individuals to drive to stores, find and purchase the item, and then display it publicly (think of a new fashion fad). Thus, a complex process is required to create the meme and infect the public. Once it is released, if it is successful, it self replicates through imitation.

Memes can be transmitted from person to person via many paths. The most obvious is imitation. One individual views the actions of another individual (whether real or simulated⁶) and imitates those actions. If the action or sequence of actions is such that it carries with it a high probability of imitation, it becomes a meme which spreads. Another method of meme transmission is conversation. One individual speaks to two or more others describing a set of behaviors induced by the meme. The conversation carries within it the instructions that make up the meme. If the other parties to the conversation act upon the instructions, the meme is copied. Printed language is also used by memes to transmit their instruction sets to other minds. Books, websites, television, radio, magazines, newspapers, leaflets, flyers, advertisements, and so on, are all vectors of meme transmission.

When a meme copies from individual to individual, there is a chance that an error may be made in the copying process. There is also the chance the carrier will modify the meme intentionally. In such cases, the meme evolves. If the newly mutated meme replicates more successfully than its progenitor, it may out compete its progenitor and replace it.

A meme may have a higher chance of replication across a longer expanse of time if it aggregates with other memes. When aggregated, complementary memes enhance one another's probability of replication. Thus, just as DNA found advantage in aggregating into complex aggregations of genes, some memes find advantage in aggregating into complexes of memes. This more complex form is called the *memplex*.

⁶ By "simulated" I mean as depicted on television, in video games, on radio, or in theatre.

Much of human society is controlled by memplexes. For example, each religion can be thought of as a memplex. Concepts such as patriotism, with their preferred set of behaviors, are memplexes. Nationalism, culture, and tradition are all memplexes. Indeed, each of these concepts contains within itself the requirement to instruct children to comply with their demands, thus enforcing their own replication.

Though memes and memplexes rule human society, few humans are aware that they exist. Most humans believe that the choices they make, the behaviors they engage in, and the beliefs that they have are all matters of free choice. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Biological humans are the slaves of the memplexes and the memes they host. It is this fact that makes meme creation, modification and/or engineering a powerful tool. Indeed, the United States Government targeted the author of this book exactly because of its fear of meme warfare⁷.

⁷ I was targeted by a smear campaign when my employer, a defense contractor, discovered that I had authored and published political websites. The harassers, put up bully websites, published defamatory articles in my name, and began a smear campaign designed to diminish my credibility. The head of this smear campaign sent me an email. In it he cited my authorship of the concept of meme warfare and his belief that I am a danger to "his way of life" as primary reasons behind the campaign. Since that time my websites have been monitored, according to the logs, by the CIA, FBI, FEMA, Homeland Security, FAA, Center for Disease Control, the US Coast Guard, The Pentagon, CyVeillance, The White House, The US Senate, The House of Representatives and various police departments.

Human Society Is Ruled By Memplexes

When we think of the rule of power over mankind, we think of the state, the dictator, the corporation, the organization or the institution. Laws, rules and the enforcers of the same are thought of as determining the direction of society. This is a false belief. It ignores the fact that all states, corporations, organizations and institutions cannot function without the obedience of their constituencies and membership. It is the memplex that determines the form and direction of society.

One may argue that obedience to laws and rules is the product of enforcement by external controls, but this is a naïve view. Before one can be subjected to rules and law one must believe one is subject to rules and law. That is, one must embrace **the belief** that power flows from the state, dictator, corporation, organization or institution. The reality, on the other hand, is that the state, dictator, corporation, organization or institution usurp the resources and lives of their subjects and call them their own. Upon the actualization of mass non-cooperation by the subjects of these “governing” entities, governance implodes and loses its power⁸. It is the **set of beliefs, practices and behaviors** of the subjects that, contrary to the individual best interests of their hosts, prevents the implosion of governance by the state, corporation, organization or institution⁹. What compels the subjects to act as agents of their oppressor is the memplex they host. The memplex infesting the subjects compels the subjects to tolerate and assist governance.

Memplexes are best conceived as parasites that anesthetize their hosts (in this case, individual human beings) and exploit their mental and behavioral resources to affect the replication and longevity of the parasite. In order to trick the individual into believing that the overhead of the memplex is worth the sacrifice, the memplex carries a payload which justifies the memplex’s existence by convincing the individual that he or she benefits from the memplex through the preservation and forwarding of the goals of the

⁸ The collapse of the German Democratic Republic (East German) is a perfect example of a state imploding through non-cooperation as is the killing of Mussolini and the many other tyrants that have lost the favor of their “subjects.”

⁹ The story of *The Emperor’s New Clothes* comes to mind.

state, dictator, corporation, organization or institution to which the individual is a subject. To render the host powerless, the memplex carries with it the belief that power derives from the state, dictator, corporation, organization or institution and not from the individual. This interferes with the subject's ability to realize that he or she is the exploited slave of a memplex that has taken over the individual's liberty and aggregated the individual with other victims who, collectively, form the state, dictator, corporation, organization or institution which, itself, exists merely as a tool to deceive the subject and compel him or her to surrender to the memplex.

Revolutions, unfortunately, are often carried out under the false belief that it is the state, dictator, corporation, organization or institution that must be crushed to affect change. Indeed, it is a logical goal in revolution to destroy the imposer of law or rule that appears to maintain the status quo, but the objective can only be achieved, in its fullest, by destroying the memplex that underlies the status quo. The goal of a successful revolution, therefore, must be the destruction of the memplex underlying the status quo. Traditional revolution often employs the destruction of the hosts of the oppressive memplex. Given that the hosts can be reprogrammed to host a different memplex, the bloodshed of traditional revolution could be replaced with the destruction of the offending memplex instead¹⁰. For various reasons that will be covered later in this book, individuals often sacrifice their lives for the good of the memplex¹¹. This is the folly of human kind. The sooner that humans learn not to become mindless tools of memplexes, the sooner human kind will be able to improve its world without bloodshed.

As an exercise, let's examine the concept of the democratic state. The democratic state is maintained by a memplex. The memplex entails a set of beliefs that justify the behavior and compliance of individuals that form the constituency of the state. For example, there is the belief that the majority should rule. There is the belief that elections are a fair way of making decisions or selecting representatives who are vested with the

¹⁰ Many communist regimes have made the mistake of destroying, imprisoning or marginalizing the former bourgeoisie rather than winning them over through the installation of a new memplex. Such mistakes rob the new regime of much needed expertise.

¹¹ See the chapter "Good and Bad Memplexes."

power of making decisions for all members of the state. There is the belief that the needs of individuals are met by such an arrangement. However, do these beliefs hold up?

For example, why do we believe that the majority should rule? The democratic memplex contrasts the belief that the majority should rule over all individuals with the belief that the minority should rule over all individuals. Obviously, by definition, when a minority rules over a majority, the will of fewer individuals prevails over the will of a larger number of individuals and so, from a utilitarian point of view, the degree of satisfaction and the degree to which liberty is expressed are diminished. It is argued, then, that it is better for the majority to rule than the minority. Indeed, most of us, including the author, would agree that it is better for the majority to rule than for the minority to rule, but what are the assumptions underlying this choice? Are these the only choices available?

One assumption is that the choice is between a majority and a minority. Indeed, if one body is to rule over everyone, such a choice is real. However, why would anyone assume that any one body should rule over everybody? Why must power be concentrated and wielded by a single body over all individuals? The democratic memplex ignores this question. It assumes that the question does not exist. It is essential to the democratic memplex that all individuals **believe** that they must be ruled by a single body, the state. It never argues that this is true; it merely assumes it as an article of faith and it depends upon this article of faith to subvert the conceptualization of alternatives.

However, is the belief that we must be ruled a true belief? Must there be a state to rule over all individuals? I can find no reason why there should be. Couldn't the state be replaced by a network of individuals and aggregations of individuals such that each individual or each aggregation of individuals forms a mutual treaty of protocol between each other individual and each other aggregation of individuals? For example, if I wish to form a communist collective with other communists, why would I assume that all individuals within society must be communist like me? Why not, instead, decide that all members of the communist collective, formed voluntarily, should work out an agreement

through which they interacted as a unit with, for example, capitalist entities? Provided the capitalist entities and the communist collective found the terms of the agreement mutually beneficial, why would this be inferior to a state that imposed one way upon all? In fact, wouldn't this networked arrangement, containing protocols between nodes of the network, be superior in that more individuals would live as they wished rather than finding themselves subject to some universal or local ruler, in this case the state?

This belief on behalf of the democratic memplex that there must be a body to rule over all is erroneous, counter to the interests of all individuals within society and the source of the individual's surrender to the democratic state.

If we made the assumption that the majority must rule (a belief I have already explained the rejection of), why do we assume that elections are fair and just? In a large system of elections, such as that of the United States of America, there are too many voters and too many disparities in election laws from state to state to verify the justness of any national election. Furthermore, there is no fool proof way of verifying that the results of elections as announced are correct.

Believing in the fairness of elections requires faith in the objectivity, dedication and honesty of everyone involved in the electoral process. If we do not trust individuals to rule their individual lives directly, why would we trust randomly or self selected individuals to rule our lives through the management of elections? Is there not enough reason to suspect that many individuals will and do subvert the elections processes to their own ends? Isn't this alone enough reason to reject the idea of elections as an objective means of governance? Nevertheless, Americans behave as though elections are Godly in their veracity.

The problem becomes even more complex when we consider representative democracy. If power corrupts (and history shows ample evidence that it does corrupt), why should anyone believe that a representative will always make the decision that best benefits his or her constituency rather than the decision that best benefits him or herself? Clearly, as

we all know, politicians lie to us and make corrupt decisions. Since we know this, why do we continue to support representative democracy? We continue to support it because the democratic memeplex demands our compliance and exploits us to guarantee its survival and replication.

Are the needs of individuals really met by democracy?

Democracy is about submission of the will of all to the will of the majority. This, of course, is better than the submission of the will of the majority to the will of the minority, but why do we accept anything less than satisfying the will of all? The answer, of course, is that often the interests of individuals are in conflict. We believe that it is impossible to satisfy everyone so we settle for satisfying the majority. This seems reasonable until we consider the case where the individual in conflict with the majority is required to sacrifice his or her rights to a majority's whim or desire not backed by rights. The truth is often inconvenient and when an individual speaks a truth that makes the majority uncomfortable, is it correct for the majority to place its comfort over the individual's right to speak the truth? In recognition of this failure in democracy, some governments institute constitutions that override the ability of the majority to impose its will upon the individual or upon minorities when individual rights are threatened.

Unfortunately, the protections of a constitution are precarious. A constitution is only as strong as the faith of the majority in the constitution. When the majority fails to protect the constitution, the constitution loses its power and the will of the majority, which is easily swayed by a powerful minority, often dispenses with the constitution, if not through legal means, then by simply ignoring it.

Even legal means can subvert the intent of a constitution. Constitutions usually include provisions for changing the constitution. A super-majority can often remove or add rights to a constitution. If it is ethically wrong for a majority to destroy the rights of a minority or the rights of an individual, why is it, then, that a super-majority is permitted to do what a simple majority is not permitted to do? Is the aggregation of wrongs, when

large in numbers, sufficient to make a right? No reasonable person would take such a position.

Thus, even constitutional democracy cannot guarantee the satisfaction of the reasonable needs of the individual. Constitutional democracy can and is subverted by overwhelming majorities. This fact is ignored when infexting the citizens of constitutional majorities with the democratic memeplex.

If the beliefs supporting the democratic memeplex do not hold up, why do we defend them? Why do we go through lengths such as war and bloodshed to spread the meme? Why do we sacrifice our children to impose the meme upon the peoples of foreign lands?

We do these things because we are slaves to the memeplex. The memeplex controls our behavior, our thoughts and our lives. Unless we recognize that our understanding of reality is shaped by memeplexes, there is little hope that we will, as a society and as individuals, make rational decisions. We cannot rule ourselves until we play an active role in determining which memeplexes we will host.

Memplexes Are Vulnerable

When we fight against the effects of a memplex, rather than the memplex itself, our struggle is often futile. The memplex compels those infected with it to defend the memplex. When we attempt to change one effect of the memplex, its hosts cannot conceive of the desired change as workable, for it contradicts their beliefs. Often each effect of a memplex is part of a vast matrix of mutually supporting effects. One cannot simply eliminate one effect without taking on all of the effects. Such changes are seen as attempts to change the world and few people believe such changes are plausible. They see the goals of those seeking change as utopian, idealistic and impossible. They mistake the memplex for human nature and since they believe that it is human nature and not a memplex that defines things the way they are, they see such causes as futile and foolish.

Rather than directly fight against the effects of a memplex, some ideologues have targeted their hosts. Hitler and Pol Pot are examples of this strategy. In their attempt to remove a belief system from the world, they slaughter the carriers of the belief system, pursuing genocide as “the final solution.” This unethical course has brought the greatest grief upon humankind and, moreover, it hasn’t even accomplished its goal. You cannot kill an idea¹².

Mass change in human organization and thinking is only possible by subverting memplexes themselves. We must look to nature for analogues of this kind of warfare. Despite the great complexity of the human body and the resilience of the human species, nothing threatens human existence more than the virus. Viruses subvert the DNA of cells and cause cells to work against the organism in which they are embedded. Viruses use cells to reproduce themselves and to attack the body. Some even change the genetic code of cells and induce cancer. If we think of DNA as a replicator, we can see a strong analogy with the meme. If the memes of a memplex can be subverted to work against the memplex or altered to prevent the survival or reproduction of the memplex, the

¹² Ideas may be discredited, subverted, or infected, but they cannot be destroyed.

memeplex can be led down the path of self subversion, with little external effort, for the memeplex itself will provide the energy and resources needed to render itself impotent.

Unlike physical warfare, it should be possible to subvert and destroy a memeplex without destroying its hosts. When biological viruses attack a body, they destroy the body but they do not destroy the elements that make up the body. These elements host the body in the same way that human minds host memeplexes. In meme warfare, our goal is not to destroy the host. Our goal is to subvert the parasite (the memeplex) that exploits the host and replace it with another memeplex. If our intentions are good and if we do this with knowledge and prudence, we will replace the existing memeplex with one that benefits the hosts. Our war, therefore, is not upon people but upon their programming.

Though they acted in ignorance of the concept of the memeplex, history is punctuated with many individuals that effectively subverted memeplexes. Abraham, Buddha, Socrates, Jesus, Mohammed, John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, Karl Marx, Galileo, Newton, and Einstein, among many others, subverted memeplexes successfully. We would be well advised to learn from their example.

Among these, I find Jesus to be the most interesting meme warrior. Jesus was born a Jew and was schooled in Judaism, the dominant memeplex of his society. Jesus offered a new interpretation of God. He subverted the dominant thinking by redefining God as a loving and forgiving God. He subverted the notion of the concept of “the chosen” by universalizing the mutual devotion and love of God as applicable to all who accepted God and not limited to family ties extending back to Abraham. He replaced the idea of compliance to the will of God with the importance of intent. That is, under Jesus’ reinterpretation of God’s will, he saw God as concerned with the intent and not the deeds of man. Under Jesus’ concept of God, it was possible to follow the letter of God’s law and yet be unworthy of God’s reward if the intent was not based on love and devotion to God. Conversely, it was possible to break God’s laws if the intent was based on love and devotion to God.

This redefinition of the concept of God and God's will created a new memplex, derived from the old, that could spread amongst a larger population and could effectively out-compete the old memplex in terms of the number of hosts willing to submit to it. Jesus did this, not by waging war on his fellow Jews, but by presenting a new way of understanding the old memplex. In effect, he subverted it by replacing various key memes with new memes that functioned within the old memplex as if they belonged there. Jesus performed the memetic analogue of genetic engineering. Two thousand years later, the memplex that Jesus mutated has recruited more than a billion more hosts than its original form.

After Jesus created his memplex, his memplex went on to subvert the Roman Empire. The Empire that crucified him found itself, five hundred years later, destroyed by his memplex. His memplex, however, mutated and became the tool of the Catholic Church. As a political tool it led to a dark age and the Dark Age gave way to war between the hosts of this mutated form of Jesus' memplex and the memplex introduced by Mohammed (which too was a memetically engineered version of Judaism mixed with the memplex of Jesus). Many hosts of each memplex were murdered in the conflict that resulted. It was not until the age of reason, where a new memplex, the memplex of humanism collided with the memplex of the Catholicism, that the Dark Age ended and the memplex of Jesus mutated once again.

And we can see, from the above, that the consequences of memetic engineering are great. It can result in mass transformations of societies. It can also result in war and human grief. It would seem, then, that meme warfare has been practiced, perhaps in ignorance, for thousands of years. We now live in a world where meme warfare has become a conscious act of aggression. Nothing will be the same again.

What Is Meme Warfare?

Meme warfare is the subversion or destruction of a memplex by means of memetic engineering. Meme warriors design memes targeting existing memplexes. Such memes are intended to infect an existing memplex, hinder an existing memplex, or form a part of a competing memplex. In the later case, the goal may be to create a new memplex intended to replace the old memplex.

Since memes require a host to carry out their payload (the immediate effect of the meme) and to reproduce, memes and memplexes are successful if and only if individuals host them. Meme warfare, therefore, uses the resources of its hosts to accomplish its task. It is parasitic in nature. Thus, meme warfare can be waged even by those who possess few resources themselves. This makes meme warfare a threat to those accustomed to monopolizing social change based on material wealth or social influence.

The meme warrior looks to nature for analogues, for biological evolution has been waging a similar form of warfare since life began. If one goal is to induce a host to carry a meme and to exploit the host's resources to carry out the meme's goals, the best analogue in nature is the parasite.

A parasite may use a range of techniques to acquire a host and then maintain its relationship with a host. Some parasites destroy their hosts in the process. Since our goal is to wage warfare without doing violence, we reject those techniques that kill their hosts. Some of the most successful parasites benefit their hosts by making their hosts desire to maintain a relationship with the parasites. The same is true with successful memes. Memes are more easily spread and retained if their hosts enjoy them. Those memes which induce entertaining behaviors are more likely to be adopted by hosts and are more likely to consume the hosts' resources (e.g. time, money, energy) than those which provide no immediate reward. Unless a meme is consuming resources, it is not doing anything. Therefore, the meme warrior, whenever possible, should design memes that the targeted hosts will willingly foster and cultivate.

The tactical use of entertainment to spread memes does not imply that the entertaining behavior induced by the memes result in pleasure for anyone other than the host. It merely requires the inducement of enjoyment in the host. Often this enjoyment is at the expense of others. For example, a meme that induces mockery may be enjoyable to its host (the person engaged in mockery), while offensive or aggravating to the object of the mockery (e.g. the President and his followers).

It is important to remember that entertainment is merely one tactic amongst many available. Other memetic side effects exploitable by memetic engineers are sexual pleasure, material gain, spiritual fulfillment, a sense of empowerment, intellectual satisfaction, and any of the other emotionally satisfying or materially satisfying desires that motivate humans.

In all cases, memes must exploit human behavior. They may exploit linguistic behavior, sexual behavior, social behavior, individual behavior, creative behavior (e.g. art), antisocial behavior (e.g. defacement of property), or any other form of human behavior. Memes are not memes unless they induce their hosts to behave in a way that executes the meme's payload and/or induce others to copy the meme. Memes may be conceptual, provided they also induce a behavior. For example, during the elections of 2004, the Republicans successfully introduced the conceptual meme known as "the security mom." The meme was largely conceptual; it introduced into the public consciousness the notion that there exist a significant number of mothers that would vote for any candidate provided the candidate could convince them that he would protect their families from terrorism. In reality, this conceptual class of mothers was small, but the meme encouraged the few individuals that hosted it to identify themselves loudly in the hope of inducing social pressure to reproduce the meme¹³. The "security mom" meme was introduced through advertising. The goal was to paint President Bush as the candidate of choice for "security moms" under the guise of neutrality. It exploited the human desire to

¹³ After all, what "good mother" would want to admit that she was unconcerned about protecting her family from terrorism? At least, that is the social pressure the meme was designed to induce.

be a good parent and to be seen as a good parent. In reality, Bush's policies have induced terrorism, not prevented terrorism. Therefore, the consequence of the meme has been to subvert the very goals it espoused. However, there is no contradiction between this deceptiveness and the essence of being a meme. From the point of view of Republican memetic engineers, the only measure of success for the meme is whether or not it assisted Bush in winning the presidency. Its effects on terrorism are beside the point.

An example of a linguistic meme is the use of the name "Bush" as a pun. "Fuck Bush!" "The Only Bush I Trust Is My Own," and "Trim the Bush!" are all perfect examples of this kind of meme. The meme exploited both sexual desire and the desire for entertainment to induce its hosts to carry the message¹⁴. Another in this category is the "Don't Be Dicked By Cheney!" meme.

During the antiwar movement targeting Bush's war of aggression on Iraq, the meme of spelling the messages "peace," "no bush," and "fuck war" using nude individuals reclined on the ground to form the letters of the message was highly successful. This meme exploited various human desires. For some participants it exploited a sense of empowerment. For others it exploited exhibitionistic desires. Since it was perceived as outrageous, it received much attention in the press. This attention assisted in the reproduction of the meme. The "spell anti-war messages with nude bodies" meme has been highly successful and is a classic example of a well designed meme.

In the early years following the attacks of 9/11/2001, the Bush administration sought to create a project that would spy on the transactions of all Americans. This project, known as the Total Information Awareness project was attacked by a meme I engineered. I placed online a set of web pages known as "The John Poindexter Awareness Office", named after the director of the TIA. Readers were encouraged to spy on Mr. Poindexter and provide any knowledge they had of his purchases and activities. While only a small amount of knowledge on Poindexter was accumulated, many thousands of people viewed the site. It gained attention in the press and on the radio. Awareness of the project was

¹⁴ This meme has been carried by bumper stickers, T-shirts, protest signs and graffiti.

increased. The meme encouraged others to engage in a new sport, “spying on government officials engaged in spying on Americans.” This satisfied the human desire for empowerment, and likely made these officials feel uncomfortable. It also spawned a large number of copycat websites, which is good because that is what meme warfare is all about¹⁵. Knowledge of the project became ubiquitous and Congress took steps to dismantle the project (at least under its official name). All things considered, this was a successful meme. It made a mockery of the surveillance memplex and induced scrutiny of DARPA’s other projects.

In a clever attempt to divert attention from the American use of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, Rumsfeld and his subordinates introduced the “Shock and Awe” meme. They wished to subvert the obvious, that civilians were being incinerated intentionally with the far fetched idea that the weapons of mass destruction Rumsfeld deployed were intended for psychological effect alone, thus the name “Shock and Awe.” They argued that this technique would induce Iraqis to surrender immediately. If this was the intent, it failed.

Memes evolve and thus there is a danger in meme warfare. One may release a meme that evolves to oppose its originator. This was the fate of the “Shock and Awe” meme. Antiwar activists quickly assigned a new context to the meme and used it to wage psychological warfare on supporters of the war. In some case, women bared their chests in public with the words “Shock and Awe” painted on their bodies. In other cases, squads of activists dumped mock carnage in front of the doors of defense contractors and the press in an effort to “Shock and Awe” Americans into seeing the reality of their misdeeds in Iraq.

¹⁵ Memes, as replicators, will evolve.

Activists use fake gore to reinterpret the “Shock and Awe” meme. (See image to the right)



A female protester exposes her breasts to “Shock and Awe.” (See above)



In response to Ashcroft's waste of government funds to hide a statue's breasts, protesters spread the Ashcroft+Boobs meme. (See above)

During the first days of the war in Iraq, the disparity in information between the foreign press and the American press was huge. This gap prompted many to suspect that the American press was lying in its coverage of the war, a position supported by the policy of embedding American journalists in military units. A clever meme warrior introduced a meme to inform Americans that their press was lying to them. A photo of a newspaper vending machine with the word "Lies" spray painted across its windowed door appeared on the Internet. Quickly this meme spread across the country, appearing in many cities. It is a perfect example of the parasitic nature of memes. The inventor of the meme did not need to fund the spray paint or take the personal risk of traveling about the country defacing newspaper vending machines. Those infected with the meme provided their own resources and took their own risks. Of the thousands of people that saw defaced newspaper vending machines, a few would select themselves to repeat the work elsewhere, and the meme reproduced.



Above we see the original graphic of a newspaper vending machine defaced with the word "Lies!" (See above).



The "Lies!" meme spreads to Miami. (See above)

The neoconservatives have their meme warriors too and just after 9/11, in an attempt to differentiate themselves from the Third Reich, a new meme was released on the Internet which equated National Socialism with socialism. This meme was slick in that National Socialism contains the word “socialism.” Equating the two is an instance of the “Big Lie” and it is interesting that both Hitler and the neoconservatives sought to utilize the same ploy. Hitler had wished to be seen as socialist in order to usurp support from socialists in Germany between the wars. At that time, socialism was a popular concept in Germany. However, there was nothing socialist about Hitler’s movement. In fact, it was anti-socialist and corporatist in nature. The American neoconservatives, openly hostile to communism, wished to equate the American left with National Socialism, not only to divert attention from the obvious; that there is much in common between fascism and neo-conservatism, but to misconstrue the left’s support for the Palestinians as anti-Semitic. By the misuse of the word “socialism” as introduced by Hitler, the goal was to use the “fascism is socialism” meme to provoke cognitive dissonance within the American population and to make it impossible for many to conceive of things as they actually were. That is, they sought to obscure the real truth; that Bush and the neoconservative movement are as fascist as Hitler’s National Socialist movement and that the American left had been motivated by anti-racist sentiment, not anti-Semitism.

This meme has done a great disservice to those who were murdered by Hitler’s regime. It opens the door to repeating the horrors of history through role switching. “So long as the victims are not Jewish,” the new fascists argue, “we are not fascists.” Ironically, this twisted logic is likely to result in the destruction of Israel, for should history repeat itself with new actors playing old roles, the world’s sympathy will one day be given to the victims of the new genocide and they are those with whom Israel finds itself locked into an existential struggle. Thus, in their long term effect, the objectives of the American left are in the real interest of Israel because the American left seeks peaceful coexistence between Israel and its neighbors while the neoconservatives seek ever increasing conflict. In effect, if not intent, the neoconservatives will do to Israel and the United States of America what Hitler did to Germany.

In addition to the “fascism is socialism” meme, the neoconservatives introduced another pernicious meme in the wake of the PATRIOT Act. They forwarded the notion that the United States of America is a constitutional republic and not a democracy, as if the two were somehow incompatible. This half truth reveals their contempt for democracy. While a constitution may limit the power of a majority, it does not eliminate it. After two centuries of fighting under the banner of democracy, Americans were expected to forget their democratic roots and embrace a form of dictatorship. Supporting memes were added to form a memplex whose goal was to subvert American democracy. Even the Constitution was under attack with one media whore after another repeating the meme “The Constitution is not a suicide pact.” The notion that simply existing is more important than rights or human dignity came to the fore, an idea abhorrent to the founders of the American constitutional democratic republic. The founders of the United States of America, I believe, did consider the Constitution a form of suicide pact. They fought a war to found the democratic republic and put their lives on the line in order to gain freedoms they did not have under monarchy. Thus, once again, the neoconservatives were reinterpreting the foundations of American society to their own ends. Hitler did the same in Germany.

One may question how these neoconservative memes are actual memes and not mere ideas. They are memes in that they carry a payload and that they are designed to reproduce. The payload they carry is the payload of acquiescence to tyranny: a kind of “bend over and take it up the ass” mentality. The meme is made seductive through the human psychological crutch of denial. When one is too cowardly to face reality, one seeks a tool to obfuscate reality and these two memes are exactly that: denial mechanisms. This is a classic dictatorial tool. What but denial can explain the willingness of Germans to consent to the murder of their fellow citizens or the willingness of Americans to turn their backs on their Arab-American and Muslim-American brothers?

The power of memes is not obvious and this is what makes them powerful. Hosts are seldom, if ever, aware that they have become tools of an idea. They are a subtle subversion of self interest that compels the individual to work in the interest of an idea which often yields no benefit to him or herself. Like any weapon, they can be used for good or for evil.

How Memeplexes Defend Themselves

Isolated memes rely upon themselves to survive. Successful memeplexes, however, employ survival mechanism not unlike those employed by the DNA of complex biological organisms. All self-replicators are in competition for resources with other self replicators of the same kind. This is true in the biological world, the world of computer viruses, and in the world of memes.

Biological replicators have evolved many different strategies to fend off infection by other biological replicators. Skin, scales, bark, shells, cell walls and hair are examples of one method of self defense – the boundary. All living things produce some form of boundary between themselves and the external world. The boundary serves to keep out infection, protect the creature from a hostile world and to retain its internal organisms. The boundary may also serve to give the organism form. Boundaries that isolate the internal workings of an organism are one example of a biological self defense mechanism.

Another example is the antibody. When an infection breaches the boundary of a complex organism, the organism may respond by deploying antibodies. The antibodies attack the invading replicators and disarm or destroy them.

In addition to internal mechanisms at self defense, complex creatures may fight other complex creatures to defend themselves or to eliminate competitors. Others may employ deceit (e.g. camouflage), flight (e.g. swiftness of escape) or swarming as defense mechanisms.

All of these mechanisms have their analogues in the world of the memeplex. The simplest mechanism that a memeplex may employ is to isolate its hosts from other memeplexes. This technique is most often employed with vigor by memeplexes that are irrational and easily refutable by facts. For example, dictatorial memeplexes and memeplexes that rely upon the cult of personality, when they seize control of a state,

often prevent their citizens from traveling freely to other countries, hinder visits by foreigners, control the press, and block out broadcasts by foreign media. They create an intellectual barrier to evidence contradicting the assumptions of the memplex.

Cults use this method too. They urge their members to cut off contact from other non-cult members, including family. They use emotional ploys and deceit to cause their membership to look inwards, towards the cult, for emotional and intellectual needs. Through this mechanism, they build a wall between their hosts and the outside world.

A technique used by memplexes to defend themselves against replicators that breach their outer barrier is wholly analogous to the antibody. In those states where direct central control is exercised by the state, secret police are used to uncover, harass, and imprison dissidents. These secret police agencies, such as the FBI, the KGB, and the STASI, are the immune systems of the totalitarian memplex. If they did not have other functions in addition to policing the thoughts of their citizens, they would more properly be called “thought police.”



New York City's finest antibodies deployed at an antiwar protest.

(See above)

Like states, cults use the same method. The Church of Scientology runs what can only be described as an intelligence network (i.e. OSA, Office of Special Affairs), geared to silencing critics whom they refer to as SPs (suppressive persons). Lyndon's Larouche's organization employs similar methods¹⁶.

As I write this essay, the United States of America is in a period of transition between an open society (one where memplexes, for the most part, are permitted to compete freely) and a police state (one where the government institutes thought police to rout out and destroy those hosting competing memplexes). In such societies, as we are now experiencing within the United States of America, private individuals, corporations and organizations are used to do much of the work of the traditional thought police. In many cases these individuals do not even need to be instructed by the state to do the work of memetic antibodies. The memetic parasite within them compels them to "volunteer" their time and energies to protect the dictatorial memplex. They keep an eye open for dissidents or actively hunt them down, reporting their findings to the state. Some go a step further and inform employers of dissident employees¹⁷, with the hope of impoverishing dissidents and, thereby, neutralizing them.



*These two young men (i.e. antibodies) showed up at a pro-Aristide demonstration in Boston. After talking with them, I came to the conclusion that they didn't even know what the protest was about. They came only to heckle protesters.
(See image to the left)*

¹⁶ While holding a sign in Harvard Square reading "Impeach Bush," a group of Larouche supporters were nearby holding a signs reading "Impeach Cheney." Their local leader came up to me in an effort to behave as an antibody for the Larouchean memplex and asked, "Why are you harming Larouche? Larouche wanted to impeach Cheney and you are holding a sign calling for the impeachment of Bush." This is an example of an antibody at work.

¹⁷ The author is a victim of one such act of employment loss due to such antibodies.



This antibody came to an antiwar protest in Boston.

(See above)



A throng of antibodies shows up at a Boston antiwar protest, huddling together in mutual safety while before them half a million American protest the war.

(See above)



This group of three rather unimpressive antibodies came all the way from the suburbs to Harvard Square hoping to infiltrate an anarchist group.

(See above)



Small group of anti-protester protesters shows up in Harvard Square with a sign reading "Stop Hippy Protesters TODAY." We still speculate that they were paid to do this.

(See image to the left)

Of course, memplexes also employ aggression against external memplexes. In the world of human society we call this “war,” but in reality wars are seldom between people, they are between memplexes and humans are mere disposable vehicles sent out to engage in combat. Two soldiers, standing eye to eye on the battlefield, have far much more in common with each other as human beings than their leaders have with the soldiers, who sit back in the homeland enjoying the fruits of custodianship of the memplex. In the war between memplexes, the individual lives of soldiers mean no more than a burning hulk of a tank in the sands of a foreign land. Another can always be made and then sent into battle. The tank never wins and neither does the soldier. They are both pawns in someone else’s war.

There are many examples throughout history of individual human beings acting as antibodies for memplexes. Socrates introduced the meme of the examined life and was put on trial for corrupting the youth, a charge for which he was sentenced to death. Roman guards put Jesus on the cross for causing turmoil in Judea, another futile attempt to kill a new idea infesting the local memplex. In Rome, the outspoken and the Christians, both infesting the imperial memplex, were fed to the lions and leagues of antibodies came to watch the entertainment. The Roman Catholic Church had no problem finding snitches during the inquisition that turned in Jews, dissident Christians, scientists, freethinkers and pagans to face torture and, in some cases, death. Hitler had little trouble finding antibodies to route out Jews in hiding and to identify those uncooperative with his program of extermination. Stalin set citizen against citizen, the East German STASI recruited a large percentage of the population as snitches and harassers.

Nothing has changed. In today’s America we have members of the “FreeRepublic” harassing dissidents online, snapping their pictures at protests, and putting them online, and infiltrating dissident organizations with the intent of turning the information over to the police. We have the Protest Warrior “movement” which specializes in infiltrating dissident protests with the goal of making a mockery of free speech. Numerous antibodies have even joined to harass the author of this essay, calling themselves

“KOBESHQ” and maintaining a set of bully, disinformation and harassment websites. None of these people are working in their own self interest. They are antibodies of the fascist memplex and nothing more. As mindless drones controlled by memplexes, they behave as sociopaths, unconcerned about the consequences of their actions upon others.

As a child I wondered how evil men such as Hitler could win the support of a number of individuals sufficiently large to work their hateful deeds. I never believed that it could happen in America, but it has. Only by understanding how memplexes use humans to their own ends can one account for the behavior of the brownshit. Brownshirts are best seen as mindless antibodies. They really do not understand why they do what they do; they just know that they must do it.

Good Memes and Bad Memes

In this chapter we propose that there are memes and memeplexes that work to forward the real interests of their hosts and there are memes and memeplexes that do just the opposite: work against the real interests of their hosts. We will refer to the former as “good memes” and the latter as “bad memes.” I believe that the use of the moral terms “good” and “bad” is justified. A good meme is a meme that complies with Kant’s practical imperative¹⁸. A bad meme is a meme that does not comply with Kant’s practical imperative. In other words, a bad meme is unethical because it exploits its host to an end that does not benefit the host.

This distinction between good memes and bad memes has nothing to do with the distinction between successful memes and unsuccessful memes. For a meme to be successful, it must reproduce and survive, competing with other memes in the process. The impact on its hosts is of no consequence provided it reaches these objectives successfully¹⁹. Indeed, even the suicide meme has survived, despite the utter destruction of its hosts. In fact, it is the destruction of its hosts that publicizes the suicide meme, thereby aiding in its reproduction.

In this discussion, it is important to understand the concept of “ends.” An “end” is a goal. It is something that an intelligent entity wishes to accomplish or needs to accomplish. This something may be an event, an experience, a state of being, or the acquisition of some material thing. Human beings are simultaneously intelligent entities and biological entities. They cannot function as intelligent entities unless their biological needs are met sufficiently to maintain their intellectual capacity. Therefore, any meme that, as a consequence of hosting the meme, causes a human being to kill him or herself, starve to death, consume materials that result in death or the permanent inability to engage in intellectual activities, or eliminates the conditions of continued existence is, by sake of

¹⁸ *‘Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but at the same time as an end.’*

¹⁹ Contrast the tree with a shark. Each reproduce and are, therefore, equally replicators. The tree, however, does not destroy life to survive while the shark does destroy life to survive.

destroying the biological aspect of the host, a bad meme. It is important, however, to properly place the onus of being a “bad meme” (or “memeplex”) where it belongs. For example, if one is embedded in a society whose dominant memeplex destroys the individual hosting a good memeplex, the designation of “bad meme” (or “memeplex”) should be applied to society’s dominant memeplex.

The preceding definition of a bad memeplex is not complete. Destruction of the biological aspect of the host is relevant in this discussion only because the survival of the biological aspect is a necessary precondition of intellectual activity within the host. If the human mind could exist without a body, then this would no longer be the case²⁰.

A complete definition of a bad memeplex must include its impact on the intellectual ends of the intelligent entity that hosts it. If an individual seeks knowledge, for example, any memeplex that limits that individual’s knowledge or ability to acquire knowledge is a bad meme. Obviously, this is a relative designation, for some individuals may not share this end. Therefore, it would be more proper, when assessing a meme from an intellectual standpoint, to speak of the goodness or badness of memes relative to a specific individual. An individual only interested in sexual satisfaction may not be harmed by a meme that limits his or her knowledge in areas such as philosophy or religion.

Let us consider a real world example of a bad meme. Many libertarians cite the pursuit of liberty and freedom as their end. Yet, the libertarian memeplex, when practiced, tends to provide more freedom to those in possession of property than those without. Indeed, in a libertarian society, the freedom of any specific individual would be determined by the amount of property the individual accumulated and restrained by the amount of property that others have accumulated. In such a society, the only condition under which absolute freedom could be attained would be to own everything. If one person owned everything, that one person would be maximally free and everyone else would be

²⁰ Which may explain why religions are as destructive as they are. If we believe that it is better to kill someone rather than allow them to sin, we rely upon the survival of their mind or soul after death. Since the survival of the mind or soul after death cannot be proved, the rational will err on the side of assuming it does not when an issue contrasting a life of sin against no life at all is considered.

maximally enslaved. Since, in a libertarian utopia, each person would obtain property and rewards according to his or her abilities and efforts, we can assume that freedom would be distributed along a bell curve. Only those near the right hand side of the curve would have any measure of freedom for they would own nearly all of the property. The vast majority, left of the right extreme of that curve, would be enslaved by the small minority on the right hand extreme of the curve. This would greatly diminish the amount of human freedom within such a society. Unless nearly everyone agreed to this arrangement, they would, by definition, be forced to live according to a system that they did not agree with. Thus, they would be enslaved. On the other hand, if they did agree, then they would be adopting a memplex that worked against their own ends. After all, the end of the majority, as described above, would be freedom and yet, by hosting such a memplex, they would be enslaved.

Even those on the right hand end of the bell curve would be constrained by their peers. They too would have limited freedom²¹. Consequently, no matter how you look at it, libertarianism is a bad memplex when it is shared by the majority. On the other hand, it may be a good memplex when it is shared by only a handful of persons who deceive others into believing that its few followers truly believe in freedom, because it would form the denial framework they need to justify their unethical behavior²². In any case, the more successful libertarianism becomes the worse on average it becomes as a memplex. When it becomes ubiquitous, it becomes universally bad.

Now let's consider the communist memplex. Imagine the perfect communist society where "each contributes according to his ability and each receives according to his needs." It is important to note that the goal of the memplex is to satisfy the needs of everyone. If we assume that sufficient production can be attained by each according to his ability, then we are left with the question of whether all ends are merely needs. For example, we all need food but does anyone need music? Does anyone need poetry? Does anyone need to write novels? Somehow, I think these things are not needs, they are

²¹ The wealthy would be constrained by the wealthy, so long as more than one person was to be wealthy.

²² As well, secretly believing in libertarianism while espousing an altruistic belief system would enable the libertarians to take advantage of the good will of their peers.

desires. Yet, it may be someone's end to compose music, write poetry, or write novels. It may also be someone's end to listen to music, read poetry, and read novels, not because that someone needs these things but because that someone desires these things.

Let us place ourselves in the shoes of the person that desires to compose music. If insufficient material needs are being met by the current level of production, should that person be compelled to shovel coal in order to increase the material wealth of society? One may say, "well, if he or she is really a good composer, it would be a waste to have him or her shovel coal when someone else could do that instead." I ask, what difference does that make? The person may be a very poor composer, but if that is his or her desire and if he or she wishes to satisfy that desire, would it not be against his or her ends to force the person to shovel coal instead? The communist reply would be that the needs of society come before the needs of the individual. Yet, does this not contradict the "each" in the dictum "from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs?" Does the word "each" not refer to the individual? If it does not, then to whom does it refer? If we substitute "society" for the individual then isn't it possible that each may contribute according to his or her ability and yet not satisfy a single individual's needs be met? If society is not the aggregation of the individuals that form it, then what is it?

In a communist society, one class of individual benefits: the less productive. The less productive can be divided into two groups: the unproductive without power and the unproductive in power. The first lives at a subsistence level in exchange for doing very little (if anything) and the latter lives at a lavish level for doing very little (if anything). Of these two subcategories composed of beneficiaries of communism, only the former actually host the communist memplex. The latter feign it and do their best to persuade everyone else to believe what they themselves do not believe. Those in the vast middle, the productive, who do believe in the communist memplex do so at their own expense and the expense of their own ends. Thus, for them, the vast majority, it is a bad memplex. For the unproductive without power it is a good memplex. For the leadership, it is a tool and only a tool. They do not host they communist memplex.

Looking at the two examples we have examined, we find something in common. Both libertarianism and communism rely upon deceit by the powerful. In the former case, the powerful hold onto a belief system which sanctifies selfishness while pretending to share the beliefs of the common person, and in the case of the latter, the powerful pretend to believe in the dominant memplex while actually failing to host it themselves. If you consider every hierarchical system you will find the same thing. In meritocracies, those who rise early remain at the top through the accumulation of power and not by continuing to be of merit. In theocracies the highest priests often live lives that contradict their teachings to the laymen. In monarchies the private lives of royal families are usually scandalous. The common thread is that the “dominant memplex” is hosted by the common man and wielded by the leadership as a means to exploit the common man. The leadership only pretends to host the dominant memplex. This deception is what Hitler meant by “The Big Lie.” When the common man fails to understand that the leadership does not embrace the common ethics, the common man cannot conceive of the evils that the leadership practices.

The only good memplex, it would seem, would be a memplex that rejected leadership and hierarchy. Such a memplex would create antibodies against a leadership, thereby preventing one class to use a memplex as a weapon against another. This leaves anarchism as the only candidate.

How to Overthrow the Powers That Be On a Low Budget

Class warfare is best seen as the act of one class deploying or exploiting a memplex which serves to enslave another class. Anarchists of the anarcho-communist persuasion often attempt to provoke class warfare in the opposite direction. That is, they seek a bottom up class warfare where the masses wage war upon the ruling class.

Real class warfare is always initiated by the ruling class against the masses and it is the normal state of affairs in all hierarchical societies. Society forms a hierarchy only because the ruling class has waged class warfare successfully upon the masses. Class warfare is a perpetual war; the masses are enslaved to a memplex imposed by the elite which works to the advantage of the later at the expense of the former.

Marxism seeks to create a dictatorship of the proletariat. Ostensibly, it is a memplex that turns the class hierarchy on its head, placing the masses at the top of an inverted triangle and the ruling class on the bottom. In reality, this cannot work. The elite are at the apex of a triangle through the exploitation of the masses and as soon as the exploitation of the masses ceases, the ruling class must implode for all power flows upward. Thus, any dictatorship of the proletariat ultimately will eliminate the ruling class and destroy capitalist hierarchy altogether. When we look at attempts to invert the triangle, we always see the rise of a new class. A new triangle emerges through their control of the state which now is described as a “peoples” republic. This creates, in effect, a single corporation that has monopolized all production under a single leadership. The power of the new elite destroys any dedication to the masses once held and a new elite is formed. This new elite imposes the communist memplex only as a means of enslavement. The new elite believe in the communist memplex no more than the previous rulers believed in the pre-communist memplex. In reality, nothing has changed.

Ultimately, the masses should seek the elimination of hierarchy altogether and this can be accomplished only by ending the class war. Since the class war exists *a priori* as a

necessary mechanism for the maintenance of hierarchy, the mission is for the masses to win the class war and put an end to it altogether. Only a memplex which destroys the concept of a class based society, and insists that it never reemerges, can accomplish this goal. The elimination of leadership requires the elimination of the state as a necessary precondition. Consequently, the memplex must be anti-state.

When one sits at or near the bottom of the class triangle, it is difficult to imagine that one can effectively wage meme warfare against the ruling class, for they possess or control nearly all of society's capital, the media, the press and the means of production. However, meme warfare does not require the possession of resources. What it requires is the construction of subversive memes that reproduce themselves by using the resources of their hosts. Provided the resource overhead of the meme is small, the cost of waging meme warfare can be distributed across the masses. Once again, the best analogy is drawn from the domain of biology.

If one were to release an aggressive biological agent into the environment, one would need only to seed its reproduction. The goal would be to infect a small number of individuals and then rely upon the agent to reproduce itself through the spread of infection from individual to individual. The same is true for a well designed meme.

Let us take the simple bumper sticker as an example. Most individuals within western society have access to a computer, are literate, and capable of designing a bumper sticker. If one were to create a bumper sticker design that was both "catchy" (in the sense that a virus is catchy) and that carried a memetic payload, distribute copies of it to a small number of individuals and include on the bumper sticker a location on the Internet with instructions on how to produce the bumper sticker at home, the bumper sticker could be replicated by anyone who wants it (at their own expense) and sold by anyone who wishes to make a profit. Use of the bumper sticker (e.g. placing it on the back of a car) would spread awareness of the meme, thus it would advertise itself.

I have done this myself with some success. For those unwilling to create the bumper stickers themselves, self publishing mechanisms exist where individuals can purchase the bumper stickers online²³. The publishing house takes care of printing and shipping the bumper stickers.

What I have described above is a single instance of a method of meme distribution with very low overhead for the creator. The same principle can be applied to T-Shirts, signs, pamphlets, and other printed propaganda.



The author began to wage bumper-sticker based meme warfare by designing his own stickers, producing them himself and distributing them in Boston Common. To the left you see a photo of his first bumper sticker stand. At the time this effort was launched, virtually NO ONE was speaking out against Bush, alone in a public place, distributing highly offensive anti-Bush materials. On this first day, the police threatened arrest and the operation was moved to Harvard Square in Cambridge.

²³ You can view my bumper sticker work online at <http://www.cafepress.com/stopfascism>



Over the following months, the bumper sticker meme evolved...



and continued to evolve...

Another method of meme distribution is the public mockery of authority. Gather a few friends, purchase a package of poster board, purchase markers (if you cannot afford them, consider “borrowing” them from your employer) and stand in a public place with high foot traffic. As your whim directs you, make signs on the spot mocking the president, government officials, the police, corporations or whatever your cause inspires. Try to make them humorous or sexually provocative and use these human impulses and desires to inspire others to copy to you. Make the poster board freely available to anyone wishing to join you. Accept donations from anyone inspired to give them and use the donations to purchase more poster board and markers. If you do this periodically (e.g. every Saturday), you and your group will become a known feature of entertainment. People will go out of their way to see you as word of your street theatre spreads. When inspired individuals come to talk with you about what you are doing, encourage them to do the same at some other location or to join you. Explain how you fund the poster board and the markers. Most of all, share with them the fact that you are having a wonderful time. Some of them will imitate you and through this process the meme will spread.



“The disorganized resistance” meme spreading in Harvard Square...

One note of caution is in order. From experience I can tell you that your activities will attract antibodies. Some will attempt to infiltrate your group, gather information about you and use it to harm you. Some will merely come to harass you. You must be cautious to not share any personal information. Do not give them your actual name. Do not tell them where you live or work. Always assume that some of the people approaching you with the appearance of friendliness are saboteurs and/or provocateurs. This does not mean you should be unfriendly. You will often never know which “supporters” are genuine and which are not. Friendliness is an important factor in spreading this meme. I am merely advising you not to share personal information. One can be friendly without divulging the details of one’s life.

If you suspect that you are being targeted (and you will know it in time), then find pretenses to photograph those around you. Save the photographs. Some day you may discover that someone that joined you is an infiltrator and having their picture will be a powerful weapon.

In addition to the “public mockery of authority” meme, memes centered on sex and nudity can be very powerful. This explains the great success of the “spelling peace messages with nude bodies” meme. Provided the participants do not get arrested, nothing is less expensive than taking off clothes. Use of the naked human body to convey a message is the ultimate form of “low budget” advertising and the prurient interests of the media are likely to fuel their assistance in spreading the meme through news coverage.

Other successful memes include invading stores, trashing their displays and disappearing before anyone can arrest the invaders; dumping fake carnage on the doorsteps of defense contractors and war profiteers; disrupting the events of the elite; flash protests to stop traffic; and so on. These acts get news coverage and that coverage spreads the meme. They can be accomplished by collective planning or by flash mobbing. Do these things only with those whom you trust. If your group is open to new members whose histories

and loyalties are unknown, then your events will be infiltrated and your exploits may end with arrest. Naturally, it makes sense to mask your identity if you choose to engage in legally questionable memes.



The author spreading memes in Harvard Square...

You are probably asking yourself how such acts can bring down the powers that be? This is a good question. However, I suggest that as these intentional acts of meme warfare become more common, meme warfare as a conscious act will become more common. The key to this form of reverse class war is the spread of the “meme warfare” meme itself. Short of violence, and we are trying to avoid violence, no one individual will bring down the hierarchy with his or her isolated act of meme warfare. If meme warfare becomes a standard tactic in returning fire against the ruling class, society will become less and less governable and the sense of empowerment amongst the masses will grow. It is this confidence and ability to affect change conjoined with the act becomes rebellion.

Meme warfare proves that power is largely psychological. Once this truth is realized and shared by the masses, the material wealth of the ruling elite and their mechanisms of control become less and less formidable. All power, ultimately, rests upon the psychological enslavement of the masses. When the masses realize this and realize how it is that they are controlled, they will be empowered to throw off their mental chains and rebel.

Conclusion

As you have seen in the preceding chapters, anyone with imagination can become a meme warrior. A memetic weapon depends only on its inspiration of human behavior to carry its payload. Such a weapon, when well designed and deployed with ingenuity, can affect mass social change. Each and every individual, armed only with an understanding of meme warfare, a creative impulse, and a will to act, is empowered with the means to undermine his or her oppressor.

All human behavior is fertile ground for meme warfare. If you are a writer, your talents as a writer can be employed to seed the public with your meme. If you are an artist, you can produce *pro bono* art and publish it online, encouraging others to replicate and display it. If you are not artistically talented, you can hold up a sign or use a can of spray paint to spread your meme. There is no limit on what you can do with a little imagination, dedication, and understanding of the human mind.

I wish you the best. The world is yours to change.