Twitter Thread by John Hayward

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Around the world, very much including the Western world, real power is measured by the ability to silence criticism.

The highest reaches of power are measured by the ability to force people to speak in politically-approved ways.

The ability to silence criticism is a signifier of power. It's how truly powerful groups and regimes recognize each other. If free people can challenge your ideals or mock you without fear, you aren't TRULY powerful, no matter how much authority you might nominally possess.

And if you can force people to speak, force them to use your preferred language, penalize them socially or legally for failing to signal their support for your agenda, then you've entered the winner's circle. Your government or movement has taken a seat at the highest table.

This is one of the reasons people with authoritarian or totalitarian inclinations are constantly screaming that opponents are trying to silence them, even when it's manifestly untrue. It's a means of signaling their contempt for the opposition, of diminishing its stature.

These people would cheerfully allow themselves to be silenced by a regime or movement they truly respected. They pretend to be victims of oppression as a means of signaling the illegitimacy of leaders they despise.

The growing authoritarian consensus across the "free" world is that a core of powerful leaders, parties, and ideological movements must be shielded against criticism in order for government and society to function properly.

The rest of speech can be more-or-less "free," as long as certain quarters of speech are tightly controlled. It's part of the "Great Reset", like reserving part of a computer's memory for the protected operating system. The OS of "free" nations must be an authoritarian core.

The core must not only wield vast compulsive power, but it must be protected INTELLECTUALLY, shielded against challenge or criticism. The designers of this authoritarian system are very well aware of the power of subversive thought. It's how THEY gained power a generation ago.

Various groups and ideologies are now jockeying to become part of the authoritarian core. They signal their candidacy by controlling speech through social pressure, with online swarms and cancel culture. It's how they claim a seat at the table of Great Resetters.

You can tell an ideological group has achieved REAL power, has become part of the authoritarian core, when its agenda becomes part of public school curricula. That's the height of power: moving beyond merely silencing critics and forcing people to say things.

Speech and thought control are vitally important because we retain the vestiges of democracy, even though a great deal of true power has been safely transferred to unelected bureaucracies that can even fight back effectively against renegade elected presidents.

The people can still turn against powerful groups and diminish them if they are allowed to criticize the leadership and agenda of those groups - or, Stalin forbid, make fun of them. Respect must become a learned behavior. It can be extracted by force, much like tax money.

If you force people to respect something - punish them for criticizing it, force them to mouth its pieties - they will eventually come to see it as sacred, as respectable, even if they quietly grumble disagreement to themselves. Critics begin to feel isolated and marginalized.

How do radicals and extremists gain real power, becoming part of the authoritarian core? By making everyone who disagrees feel like THEY are the fringe. You can trace the outlines of real power by asking: "Could I show disrespect for this and still be considered mainstream?" /end