

Theory of the Firmament

by stephen hastings-king

I admit that, on Twitter, I have been trying to annoy Glenn Greenwald so much that he blocks me. I carried out this project by way of witty interventions. But my number of followers is so small that I am less than an insect. It's like there's a plug-in that comes with the blue check that adjusts the font size of messages received to the sender's magnitude in the Twitter firmament, measured in followers. If there is such a thing, then my interventions are invisible and the project of getting blocked hopeless.

Another way---I wanted to get blocked because I was throwing food at Glenn Greenwald as he announced and then expounded on his business-model decision to go neofascist, hoping to use Tucker Orban's platform to tap into the ultra-right isolationist set and extend the reach of his personal brand in that way because, hey, a click's a click and neofascist dollars spend the same as anyone else's. But the food I threw never reached the gated community of Olympus from where he furiously types out his rage.

But I tried.

I know, I know---he's just another libertarian sociopath except with more dogs. It wasn't worth the bother.

But he says crazy shit and 1.3 million people follow him.

For example, Greenwald's recent line on "public health measures" assumes, without arguing for it---because it's ridiculous---a libertarian inability/refusal to acknowledge "society" or "the public." But he talks about public health measures anyway. Because he can't or won't acknowledge "the public" in "public health measures" when he talks about them anyway, he invariably heads in the direction:

"Public health measures are not public health measures."

Because, obviously, if the public does not exist then there's no "public health" to protect through various measures.

Nope.

There's only me, me, me & my choices.

So, we are told, "public health measures" aimed at mitigating a pandemic * * *during that pandemic* * * cannot be public health measures. They have to be something else. And, because he's the only one climbing out on this branch, Glenn Greenwald gets to say what that something else is:

Tyranny! Authoritarianism! A diabolical project hatched by liberals to get everyone to conform for its own sake because that's how they roll, liberals who suck and their shriveled and blackened liberal souls!

Other times, he assumes, without arguing for it---because it's ludicrous---that Science is a Platonic space in which everything everywhere is already known, a space with, presumably, a geography, a center and a periphery.

In the center are the most Enlightened of Scientists. Presumably they wear lab coats. On the periphery are the Lying Charlatans of Government. They wear uniforms, variously construed.

In the center are Individuals Freely Thinking and Choosing about matters Scientific, isolating problems and their solutions with a glance just because. On the Periphery, the Lying Charlatans of Government send garbled messages about things that shift and change.

The Lying Charlatans of Government are not spiritually advanced enough to access the Lucid Transparency of Everything that is available to Real, Enlightened Scientists. Like low-level courtiers everywhere, they are vain. They are vain and demand submission.

Libertarians love metaphysics and they love natural hierarchies. Glenn Greenwald's no different. But not every libertarian would hold to an image of Science that's like Plotinus rinsed in stupid.

This isn't to even start on the Litany of Conflations: of public-health measures with surveillance; of CDC with NSA and FBI; of people who think it'd be nice were the pandemic brought under control with liberals who suck and just want to control everybody else, who would put people who Dare Question into camps if they could...

It's all so relentlessly idiotic.

I mean, I get it. Every marketing firm that uses Facebook user engagement data to inform their pitch says the same thing: electronic media are noisy spaces; messaging is useless, nothing gets through; there's an inverse relation between number of data points a message includes and the duration of engagement (the more there are, the shorter the engagement). The only thing that can get through the noise are appeals to the emotions. Anger is an emotion. So be a troll: it can be a path to The Big Ka-ching.

I get it---but I fell for it anyway. Until I realized my insignificance in the Twitter firmament, and the futility of my project.

I write to pass the baton.

If you, out there, reading this, have more Twitter followers than I do then please, by all means, take up the project of annoying Glenn Greenwald so much that he blocks you.

Just remember to keep us little people posted.

Thank you.

