

## **Wikipedia: Our New Technological McCarthyism, Part 1**

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Today, the internet, often thought of as our world's "final frontier" for free thinkers and the flow and exchange of ideas and information, is seriously ill. It has been systemically infected by ideological viruses, memes of information intent on poisoning freedom of expression that we take for granted every time we use Google or visit Facebook, Youtube and now the online encyclopedia Wikipedia. Censorship is not limited to the governments' attempts to silence dissent. Yet when it succeeds, society is greatly hindered because people no longer have easy access to the whole truth. Censorship is one of the most effective ways to lessen people's freedoms and numb the faculties for critical thought. And because the media, and having access to news and a wide variety of interpretations and opinions is at our finger tips, it has become a critical part of our daily lives.

A censored society is an uneducated society. It destroys progress and can even destroy careers, reputations and personal lives. Over the years we have witnessed a slow and emerging awakening to the falsehoods behind government and corporate interests. The internet and its technologies have been largely responsible for this gradual awakening, evidenced by the growing distrust and suspicion towards an oligarchy wishing to control what and what we cannot view and read. This suspicion is healthy even if it means that many find themselves increasingly confused. Yet this sense of freedom, the allowance to be dubious about fake news and manicured knowledge being fed to us is fragile, and even in peril.

An issue grossly ignored is that with all the new technology and enormous advertising campaigns on Google, Facebook and YouTube, the two younger generations rely upon social media daily. Rarely do they consider the level and depth that propaganda holds over their lives. During the Boomer generation through the 1960s and 1970s, support

for free speech and holding a healthy skepticism towards federal agencies such as the CIA and Pentagon, and most importantly against mainstream media, strengthened critical thought. Today's generation gives no thought towards the content in agreements they accept to use social media platforms. For example, recently it was announced that Yahoo's "new" system will require access to information about your bank account and credit card purchases to sell to third parties. Consequently, virtually nothing in our lives will be private. Sadly, there is no sense of betrayal. No sense of apprehension and fear, and no efforts to protest these actions. To the contrary, people will simply accept Youtube's terms blindly.

In our era of fake news, from all sides of the political spectrum, we are rapidly sacrificing our common sense and reason to illusions and gut emotional reactions. Our compromised and biased mainstream media is now utterly beholden to party storylines. Complex national and global issues are reduced to simplistic and infantile images for mass consumption. The recent revelations about Facebook's misappropriation of its users' personal information should be a trumpet blast, a wakeup call to action. Tens of millions have been naively duped into the easy and free access to social media and the myth of untethered free expression promised by Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, Medium and other internet platforms. Although Silicon Valley's technological capacity for global surveillance and the censorship has long been a worrisome problem on the internet, Trump's handling of fake news as the centerpiece of his campaign and presidency granted Facebook, Google and more recently Wikipedia a green light to increase censorship of dissenting and alternative news, opinions and even scientific facts. Recently Youtube announced it will flag videos it believes to communicate falsehoods and add links to Wikipedia.[1] Yet Wikipedia, as this series will put forth, is by no means a reliable resource for objective intelligence and knowledge, which is reason enough for university's to flag it as a capricious source for responsible research.

This should raise serious concerns. Wikipedia is another internet behemoth, and like the other tech giants it is horribly compromised by biases and preferential treatment to private interest groups and extremist ideologies. Wikipedia's ideological biases and favoritism to communities hiring and recruiting armies of internet trolls has been responsible for ruining the reputations and tainting the careers of numerous people,

notably health professionals and academics who fail to live, teach and practice in alignment with Wikipedia's very narrow scientific criteria of what is deemed as legitimate proven facts. When a belief system becomes a dogma, an ideological doctrine, debate and conversation shut down. Unpopular views on controversial subjects are jeopardized. Or even popular, common sense views are silence. Only a single message is propagandized and opposing positions that have their own body of commendable evidence are blacked out or censored. Very early on, Wikimedia Foundation, the parent organization behind Wikipedia has become possessed by ideology and increasingly manipulates its control over content in specific subjects, discussed below, in a cult-like manner. In short, it is riddled with identity policies.

Sophisticated technological algorithms for internet surveillance, utilized to their full extent by the large internet giants, have created what the father of virtual reality, Jaron Lanier, argues is a "behavior modification empire." Facebook, for example, should no longer be regarded as social media.[2] And Silicon Valley, private corporations, regressive social movements, and the federal and private intelligence agencies are all too eager to take full advantage of this internet crisis. The tech companies have essentially shut down the public commons that once upon a time promised a cyber utopia, a free and unencumbered Internet that would gather people globally together. Sadly in its place has sprung up a shadow techno-regime dominated by the Internet's ruling corporate regime, billionaires all too willing to sell their acquired information for enormous client fees. In return, illusions of a functioning democracy, Huxley's soma, are spoon-fed to the masses seduced by the theater of images flashed across our monitors and mobile screens rather than the darker underpinnings behind this total charade. Erringly we believe we are completely free to express ourselves, share opinions, and find new friends with common values and to organize together. Yet how many people actually knew that every bit of information we share on Facebook with family and friends, groups and organizations and environmental, political and social activist causes would be gathered to generate profiles about our behaviors and then in turn reduce our personal profiles into commodities to be used by the private and federal elites. The scandal between the collaboration between Facebook and Cambridge Analytica, the latter founded by right wing ideologues Robert Mercer and Steven Bannon, has shown us the serious threats to personal freedom when every message, file and photo we've ever sent or been sent, when every personal contact on our mobile phones, and every

audio message has been hoarded for the benefit of third parties, the least dangerous being advertisers.

Likewise Google traces everywhere we have been or traveled and knows exactly where we are on the map in real time. As long as your mobile phone is in your possession, Google can always find you. You can even access a log and map of everywhere you have been for the past year, including how long it took you to get from home to visit grandma for the holiday. Google gathers every piece of data on our computers and phones, including our search and browsing histories. Even though you delete information or may happen to lose data, it remains in Google's memory vaults. And this is not done secretly. Google is completely transparent about its intrusion into our private lives and anyone can request and receive a file of everything the megacorporation has collected about us. One individual, Dylan Curran, accessed and downloaded his personal Google file; it was 5.5 gigabytes, roughly equivalent to 3 million average sized Word documents. What Google actually does with this massive data collection is another matter.[3]

In effect, the subconscious script behind Facebook, Google and other multinational internet media is designed to convert our lives into commodities, and then convert commodities into dead money. Lanier would consider this to be a severe threat to our species. "We cannot have a society," Lanier said during a TED talk, "if two people wish to communicate with each other and the only way it can happen is if it is financed by a third party who wishes to manipulate them." [4]

But commodifying our personal lives to sell to advertisers is far more innocent than other insidious practices that target people for corporate, financial, national security and political benefit. We can be sure that Uncle Sam's official spooks have immediate access to all our personal information. In 2011, Stratfor, a private intelligence firm in Austin was infiltrated by the hacker group Anonymous. Stratfor is one of the largest private intelligence and surveillance contractors for the National Security Agency and other federal intelligence agencies. The hack acquired addresses, credit card information, bank accounts and passwords on hundreds of thousands of citizens. Knowing enough about people is often the single most important weapon to be used

against them. That is what made the Inquisition so successful in spreading fear over medieval Spain and Italy to keep citizens weak and passive. And all of this is available to NSA to keep a vigilant eye on the American public.

In 1954, the late great French sociologist, philosopher and Christian anarchist Jacques Ellul foresaw that every form of technology would end up becoming a form of control, power and a means to achieve efficiency. The technological drive to gather more and more personal information on citizens, whether by Facebook and Google, and for the benefit of federal agencies, political parties and private corporations, which reward and shower favors upon these firms, is itself an attempt to manipulate the public's uncertainty and confusion.[5]

Most criticism is rightly directed against Google and Facebook. Nevertheless Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia project of the MediaWiki Foundation headquartered in San Francisco, remains relatively unscathed. Undeservingly it has managed to remain marginal from the light of public scrutiny. Rather than participating in intelligence gathering into private citizens' lives, it has become the Internet's monolithic gatekeeper, and controller, of free encyclopedic knowledge. Although it has its critics, often those who have experienced Wikipedia's culture of victimization and abuse, the controversies surrounding Wikipedia are given no attention by mainstream media. Acting freely from third party advertising, draped in the security of its not-for-profit status, it has become an invaluable resource in the lives of hundreds of millions of people. Minimal efforts are made to investigate whether Wikipedia too has hidden agendas that adversely affect the public; or whether the Foundation is actively participating in stealth censorship. We know this to be a fact from firsthand experience. Do a Google search on any subject or notable person and Wikipedia will often be the first site to pop up in your browser. It describes itself as a free-content encyclopedia and uses a platform that portends to be open for editing content. This has been one of the encyclopedia's admirable appeals as well as its curse. However, there is undeniable evidence that the site has injured the lives and careers of many innocent people, especially in the field of medicine and healthcare, and people who seek truths outside the confines of corporate science's corridors and a quasi-Libertarian Objectivist universe.

The sheer size of the encyclopedia is imposing. It is unquestionably the single largest juggernaut for online information. According to statistics compiled by DMR, a digital marketing collection firm, Wikipedia hosts over 5.5 million articles and adds 600 new articles daily. Eighteen billion pages are viewed weekly, and there are over 137,000 active writers and editors composing and editing articles in 280 languages, 13% in English. On the other hand the Foundation itself only employs about 300 people. It is also the first to appear in 99% of internet searches.[6] Supposedly, Wikipedia has NO employed editors. Content and edits are performed exclusively by volunteers. This does not mean that editors are not being paid by other third parties, including on the behalf of huge multinational corporations, advocacy groups, think tanks, PR firms and even governments, including their intelligence agencies and militaries.

In 2009, Virgil Griffith, a 24 year old researcher at the Santa Fe Institute, one of the world's preeminent progressive think tanks for systems theory, created a program called the WikiScanner, which "tracks computers used to make changes and edits to Wikipedia entries." Griffith was inspired to design the scanner after he learned about US Congressional legislators "whitewashing" the content on their Wikipedia biographies. In 2014, the Foundation banned all computers within the US Congress from editing privileges.[7] In 2015, the Daily Kos went undercover into Wikipedia's editing labyrinths and caught "hired literary whores" working for the Koch Brothers to airbrush content that made Charlie and David Koch look bad to readers. Four years earlier Wikipedia banned Koch Industries for its unethical use of "sock puppets" (trolls and malcontents who use false online identities to promote their opinions). Koch operatives were also responsible for writing hit pieces on the site against their critics such as ThinkProgress and a journalist for the *New Yorker* who had published investigations into Koch's corruption.[8]

Griffith's Wikiscanner identified CIA and FBI computers editing Wikipedia content, including the doctoring of facts concerning the US invasion of Iraq, such as casualty numbers, and the human rights crimes committed at Guantanamo prison. He also identified computers at numerous organizations and private corporations engaged in editing activities. Senior Wikipedia editors, who have succeeded in making thousands of edits and therefore understand the game's rules, have turned their experiences into

consulting businesses for paying clients. Although Wikipedia's co-founder Jimmy Wales has strongly forbidden this activity, it is still widespread because the Foundation has lost control over the huge army of known, anonymous editors, trolls, sock puppets and even algorithmic bots who operate independently. This is further evidence of how chaotic Wikipedia has become, and one among other reasons why a growing number of colleges and universities forbid students from citing Wikipedia articles as reliable sources in their course assignments.

On the other hand, Wikipedia has also become a source for widespread disinformation, especially on current events and controversial health, social and political issues. To the encyclopedia's detriment, the Foundation has had a history of providing a platform for select independent factions to propagandize dogmatic and fundamentalist beliefs. Frankly, it is utterly foolish to assume that everything on Wikipedia is honest and factual. One man who rose through the editorial ranks to become a Wikipedia site administrator, claimed to be a tenured religion professor with a doctorate in theology. Later, it was discovered he was a high school dropout. Likewise, many Skeptic trolls control the Wiki pages about alternative medicine, natural health and the paranormal. [9] Most have no medical background nor experience in healthcare. In a private conversation with one Wikipedia editor who has gone head-to-head with Skeptic trolls to correct falsehoods and abusive language in the Wiki entries for the New Age celebrity Deepak Chopra and biologist Rupert Sheldrake, Rome Viharo jokingly said most of these trolls are tech geeks who are likely mentally unstable and on psychiatric medications. [10]

As we have discovered, behind the scenes and hidden from the public's view, Wikipedia is a vipers' pit. Its editorial culture is plagued with "wiki wars," conflicts between antagonistic groups fighting for control over content. Perhaps this would be fine if the Foundation remained an innocent bystander, allowing editors to battle out the facts and falsehoods based upon Wikipedia's own consensus guidelines to rule what is reliable, objective information. Unfortunately, that is not the case. And because Wales is fully aware of these serious problems, he and his Foundation are complicit for allowing extremist parties to run rampant and freely in the editorial community. A consequence is that the MediaWiki Foundation has become increasingly authoritarian in order to

cover up its internal chaos. A former Wikipedia executive told Natural News that Wales believes in "hardcore atheism, a dedication to scientism, and a deep disdain for humanity." [11] All who have failed to clean up the massive falsehoods and venomous text on their personal Wiki pages can attest to the Foundation's culture of deception and censorship that riddles the encyclopedia.

In his blog "Wikipedia We Have a Problem" Viharo describes the immensity of the problem:

"There is a disturbing pattern of behaviors evolving across Wikipedia – a number of skeptic activists on Wikipedia believe that only they are qualified to edit a large swath of topics and biographies on Wikipedia, and they seek to purge other editors from those articles or Wikipedia itself. Skeptic activists take this very seriously and treat Wikipedia like a battleground for their activism, where online harassment, slander, bullying, character assassination, and public shaming are all used as tactics to control editing permissions on the world's largest repository of knowledge." [12]

We are also gradually discovering that Wikipedia itself has been supporting certain creeds, networks of private organizations and corporate interests, and political support groups that enforce dangerous ideologies while diligently corroborating with chosen third parties to silence and/or censor critics and opposition. This is certainly in direct violation with Wikipedia's mission and Wales' consistent statements that he opposes censorship and surveillance. For example, societies and organizations identified with the rational Skeptic and scientific materialist movements are very prominent and granted free editorial reign on Wikipedia. Their technical sophistication has hijacked large amounts of the encyclopedia's content and manipulated it to disseminate their rationalist and reductionist doctrines. Very valid scientific information concerning medicine and health are jeopardized, deleted and ignored. The site embraces the conventional pharmaceutical, drug-based paradigm. Complementary and natural medical disciplines, treatments and alternative doctors and practitioners are regularly denounced and castigated. On the other hand, Sceptics' biographies and organizations' own Wikipedia entries are without fault and consistently full of praise. Editors who



attempt to add factual and referenced evidence, which may taint Skepticism's shining image, are immediately blocked or edits are quickly removed. Many editors who try to correct these pages are censored and/or banned from editing pages--as in our own case--although they may have years or even decades of experience and expertise on a given subject.

In this series we will focus attention upon one especially pernicious ideological network of individuals and organizations that has made enormous and successful strides in hijacking Wikipedia's editorial platform. There is no single title that adequately gathers them under a single umbrella; however they all share a similar philosophy that embraces rational science-based Skepticism. Small-s skepticism itself is a healthy exercise for discerning truths and falsehoods. Wikipedia would fare far better if it practiced healthy skepticism towards its own editorial allies. However in this article we capitalize Skepticism to refer to an actual movement of independent individuals and groups, including one of Skepticism's subsets, Science-Based Medicine (SBM), which share a mutual belief system and engage in internet terrorism based upon the principles of behavior modification, common to cults.

Modern Skepticism is a continuation of earlier Scientism founded by the early naturalists who declared that the only thing that exists is the natural world and everything else is unfounded, and therefore illusory and to be shunned. It follows the old tired adage that "I will only believe in what I can see, smell, taste, touch or hear." In short, Scientism, in Swedish philosopher Mikael Stenmark's words, is based upon the epistemic principle "there is nothing outside the domain of science, nor is there any area of human life to which science cannot successfully be applied." [13] Skepticism, purports to be rational yet simultaneously is incapable of ascertaining other forms of non-scientific truth, such as ethical and moral, metaphysical, aesthetic truths. Although the scientific method is incapable of ascertaining or disproving other truths, nevertheless they too follow reason and logic, often every bit as rigorous as Skepticism's reductionist determinism.

For example, it may not be the case that science can yet accurately comprehend

whether or not homeopathy is effective. But for tens of millions of people around the planet homeopathy has treated many serious medical conditions. For over 200 years after Samuel Hahnemann founded homeopathic medicine, countless numbers of people witnessed illnesses and symptoms disappear and they were healed. Skeptics have absolutely no proof that homeopathy's positive effects are due to the placebo-effect alone, which is their only explanation to account for homeopathy's successes. Yet for all Skeptics, homeopathy is nothing but quackery. And as we will describe later, Wikipedia agrees with them. The Skeptics' only defense is "plausibility"; that is, in the absence of clinical research, which only they are willing to accept, rely instead on the flawed faculty of reason and logic to decide whether homeopathy is "plausible" and persuasive or not. This is the same rationale voiced by one of SBM's leading inspirations, Dr. Stephen Barrett, founder of Quackwatch. When asked during an interview why he only disparaged alternative medicine and does not critique modern conventional medicine, Barrett noted that he lacks sufficient expertise in the medical field. Openly Barrett confesses that his efforts to debunk alternative medicine is solely based on his personal opinion as to whether alternative modalities are plausible. In the same way, SBM-Skeptics' major proponents, including physicians Steven Novella at Yale, oncology surgeon David Gorski at Wake Forest, full time SBM militant Dr. Harriet Hall, Kimball Atwood and the nation's leading promoter of vaccines Dr. Paul Offit lack experiential knowledge about alternative medical modalities and nutrition. Rather than being truly scientific, they hypocritically hide behind the irrational methodology of faux notions of validity.

Categorically, Skepticism espouses either atheistic or agnostic beliefs; however all the celebrity Skeptics admire Richard Dawkins, the British evolutionary biologist who is recognized as the father of the New Atheism. Dawkins' endless mission to publicly preach an intolerant view of atheism has made him deserving of an international award for having offended more human beings than anyone in recent history.

The Center for Inquiry (CFI), the umbrella organization that serves as the mother chapel for the Skeptic movement, fully embraces Dawkins' atheistic Scientism. In 2016, the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science merged with CFI. Its stated mission is to "foster a secular society based upon reason, science, freedom of inquiry and

humanist values." [14] Laudable words, but the Center fails horribly to tolerate, let alone respect, the freedom of others to their beliefs and the freedom to choose a medical intervention of their choice. Any discipline of inquiry that is performed outside the Center's narrow interpretation of science is condemned as heresy, exposed and publicly maligned. Everything that deals with religion and spirituality, the paranormal, unexplained phenomena, and alternative and natural medical modalities are accused of con-artistry. Other leading major Skeptic groups are the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, the Council of Secular Humanism, the James Randi Educational Foundation and the SBM-related Commission for Scientific Medicine and Mental Health.

The latter publishes the *Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine*, founded by Skeptics at Stanford University and the Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. The publication makes the narcissistic claim of being the only journal that properly analyses alternative medical claims. However, on at least three separate occasions, this highly biased, one-sided interpretation of medicine failed to be recognized by the National Library of Medicine for inclusion into the National Institutes of Health's Medline/PubMed registry of reliable medical and healthcare publications, the world's largest source for peer-reviewed medical literature. Wikipedia on the other hand has permitted the journal the status of being referenced as a legitimate and reliable source for criticisms against alternative medicine.

During a TED talk shortly after 9/11, Dawkins made his plea for "militant atheism." [15] Although he was specifically calling for an unapologetic and disrespectful rationalist crusade against religion, his fundamental premise has been embraced throughout the Skeptic movement in its efforts to silence, ridicule and demonize all who advocate alternative medicine and question conventional pharmaceutical drugs, vaccination and industrial and genetically modified foods, pesticides, the junk food industry, etc. Medical treatments that fall outside its pharmaceutical paradigm--chiropractic medicine, homeopathy, naturopathy, energy healing, etc.--are categorically quackery and fraud.

For the most zealous Skeptics, scientific "truths", guided solely by "reason" (which

Skeptics are unable to adequately define), is the only religion humanity should follow. It identifies itself as an intelligentsia and praises its superiority as a humanoid subspecies above anyone who questions or challenges their faith in scientific reductionism. In his book *When Atheism Becomes Religion*, Pulitzer Prize journalist Chris Hedges presents the argument that this extreme mindset, cloaked in the god of reason and science alone, is today's "new fundamentalism." Because science is solely concerned with discovering facts about our material existence, Skepticism is neutral towards universal human values and ethics aside from the cold values that science offers.

Commenting on Scientism's determinist ideology, Robert Wuthnow, chair of Princeton's sociology department, writes, "Scientists are drunk on hubris, in it for the money or their own glory, and sadly incapable of any humility." [16] Anyone reading the blogs and articles composed by the medical doctors leading the Science Based Medicine movement, will quickly observe the pretentious conceit noted by Wuthnow. But SBM propaganda goes beyond the confines of rationalist critiques of alternative medicine's claims. They express a contemptuous disdain, and vile hatred, towards practitioners and advocates of the alternative medical paradigm and anyone who questions the conventional medical establishment.

During a lecture in 1959, British chemist and novelist C.P. Snow challenged our civilization's move towards an over-reliance upon scientific rationality as a means for solving world problems. Snow explained how this failure, which science and technology in isolation will continue to experience repeatedly, is due to scientific institutions having removed themselves from the humanities, which otherwise provide human value with moral guidance. [17] The consequence is that science will become increasingly technological, and this may lead to dire futures, including the rise of new postmodern programs of eugenics and genocide. Scientism's hubris is grounded in the inflated belief that history is on its side. For this reason it becomes intolerant and impatient with other disciplines that also claim to hold universal values. Consequently, Snow warned that science is racing to sequester itself from the most precious elements that make us human. Science then becomes amoral. Likewise, the entire Skepticism movement is morally bankrupt, incapable of piercing through its nearsighted lens.

Science writer John Horgan further sheds light on the darker underpinnings and irrationality of Skepticism, including a few of the leading voices within the SBM cult. In his recommended article published in *Scientific American*, "Dear Skeptics, Bash Homeopathy and Big Foot Less, Mammograms and War More," Horgan targets a crucial failure in popular Skepticism today. He writes, "I'm a science journalist. I don't celebrate science, I criticize it, because science needs critics more than cheerleaders. I point out gaps between scientific hype and reality. That keeps me busy, because as you know, most peer-reviewed scientific claims are wrong." The Skeptics and their scientism have "become tribal," notes Horgan. "They pat each other on the back and tell each other how smart they are compared to those outside the tribe. But belonging to a tribe often makes you dumber." [18]

Dumb indeed. Worse, exceedingly dangerous. Wikipedia's Skeptics, who cling upon the words of SBM's gurus, is a curious mix of Orwellian fascism and a quirky technological totalitarianism, which Aldous Huxley warned about in his 1958 follow-up to *Brave New World*. A world of scientific McCarthyism is the utopia they pray to. But conventional definitions of fascism and totalitarianism don't accurately apply. Instead, Skepticism is the darker side of Liberalism, with noticeable parallels to Ayn Rand's Objectivist and autocratic absolutism. These are the Liberals who find no fault in bombing Muslim nations back to the pre-Islamic sands of Arabia, criminalize faith healing as physical abuse, and stamp all currency with "In Science We Trust."

Jimmy Wales is an avowed disciple of Ayn Rand's Objectivist religion. *The Economist* reports that Wales remarked that Rand's philosophy "colours everything I do and think." [19] Rand, a methamphetamine addict and admirer of the 1927 sadistic serial killer William Edward Hickman, modeled a few of her novel's sociopathic heroes after Hickman, including the *Fountainhead's* champion Howard Roark. [20] Wales' philosophy for Wikipedia is thoroughly Rand's Objectivism functioning in the cyber spheres of the internet, decentralized anarchy with the blind belief that somehow truth and order will prevail.

Yet it is important to make one observation clear: SBM is perhaps today's greatest

threat to the future physical and mental health of the nation and well-being of Americans. It is solely an ideological public relations campaign to promulgate a totalitarian dogma with McCarthyian interrogations that alternative medical modalities are perilous to public health and therefore should be avoided and preferably banned. It doesn't conduct nor fund clinical research. Families who reject vaccinating their children, according to SBM physicians, ought to be charged with child abuse and have their children placed into the care of the State to lead miserable lives of psychological degeneration and abuse in foster care homes and institutions. In short, SBM is the harbinger of medical McCarthyism, and as we will see, the SBM movement and its allies in the Skeptic organizations are succeeding in their mission through their collaboration and support from Wikipedia.

Another serious threat our nation faces from SBM is that the movement is systemically infected with what we call the "gene meme." In his *Scientific American* article, Horgan calls it "Gene-Whiz Science." He writes, "Over the past several decades, geneticists have announced the discovery of "genes for" virtually every trait or disorder. We've had the God gene, gay gene, alcoholism gene, warrior gene, liberal gene, intelligence gene, schizophrenia gene, and on and on. None of these linkages of single genes to complex traits or disorders has been confirmed. None! But gene-whiz claims keep coming." [21] David Gorski, Paul Offit and other SBM gurus are the extreme champions of Gene-Whiz Science; yet simultaneously they remain petrified of the potential conclusions to be drawn from environmental epigenetic research that challenges the scientific credibility of genetic determinism. For example, Paul Offit at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the co-developer of the first rotavirus vaccine, is a highly respectable skill for the vaccine industry, notably Merck, who once held a seat on the vaccination advisory council at the Centers for Disease Control. He is the nation's leading apostle of junk-vaccine science, having stated in his institution's *Parents Pack Newsletter* that infants' immune systems can safely receive 100,000 vaccinations. [22] Yet Offit is also a darling of Skepticism's extremists. He is adamant that autism is genetic, inherited, and has no association whatsoever with vaccines. While we agree that many autism cases involve mutated genes, categorically blaming parental inheritance is questionable since this denies epigenetic evidence. In fact, a University of Montreal review of the 100-plus genes now identified with autism, found that the majority of these "autism genes" were de novo genes, fetal polymorphisms occurring in the womb and therefore likely

associated with an external environmental trigger, including toxic chemicals such as aluminum and mercury ingredients in vaccines, that may pass the placental barrier in the pregnant mother.[23]

A second threat to national health is Wikipedia's unguarded open editing platforms. It is irrefutable that the Foundation's tight relationship with militant Skepticism has given license to trolls and sock puppets to dominate the flow of information about disease prevention and treatment. By hijacking these platforms, Skeptics have risen through the encyclopedia's editorial ranks to grasp greater administrative authority to censor opposing voices. On the other hand, this is completely transparent. Wales and his Foundation make no apologies for Skepticism's sway and supervision of data and information. It is all visible. Yet this also raises a very serious ethical question. Based upon Wales's own personal sentiments, philosophy and deep-seated prejudices is Wikipedia also part of the "behavior modification empire" Jaron Lanier has warned us about? In the following articles in this series, it will become more certain that it is.

## NOTES

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