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date: Apr 25, 2023, 9:12 AM

subject: Why Robert Malone didn’t make up the term 'mass formation psychosis'

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|  |  | [**Who is Robert Malone**](https://substack.com/redirect/4e135527-7ee4-45df-abc7-6518c8ba1f84?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg)**cross-posted a post from**[**Mattias Desmet**](https://substack.com/redirect/57437ab2-a091-43da-9828-2313f3cbd8f4?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) |

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|  |  | **Robert W Malone MD, MS**Apr 25 · Who is Robert Malone |

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| My friend and colleague Professor Dr. Mattias Desmet is one of those rare deep thinkers who ponder many great mysteries of the universe - such as Truth, and the nature of the psychology of individuals, groups, society and transcendent spiritual/religious truths.Anyone who claims to fully understand Mattias his arguments and insights has not spent time discussing these matters with him. He is fully aware of how fluid the concept of "Truth" is, and touches a bit on this in this article. He is a deep thinker who has spent his life pondering the wisdom and philosophy of both the classical sages and modern philosophers of group psychology.In this article, he provides yet another carefully considered reply to his (and my) many detractors. I hope you enjoy reading, and will consider a follow |

[**Why Robert Malone didn’t make up the term “mass formation psychosis”**](https://substack.com/app-link/post?publication_id=949937&post_id=116958914&utm_source=cross-post&isFreemail=false&utm_campaign=583200&token=eyJ1c2VyX2lkIjoyMjk3ODczNiwicG9zdF9pZCI6MTE2OTU4OTE0LCJpYXQiOjE2ODI0MjgzMjgsImV4cCI6MTY4NTAyMDMyOCwiaXNzIjoicHViLTk0OTkzNyIsInN1YiI6InBvc3QtcmVhY3Rpb24ifQ.kLuFIoPsERsNPBLTEZfJDDelAPsmcUj3DMn4cPVQwVI)Just as little as I made up the term “mass formation”

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| [Author] [MATTIAS DESMET](https://substack.com/redirect/476d4395-83ef-4642-bcee-6529a3ca256a?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) |

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It is a remarkable phenomenon: **the more it becomes clear that the mainstream narrative about the coronavirus was wrong, the more vehemently voices are attacked that from the beginning warned it was wrong.** One of these people is [**Robert W Malone MD, MS**](https://open.substack.com/users/49176289-robert-w-malone-md-ms?utm_source=mentions), someone who, in my humble opinion, is one of the most reasonable and agile critical voices worldwide. Calm and precise in his wording, crystal clear in his line of argumentation, charismatic in his appearance and tone of voice, Robert has everything to attract people’s attention and make them consider new perspectives. And that’s exactly what makes him dangerous to some people and why he’s envied by others.I know Robert quite well by now. I met him several times abroad, welcomed him at my home in Belgium, stayed at his place in Virginia. **To those attacking Robert, I want to say:** you cannot know Robert if you haven’t seen him feed his horses on his ranch that he built with his own hands, together with his lovely wife Jill, his inseparable companion on his intellectual journey.Thanks for reading Mattias Desmet! Subscribe for free to receive new posts and support my work.[**Subscribed**](https://substack.com/redirect/2/eyJlIjoiaHR0cHM6Ly9yd21hbG9uZW1kLnN1YnN0YWNrLmNvbS9hY2NvdW50IiwicCI6MTE3MTY5OTE4LCJzIjo1ODMyMDAsImYiOmZhbHNlLCJ1IjoyMjk3ODczNiwiaWF0IjoxNjgyNDI4MzI4LCJleHAiOjE2ODUwMjAzMjgsImlzcyI6InB1Yi0wIiwic3ViIjoibGluay1yZWRpcmVjdCJ9.GOpAtootQ2iFH-LkmlHiSLP2K-ZzxSLQJjcU4dIwbEs)During the coronavirus crisis as well as now, the attacks on Robert come from different directions. **One criticism directed at him addresses his use of the term “mass formation psychosis”, a term referring to a theory that was articulated by myself in public space.** I am not talking about one article criticizing Robert – I am talking about tens of articles (see for instance [1,](https://substack.com/redirect/38f0ec99-c642-4ede-9c27-2a5fd42d74dd?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) [2](https://substack.com/redirect/d9962fa2-eae9-4179-ab7d-fc5ff028beae?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg), [3,](https://substack.com/redirect/9ad940ff-58ca-426f-bd4f-d435fdc87cad?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) [4](https://substack.com/redirect/ef72fdc5-32d1-40c8-8dd9-17b15937065b?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg), [5](https://substack.com/redirect/bb4be332-6a8c-4b1e-8511-ead2e68e959c?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg), [6](https://substack.com/redirect/fe933f8c-450a-481b-b2e2-2fa41198eb24?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg), [7,](https://substack.com/redirect/a401d491-4f6a-4bdf-86a4-62f0f667fb29?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) [8](https://substack.com/redirect/b832c886-fe17-4684-bf25-2b388c822e43?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg), and so forth).The dust of the coronavirus crisis is starting to settle a little bit now, but there is still much ado about the theory of mass formation. I applied it to the social dynamics during that crisis but it equally applies to the social dynamics stirred up by climate discourse and [by] the woke movement. As such it still leads to heated debates on social media and elsewhere.Somewhere **back in 2020**, I started to articulate this theory in some Belgian and Dutch newspapers and podcasts. In a nutshell: **I suggested that** during the coronavirus crisis, society was in the grip of a kind of group formation that makes people fanatically believe in **a narrative which from a rational point of view is absurd and which makes them radically intolerant for each and everyone who doesn’t go along with the narrative. Many people recognized the phenomenon I described, saying that they finally understood why their fellow human beings started to behave in such a strange way, and consequently, the theory spread around the world.****Some didn’t like that.** Fact checkers around the world launched furious attacks at those whom they held responsible for the dissemination of that theory. For the sin of describing my thinking, Dr. Robert Malone became a primary target of those attacks. During [a podcast at *The Joe Rogan Experience*](https://substack.com/redirect/165f4720-3c81-4bf6-a40f-afb994710437?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) in late December 2021, Dr. Malone presented a concise summary of my theory, which he referred to as a theory on “mass formation psychosis”. Many people tried to do so before him, but none did it in such an accurate and evocative way as he did. **The podcast broke the internet.** For days in a row, it was the most searched for term on Twitter. All of a sudden “mass formation psychosis” was an established concept in public discourse.**Fact checkers** from all continents sounded the alarm bell, claiming that Robert Malone entirely made up the term “mass formation psychosis”. This criticism was absurd in at least two respects. 1. First, if we are literally talking about the term “mass formation psychosis”, it is clear that Robert didn’t make it up. Robert watched some podcasts with me (more in particular, those with [Aubrey Marcus](https://substack.com/redirect/72c65f6d-ce24-480a-904b-7e156c7a0cfe?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) and [Chris Martenson](https://substack.com/redirect/36aa42a5-e128-47d6-9d55-e062d183dedf?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg)) that used the term in the title and/or in the description of the content. As Robert mentioned later on during a conversation with me, he picked up the term there, supposing that I myself used this terminology. When I explained I didn’t [create this terminology] because I think it’s counterproductive from a pragmatic, intellectual and ethical perspective to use a psychiatric term like “psychosis” to describe social phenomena, **Robert immediately agreed and has since used the term “mass formation” instead.**
2. Second, beyond the mere use of the term, the academic legitimacy of the entire theory was questioned.

Professor Nassir Ghaemi, one of the attendees of a meeting of the Karl Jaspers Society discussing my book [*The Psychology of Totalitarianism*](https://substack.com/redirect/b858aa26-db86-442c-9025-7a6174f85845?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg), even went so far as to say that the term mass formation had never been used before in the history of mankind. He believed I entirely made it up and that there is no academic basis for it whatsoever. A few months ago I wrote [a substack essay](https://substack.com/redirect/f30bc3b2-955c-4b78-bfda-aeba6b721359?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) in which I responded to this criticism (among other things) and presented a list of publications by prominent scholars that used the term mass formation before I rearticulated it during the coronavirus crisis. I quote from this essay:*These are the (harsh) words in which Professor Ghaemi posits this bold statement:**“And by the way, one more big picture point I forgot to make: the concept “mass formation” has never existed in human history”. … This is perhaps the most bizarre criticism of Ghaemi. Let us first briefly consider the use of the term itself. Is it true that the term has never existed in the history of mankind? In German, the term is* ***“Massenbildung”****, in Dutch* ***“mass formation”****, in English usually* ***“crowd formation”, but sometimes also “mass formation”****. Below is a selection of the undoubtedly much wider number of examples of the occurrence of the term “mass formation”, whether it is translated into English as “crowd formation” or “mass formation”:** *The word “mass formation” appears on the back cover of the Dutch translation of Elias Canetti’s book Masse und macht (Massa en Macht, 1960) and the term is used twice in the text of the book. In the English edition, the word is translated as “crowd formation”.*
* *In Freud's text Massenpsychologie und ich-analyse (1921), the term “Massenbildung” is used nineteen times. In the Dutch edition, it is translated as “mass formation” and in the English edition, it is translated as “crowd formation”.*
* *Salvador Giner uses the term “mass formation” in his book Mass Society (1976).*
* *The Dutch edition of Kurt Baschwitz’ book on the history of mass psychology Denkend mensch en menigte (1940) frequently cites the term “mass formation”.*
* *The Dutch edition of Paul Reiwald’s book Vom Geist der Massen (De geest der massa (1951)) mentions the term “mass formation” around forty-six (!) times.*
* *And so on…*

*Even if, in a moment of extreme benevolence towards Professor Ghaemi, we were to assume that he specifically means the term “mass formation” and not the term “crowd formation”, his statement that the term does not occur would therefore still be incorrect. And what is certainly incorrect is the claim that there is no conceptual basis for the phenomenon of mass formation. It hardly needs to be said that* ***Professor Ghaemi gets carried away here.*** *Is there really anyone who doubts that conceptual research has been done on the phenomenon of mass formation? The criticism is so blatantly absurd that it is almost equally absurd to respond to it. Purely as a sign of goodwill, I will do it anyway, with special thanks to Yuri Landman, who has helped to give an overview of the literature both on social media and in private communication:**The scientific study of mass formation started sometime in the nineteenth century, with the work of Gabriel Tarde*(*Laws of Imitation*, *1890*)*and Scipio Sighele*(*The Criminal Crowd and Other Writings on Mass Psychology*, *1892*).*Gustave Le Bon famously elaborated on this work in 1895 with “La psychology des foules”* (*The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind). Sigmund Freud published his treatise Massenpsychologie und ich-analyse in 1921, in which he frequently uses the term “****Massenbildung****,” literally translated as “mass formation” in Dutch. The mass formation theory is endorsed and supplemented by Trotter (Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*,*1916), McDoughall’s Group Mind* *(1920),*Baschwitz (*Du und die masse*,*1940), Canetti's Crowds and Power (1960) and Reiwald (De geest der massa, 1951). In the interwar period, founders of modern propaganda and public relations management, such as* ***Edward Bernays*** *and Walter Lippman, relied on the literature on mass formation to psychologically direct and manipulate the population. The philosopher Ortega y Gasset (The Revolt of the Masses*,*1930), the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm (The Fear of Freedom*,*1942), the psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich*(*The Mass Psychology of Fascism, 1946 ), the philosopher Hannah Arendt*(*The Origins of Totalitarianism, 1951) also made important contributions to the thinking about the phenomenon of mass formation. In addition, the entire secondary literature based on these seminal writers can be quoted, almost endlessly, when it comes to illustrating that, in radical contradiction to what Professor Ghaemi claims, there is indeed a conceptual basis for the term “mass formation” that continues to be developed today.*In the same essay, I also respond to six other criticisms raised by Professor Ghaemi, showing that in the final analysis, none of them make sense. Up until now, Professor Ghaemi has remained silent in response. There is a small chance he didn’t read my reply yet; there is a bigger chance he began to see the absurdity of his criticism.Since it is clear that criticisms such as the ones discussed above are incorrect, it would be nice if the people who launched them - often in a relentless and condescending way - would admit that they made a mistake. So far this has not happened. And this is not innocent. The criticism of Professor Ghaemi was used to justify the banning of my book on mass formation in a class lecture at Ghent University. When I confronted the colleagues at University with my response to Ghaemi, proving black on white that his criticism made no sense, not a single one of them proved capable to admit the critiques of Ghaemi were wrong. They all found a reason to ignore what I put out to them – saying that the discussion was closed, that they trusted the commissions that took the decision to ban my book, and so on.We live in remarkable times. **A discourse that claims to be scientific increasingly shows a radical contempt for facts** (to use an expression of Hannah Arendt). Throughout the last months, it became more and more clear that the coronavirus narrative was absurd in many respects. Think of [the lockdown files in Great Britain](https://substack.com/redirect/894e1881-c150-4382-b4fc-5b46dc1ab25d?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) (showing that the British government actually lied about virtually everything related to the coronavirus and for instance always knew the virus was far less dangerous than they communicated), the results of [the Cochrane study on the inefficacy of mask wearing](https://substack.com/redirect/d15ff1fd-65f1-42f5-84b5-407e6f3c294e?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg), the revelations in both [Switzerland](https://substack.com/redirect/e9e0c68c-ed4b-4cdc-a428-84890704400f?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) and [Germany](https://substack.com/redirect/387795b4-2b8e-4138-af49-26a93a195f1a?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) that journalists and [social media](https://substack.com/redirect/31494d6d-2abb-4bf0-80a9-500093a26243?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) were advised (and even payed by the government) to promote the narrative, [the fact that the vaccines did not prevent transmission, as even Fauci acknowledges by now](https://substack.com/redirect/3bd2ca9b-7852-40ae-844d-fe2e8570a7cb?j=eyJ1IjoiZG9paTgifQ.91g_34VRuzI_MLkPmRIGM0gm4tNgR1dQS7br89dPnSg) (while it was initially claimed that they prevent 95% of all infections), and so on.Strangely enough, despite the tidal wave of documents and information demonstrating the tragic failures of public health decision making, the intolerance towards the dissident voices who tried to warn society that the narrative was absurd, didn’t disappear at all. On the contrary, they are targeted more vehemently than ever before. All this is reminiscent of a quote from Gustave Le Bon: **“The masses have never thirsted after truth. They turn aside from evidence that is not to their taste, preferring to deify error, if error seduce them. Whoever can supply them with illusions is easily their master; whoever attempts to destroy their illusions is always their victim. An individual in a crowd is a grain of sand amid other grains of sand, which the wind stirs up at will”.** (*The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind (1895)*)       This shows us that the process of mass formation and totalitarization has not stopped with the winding down of the coronavirus crisis. It continues. It uses a variety of narratives as its vehicle – the coronavirus narrative, the climate narrative, the woke discourse, and so on. Each of these narratives is, ultimately, a kind of propaganda for one underlying ideology- intentionally circulated by institutions or enthusiastically disseminated by fanatic believers. **This ideology is the mechanistic, materialistic-rationalistic ideology (or no matter how you want to call this set of ideas) which believes that the universe is a machine that can be entirely understood and controlled in a strictly rational way.** The most recent version of this ideology is **transhumanism**, which believes that the ultimate destiny of the human being is to be technologically optimized and placed in a technological, digitalized society. **Ultimately, this ideology believes that *everything* can and should be rationally understood and controlled, including people’s minds and the psychological processes in society. That’s what we have propaganda for:** to control people’s minds, to make them believe whatever we want them to believe, to make them stop thinking for themselves, to make them all think in the same way, in the way the big supra-organism they belong to – the state – wants them to think. That is exactly the opposite of what the Enlightenment tradition initially aimed for, namely to encourage people to think for themselves (see Kant’s essay *What is Enlightenment?*).       **It is in times when public space is saturated with indoctrination and propaganda** – saturated with a kind of speech that is purely instrumental and devoid of all sincerity and honesty – **that certain people truly start to re-appraise Truth.** This is indeed what we should realize: **there is not so much a terror crisis, climate crisis, MeToo crisis, or banking crisis – there is a Truth crisis.**No one can possess Truth. And the more we think we do, the more we are at risk of losing touch with it. We have to reconsider this question: what does it mean to speak the Truth? We will never be able to rationally determine in a definitive way what Truth is. Truth is something we have to experience, we can sense that someone is speaking the Truth, but we cannot quite grasp it with our rational mind.               More crucial than the act of rational thinking is the act of truth-telling. Having the courage to question a narrative that is fanatically believed by society – that is what the act of truth-telling has consisted of since time immemorial. The first characteristic of truth speech therefore is this: if you try to practice it, you will be resisted by the world of appearances. And people might get mad at you. Sometimes very mad. The ancient Greeks knew it very well: one pays a price for speaking the Truth. Yet on the other hand, you also get something in return, something that is more important than anything that can be lost. I am sure Robert Malone knows what I’m talking about.Thanks for reading Mattias Desmet! Subscribe for free to receive new posts and support my [Robert W Malone MD's] work.[**Subscribed**](https://substack.com/redirect/2/eyJlIjoiaHR0cHM6Ly9yd21hbG9uZW1kLnN1YnN0YWNrLmNvbS9hY2NvdW50IiwicCI6MTE3MTY5OTE4LCJzIjo1ODMyMDAsImYiOmZhbHNlLCJ1IjoyMjk3ODczNiwiaWF0IjoxNjgyNDI4MzI4LCJleHAiOjE2ODUwMjAzMjgsImlzcyI6InB1Yi0wIiwic3ViIjoibGluay1yZWRpcmVjdCJ9.GOpAtootQ2iFH-LkmlHiSLP2K-ZzxSLQJjcU4dIwbEs) |