

A Glossary for Our Times

August 18, 2020

Reminder: SARS-CoV-2 is the name of the virus that is said to cause COVID-19.

Scientists and doctors are still learning about the novel virus and the new disease. Much of the information is uncertain, in part because it has become politicized, making it hard to navigate both medical and political subjects.

Making sense of the data or the arguments is more difficult because people confuse the terminology. The virus is not the disease, the disease is not the virus, though by *metonymy*, we do swap terms. Don't let a mere figure of speech fool you.

As awful as COVID-19 is, in America, more citizens are affected negatively by the virus popularly known as TDS.

Perhaps we should call it TDS-2016, since the three letters stand for "Trump Derangement Syndrome."

As we approach Election Day 2020, TDS-2016 will only grow. The meme itself has proven resilient.

Though the mind-virus (meme) was rampant from the moment Donald Trump announced his candidacy in 2015, the illness is not the meme itself. The illness, or behavioral syndrome, is how host brains *process* the meme. And it did not really set in as a disease until Trump got the Republican nomination. That's when Democrats stopped laughing so hard and began to take Trump seriously.

As with **COVID-19**, the worst cases of **TDS-2016** depend upon co-morbidities. In **TDS-2016's** case, co-morbidities include a **sense of entitlement** (that your side must always win); a **denial of culpability in ramping up political polarization** (in such things as the corruption- challenged candidacy of Hillary Clinton); and **in flirting with other memes** (such as "democratic socialism" and "wokism").



And drive themselves crazy.

As with COVID-19, the worst cases depend upon co-morbidities. In TDS-2016's case, co-morbidities include a sense of entitlement (that your side must always win); a denial of culpability in ramping up political polarization (in such things as the corruption-challenged candidacy of Hillary Clinton); and in flirting with other memes (such as "democratic socialism" and "wokism").

As we approach Election Day 2020, TDS-2016 will only grow. The meme itself has proven resilient. We appear not to have reached *herd immunity* yet.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

Definitions: -----

meme *n.* 1. an element of a culture or system of behavior that may be considered to be passed from one individual to another by nongenetic means, especially imitation. 2. a humorous image, video, piece of text, etc., that is copied (often with slight variations) and spread rapidly by Internet users.

metonymy *n.* a figure of speech featuring the substitution of the name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant, for example *suit* for *business executive*, or *the track* for *horse racing*.

herd immunity *n.* a key concept in epidemiology where the resistance to the spread of a contagious disease within a population that results when a sufficiently high proportion of individuals become immune to the disease, through exposure by infection or vaccination: *the level of vaccination needed to achieve herd immunity varies by disease but ranges from 83 to 94 percent.* [Discussions of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 that do not mention herd immunity can only have limited value.]