

the manifesto for
DERANGEMENT

2021 december

the manifesto for DERANGEMENT

by Z. Yin

It is in the nature of Man (or perhaps Woman, or any Human Being) to wish to hide away in his own comfort zone when faced with a threat, whether it be a moral transgression or a phone call from the doctor. Under the assumption that all Human Beings have value and thus autonomy, we respect their decisions to curate their own experiences in life, which means that they are free to block people on Twitter for having a differing political opinion and free to choose whichever internet discourse of the week to engage in. However, when that sort of self-policing is taken too far and applied liberally to not only the person themselves but onto their communities, certain problems may occur. A person may really hate cucumbers, and choose to abstain from consuming it, but once they begin to force their family members or friends to never serve any dishes with cucumbers in front of them—it becomes clear they have control issues. In the same vein (with perhaps larger stakes), there is the issues of censorship.

There are many different types, so to oversimplify the topic, we will consider two examples.

1. Censorship in China
 - a. in popular media
 - b. with regards to international relations
2. Specific internet Niches
 - a. book banning
 - b. nudity on the internet

As the USA continues to consider China a large threat (for some reason or other, whether politically or economically, or maybe all that and more. It's hard to say), criticism of China is rife and there appears to be an almost 1:1 ratio of pro-China keyboard warriors pitted against pro-USA keyboard warriors. Consequently, the issues that lie with China's censors (such as the Great Firewall, which isolates the Chinese web from the rest of the world and vice versa) are commonly known. No one can speak any evil of the CCP and their government, and even their most popular TV actors and actresses can be struck down and banished without a single rebuttal. Of course, there are those that have committed heinous crimes, and Idiots (as there are in every place in the world), but the true terror lies in the fact that even if the governing bodies simply do not like you, they can disappear you.¹ In a more recent case, successful Chinese tennis player Peng Shuai posted about sexual assault by a former vice premier—crimes committed by high-ranking officials, especially regarding women, is something that is often swept under the rug. As a result, her posts have disappeared from the internet, and for a while, she herself was missing. There has been no proper response from the government, as expected, and for the most part no one has spoken up about in China: partially because the censorship prevents the topic from surfacing. There has been support internationally, but again, if the Firewall keeps Foreigners out, it also keeps the country men in.²

1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/27/business/media/china-celebrity-culture.html>

2 <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/tennis/article-wta-suspends-tournaments-in-china-over-peng-shuai-situation/>

On a smaller scale, censorship can also be used to control the flow of information and education in schools. In communities that skew White and Christian, books about LGBTQ issues and relating to critical race theory are questioned and sometimes altogether banned.³ For lack of a better phrase, we think this is a stupid discussion to even have. What constitutes as a bad or good book? Should we not be more concerned about whether we want to read it or not? Reading is like eating: if you do not like that flavour, put it down and try another. Surely there is something you like. Of course, having a variety is most healthy, but some is better than none (this is a rather shitty analogy, but serves the purpose). Similarly, as adults attempt to preserve the innocence of their children and companies strive to advertise as much as possible in as many places as possible, the internet is becoming increasingly homogenized as streamlined to sell. Even Art is not exempt from this massive sweeping of the internet—OnlyFans, a website used to host and sell “Adult Images”, became the haven for museums wanting to share photographs of famous nude artworks.⁴ A classical subject! The nude! Banned from the internet, originally a place to share everything and anything! What used to be the equivalent of a free-range farm now has become a white-washed (excuse me) shopping mall.

Although we offer no real solutions to the wider issue of censorship and the rising concerns over policing of content in the digital world (which has many not-so-digital consequences), what we can offer is a different outlook. A perspective of someone who wishes not to be as invested in the stupidity prevailing in this world but unfortunately is, due to the simple act of having been born during this Age of Information. It is impossible to be apolitical, it is impossible to be objective—I am a consumer and a product, and I aim to be as obnoxious as possible. And back to the topic of free-range farms and the uptight range we reside in: what if that was broken down?

3 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/06/us/the-fight-to-ban-books.html>

4 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/21/style/onlyfans-nude-art-vienna.html>

derange

in British English

(dɪˈreɪndʒ)

verb (transitive)

1. to disturb the order or arrangement of; throw into disorder; disarrange
2. to disturb the action or operation of
3. to make insane

from the Collins English Dictionary. Copyright © HarperCollins Publishers

Derangement, as defined the Collins English Dictionary, seems to point at some rather gentle connotations. In the common vernacular, we often see the word used in a flippantly violent context: “the deranged gunman”, or when viewing a particularly affronting image on Twitter: “that’s fucking deranged, man.” To the average 18–22-year-old University Student, this may not be a word used that often, though whether that is because they command a frighteningly large vocabulary or the exact opposite is up for debate. Regardless, the word is not usually interpreted positively. The Cambridge Dictionary, however, has only “deranged” in their list:

deranged

adjective

/dɪˈreɪndʒd/

/dɪˈreɪndʒd/

completely unable to think clearly or behave in a controlled way, especially because of mental illness:

1. a deranged criminal/mind/personality
2. to be mentally deranged

From this, we can see that the public opinion of the word “derange” is just as negative as the word’s definition itself. Whilst it is true that meanings are arbitrary, and the usage of “derange” as “to disturb” is now labelled Archaic, it still offers a view of our modern society, particularly towards mental illnesses. But I digress.

I am instead choosing to offer a new meaning to the word: to de-range. The word “range” has a formidable number of definitions, but I have found some from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary that suit my purposes. Range: *verb*. 1. a : to set in a row or in the proper order, b : to place among others in a position or situation, c : to assign to a category; *intransitive verb*. to take a position, to correspond in direction or line. To de-range, in this perspective, is to un-align, to not fit within certain boundaries, to take no position, and to completely refuse correspondence. Similar to the ideals of Fitting Into Categories and assimilation offered by the word “range”, the ideals of Purity, Moral Goodness, and all things holy exist in the world today.

Yes, as history repeats, originally puritan beliefs and rosary-clutching communities proliferate today in a new environment. Various corners of the internet, in an attempt to become more and more marketable, have lowered age limits and removed all Unholy content from their servers. The very definition of what is considered NSFW (Not Suitable For Work, but perhaps it now, spiritually, stands for something else entirely) and what is suitable for brands to place their advertisements nearby has changed even within the last 5 years. The complete ban of 18+ content, as well as the infamous censoring of “female-presenting nipples” on renowned social media website Tumblr also changed the landscape for many producers of pornographic content and sex workers.⁵ So, to reiterate: we have covered censorship by a) The Government, b) Educators/Parents, c) Administrators of Social Media, and now d) random people on the internet.

5 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/06/opinion/tumblr-adult-content-pornography-ban.html>

A particular subsection of the internet, mostly young adults and teenagers disillusioned with the wideness of the observable (engageable) internet as well as how “problematic” their “faves” are, are taking up the task of policing their communities to a frightening degree. It seems illogical to discuss whether an artist should post about two fictional characters and the logistics of their romance and whether or not their relationship adheres to the (often) sheltered perspectives of love that their audience, impressionable high schoolers, hold. Oh, if an author writes about rape and murder, they must be a proponent of such crimes in Real Life! As if fiction was not born from reality, or the other way around.⁶ Or perhaps all kids are too self-centred to recognize that eventually, they will grow up and develop critical thinking skills. I would know, I was a child not too long ago. But back to the matter at hand: it is not fair to shame only young people for these wildly out of touch thoughts. Anyone who is Chronically Online and active in fan circles (or even Art and Poetry circles) may have encountered these types of discourse floating around. Is censorship—a violent removal of things the governing body finds displeasing in order to control information flow—really the best way to have these sorts of discussions about anything, least of all Art?

Derangement provides the ideal response. It is the equivalent to going Batshit Insane, to embrace the insanity present in the word, to reject all attempts to be classified (as consumer, as product; as creator or artist or critic; as pro or anti Whatever), and to explore whatever topics we wish to explore. As with all human interactions, a certain degree of tact and respect is necessary to facilitate communication (the most important part of all) and prove that there exists a propensity to look towards the dark, the criminal, and the forbidden, and it does not always directly correlate to our moral goodness. Perhaps it is a return to surrealism—but that idealistic sort of thinking is impossible. Is a movement dictated by white European men something we want to follow? In the currently globalized world, our realities are so different! We can choose a different genocide to read

6 <https://www.themarysue.com/must-ships-not-be-problematic/>

about every day of the week, and there are always at least five different humanitarian crises happening at once, pushed in our faces. If we are not insane, we are desensitized, and what could be worse than apathy?

Ignorance, maybe. Then do you see how censorship could lead to that? When a child is spoiled rotten, they become incredibly out of touch with reality. This is something I have observed often in my University Art classes. The amount of privilege ranges heavily, and it is almost impossible to have a coherent critical discussion. In order to cope with the injustices, I simply go insane. There is no ideal world, and no amount of change or willpower can do anything. I am deranged, and will be forever.

Attached are some images representing the deranged vibes I aim to harness at all times. As widely circulated images (to a degree), the sources are no longer trackable.

