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industry insiders called 'Personalized Amplification'. This is why I would argue that in the United States, we need to disentangle First Amendment rights, freedom of speech, from efforts to regulate social media. In the end, this has very little to do with freedom of speech, since these algorithms are effectively putting their thumb on the scale. Literally, they are artificially amplifying sensationalist fringe outrageous discourse at the expense of truthful, evidence-based information that may not be deemed as interesting from a market perspective.

This is an interesting observation. There is another argument as well, that the social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, they shouldn't be run as private companies, because they are determining the outcome of the political system in many cases, and they are going to affect the lives of the American people at least, but also everybody across the globe, and therefore they should come under some

sort of public supervision. How do you see that?
I do agree that we have to think about creative, commonsense ways of regulating certain patterns of misinformation spreading, that social media algorithms engage in. This notion of insiders, or whistleblowers, who come from Facebook, Twitter, or TikTok, have given us a very clear idea of how the artificial intelligence tools that are used by these social media companies are explicitly selecting content to create their recommendations, and this content plays better with viewers. In other words, it gets more eyeballs if it's sensationalist. So, conspiracy theories, for example, are pushed artificially by their algorithms: They can come as recommendations to you even if you have never searched for a specific conspiracy theory, only because they are considered "popular searches", or "popular notions". So I do believe that we have to separate freedom of speech from the need to regulate social media companies. I don't know if I would go as far as to say that social media companies would need to come under the umbrella of, say, public institutions or government institutions, because then we have a different type of problem. The problem could be that you could have a government that runs its own media, and that can create other types of entanglements with freedom of speech. So, I think the best case scenario is trying to figure out how to protect first amend-

ment rights, and identify the areas in which we need to make sure we have some commonsense regulations in place.
Okay. You describe our current world as one in which the idea that "I'm ineffable" trumps every other truth. How did we collectively become so arrogant, if you agree with my choice of term?
Let me start here: In the absence of a commons, where our ideas and beliefs can be tested through exposure to the ideas and beliefs of others, it is easier for us to essentially ignore anything that doesn't fit our worldview, my worldview, and possibly to ascribe to those who do not agree with my own worldview, some sort of nefarious intent, since they are not members of my group, my tribe, so to speak, they are essentially my enemy, intent on destroying me and others like me. So I may come to the belief that in order to preserve my own sense of self, I have to stand up to them with everything I've got. The result can be a circularity that reinforces my own beliefs with even higher walls. I can project those beliefs into some agency that anchors them. To put it plainly, in a Christian context for example, the question of "What would Jesus do?", may come with the default answer, "Whatever I believe, since I know the real Jesus!"

Or, "I am the real Jesus!"
Right!

TO BE CONTINUED



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What are the historical, cultural conditions of my beliefs? If I understand that, at least I will know the origins of my beliefs, so that I will be aware of the contingency of those beliefs.

