



**Dr. Jane Clare Jones** @janeclarejones

1 Mar 20 · 13 tweets · [janeclarejones/status/1234049007070085121](https://twitter.com/janeclarejones/status/1234049007070085121)



So, some thoughts on the authoritarianism of some of our younger people, which I've been mulling over and might be relevant re: the debacle yesterday.

Most of us were brought up in the shadow of both right and left-wing totalitarianism. We almost all read 1984 and Animal Farm

when we teenagers. We were exposed also throughout our youth to the horrors of the racist state repressiveness in South Africa. I wrote my extended essay for GCSE English on a comparison between 1984 and JM Coetzee's 'The Life and Times of Michael K.' I was seriously concerned

about the damage to the humanity of people of all kinds at the hands of violent, reality twisting state machinery.

This generation were brought up in the shadow of 9/11 and the War on Terror. What they came to age with was the abuse of the language of liberal democracy to

justify violent imperial wars. With the understanding that the language of 'freedom' could be effectively deployed to mask illegitimate economically self-interested and massively destructive meddling in the self-governance of other, less economically and politically powerful, and

often non-Western/non-white nations. To them the language of liberal democracy is a sham. It is the polite face of a neoconservative and neoliberal imperial fist. And they have often been taught in university that liberalism is the political discourse of capitalism. And they

are not entirely wrong about that.

It is not entirely surprising, under these conditions, that they would be suspicious about ALL appeals to democratic process, and would be easily convinced that we are concerned only with masking the operation of power.

They don't have our cultural memory about the damage authoritarianism can also wreak \*in the interests of power.\* And they feel, quite understandably, powerless, in the face of a massive rapacious global neoliberal machine that is laying waste to millions of lives and the very

substance of the earth, and has cloaked itself in the language of freedom.

As with most things, the truth here lies between the poles. Both the neoliberal and imperial abuse of democratic rhetoric, and authoritarianism, are threats to the well being of people and of the polity.

It is understandable I think, that we feel angry with the way young people, like Lola, have apparently uncritically absorbed a discourse that prompts them to act in such a totalitarian manner, and that they have somehow been convinced that the lynchpin of the structure of global

domination is a bunch of mostly middle aged left-wing feminist women... to project their anger at the intellectual traditions that, in fact, have won so much for them, and are not responsible for the damage neoliberal imperialism has wrought over the last 4 decades.

It's understandable that we are angry that their justified anger at the state of the world has so effectively been displaced from what I think should be its rightful target, that they don't see that their analysis is distorted, that it actually serves the interests of exactly

what they want to resist, and that it so much easier to beat up on older women than actually trying to stick it to 'the man.'

But we should also probably remember that, like us all, they are products of history and power. And that one of the real sources of this fucking mess

is the right wing men who so abused the language of democracy in order to continue their avowed intent to exploit the world and its people to the point of near extinction.

<Ends>

...