



# An Inquisition for Propaganda and Mass Deception: Deposing the Neolithic Mind

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Human language harbors a mechanical aberration, leaving human communication vulnerable to manipulation. Mass deception is the systematic exploitation of this linguistic glitch, the agency of which is premeditated indoctrination. Its influence over human thought and behavior is rooted in the phenomenon of the tribal mind, an unconscious collective ego predisposed to propaganda. In its early modern iterations, Eddie Bernays heralded propaganda as an efficient way to establish shared understanding between an individual and established information that this individual encounters. Communicating to the masses was seen as a means of educating the masses, and this was celebrated. Now, though, inside the utter profusion of multifaceted information, propaganda's bearing in mass communication cannot be ignored as a contaminant at its source. The challenge is the ease with which intra-action can be subtly systematized, around an insidious fatal flaw.

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## INCANTATIONS FOR DECEIT

Deceit in mass communications encumbers language as sorcery. An alchemy of make-believe beguiles whole populations. Well-meaning objectors illuminate evidence, only to be branded in a witch hunt. Would-be provocateurs quickly discern the perils of dissent, witnessing in silent wonderment the vexation of entire societies. Unraveling this tangle demands doggedness because direct assaults are absorbed in phalanxes of duplicity. The multitude becomes entranced, charmed inside its abracadabration. The primary mechanism for mass deception is linguistic enchantment designed to entrench the dichotomous and to deflect the dialectical. The power behind these divinations is agility. Debate is summarily halted. The credos of critical thought are sacrificed, burned at the stake.

## LANGUAGE AS DILEMMA

To dispel mass deception is to untie the knots of subtleties within the mystery of language. Such an undertaking commences at intrapersonal introspection. This odyssey launches at a discourse on how language arose in the human experience.

Scholars of linguistics and communication generally concur that human language emerged from around 50,000 to 150,000 years ago (Perreault and Mathew, 2012). Gaps in the archeological record relegate its appearance to perpetual debate. Pinker and Bloom (1990)

hypothesized its gradual development over time. Chomsky (1996) argued, by contrast, that it appeared spontaneously. Often referred to as continuity versus discontinuity hypothesis, respectively, Chomsky (2020) railed against the latter, referring to discontinuity theory (in relation to his work) as sheer fabrication.

Perhaps this misconception derives from wont to juxtapose the former's *continuity hypothesis*. Or it may be a misinterpretation of *perfect form*, a combinatorial operation that yields what has been called the *basic property* of language—the generation of a discrete infinity of hierarchically structured expressions of thought.

The argument is supported in theoretical linguistics by *digital infinity*, the operation by finite means to articulate an infinite array of thoughts (Chomsky, 1991). A zero-sum operation, digital infinity in linguistics is not unlike the number systems in mathematics: humans either have access to all numbers or access to none (Chomsky, 1995; Knight and Power, 2008). Empirical evidence and a conceptual rationale are lacking in the corpus to support the existence of proto-numbers or proto-language (Bidese et al., 2012; Botha, 2012). Such evidence, should it emerge, may not matter anyway because going from, say, seven to infinity is no easier than going from zero to infinity.

Thus, early humans may have been struck with language not unlike spontaneous crystallization within a super-saturated medium (Chomsky, 2004a; Chomsky, 2004b; Chomsky, 2005). Or human language may have descended as a mutation (Christiansen and Kirby, 2003) which are known to occur in individuals or groups of individuals, for instance, a virus within a community (Lindgren, 1992).

## LANGUAGE AS EPIPHANY

The debate within *rationalist* and *empiricist* epistemologies, respectively, suggests that either certain ideas exist independent of experience or that all knowledge is acquired by experience. Kant (1908) is credited with breaking the impasse by postulating that both reason and experience are necessary in the accumulation of human knowledge. This philosophical fusion and its relation to the phenomena of language was personified in the modern era.

Helen Keller lost her eyesight and hearing at 19 months of age from a febrile illness. As an adult, she reflected on the absence of language: “I did not know that I am. I lived in a world that was a no-world. I cannot hope to describe adequately that unconscious, yet conscious time of nothingness” (Keller, 1908, p. 108). Keller (1908) continued:

I did not know that I knew aught, or that I lived or acted or desired. I had neither will nor intellect. I was carried along to objects and acts by a certain blind natural impetus. I had a mind which caused me to feel anger, satisfaction, desire. These two facts led those about me to suppose that I willed and thought. I can remember all this, not because I knew that it was so, but because I have tactual memory. It

enables me to remember that I never contracted my forehead in the act of thinking. (p. 113).

Contemplating the precipitous emergence of language in her experience, Keller (1908) wrote, “[w]hen I learned the meaning of ‘I’ and ‘me’ and found that I was something, I began to think. Then consciousness first existed for me” (p. 117).

Keller's (1908) recollection upon the moment she was overtaken by language may serve as a model for the occurrence of language in the human condition. Language may have appeared in an instantaneous flash, following the Chomskyan polemic.

Before that instant, language had not occurred. After that instant, language occurred. The argument holds that language struck its victim from a Grecian-like *chaos*, from nothing, and the consciousness that was awakened also issued from this nothingness. Stated as a psycholinguistic palindrome, language gives rise to consciousness, and consciousness relies upon language (Ponty et al., 1964). These are primary demarcations in the battleground of deceit.

Critical to the argumentation in this writing is the distinction between language and communication. Chomsky (1972) contended that language is tantamount to *inner speech*, used in intrapersonal cogitation. Further, language falls short for *communication*, apparently a secondary utility of what is in essence a system of thought (Fodor, 1975; Chomsky, 2002; Reboul, 2015). For deceit in mass communications to sway a collective, say, a society or a sub-set of a society, the intrapersonal component of inner speech must be manipulated en masse, conspired on to exploit a divergence between language and communication. To deceive the trusting, unsuspecting masses, practitioners in the dark arts in communicology deliberately target a relic of human cognition, the Neolithic mind.

## THE NEOLITHIC MIND

The Neolithic or Tribal Mind loiters as a vestige to an evolutionary survival mechanism, a collective ego form. This rudimentary herd-mind demanded compliance and afforded a strength-in-numbers security for defense, support, and husbandry. Characterized in humanity as nervous-by-nature, the tribal mind continues to codify itself as the culprit of community.

The rules of membership are programmed from childhood to forfeit individuation. Tacit yet transmitted, these dictates (lexical brickwork) stockpile into a systemagogue of values, beliefs, and attitudes. The individual inside this hive-mind is the self-deceived solitary drone, soused in the raw hum of assent.

The goading of the tribal mind is an all-encompassing psychic integrity and reenforced conformity. “Nothing in tribal society belongs to the individual” (Dhlomo, 1939, p. 38). It coalesced before science, before medicine, before machines; superstition ruled. Ignorance and fear bonded an emotional relationship with fate and fortune. Disease and death, pestilence and crop failure, war and calamity were all signs of the wrath of an all-powerful yet unseen entity. A maverick was deemed a threat, an evil that must

be banished or destroyed. Crushing individuated identity, belief, and method necessitated the advent of the group mind.

Noncompliance within the sanctity of the tribal covenant threatened its ascendancy. Acts of nonconformity were deemed taboo. Loyalists were deputized unperceived to coerce a covert curriculum. An ethereal yet ubiquitous tyranny—communicated but not spoken—surveilled through language, communication, and even clothing. The entire tribe its own constabulary, it constrained through shame and isolation. Inevitably, this absolutism was internalized, a precursor to culture.

Inside this induced anxiety, sapient communication burgeoned and with it the capacity to share information and knowledge, that is, a transactional comprehension. Klein (2018) referred to this tectonic drift from the instinctual to the calculated as *collective learning*. For example, whereas scientists taught Koko over 1,000 *Gorilla Sign Language* signs (Linden and Patterson, 1983), she could not teach these signs to her offspring or other gorillas. Hence, prior to language, early humans, not unlike the great apes, were timeless in the sense that every generation was relegated to starting anew without any gains beyond those gotten from instinct.

Today, even with an explosion of information and knowledge, modern societies cling to tribal-mind conformity. Mass communication, apart from freeing humanity from the Neolithic mind, expedites and reinforces mass deception. In this psychozoic age, the tribal mind, now magnified, imperils nations.

The tribal mind offers safety and familiarity through a collective consciousness and, simultaneously, courts conjurers of mob *magick*. A fear-driven psychoneurology incentivizes deception. To extricate oneself from the magnetic force of the tribe requires extraordinary courage. Even to witness a breakout from inside its prison of forms registers as ludicrous or insane or dangerous.

## THE FATAL FLAW

Modern humans straddle a barbwire of consciousness, charged with a tribal pulse. Language electrified a *great leap forward* (Ruhlen, 1994). Communication atomized the time barrier unseating instinct, that the next generation could take up from the previous. However, the fissure between language and communication contains a fatal flaw. A machinosus operandi, language descended as an intrapersonal thought form. Its distraction is an involuntary propagation: instinctual and impersonal.

By diminution, the appearance of communication—an echo of its own thought form—condemned language and communication to languish together (Vernon, 1967; Sellars, 1969; Bloom and Keil, 2001; Carruthers, 2002). This insanity of unrelenting closed-circuit intrapersonal duologue is universally experienced in the human condition as *chatter*.

This is the fatal flaw. This is the perpetual vulnerability to manipulation and deception. In its latent tribal form, the chatter is nomadic, wind-blown, and drifting. Propagandists hijack the chatter, weaponizing it at the wellspring between language and communication.

## A VOICE FOR DECEIT

Circumventing mass deception commences in the individual, waking to the microchasm between language and communication. Recognizing this fatal flaw, the individuated person encounters the authentic voice, apart from group-mind. This marks the beginning of the end for propaganda's deceptive influence and the beginning of alert watchfulness.

This voice occurs consistently to the individual from higher-order thought through insights, hunches, glimmers, suspicions. While the products of this voice cannot be ascribed as a *right* or a *true* voice for an entire family, clan, tribe, or nation, it is a sovereign thought form: Emerson's *iron string*.

To thwart this voice is to waive ownership of one's own mind, one's own will. This is what has always been under attack by those who propagate mass deception.

## CONCLUSION

Those who brandish the dark arts of mass deception anticipate this simple veracity about human perception: that which occurs as real is defended as real. Even in the light of concrete evidence, propaganda is supple and resilient to perfunctory investigation (Bernays, 1928). Deception in mass communications derives its power in mythology, the mystery of language itself. The pervasive efficacy of propaganda's conductivity derives from the trance-like function of language. Every word is hypnotic (Erikson, 1964), every word a spell. Deceit inculcates into the deceived as the way things should be, as the only way things could be.

A counternarrative always meets with flagrant opposition. The propagandists dare not relax hypervigilance, guarding their house of cards. Challenged, a Delphian priesthood hurriedly conjures fresh runes to soothe the masses back to guileless slumber. Once the conditions of plasticity are met, the faith in the tribal mind bolsters an almost unfettered confidence to bend reality, beyond what any semblance for the pursuit of truth could otherwise portend.

For nearly 70 years, the minds of the masses, generation after generation, have been programmed inside mass media. The individual who can dismantle distortions in thought forms is increasingly rare—the more educated, the more likely indoctrinated.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/Supplementary Material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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