



The New Face of Psychiatry

To ensure that psychiatry “permeate every educational activity of national life” and “infiltrate the professional and social activities of [all] people” was a global goal that originated with British Brigadier General Dr. John Rawlings Rees in a 1940 speech to the National Council for Mental Hygiene. He ended on an ominous note: “Though our knowledge be incomplete ... I think we must imitate the Totalitarians and organize some kind of fifth column activity.”



Canadian colleague Dr. Brock Chisholm chimed in with sinister comments of his own at the close of the war in 1946, in a speech to the World Federation of Mental Health. He argued for “freedom *from* morality” and the “eventual eradication of right and wrong.” Such traditional upbringing was making children ill, he insisted. “If the race is to be freed of its crippling burden of good and evil it must be psychiatrists who take the original responsibility.”

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Rees and Chisholm had company — in political, educational, journalistic, marketing, and military circles, most ensconced within interconnected foundations, associations, and “research centers” (foreign and domestic). They became Rees’ and Chisholm’s enablers. Together, they created Rees’ dream: “a controlled psychological environment.”

Today, the Department of Defense has a new name for it: “perception management” (or “PM”), and the psychopharmaceutical industry has hit the jackpot.

Ask yourself this: How did people get the impression that parents are “nonprofessionals” and therefore basically incompetent to rear their children without help from mental-health specialists and child experts? Where did we get the idea that being sad about one’s circumstances was a clinical condition to be “cured” with a drug? Or that feeling “overwhelmed” was an indication of longstanding anger requiring anger-management counseling? Or how about that child with the irritating habit of clicking his pen repeatedly, or kicking his foot as he sits at his desk, or passing notes to classmates when he is supposed to be listening to the teacher? How did people decide that he is, in fact, “hyperactive,” and that he needs *treatment* to address these annoying behaviors?

Well, we learned this information from commercials, featuring a household news anchor or sports figure, telling us that, by golly, we can “beat depression — just like I did” by getting psychiatric counseling and drugs. Parenting articles, including those that came in your Sunday paper, poured forth “expert” advice via articles, advertisements, and editorials — all promoting the notion that people



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“have” (as in “disease”) attention deficit *disorder*, anxiety *disorders*, obsessive-compulsive *disorder*, a reading *disorder* (dyslexia), and so forth, until, as best-selling author-researcher David Baldacci put it in an addendum to his recent thriller, a major untruth was instituted with such speed and ubiquity that it overpowered the rational mind. At this point, no amount of proof to the contrary, delivered after the fact, seems to make the slightest dent in public perception to the effect that none of what the public heard and read is true at all.

That is PM at its finest.

So, thanks to behavioral scientists and their enablers in the marketing and advertising industries (where psychology is the major course of study), perception management is now pervasive. John Rawlings Rees, it seems, got his wish: that psychiatry “permeate every [informational] activity of national life.”

Without firing a shot, a cadre of like-minded interest groups today comprises the Elite — acting as the Nation’s Board of Directors, so to speak, micromanaging our lives and setting government policy. The mental-health industry is that cadre, and we are its chumps, paying hundreds of millions of dollars to support legislation, purchase medications, and rearrange our lifestyles in accordance with the wishes of a select few who are laughing all the way to the bank.

How They Pulled It Off

The 64-million-dollar question is: How, given what the World War II generation went through — the sacrifice, patriotism, and ideals like duty and honor — could a relatively small cast of radicals snooker an entire population?

Well, first of all, it wasn’t called “perception management” right away. It came in a kinder and gentler package about “changing attitudes.”

The true believers — colleagues of Rees and Chisholm — first seized upon Russian Ivan Pavlov’s “classic conditioning.” They followed that up with German psychologist Kurt Lewin’s “group dynamics,” Russian neuropsychologist Alexander Luria’s “disorganization of behavior,” and U.S. psychologist B. F. Skinner’s deprivation-based “operant conditioning.” U.S. social psychologist Elliot Aronson added “cognitive dissonance.” By the 1990s, Rees’ vision of a *controlled psychological environment* had been raised to the level of an art form.

But the darker side became known as “scientific coercion,” a term coined in 1994 by author Christopher Simpson in his watershed historical masterpiece on psychological warfare (*Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare 1945-1960*, Oxford University Press). By then, the whole sorry business had morphed into the “engineering of consent” for “populations at home and abroad.” It was institutionalized in the education system as “behavior modification”; in journalistic circles as “molding public opinion”; and in commercial advertising as “psychographics.”

If you “google” the Department of Defense definition, you will find PM characterized as “actions to convey and/or deny selected information ..., to influence ... emotions, motives, and objective reasoning ... ultimately resulting in foreign behaviors and official actions favorable to the originator’s objectives. Perception management combines truth projection, operations security, cover and deception, and psychological operations.”

The Wikipedia definition adds the “imposition of falsehoods and deceptions,” seen as important to getting “the other side to believe what one wishes it to believe.”



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So, PM functions, in effect, as a euphemism for information warfare.

But what is necessary to survival in wartime may not be so helpful to a peacetime civilian population, especially children.

Tax-exempt, foundation-subsidized bigwigs like G. Stanley Hall, Abraham Flexner, John Gardiner, Theodore Sizer, Ronald Havelock, John Goodlad, Benjamin Bloom, and Ralph Tyler — viewing life's dilemmas through the prism of the World Federation of Mental Health — saw it differently. For openers, they worked to ensure that school curriculum and testing ditched the traditional focus on excellence and academics to concentrate on a subjective socialization (i.e., *socialist*) agenda that targeted the child's "belief system."

To illustrate the radical nature of this step, one need only quote from the "father of *modern* education," John Dewey. In his acclaimed book *School and Society* he wrote: "There is no obvious social motive for the acquiring of learning [and] ... no clear social gain at success thereat." Fast-forward to 1981 and to the "father of *outcome-based* education," Benjamin Bloom. In *All Our Children Learning*, Bloom averred that "the purpose of education is to change the thoughts, feelings and actions of students ... by [challenging] the student's fixed beliefs."

You get the picture. By indoctrinating postwar Boomers early on, perception management morphed into a psychological force of such magnitude that best-selling author Michael Crichton (*Jurassic Park*, etc.), was moved to comment before his recent death: "The greatest challenge facing mankind is ... distinguishing reality from fantasy, truth from propaganda.... In the information age (or ... the *disinformation* age) ... we must daily decide whether the threats we face are real, whether the solutions we are offered will do any good, whether the problems we're told exist are in fact real."

So it's not as if *nobody* important views psychological manipulation with alarm. It's just that most people never study the powerhouses behind the methods. Maybe, then, it's time for some crash courses.

Course 1 — "Behavior Modification"

The idea for incorporating attitudinal information into school tests was based on *Crucial Issues in Testing*, co-edited in 1969 by behavioral scientists Richard Wolf and Ralph Tyler. Privacy implications aside, they wrote, there "are occasions in which the test constructor [finds it necessary] to outwit the subject so that he cannot guess what information he is revealing." Educrats Archie LaPointe and Willard Wirtz went further in their 1981 document "Measuring the Quality of Education" by justifying "the permissibility of deception" in testing based on "the rights of an institution to obtain information necessary to achieve its goals."

This is the rationale for what came to be known as "behavior modification." To modify anyone's behavior, you see, one must first find out what people, preferably children, are thinking, then set about changing any "offending" attitudes.

Take, for example, an expression nobody hears much anymore, but folks used to hear with regularity: "rugged individualism." Rugged individualism encompassed a range of characteristics — independence, self-sufficiency, thinking for oneself. In the 1970s, the axe was laid to all three. Negative terminologies like "loner" and "misfit" redefined the individualist. "Independence" was scrapped for *interdependency*, self-sufficiency for *redistribution*, and "thinking for oneself" was equated with *intolerance*. Today, any close reading of the newspaper reminds us daily that the "loner" requires psychiatric intervention, and maybe drugs as well.



Course 2 – Conditioning

Conditioning per se is a term associated with reward and punishment, which may include deprivation, abuse, even torture. Most often, however, it is based on simple repetition — the use of slogans, songs, commercials — something people hear or see so often they don't remember where they first ran into it.

In the 1890s, Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov was investigating the gastric function of dogs when he noticed that the animals tended to salivate before food was actually delivered. He set out to investigate this “psychic secretion,” as he called it. He found that if he manipulated the “stimulus” before presenting the food, he could establish a few basic laws. He dubbed them “conditional reflexes.” Pavlov became highly regarded by the Soviet government. He was praised by Vladimir Lenin and became a Nobel laureate.

But Pavlov started having second thoughts about the use of his research. He wrote letters to Vyacheslav Molotov, Stalin's confidant and protégé. But it was too late; the Soviet hierarchy was already utilizing his research to “condition,” meaning “re-educate,” political dissidents. The Soviet regime's tweaking of Pavlov's research meant generating high levels of agitation and distress so that the individual could not make decisions or maintain a train of thought. Psychologists now refer to such condition as a “mental breakdown,” but it boils down to extreme emotional upset — not hallucinations, delusions, or any particular illness. Normalcy typically returns with restoration of a normal environment.

American psychologist Burrhus Frederic Skinner, however, took Pavlov's classical conditioning to whole new heights. He launched a philosophy (later called the “science of *operant* conditioning”) and wrote a precursor to today's “chaos theory,” entitled *Radical Behaviorism*, in which he essentially describes how to incite a mob to frenzy. Skinner founded his own school of experimental research and poured himself into experimenting with human behavior, which culminated in a work entitled *Verbal Behavior*. It was this text that pricked the antennae of educators like Edward Thorndike and opportunists in marketing, journalism, and politics — all of whom could clearly see benefit in “molding public opinion” beginning in childhood.

So, Skinner's greatest legacy became education and childrearing. An avowed atheist, he viewed humans as high-functioning animals. All one had to do is apply reward and punishment in appropriate doses (the highest reserved for stubborn cases), and society could get a child to hate what he once desired and love what he once despised.

It didn't work out quite so simplistically. What it did do, however, was launch a whole new approach to education, eventually shifting it away from excellence to mere functionality. Most significantly, it compromised the child's ability to think logically and analytically, which of course carried lifelong side effects. Unless a student was taught otherwise by his parents, Skinnerian “wisdom” made the child a sitting duck for manipulation as an adult.

This, of course, made behavior modification ever so much easier to implement at the high-school and college levels. But it would take the application of tactics from psychologists like Alexander Luria, Kurt Lewin, Benjamin Bloom, Ewen Cameron, John Goodlad, and Elliott Aronson to entrench a “science of coercion.” The special combination of Lewin's “group dynamics” and Aronson's “cognitive dissonance,” in particular, comprised the keys to the *breakdown of public resistance* which is, at its core, an underhanded means of exhausting the other fellow's will.

Course 3 – War Games

Ironically, the biggest boost for psychological manipulation research (including exhausting the



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opposition's will) came out of our fight against the Axis Powers in World War II. The propaganda wars were on in Europe and Asia, and we had to counter it, leading to America's first serious excursions into informational warfare.

Unfortunately, many of those who did their jobs so well ultimately carried their newfound knowledge with them to posts in the media, major universities, and industry. Among them were William Paley (CBS), Charles Dollard (Carnegie Corp. and Rand Corp.), and Edward Barrett (Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism). The latter launched, in turn, the careers of America's top publishers — the heads of *Look*, *Time*, *Fortune*, *Parade*, the *Denver Post*, and dozens more.

Despite their intelligence (pun intended) and apparent patriotism in wartime, these high-functioning individuals decided psychology and psychiatry *were* indeed the antidotes to war, crime, and a host of social ills. They concluded that God was not on their side, that in fact the Almighty should take a hike, having just let loose Hitler, Mussolini, and the Bataan Death March. As for Josef Stalin, he was the victim of early brutality, after all, and now he was playing a game of "chicken" with us. (Such thinking led to the 1964 book *Games People Play* by Eric Berne, father of "transactional analysis." The book and the theory both apparently "sold" well with the public, but did the author himself little good, what with three failed marriages and a subsequent string of clandestine relationships.)

In any case, what Stalin needed was reassurance, not bomb threats. These hardened propaganda warriors believed Americans should just take a deep breath (and maybe a bit of heavy breathing, too — who needed that monogamy stuff, anyway?) and get an attitude adjustment with the help of a psychiatrist.

Of course, none of that worked quite as promised, either. It turned out that the Soviets under Stalin were into attitude adjustment, too — only theirs already came with the stench of the gulag, "hospitals"-*cum*-prisons, re-education camps, and torture, with and without psychiatric drug cocktails.

Meanwhile, America's "progressive" educators were hardly asleep at the wheel. Following up on J. R. Rees' infamous speech to the World Federation of Mental Health, the nation's largest teacher union, the National Education Association, incorporated hardball psychiatric techniques into its special National Training Laboratory for Applied Behavioral Sciences in Bethel, Maine. Psychologists carefully selected candidates who looked promising as department heads in public schools or simply as master teachers who would use the same potent techniques with their students as were being taught at the Lab.

By 1989, the much-ballyhooed "paradigm shift," as it was dubbed by behaviorist educrats, occurred in American schools, and the free world was hurled into "free fall": clandestine censorship counselors in university dorms, encounter-style techniques masquerading as "class discussions" in high schools, massive invasions of privacy under the cover of "academic testing," "value-neutral" courses in ethics, and world history that bestowed upon even the most heinous regimes the moral equivalence of Jeffersonian democracy.

Little wonder that by the 1990s battalions of psychiatrists were being dispatched to every school district to help contain the new brand of war games: a tsunami of school shootings and mass murders perpetrated by kids raised on a diet of behavior modification and psychiatric drugs.

Course 4 — Cognitive Dissonance, Re-education, and Social Propaganda

"Cognitive dissonance," like "encounter groups," is vital to *social propaganda*, a Marxist-era moniker that today is (oddly) a mainstay of free-world advertising.

Cognitive dissonance was the brainchild of American social psychologist Elliot Aronson (1969) and was



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fine-tuned by Herbert Marcuse, a German immigrant. Aronson is best known for imposing the “jigsaw teaching technique,” based on his experiments (the National Training Laboratory — NTL — was a big fan). Marcuse immigrated to the United States and joined in America’s anti-Nazi propaganda campaigns, then turned around and proceeded to foment protests and riots on college campuses in the late 1960s and early ’70s.

Technically, *cognitive dissonance* is “a stressful mental or emotional reaction caused by trying to reconcile two opposing, inconsistent, or conflicting beliefs held simultaneously.” The reaction typically presents as irrational denial in the face of the facts, out-of-hand rejection of alternate evidence, and other forms of emotional self-defense. So, the technique becomes a form of mental coercion, because people become irritable, lose their self-confidence, and cannot engage in any normal exchange of ideas. Discussions dissolve into shouting matches.

Educators steeped in such methodologies often believe they are using the “scientific method” to transmit “thinking skills” and that they are “empowering pupils to be decision-makers.” Budding journalism students think they are perfecting interviewing techniques. Political-science majors typically espouse dissonance as “negotiating tactics,” which is closer to the truth, while military trainers believe that it will help make young recruits more resistant if captured.

But the goal of cognitive dissonance, as with all surreptitious opinion-molding, is to get people to respond to a contrived “stimulus” (usually a hot-button topic or situation) with knee-jerk reactions, leaving reason behind. In so doing, the subject is thrust unawares into a twisted view of reality. In today’s politically correct environment, this unorthodox technique is sold as intellectual and academic freedom. If you crave some heavy reading on the subject, look no further than Moscow’s *Social Psychology and Propaganda*, translated into English — a now-declassified how-to text confiscated by U.S. troops in Grenada. One chapter heading reads: “How to Start a Rumor.” Fascinating.

Similarly, encounter sessions (or “therapy groups”) are predicated on fostering emotional toughness. Facilitators lead participants to accept ideas and deportment they normally would not tolerate. What they actually get is “re-education,” Soviet-style. Schools of behavioral science, such as Esalen Institute and the Western Training Laboratory for Group Development, allude to consensus — group thinking — as being the objective. Encounter groups deliberately heighten peer pressure — isolating holdouts of a viewpoint and intimidating weaker individuals by ridiculing them, cursing at them, yelling at them, and ostracizing them until they “cave.” Some even commit suicide. That’s why NTL, for example, carries a disclaimer which the applicant must sign prior to admission:

No person concerned about entering a stress situation should participate in NTL programs.... A small percentage of participants have experienced stress reactions in varying degrees. There is no means of predicting such reactions or screening out or otherwise identifying those predisposed to such reactions.

Now any thoughtful person, upon reading this, would realize that the very concept of psychological screening must be a sham. If psychologists are unable to predict or screen out individuals predisposed to become upset by NTL’s daunting program, then how do they expect to “screen” the entire population for mental illness? Yet, just such an initiative was funded by Congress in 2002, with copycat bills set for launch in several states. Could our nation’s leaders be looking to avert political dissent under the pretext of preventing emotional “diseases”?

Wouldn’t be the first time...



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Which brings us back to “perception management,” or “PM.”

When imposing appropriate levels of conflict and stress becomes more important to selling an idea or product than the rights of individuals, then you know that something is wrong. We now have 27 million Americans being treated for depression, mostly with drugs; untold millions more, especially women, treated for anxiety; millions of children on drugs for hyperactivity, attention deficit, and various “learning disorders”; some one-fifth of our soldiers treated for post-traumatic stress disorder; and thousands more on antipsychotics that compromise their own physical health — and everybody’s public safety. Why, confronted with the facts, can we not see that the diagnoses are themselves “off base,” and that conduct such as rudeness or sadness emanates from causes having nothing to do with a malfunctioning brain?

Indeed, who would qualify as “normal” in the eyes of mental-health experts?

Perhaps only those who buy into the whole “mental disease” crock — hook, line, and (unfortunately) sinker.

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