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MJC

McMaster Journal of Communication

Vol. 10, 2013



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The Carrot, the String and the Hand that Controls Them.

Preface by David Schokking; Editor in Chief.

In 1939 the Royal Air Force first began to use a secret radar technology known as the on-board Airborne Interception Radar (AI) in response to the Luftwaffe's devastating nighttime attacks on Britain. This radar technology proved to be essential to the allied war effort, pinpointing Nazi bombers well before they could cross the English Channel, thereby saving countless lives, stirring support from allies and citizenry alike, and potentially influencing the outcome of the war effort as a whole. As such, AI was deemed highly classified and precious information. To keep the AI secret and out of the hands of the axis, the ministry responded to a temporary wartime oversupply of carrots ("*There used to be a joke about only donkeys eating carrots. Now it seems we shall all be donkeys if we don't.*" *Kitchen Front broadcast, 7 January, 1941*) by suggesting to the citizenry – and the axis spies amongst them – that these underwhelming vegetables were the secret to British pilots' recent excellent nighttime marksmanship. The RAF published this misinformation in papers and on radio broadcasts with great success. Stories such as John 'Cats Eyes' Cunningham crediting his superb night vision to an abundance of carrots in his diet soon became the talk of the town. The information led to a glut of carrot consumption by the public (and surely a few stubbed toes) during compulsory blackouts during the war.

There are an awful lot of carrots in and around this very important 10th edition of the MJC. The image of the carrot on a string exemplifies the notions of power and persuasion (the running theme of this edition). In the aforementioned story, the RAF and the British government manipulated and persuaded the people of Britain to eat carrots in order to achieve a desirable end. They also manipulated the axis spies attempting to unravel the secret to Britain's nighttime defenses.

The carrot on a string image conveys the myriad themes found in the selected works of this journal. Some of the authors touch upon the unseen hand wielding control, influence and power, others deal with the means of control, the string. While others concern themselves with the notion of the carrot itself, a symbol of desire, and its use to achieve certain ends. By no means are the works found herein the sum total of study in this area of scholarship, however, they represent a diverse range of thought and philosophy. This diversity was intentional in the selection process. In its tenth edition, I felt, as Editor in Chief, that the MJC had an opportunity to expand its borders. Although it is a communications journal, I have always felt that Communications (capitol 'C') has a place in every field of scholarship. Therefore, when selecting works, I made it clear to the editorial committee that diversity of thought and perspective was a paramount goal, furthermore, as a 'bridging' of ideas, the diverse fields of study found in these pages were given strong consideration.

These works exemplify more than fantastic communications research, but also philosophy, cultural and gender studies, political science and linguistics each afford a distinct lens through which to view the equally diverse subject matter. Likewise the theme of this issue, 'Power and Persuasion', was chosen for both its breadth of concept, and its particularities, allowing for our authors to contribute to the immeasurable wealth of thought found under each heading. It is therefore a testament to the editorial committee which was flexible and fluid in evaluating submissions to the numerous fields being represented within these pages.

The editorial team, consisting of Lisa LaRocca, Alyssa Lai, Maida Amir, Christopher Terry, & Kyle Brown, reviewed, selected and edited the numerous submissions we received with in depth notes and eye opening observations that myself, and the authors no doubt appreciated tremendously. The editorial team did so while completing graduate work, conflicting schedules, and their own publication attempts and completed the editing process a full *two months* ahead of schedule! Furthermore, for the eagle eyed amongst you, you'll notice that two of our editorial team (Kyle Brown and Christopher Terry) have had works selected for publication. A note about the peer review process. As editor-in-chief, I was the only one who read and selected the top finalist's works. Throughout the selection process I was the only one who knew the authorship of each paper, and the identities of the authors were kept secret throughout the process. All editors edited only three works, allowing me to avoid any authors from reviewing their own submissions or the submissions of a friend. I also took care to avoid interaction between editors regarding the content of the selected appears until the final works were revealed. Similarly, any classmates of potential candidates did not review the selected works.

Special thanks are due to Lisa LaRocca, who worked patiently while I clumsily delegated the layout of this journal. Her patience is incredible and this journal could not be possible without her help. Thanks also to the team for assembling a dynamic issue of the McMaster Journal of Communication. On the subject of the carrots, another very special thanks must be extended to Chris Brown. His inventive and dynamic artwork is an integral component to the design of this journal, inside and out. Every Carrot, from the imposing cover to the black and white sketches throughout, were born from the fertile soil of his magical mind. You are encouraged to check out his website @ www.cbpencil.com.

Finally, thank you to the support of the staff of the Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia at McMaster University – in particular Christine Larabie – a former MJC Editor in Chief, for helping me navigate uncertain waters with this publication. Special thanks also to Dr. Alex Sévigny for being a trusting counsel, voice of wisdom, reliable and accepting source of oversight and a friend.

The themes of this journal are close to my heart, as a great deal of my own research focuses on persuasion ethics and the role of power in manipulative branding. Power is a somewhat broad term, having a role in nearly all papers regarding the study of interpersonal relations. However, the inclusion of this term was intentional. Persuasion analysis, without a study of the hand that rocks the cradle, the intentionality, or the resultant gains is almost always lacking. The authors in this edition have shown that power can be wielded in a myriad of ways, but persuasion can often muddy the waters of simple delegation. Persuasion, too, is liquid and ephemeral. The tools of persuasion are constantly changing and evolving,

leaving study of its parameters ever constant, ever shifting and wholly modern. In an era where personal control is at a seemingly all time high, why do our grasps of the strings being pulled continue to feel so exiguous?

The history of persuasion scholarship and its particular techniques, alternately, can be generally traced to ancient Greece, specifically with the Sophists and, in particular Aristotle's (1991) work on *rhetoric* wherein Aristotle famously defined rhetoric as, '*the power to admit the persuasiveness of which any particular matter admits. For of no other art form is this the function.*' Since then, many notable theorists have debated the role and ethicality of rhetorically persuasive tactics.

Persuasion is a far more complex act than mere deception or 'lying' outright. Persuasion may potentially involve specific tactics to motivate a party to one's desired perspective or outlook. Regarding the use of the truth, persuasion may involve the manipulating and 'framing' of the truth in order to convince another individual (or individuals) of a desired truth claim. It may be argued that with the ability to persuade comes great power, however, intentionality must undoubtedly play an important role. Troels Engberg-Pederson (1996) has argued that Aristotle idealizes rhetoric by assuming that a successful orator was a visceral part of a comprehensive language game directed towards discovering truth. Truth, as highlighted particularly by this issue's authors, is a murky subject made all the less clear by the muddying of those in power through persuasive techniques.

A number of thinkers such as, Rucker, Tormala & Petty (2004), have viewed successful persuasion as a means of undermining cognitive resistance; indeed, without a resistant force to work from, there is no belief to overcome and thus no truth to persuade one towards. Persuasion is thus relational and, much like power, is a study in interaction and resistance, as much as submission. Theories of persuasion such as Harmon-Jones' most recent application of the *cognitive dissonance theory*, originally theorized by Festinger in 1957, center around the technique of presenting conflicting stimuli to remove or alter opinion while William and Pamela J. Benoit (2008) attempts to mitigate the ethical pitfalls of persuasive action by incorporating a utilitarian calculus (ends vs. means), alternately Randal Marlin (2002) balances this view by utilizing a pseudo Kantian deontology (rule based ethics) and his maxim of universalizability to argue against propagandistic persuasive techniques, particularly by those in positions of power. Providing another ethical framework from which to consider the tools of power and persuasion, Herrick (1992) has argued that the key to moral rhetoric and persuasion is an incorporation of virtuous character with an appreciation for excellence within rhetorical and persuasive technique, concluding for an ethically guided character-based pedagogy of communication. Each of these thinkers understood that a comprehensive study into the ethicality of various persuasive endeavors was intrinsically linked to the ethical parameters of truth. However, as Aristotle noted via his construction of Ethos, Pathos and Logos, the truth is as much contextual and relational as much as it is utilizable.

A large contingent of the writings on persuasion center on volitional behavior theory, initially detailed in Miller's 1980 work *Persuasion: New Directions in Theory and Research*, eventually growing into the theory of reasoned action (TRA). Scholars of TRA have utilized it in numerous behavioral analysis' such as scripted manipulation (Langer 1989), cooperation (Liska, 1984), and consumer attitude measures (Fishbein, and Ajzen, 1980), however, it is

Hale, Householder and Greene's more modern 2002 account which most effectively deals with persuasive influence by means of measuring and focusing change vis-a-vis behavior and target intentionality.

The focus on the intentionality of the target and the marked issue of coercion at the center of this theory closely resembles and Sunstein's modern libertarian paternalism model of influence (2008).

Nowhere are the techniques of persuasion currently more pervasive, and problematic for these very same reasons, than in politics, media and marketing. Christopher Terry, Roy Campbell and Kyle Brown have articulated the problematic uses of persuasion within these fields particularly well, whereas Natasha Szostak and Aaron Lauretani have focused their scholarship on persuasion and power far more indirectly.

Christopher Terry's analysis of power and persuasion through cross promotion is a fascinating analysis of the tools of manipulation and the ends that can be achieved when those in power congregate ends and means. Through what he designates as 'herding', his work analyzes and critiques the techniques of Bell media putting their own promotion before the public's ability to be informed.

Szostak highlights the world of persuasive influence regarding gender equality in the powerful modern medium of YouTube. She analyzes power dichotomies in a new digital age and the effects the public sphere may have in shaping how we view gender roles, each other, and communications as a whole.

Aaron Lauretani provides a far more theoretical analysis of persuasion and its influences, arguing that persuasion has an important role within any moral standard, but still ought to be mitigated and managed, rather than demonized outright. Lauretani weaves a complex philosophical tapestry, reshaping the frameworks surrounding both power and persuasion, and the parameters in which they engage.

Kyle Brown questions the role of power and control in the architecture of the digital democratic movement. He argues that, optimism aside, the internet, in particular emerging social networking technologies, function more as tools of capitalistic growth rather than individual expressionism. Arguing that we have been persuaded to blindly embrace this technology as a democratic tool, Brown asserts that the 'public sphere' of the internet is simply the extended reach of power, profit and control.

Finally, Roy Campbell's analysis of rhetorical speech during Canadian Parliamentary members during Question Period examines the tools of rhetoric, and questions their necessity in the political system. Arguing that the discursive tools of manipulation are married to an agenda setting effect on the issues debated, Campbell highlights the importance of monitoring those in power, and the effects their discourse may yield within a broader context.

Each of these thinkers has explored our role within numerous complex systems. In some cases we persuade ourselves, in others, we are the mark in a long con. As a journal representing critical thought at the graduate level, it would be hypocritical to ignore that

academia and education have shared in criticisms regarding the power to construct narratives in the burgeoning minds of youth, and the persuasive technique innately situated in educational practice. Carey (1997) contrasts persuasion in the commercial field from persuasion in the realm of education by arguing that intentionality plays a subtle yet essential role, “Here, at least ideally, the purpose is to encourage critical inquiry and to open minds to arguments...rather than close them.”

Alternately, Edward Bernays (1923), one of the fathers of modern public relations, strongly contradicted this view by arguing that the only difference between education and propaganda was perspective. What we *choose* to believe is then deemed ‘education’, what we do not is seen as propaganda and requires a more active and distinct persuasive element. It is a sobering consideration, and one that, as educators, we must take to heart. The role of scholarship is to question, however, without questioning the roles we play within the clockwork, we only hinder ourselves.

The carrot, the rope, and the hand that controls them. These elements of power and persuasion are constantly evolving critical means and ends within an ever-changing relational topography, as such, their continued consideration and study is paramount. There will always be those who see fit to wield a myriad of metaphorical carrots in the face of those who bend to influence, it is the role of scholarship to know why and at what costs.

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