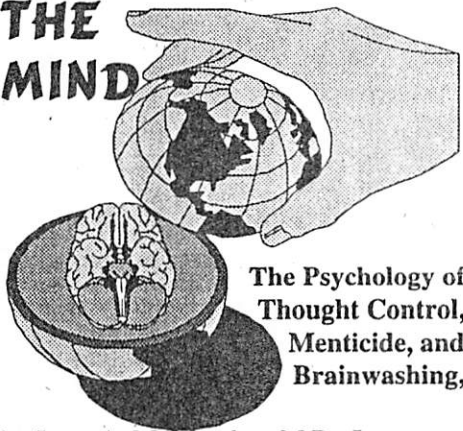


THE RAPE OF THE MIND



The Psychology of Thought Control, Menticide, and Brainwashing,

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CHAPTER TWO PAVLOV'S STUDENTS AS CIRCUS TAMERS

Mass Conditioning Through Speech

According to official Pavlovian psychology, human speech is also a conditioned reflex activity. Pavlov distinguished between stimuli of the first order, which condition men and animals directly, and stimuli of the second order, with weaker and more complicated conditioning qualities. In this so called second signal system, verbal cues replace the original physical sound stimuli. Pavlov himself did not give much attention to this second signal system. It was especially after Stalin's publication in 1950 on the significance of linguistics for mass indoctrination (as quoted by Dobrogaev) that the Russian psychologists began to do work in this area. In his letter, Stalin followed Engel's theory that language is the characteristic human bit of adaptive equipment. That tone and sound in speech have a conditioning quality is something we can verify from our own experience in listening to or in giving commands, or in dealing with our pets. Even the symbolic and semantic meaning of words can acquire a conditioning quality. The word "traitor," for example, provokes direct feelings and reactions in the minds of those who hear it spoken, even if this discriminatory label is being applied dishonestly.

Through an elaborate study on speech

reflexes written by one of the leading Russian psychologists, Dobrogaev, we get a fairly good insight into the ways in which speech patterns and word signals are used in the service of mass conditioning, by means of propaganda and indoctrination. The basic problems for the man tamer are rather simple: Can man resist a government bent on conditioning him? What can the individual do to protect his mental integrity against the power of a forceful collectivity? Is it possible to do away with every vestige of inner resistance?

Pavlov had already explained that man's relation to the external world, and to his fellow men, is dominated by secondary stimuli, the speech symbols. Man learns to think in words and in the speech figures given him, and these gradually condition his entire outlook on life and on the world. As Dobrogaev says, "Language is the means of man's adaptation to his environment." We could rephrase that statement in this way: man's need for communication with his fellow men interferes with his relation to the outside world, because language and speech itself the verbal tools we use are variable and not objective. Dobrogaev continues: "Speech manifestations represent conditioned reflex functions of the human brain." In a simpler way we may say: he who dictates and formulates the words and phrases we use, he who is master of the press and radio, is master of the mind.

In the Pavlovian strategy, terrorizing force can finally be replaced by a new organization of the means of communication. Ready made opinions can be distributed day by day through press, radio, and so on, again and again, till they reach the nerve cell and implant a fixed pattern of thought in the brain. Consequently, guided public opinion is the result, according to Pavlovian theoreticians, of good propaganda technique, and the polls a verification of the temporary successful action of the Pavlovian machinations on the mind. Yet, the polls may only count what people pretend to think and believe, because it is dangerous for them to do otherwise.

Such is the Pavlovian device: repeat mechanically your assumptions and suggestions, diminish the opportunity of communicating dissent and opposition. This is the simple formula for political conditioning of the masses. This is also the actual ideal of some of our public relation machines, who thus hope to manipulate the public into buying a special soap or vot-

ing for a special party.

The Pavlovian strategy in public relations has people conditioned more and more to ask themselves, "What do other people think?" As a result, a common delusion is created: people are incited to think what other people think, and thus public opinion may mushroom out into a mass prejudice.

Expressed in psychoanalytic terms, through daily propagandistic noise backed up by forceful verbal cues, people can more and more be forced to identify with the powerful noisemaker. Big Brother's voice resounds in all the little brothers.

News from Red China, as reported by neutral Indian journalists [See the "New York Times", November 27, 1954] tells us that the Chinese leaders are using this vocal conditioning of the public to strengthen their regime. Throughout the country, radios and loud speakers are broadcasting the official "truths." The sugary voices take possession of people, the cultural tyranny traps their ears with loud speakers, telling them what they may and may not do. This microphone regimentation was foreseen by the French philosopher La Rochefoucauld, who, in the eighteenth century, said: "A man is like a rabbit, you catch him by the ears."

During the Second World War the Nazis showed that they too were very much aware of this conditioning power of the word. I saw their strategy at work in Holland. The radio constantly spread political suggestions and propaganda, and people were obliged to listen because the simple act of turning off one's radio was in itself suspicious. I remember one day during the occupation when I was taking a bicycle trip with some friends. We stopped off to rest at a cafe that, we later realized, was a true Nazi nest. When the radio, which had been on ever since we arrived, announced a speech by Hitler, everyone stood up in awe, and it was a must to take in the verbal conditioning by the Fuhrer. My friends and I had to stand up too, and were forced to listen to that raucous voice crackling in our ears and to summon all our resistance against that long, boring, repetitive attack on our eardrums and minds.

Throughout the occupation, the Nazis printed tons of propaganda, Big Lies, and distortions. They even went so far as to paint their slogans on the stoops of the houses and in the streets. Every week

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newly fabricated stereotypes ogled at us as if to convince us of the splendor of the Third Reich. But the Nazis did not know the correct Pavlovian strategy. By satisfying their own need to discuss and to vary their arguments in order to make them seem more logical, they only increased the resistance of the Dutch people. This resistance was additionally fortified by the London radio, on which the Dutch could hear the sane voice of their own legal government. Had the Nazis not argued and justified so much, and had they been able to prevent all written, printed, or spoken communication, the long period of boredom would have inhibited our democratic conditioning, and we might well have been more seduced by the Nazi oversimplifications and slogans.

Political Conditioning

Political conditioning should not be confused with training or persuasion or even indoctrination. It is more than that. It is tampering. It is taking possession of both the simplest and the most complicated nervous patterns of man. It is the battle for the possession of the nerve cells. It is coercion and enforced conversion. Instead of conditioning man to an unbiased facing of reality, the seducer conditions him to catchwords, verbal stereotypes, slogans, formulas, symbols. Pavlovian strategy in the totalitarian sense means imprinting prescribed reflexes on a mind that has been broken down. The totalitarian wants first the required response from the nerve cells, then control of the individual, and finally control of the masses. The system starts with verbal conditioning and training by combining the required stereotypes with negative or positive stimuli: pain, or reward. In the P.O.W. camps in Korea where there was individual and mass brainwashing, the negative and positive conditioning stimuli were usually hunger and food. The moment the soldier conformed to the party line his food ration was improved: say yes, and I'll give you a piece of candy!

The whole gamut of negative stimuli, as we saw them in the Schwable case, consists of physical pressure, moral pressure, fatigue, hunger, boring repetition, confusion by seemingly logical syllogisms. Many victims of totalitarianism have told me in interviews that the most upsetting experience they faced in the concentration

camps was the feeling of loss of logic, the state of confusion into which they had been brought the state in which nothing had any validity. They had arrived at the Pavlovian state of inhibition, which psychiatrists call mental disintegration or depersonalization. It seemed as if they had unlearned all their former responses and had not yet adopted new ones. But in reality they simply did not know what was what.

The Pavlovian theory translated into a political method, as a way of leveling the mind (the Nazis called it "Gleichschaltung") is the stock in trade of totalitarian countries. Some psychiatric points are of interest because we see that Pavlovian training can be used successfully only when special mental conditions prevail. In order to tame people into the desired pattern, victims must be brought to a point where they have lost their alert consciousness and mental awareness. Freedom of discussion and free intellectual exchange hinder conditioning. Feelings of terror, feelings of fear and hopelessness, of being alone, of standing with one's back to the wall, must be instilled.

The treatment of American prisoners of war in the Korean P.O.W. camps followed just such a pattern. They were compelled to listen to lectures and other forms of daily word barrage. The very fact that they did not understand the lectures and were bored by the long sessions inhibited their democratic training, and conditioned them to swallow passively the bitter doctrinal diet, for the prisoners were subjected not only to a political training program, but also to an involuntary taming program. To some degree the Communist propaganda lectures were directed toward retraining the prisoners' minds. This training our soldiers could reject, but the endless repetitions and the constant sloganizing, together with the physical hardships and deprivations the prisoners suffered, caused an UNCONSCIOUS TAMING and conditioning, against which only previously built up inner strength and awareness could help.

There is still another reason why our soldiers were sometimes trapped by the Communist conditioning. Experiments with animals and experiences with human beings have taught us that threat, tension, and anxiety, in general, may accelerate the establishment of conditioned responses, particularly when those responses tend to diminish fear and panic (Spence and

Farber). The emergency of prison camp life and mental torture provide ideal circumstances for such conditioning. The responses can develop even when the victim is completely unaware that he is being influenced. Thus, many of our soldiers developed automatic responses of which they remained completely unconscious (Segal). But this is only one side of the coin, for experience has also shown that people who know what to expect under conditions of mental pressure can develop a so called perceptual defense, which protects them from being influenced. This means that the more familiar people are with the concepts of thought control and menticide, the more they understand the nature of the propaganda barrage directed against them, the more inner resistance they can put up, even though inevitably some of the inquisitor's suggestions will leak through the barrier of conscious mental defense.

Our understanding of the conditioning process leads us also to an understanding of some of the paradoxical reactions found among victims of concentration camps and other prisoners. Often those with a rigid, simple belief were better able to withstand the continual barrage against their minds than were the flexible, sophisticated ones, full of doubt and inner conflicts. The simple man with deep rooted, freely absorbed religious faith could exert a much greater inner resistance than could the complex, questioning intellectual. The refined intellectual is much more handicapped by the internal pros and cons.

In totalitarian countries, where belief in Pavlovian strategy has assumed grotesque proportions, the self thinking, subjective man has disappeared. There is an utter rejection of any attempt at persuasion or discussion. Individual self expression is taboo. Private affection is taboo.

Peaceful exchange of free thoughts in free conversation will disturb the conditioned reflexes and is therefore taboo. No longer are there any brains, only conditioned patterns and educated muscles. In such a taming system neurotic compulsion is looked upon as a positive asset instead of something pathological. The mental automaton becomes the ideal of education.

Yet the Soviet theoreticians themselves are often unaware of this, and many of them do not realize the dire consequences of subjecting man to a completely mechanistic conditioning. They themselves are often just as frightened as we

are by the picture of the perfectly functioning human robot. This is what one of their psychologists says: "The entire reactionary nature of this approach to man is completely clear. Man is an automaton who can be caused to act as one will! This is the ideal of capitalism! Behold the dream of capitalism the world over a working class without consciousness, which cannot think for itself, whose actions can be trained according to the whim of the exploiter! This is the reason why it is in America, the bulwark of present day capitalism, that the theory of man as a robot has been so vigorously developed and so stubbornly held to." (Bauer)

Western psychology and psychiatry, although acknowledging its debt to Pavlov as a great pioneer who made important contributions to our understanding of behavior, takes a much less mechanical view of man than do the Soviet Pavlovians. It is apparent to us that their simple explanation of training ignores and rejects the concept of purposeful adaptation and the question of the goals to which this training is directed. Western experimental psychologists tend to see the conditioned reflex as developing fully only in the service of gratifying basic instinctual needs or of avoiding pain, that is, only when the whole organism is concerned in the activity. In that complicated process of response to the world, conscious, and especially unconscious, drives and motivations play a role.

All training, of which the conditioned response is only one example, is an automatization of actions which were originally consciously learned and thought over. The ideal of Western democratic psychology is to train men into independence and maturity by enlisting their conscious aid, awareness, and volition in the learning process. The ideal of the totalitarian psychology, on the other hand, is to tame men, to make them willing tools in the hands of their leaders. Like training, taming has the purpose of making actions automatic; unlike training, it does not require the conscious participation of the learner. Both training and taming are energy and timesaving devices, and in both the mystery of the psyche is hidden in the purposefulness of the responses. The automatization of functions in man saves him expenditure of energy but can make him weaker when encountering new unexpected challenges.

Cultural routinization and habit formation by local rules and myths make of

everybody a partial automaton. National and racial prejudices are acted out unwittingly. Group hatred often bursts out almost automatically when triggered by slogans and catchwords. In a totalitarian world, this narrow disciplinarian conditioning is done more "perfectly" and more "ad absurdum."

The Urge to Be Conditioned

One suggestion this chapter is not intended to convey is that Pavlovian conditioning as such is something wrong. This kind of conditioning occurs everywhere where people are together in common interaction. The speaker influences the listener, but the listener also the speaker. Through the process of conditioning people often learn to like and to do what they are allowed to like and do. The more isolated the group, the stricter the conditioning that takes place in those belonging to the group. In some groups one finds people more capable than others of conveying suggestion and bringing about conditioning. Gradually one can discern the stronger ones, the better adjusted ones, the more experienced ones, and those noisier ones, whose ability to condition others is strongest. Every group, every club, every society has its leading Pavlovian Bell. This kind of person imprints his inner bell ringing on others. He can even develop a system of monolithic bell ringing: no other influential bell is allowed to compete with him.

Another subtler question belongs to these problems. Why is there in us so great an urge to be conditioned, the urge to learn, to imitate, to conform, and to follow the pattern of family and group? This urge to be conditioned, to submit to the communal pattern and the family pattern must be related to man's dependency on parents and fellow men. Animals are not so dependent on one another. In the whole animal kingdom man is one of the most helpless and naked beings. But among the animals man has, relatively, the longest youth and time for learning.

Puzzlement and doubt, which inevitably arise in the training process, are the beginnings of mental freedom. Of course, the initial puzzlement and doubt is not enough. Behind that there has to be faith in our democratic freedoms and the will to fight for it. I hope to come back to this central problem of faith in moral freedom as differentiated from conditioned loyalty and servitude in the last chapter. Puzzle-

ment and doubt are, however, the crimes in the totalitarian state. The mind that is open for questions is open for dissent. In the totalitarian regime the doubting, inquisitive, and imaginative mind has to be suppressed. The totalitarian slave is only allowed to memorize, to salivate when the bell rings.

It is not my task here to elaborate on the subject of the biased use of Pavlovian rules by totalitarians, but without doubt part of the interpretation of any psychology is determined by the ways we think about our fellow human beings and man's place in nature. If our ideal is to make conditioned zombies out of people, the current misuse of Pavlovianism will serve our purpose. But once we become even vaguely aware that in the totalitarian picture of man the characteristic human note is missing, and when we see that in such a scheme man sacrifices his instinctual desires, his pleasures, his aims, his goals, his creativity, his instinct for freedom, his paradoxicality, we immediately turn against this political perversion of science. Such use of Pavlovian technique is aimed only at developing the automaton in man, not his free alert mind that is aware of moral goals and aims in life.

Even in laboratory animals we have found that affective goal directedness can spoil the Pavlovian experiment. When, during a bell food training session, the dog's beloved master entered the room, the animal lost all its previous conditioning and began to bark excitedly. Here is a simple example of an age old truth: love and laughter break through all rigid conditioning. The rigid automaton cannot exist without spontaneous self expression. Apparently, the fact that the dog's spontaneous affection for his master could ruin all the mechanical calculations and manipulations never occurred to Pavlov's totalitarian students. **END**

"Who are the militia? Are they not ourselves? Is it feared, then, that we shall turn our arms each man against his own bosom? Congress shall have no power to disarm the militia. Their swords and every other terrible implement of the soldier, are the birth-right of an American The unlimited power of the sword is not in the hands of either the federal or the state governments, but where I trust in God it will ever remain, in the hands of the People."
—Tench Coxe, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Feb. 20, 1788.