



The Role of the Lingual Levers in Creating Psychological Power among Mental Manipulators

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ABSTRACT

Mind manipulation is defined as any action or attempt using the psychological authority and language skills in order to get owned the will, behavior and thought of the person or group. This ownership of the mind sometimes can be summarized in the scope of personal relationships, but in social and political arena, some institutions, organized with the aim of individuals' mental diversion trying to prevent their access to the correct information. In such circumstances, people can't judge correctly and sometimes the entire person's physical and mental power is organized in order to meet their demands.

In this paper, we are to investigate the individuals' or institutions' characteristics and their methods of seeking manipulating individual and collective memory in persons; and also we are going to study the mechanism of taking the advantage of language among mind manipulators. In this regard, to have a better understanding of action of manipulation, we should first discuss the manipulators' relationships and contents of their discourse.

Then the role of fallacious remarks and false arguments for deception analysis of individual and collective thoughts will be discussed. And finally, we will explain how manipulators with using of their language skills, in their communications they create an emotional atmosphere and target their audience's feelings instead of their understanding.

KEYWORDS: Manipulation, Language, Manipulators, Communication, Authority.

INTRODUCTION

A piece of mud takes a new shape in the hands of a potter. Can we consider human mind as a shapeless substance capable of manipulation and change?

Undoubtedly, manipulation of the human collective and individual memory is not a new subject among human communities and it has a very old record. Since the time of the sophists like Gregyas and Porthagore and even before them in the 5th century BC to date, 'rhetoric' has been an efficient means to intellectual muscle-flexing during arguments and discussions; and mind manipulation has been a tool overcome public opinion.

In a social life we have no choice but to use language to communicate with others. The internal logic of every bond encourages the individual to preserve his entity and gain more benefits so that he may be able continue social life with much more power. In this regard, language is an effective element for gaining this power. No doubt, among various tools, language is the most efficacious that we use to gain access to our wishes or even satisfy our ambitions; because it provides the opportunity to obtain more power to fulfill different desires.

Among indispensable human characteristics are tendency to obtain more power while enjoying a vulnerable and changeable mind together with fervid feelings and sentiments. The existence of such characteristics and particularities in human beings lead to skirmishes and supremacy among them; and open the gate to any kind of intellectual dominance and mental manipulation. On this basis a group or some individuals come to power and consider themselves rightful to enjoy more benefits and use the outcome of others' efforts. There is another group who is intellectually, physically and sentimentally abused because of lacking such a situation and power.

Manipulation of the collective and individual memory is one of the most used methods to enforce power with the help of lingual abilities. This happens with psychological dominance and creating one or more of the following disorders: disorder in understanding, disorder in judgment and disorder in argumentation.

However it shouldn't be forgotten that there is a sort of argumentation inside any understanding or judgment. Misjudgment, too, usually results from a kind of prejudgment. Mistake in understanding leads to sort of illusion because the individual errs in receiving the surrounding emotional and mental messages.

In this article, in addition to reviewing mental manipulation in a communicative process, we will analyze the role of sophistication or rhetoric as one of the methods for persuading or convincing people through lingual skills. We will also

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examine the psychological features and strategies used by manipulators of mind to overcome individual and collective thoughts.

Analysis

1. Mental Manipulation and Communication Process

In every communicative process, on one side there is the message sender and on the other side there is the receiver; and principally the message sender wants his word to be received properly by the receiver so that his mental purposes are conveyed to him in form of sentences and words in the best way. Although the lingual communication may be damaged due to any reason like the inability of the announcer to present his intention or his lack of command of the language, occurrence of such cases is beyond the will power of the announcer and is not a deliberate thing; whereas the damaging of the message is done on purpose by the manipulators of mind.

These people not only do not care about the miscomprehension of others or creating disorder in the message but like it deliberately; because ambiguity in their word makes it difficult for the audience to decode their message due to everybody's different interpretation of their words.

As a message lacks clarity, smoothness and expressiveness, equally it will cause different interpretations and takings. Choosing such a discourse is always tantamount to avoiding describing a part of reality, or it presents an imperfect and incomplete sentence which will lead to no logical conclusion. Occurrence of such a condition puts the audience before a host of answerless questions. Ambiguity in 'why', 'how', and 'what' of the subjects will always delay the comprehension of the ultimate meaning.

Certainly, everybody knows people around him, who enjoy leadership power, psychological dominance, speech influence, and impressing others. In such a case others usually expect him to take the lead and decide. Sometimes this might of leadership and guiding others is carried out with positive intentions in order to create sympathetic bonds and to improve social relations. Particularly, in the systems based on classical patterns and also paternal communities, paying respect to the decisions of the experienced persons is considered as a part of the value-oriented system and their educational structure. Therefore the ground is paved for mental manipulation of people in different individual, family and social situations.

The provocative factor and driving force of any lingual communication is to answer to a human internal need and his self-love; because otherwise man would never feel the need for language as a tool to communicate. Although in human interactions, basically the interests of the two sides must be observed so that the continuity of connection is possible; but some people, especially those who have been trained in unequal conditions due to gender discrimination by parents or other factors, believe in the equality of the human rights less than others and are just seeking their own desires in social bonds, and pay little respect for the sanctuary and rights of others.

"Participants in strenuous argument sometimes disparage the character of their opponents, deny their intelligence or reasonableness, question their integrity, and so on" (Cohen, M. Copi, p: 143)

These domineering and supremacy-seeking behaviors are more seen among paternal communities that have an unequal hierarchical structure where the individual gets accustomed to resorting force against weaker individuals since very beginning of childhood and adolescence. Therefore, as such people are often supported by the elders of the family and relatives ceaselessly continue their power-seeking method; and consider their indispensable right to bid and forbid other family members. Indeed this little dictator has the potentiality to turn into a bigger dictator in social arenas in the future provided that the job and executive conditions are met.

2. The Role of Sophistication in Mental Manipulation

Sophistication means to make use of argumentation on the basis of a false logic that intends to deceive the audience and seduce his mind. Sophisticated discourse, though with a decorated appearance, has a wrong and shaky foundation because it only relies on the beauty and deceitfulness of word, and it is not based on a logical and rational argument. The Sophisticated discourse does not intend to make a humane relation with its audience via language but it just thinks of overcoming him. Since such a discourse is not based on truth it does not enjoy much stability though in the beginning it might look impossible to detect it from a true and wise word.

"When the sentence expresses an attitude or feeling, however, some of its words may also have emotional suggestiveness or impact. A word or phrase can have both a literal meaning and emotional impact" (Cohen, M. Copi, p: 86)

An argument may be right or wrong, good or bad in terms of conformity with the rational and logical criteria, or being accepted by collective wisdom. Actually the individual or collective wisdom is the criterion for judgment. Besides, the conclusions should be evaluated by the power of wisdom to see its rightfulness or falsehood. No doubt when reasoning is not based on wise and judicially approved patterns will not lead to rational results or won't result in logical conclusion by the audience. Such an argument can be regarded as false.

"The argument ad populum, the appeal to emotion is the device of every propagandist and demagogue. It is fallacious because it replaces the laborious task of presenting evidence and rational argument with expressive language and other

devices calculated to excite enthusiasm, excitement, anger, or hate. The speeches of Adolph Hitler, which whipped up his German listeners to a state of patriotic frenzy, may be taken as a classic example” (Cohen, M. Copi, p: 145)

It should be noted here that: sometimes arguments presented by a speaker or thinker have all logical and rational capabilities among public opinion; but factors like the audience’s mental prejudices or prejudgments, incompatibility of its personal or collective interests with the ideas of the speaker, audience’s unawareness or incomplete knowledge of the issue in question, religious bigotries or ideological blindness mixed with superstitions, impatience for understanding and accepting the words of the speaker, can all be effective and determining parameters for not welcoming or accepting the speaker’s words.

At times the reverse is true; i.e. the ideas and thoughts of the speaker have no logical argument or consist of none of the necessary factors to be accepted by the aware and clever audience, yet since they present answer to some of the psychological, sentimental or ideological needs of the individual in question, or are in compliance with his personal interests and desires, they are intensively supported and approved by him.

Therefore, it is not just the abilities of the speaker, writer or preacher in demonstrating some of his views that create the condition for accepting or rejecting by the audience; but basically the mental and spiritual situations of the audience, his thinking ability, and his level of awareness and knowledge play a determining role in the success of the speaker or writer of an idea.

Misusing upper position to enforce coercion and violence, especially on those who don’t endure such an illegitimate power, is practically imposed by the organs of power. Although there are no civil bodies in non-democratic communities, or if there are, they have an invisible presence; at any rate the ruling political power enters a serious challenge with the civil society.

A powerful orator, besides having knowledge, is aware of aesthetics so that his word is better imprinted on the spirit and thought of the audience. Many of the eminent philosophers throughout history have described “rhetoric” and “oratory” and the goals of these concepts according to their mental experiences. Plato, for instance, pessimistically calls it a kind of manipulating the mind of the audience that is not based on a true and valuable foundation. But some of the stoic philosophers such as Cicero and Caelius gave it a high position and considered it the art of wisdom based on moral models.

Although word ornamentation and beautification are palpable in literary aesthetics, whereas the argumentation power and rhetoric, especially for persuading the audience stem from the orator’s power of analysis and often are seen in the philosophical fields, sometimes these two domains are intertwined so that the orators and thinkers put the two abilities together to gain access more easily to their various political, cultural and judiciary objectives.

Amongst many philosophers of the old times, fluency and oratory had a position no less than that of intellect and logic. Till the 17th century philosophers who used to exchange ideas on rhetoric never raised the assumption that using figures of speech would lead to irrational and false domains. But after that century some of the neo-Platonic philosophers took the very pessimistic views of their teacher as the practical criterion.

Plato considered usage of oratory power, literary figures and rhetoric by the sophists a cause of misguiding the mind. Because he regarded their duplicitous and decorated arguments as nonsense presented to the audience in beautiful clothing. Yet his disciple, Aristotle, shows conditions and situations in which offering reasons lead to firm belief.

After all, is that the individual abilities of orators, writers and preachers that increase the impact of their words or are the words themselves capable of attracting the audience? Is it the tone of speech, knowledge of language figures and encouraging the reader or listener that determines or is it the possession of a broad scope of knowledge and eye-catching awareness of the subject that determines the success of the preacher or writer?

“ if communication is the sharing of meaning, as one important definition states, then it is clearly necessary to study the different kinds of meaning words can have in order to understand why misunderstanding are so common” (Gill, Adams , p: 94)

Definitely all of the mentioned items are considered as the requirements of the speaker’s success but one must not forget the role of the listener. Not everything can be or should be said for the wise and aware listener and reader; for, if the speaker goes astray from the right path he has the proper awareness to differentiate right from wrong whereas the unaware listener could be gulled by any false word in a rightful cover and made happy with untrue promises. So it is the listener that must always be wise.

3. Mental manipulation and psychological pathology

Are we the same as we look, or do we wear different masks and demonstrate a mendacious nature according to the requirements to go forward with our goals? Everyone of us, consciously or unconsciously, embark on manipulating the minds of others in different situations to gain access to the contemporary or even long term demands or else to overcome the thoughts of others.

Embarking on mental manipulation could be examinable in the domain of pathology. As a matter of fact, those who are considered the subjects of this work have different motives to do it. Perhaps material, cultural and social deprivations,

especially in childhood, and educational problems can be considered as effective factors in this act; because those who have grown up in a sound and healthy family or social environment, due to the spiritual soundness and necessary awareness, neither resort to manipulating others' minds nor do they fall victim to such duplicitous behaviors; for, those who try to distort facts and deceive others are often gulled persons themselves, that is to say that they are both the subject and object of this behavior.

Anyhow, mental manipulation is a sort of psychological reaction to the foundation of egotism and selfishness, and the one who manipulates the minds of others ignores all their rights because everybody should be at the service of meeting his interests and demands. He often escapes any agreement or covenant and does not think but about proceeding his objectives. He lauds the awareness, mental and practical capabilities of others as long as they are in line with his interests. He does not tolerate any criticism since his defects and psychological complexes have made him a spiteful and uncompromising person.

Among different tools for playing with and controlling the will power of the individuals fear should be considered as one of the most common and most effective factors. Usually as long as this factor is lasting and active with the (object) person he continues to be affected by external elements and forces other than his personal will power take the control of his mental guidance. But those who are able to harness their internal fears and escape from mental insecurity will flee the despotism of fearful forces, too. Having necessary information and knowledge and enjoying self-confidence are undeniable for success in this field.

Putting individuals in frightful and worrying circumstances severely wears out their mental and psychological ability, makes their decision-making blunt or impossible, and in general undermines their individual and social capabilities remarkably. To get rid of these critical conditions the individual usually takes hasty decisions and irrational solutions to just get rid of this tough condition. The occurrence of such conditions provides a proper opportunity for the manipulator of mind to play with his prey in the best way.

"Manipulators of mind are undeniably the eroding elements of energy. 90 percent of us are the victims of their acts. The 10 remaining percent, too, show a sort of emotional indifference to them and are only annoyed at the form of communicating with them or maybe their misuse of power." (Nazare Aga, page 61).

The levers of power often consider younger people fit for mental manipulation because on one hand they lack adequate experience and necessary maturity to understand the false atmospheres and are easy to affect and impact via their thought and psyche. On the other hand these people are considered a suitable means for exploitation because of their exuberance and strength of youth.

Without any doubt there are some spiritual and psychological flaws in every person. Thus one of the most effective and efficient tools of the mental manipulators to reach success is to detect these flaws in others and exploit them for their vested interests. First, the mental manipulators precisely and rapidly detect the personal shortcomings and emotional complexes of the vulnerable individuals and make use of these defects to penetrate the structure of their personality. If the targeted individual is ambitious or greedy they satisfy his ambitions; if he is cautious and shy they threaten his reputation or family honor; and if he lacks necessary courage to face problems they urge him to move in the direction of their objectives through frightening him of unclear and hard future circumstances.

With an approximately pessimistic view on the harms that could be incurred by confidence in others, Michela Marzano writes:

"Confidence is always accompanied with vulnerability and dependence: when we trust we give others the chance to betray us. The human trust is pregnant with betrayal and before anything it feeds on shortcomings and flaws of others." (Marzano, p: 188).

The mental manipulation is mostly done via creating the feeling of guilt in others; especially among traditional communities and religious individuals, provoking such a feeling is much more feasible. The mental manipulator paves the ground to dominate over his thought and will power by misusing the blunders and flaws of his victim, and also aggrandizing his shortcomings and negative points. Another tool used by the manipulators of mind is to put the audience in a tough situation and annoying him (or rather tormenting him) through asking him to do the things that are beyond his ability and will power. Using this method makes the audience a little bit ashamed and forces him constantly to compensate for the past unfulfilled duties; this is the beginning of the audience's flaw and providing the ground for submission and obeisance.

Those who are popular due to honesty and moral capabilities are considered stubborn rivals by the mental manipulators. Therefore, the mental manipulators calumniate them by their verbal skills, and create a climate of suspicion and mistrust among other people against them. Thus making use of seditious discourse and dismissing the individual merits that are not liked by the manipulator, are among the mechanisms used by him to destroy the personality of influential and popular figures among grass roots.

Since his words do not have logic, he uses threatening methods or flatters elements who are more powerful than him. Anyway the most fundamental and important characteristic of his word is to instigate feelings and misusing excitements and sentiments of his audience via language.

Such people are even susceptible to, sometimes, use vulgar and repulsive literature to force the rival, who keeps away from disgraceful verbal squabbles, to retreat and give in. They are able to fabricate any fact-no matter how clear- to reach their pre-determined goals. Some of the mental manipulators can sometimes deceive many thinkers of the society via using an apparently logical discourse with intellectual mottoes.

Persuasion is a deliberate attempt by an individual or organization to bring about a change of opinion, belief, value or attitude in another individual or group.

“The aim of most persuasion is to get people to do things that they would not otherwise have done. And people will not act before they see that in some way it is to their advantage to do so. Persuasion helps them to make up or change their mind” (Gill, Adams, p: 130)

Conclusion

Although language is able to clarify many realities, it has also a lot of facts inside itself. Indeed this feature is a part of the nature of language which does not always lead to the single meaning aimed by the speaker or writer. Therefore, though many people consider language an effective tool to understand the facts of the world, at times its usage is reversed in this arena turning to a means to mislead public opinion and manipulate mind. In this case vocabulary plays the role of power enforcement. As a matter of fact, misusing the language is another form of its application that harms the logic ruling discourse and word, and drives human interrelation out of its conventional, sound and fair path.

Although the role of language and rhetoric in dominating over public minds was clear prior to the 20th century, language has gained momentum in this century, and the position of rhetoric and the power to change or provoke in different arenas- from literature to politics and in general any arena that there is an “intersubjective relation” among individuals- it has become very prominent.

Mental manipulation is possible in any place capable of materializing a humane bond where individuals try to exploit more. In job positions, social relations and even conjugal bonds and family relations each person, motivated by supremacy over others, can seek to create a sort of mental deviation. Indeed every human being, during his life, may manipulate others’ minds with different motives or be the victim of such action. Sometimes this behavior takes a transient shape. Perhaps Machiavelli was right when he said that in many present fields of human relation the force of fox’s deception is more efficient than that of the lion’s power to reach the goal.

The discourse often used by the mental manipulators is “egoistic” and if it sometimes speaks of “we” it means “I” and others are his subjects and inferiors. Having such a characteristic makes him intolerant to any criticism and he becomes always heedless of others’ demands, thoughts and beliefs.

Psychology considers mental manipulation one of the personality abnormalities that, on the basis of psychological pathology, could be defined as a sort of defense mechanism of the individual, and has its roots in the individual and social training of childhood. As a matter of fact, the emotional gaps and psychological defects of the individual resort to different mechanisms, such as bellicose and power-seeking reactions, to preserve his fragmented psychological or ill structure; although many abnormalities of his personality are covered under the mask of social epithets.

At any rate, employing language with the intention of deceiving the public opinion and changing the realities, and hijacking the will power of others for one’s own interest is tantamount to misusing language capabilities. Moreover, observing no fair morality and transgressing social etiquette hurts the status of language and the human position.

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