

SHARPENING THE PROPAGANDA STRUGGLE BY UNDERSTANDING HOW THE BRAIN WORKS, AND HOW THE CAPITALISTS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY.

Marx's famous quote, "the ruling ideas of society are the ideas of the ruling class", has been the cornerstone of the ideological struggle - the clash of ideas and theory. In addition, the fetishism of commodities coupled to with how competition turns the world of production on its head obscuring exploitation, helps solidify the hold of the ruling class over the working class. But as we shall see, using the latest neuroscience, there are evolutionary advantages which are additionally exploited by the capitalist state and their propaganda machine to maintain control.

We will begin with the following observation. The brain is essentially a defensive organ. One prioritised by adaptive evolution to remain connected to the outside world enabling us to function within it and to remain alert to danger while being aware of changes to the local environment. To this end, the Central Nervous System centred on the brain, subordinates internal communication so as not to be distracted from the external task of surveillance and being present in the outside world.

One example is pain. After being painfully alerted by damage to any part of the body, pain gradually subsides though the wound may be far from healed. It is as though the brain has a pain-dimmer-switch. There are more subtle examples. Take eating the wrong foods or foods that do not agree with one. After a while the brain numbs discomfort. To determine whether the body is sensitive to that food, the gut has to be resensitized. Normally that requires abstaining from and avoiding a particular food for at least two weeks before re-introducing it. The effect can be spectacular. Similarly, some drug addicts go off their drug for a few days to get a bigger kick when they mainline again.

Another example worth discussing is irritable bowel which creates the opposite effect. The gut has a small brain which is attached to the large brain via the [Vagus Nerve](#). When the gut is irritated or inflamed there is an influx of disturbed communication via this nerve to the big brain flooding it with information. This is why sufferers of irritable bowel often complain of foggy brain or of being spaced out as their brains become overloaded. They become disassociated from the world.

So, the body is programmed for abuse from an evolutionary point of view, because muting internal distraction is more important for survival than acknowledging and responding to discomfort. This applies not only to the physical but the emotional as well. The brain can also become inured to emotional abuse. *Put up and shut up* sums this phenomenon up. This numbness gives rise to coping measures replacing reactive measures such as fight or flight. This is especially true when the victim feels disempowered and helpless. This resignation and subjugation is at the heart of exploitation.

Habits.

Energy conservation is also an evolutionary advantage. This applies to the brain in particular. Although it represents only 2% of total body weight, it consumes 20% of the body's energy, even more when strenuous mental activity is undertaken. This article sums it up. "[Habits are the unseen architects of our daily lives.](#)" *"Habits do not emerge by chance; they are the brain's strategy for economizing effort and energy. The human brain, though remarkably flexible, consumes an enormous amount of energy—about 20% of the body's total at rest despite being only 2% of body mass. To conserve resources, the brain automates frequent behaviours, freeing conscious attention for novel or complex tasks."* What is

often categorised as the unconscious or unthinking is really formed habits, habitual habits, often learnt and reinforced over a lifetime.

Habits alter the wiring of our brain. *“[When an action is performed repeatedly](#), neurons in the basal ganglia and related brain regions begin to fire together consistently, strengthening synaptic connections through a process known as synaptic plasticity.”* We rely on habit because it is energy efficient. To break a habit therefore is not only mindful it is also physiological. *“However, plasticity also means habits can be reshaped. Just as neurons wire together to build a habit, they can also weaken and rewire in response to changes in behaviour, environment, or conscious effort. This process—known as extinction or relearning—requires time, consistency, and often intentional practice.”* The process of **wilfully** breaking or reversing a habit therefore costs energy because only a conscious effort will succeed, as energy is expended unwiring then rewiring the brain. For that reason, it is likely that breaking a habit is more energy intensive than forming a habit.

Refining habits have additional advantages. This is particularly true for top level athletes. This can be seen tangentially through the science of predictive processing. *“Instead, those who believe in [predictive processing](#) view the brain as constantly predicting its input based on best-bet estimations via its predictive model. It’s a case of “we see what we believe” rather than “we believe what we see”.* Top athletes broaden and hone their skills, and over time and through experience, their predictive processing becomes more comprehensive. Their actions become habitual almost instinctive. To perform at this level, they use less energy than do lower skilled sportspeople who have to think their movements rather than merely respond automatically.

Again, the neuroscience shows shorter connections in that part of the brain governing movement and faster response times. It seems muscle memory is not found in the muscles themselves, but in the brain-muscle connection. *“Since the [primary motor cortex](#) is involved with issuing specific bodily acts, repetition or long-term training can lead to the greater expansion development of the primary motor cortex, allowing for a higher level of FMS (fundamental motor skills). This repetitive training is associated with an immediate increase in motor evoked potential (MEP) response [10]. MEP responds to the time taken of impulses in order to reach the desired muscle in movement. Depending on how fast MEP is, the faster the motor cortex can designate a certain muscle for movement. This response relates directly to the primary motor cortex because the MEP response is used to assess the conduction time along the central motor pathways.”*

Now let us turn to breaking or reversing habits. One of the most important inducements to altering or reversing habits is reward. The person or worker must recognise there is a must-have advantage in changing their lives. For most people this is not an overnight phenomenon, a Eureka moment. [Studies show that habit formation](#) takes anywhere from 21 to 66 days. The reverse is also the case. Often in political discussion and debate there is frustration when the other party does not immediately grasp the consequences of the discussion or spontaneously challenge their habits.

This is not the goal, the goal is to plant a seed, to plant doubt, to plant the realisation that there is an alternative, something which will grow with time and attention. It requires a conscious process and expenditure of energy in the form of contemplation, which is not immediately achievable to those in a state of exhaustion after work, therefore in a state of conserving energy rather than expending it.

In terms of reward, the evolutionary driver of change, mimicked in LLM (A.I.) computer models, understanding the vital interplay between objective and subjective conditions must be understood. By objective conditions we refer to the external conditions, in this context, the economic conditions. Reward can be split into positive and negative, with negative being defined as the penalty of not doing something. Thus, when the economy is deteriorating dragging down workers, not fighting back represents a loss, a negative reward. Revolutions do not occur when conditions are improving but when they are dire, when the mass of society can no longer live in the old way with its burdens. It is not only ideas which make revolutions, but when conditions confirm them, when they echo off and are amplified by the objective conditions themselves.

We can correctly substitute the word, conditioning, for habit forming, with the caveat that conditioning is an externally induced often coercively formed habit. Which brings us to capitalist oppression. Several examples will suffice. From an early age children, often reluctantly and often with much whingeing, are forced to wake up at a fixed time to attend school, a repetitive process which conditions them for the mechanical routine of turning up on time for work when they are older. At school they are taught to compete and are graded based on their own accomplishments. This precedes their regular performance reports in the world of work. Finally, they sit exams which isolate them from each other, where any co-operation is considered cheating. Once again, this pre-dates the time when they seek employment, when in the interview they sit alone and isolated in front of their prospective employer.

We are therefore creatures of habit, socially imposed from without. An evolutionary advantage now turned into an advantage utilised by the capitalist class. This goes beyond being told what to do, it is conditioned by what the system needs. In many ways this is the opposite of brainwashing, the replacement of ideas. It is in fact brainforming, not removal but reinforcing, often under coercion, not necessarily physical, but certainly under the threat of sanction.

Thus, the habit of being oppressed, of taking orders, is a lived experience. Breaking this habit is at the heart of our transitional tactics, tactics which challenge the existing way of living by opening the door to a new way of being. Often ideas are insufficient to generate this process. The clash of ideas, the pure propaganda struggle only sways a minority in society. The majority, if they are to risk altering their lives need something stronger, experience itself. This is the essence of the *United Front Tactic*; to prove in action that proposals, ideas and warnings have direction, meaning and consequence.

But it's not only about words, it's also about finding the courage to change and the determination to see this through, which requires collective action. Unity is strength and common purpose unstoppable.

Prejudice.

Prejudice is linked to the 'predictive processing' discussed above but confined to the social not the physical world. We interpret the world based on our cumulative understanding of the world derived from learning and experience. We do not, and cannot, approach it with an open mind - a clean slate. The brain does not and cannot work that way. It would be overwhelmed and overloaded. It would have to relearn everything all over again, start from scratch. Besides wasting brain energy, the brain does not have the capacity to do this. Rather we seek to explain the world at any moment based on a theory of how it should behave derived from our previously lived experiences and from learning. We pre-judge the world, and we primarily interpret the world based on the range of our experiences. Thus, it is our experiences which shape our view of the world, until such time that contradictions begin to

undeniably challenge those interpretations, until such time that experiences collide with a world where experience no longer fits and must be adapted.

One transition explains this better than any other example. It's the way [children begin to see the world differently](#) around the age of 8. *"At the age of 8, children are typically in what developmental psychologist Jean Piaget described as the "Concrete Operational Stage" of cognitive development. This stage, which generally spans ages 7 to 11, is characterized by the development of logical thought. Children in this stage begin to understand the concept of conservation (that quantity remains the same even when its shape changes), can organize objects into categories, and start to see things from perspectives other than their own. While younger children may rely heavily on fantasy to explain the world around them, 8-year-olds start to question how things work and seek real-world explanations".*

Prior to that age children see the world as both real and imagined. Falling off a bike hurts, but there are also fairies at the bottom of the garden, and while their father is real so is Father Xmas. They are still unable to categorise the world, to understand how it behaves as well as the distinction between their imagined world and the real world. At around 8 they start to see themselves outside their head, as standing in the outside world. Facts begin to slowly assert themselves over fiction.

The world as it exists is a mass if not a mess of information. Categorisation breaks the world down into comprehensible chunks of **structure**, a veritable mosaic of predictable outcomes and processes, and if not predicted then at least anticipated outcomes and behaviours. *"[It seems our tendency as humans to become prejudiced stems from the evolutionary advantage of categorization](#). Mentally grouping things helps us make sense of the world around us, which often bombards our brains with an unmanageable amount of information."*

Thus, prejudice or pre-judging is hardwired into our brain, centred on the Medial Prefrontal Cortex and particularly the amygdala which processes, inter-alia, fear responses. It can be governed by automatic responses, reflex, or indirectly through learned sensitisation. It is likely that it emerged as a defensive mechanism born out of surviving a hostile world by improving response times. *"[The amygdala, a brain structure strongly associated with fear conditioning in the brain, has been a focus of researching where and how we form unconscious prejudice.](#)" **

And the capitalists are assisted in this thanks to poverty and insecurity. Poverty necessarily limits horizons, reduces the spectrum of experiences, traps workers in their locality. Their view of the broader world is filled in by capitalist propaganda painting a world which serves the interests of the ruling class which cannot be tested by experience due to lack of resources.

In terms of divide and rule, the capitalist class work on this **evolutionary fear mechanism** projecting and presenting a curated world which the intended party has not yet experienced or only experienced in part. This can be seen in number of ways, notably in the form of racism or its equivalent. Racism or prejudice against foreigners or people of colour is more pervasive in communities where there are few people of colour or foreigners. These homogenous communities, stable but brittle because of lack of opportunity - shall we say white communities - have no personal experience to contradict the misinformation fed to them. It explains why more diversified and integrated communities exhibit lower levels of racism and associated prejudices. It seems counter-intuitive, but it is not.

Secondly, there is another aspect which is uniquely working class, collective action breaking down divisions. This was seen during the [Grunwick Strike](#) in the late 1970s and ten years later in the [Fleet](#)

[Street](#) print strike. I was present in the latter strike. One sunny afternoon in Wapping, a large group of protesters approached the picket line. They were the *Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners* group. Many of the print workers were conservative East End middle-aged white craftsmen. When their convenor clocked who this approaching group was, he approached the police to bar them from the picket line saying they were not welcome, but the police refused to do. However, within weeks this group, which had previously proved themselves during the Miners' Strike, were integrated into the pickets by men who now saw them as valuable and determined allies united in struggle. So collective action has proven time and time again that it can overcome divisions when the need for unity asserts itself breaking down prejudices.

There is a final element governing prejudice, disempowerment. The capitalist's ownership of the means of production - the means of life - disempowers workers. It generates insecurity and competitive behaviour. It places workers at the mercy of their employers. Insecurity generates fear, and fear is the most fundamental driver of prejudice, because in the end and from an evolutionary perspective, prejudice was critical for survival. It is this fear the ruling class and their right-wing allies' shape and exploit to divide the working class thereby minimising class antagonisms.

Diet.

It is our brain that makes us human. It evolved on the shores of *Lake Tanganyika* over two hundred thousand years ago nourished by the fresh lake sardines that thrived in that huge lake. Without the Omega 3 fats and proteins, without our prior mastery of fire with which to cook, our brains would not have evolved. So, nourishing our brain is key to understanding our higher functions.

But in today's society with its inequality and therefore expanded poverty, with an unregulated food industry producing tasty crap masquerading as food, many brains are undernourished and inflamed. Such brains have trouble thinking, not because they are inherently stupid, far from it, but because they have trouble processing information. [This study from Warwick University](#) involved 181,990 participants in the UK Biobank drew this conclusion and it was sufficiently large to establish firm associations. *"The research demonstrates how a balanced diet can improve both mental well-being and cognitive function. This study also reveals how diet influences brain structure, particularly gray matter, which is essential for decision-making and memory."* Crucially the study included brain imaging. *They performed better on cognitive tests measuring memory and **attention** and reported fewer mental health issues."* ["Studies have shown"](#) that children with better nutrition tend to perform better academically, and this connection remains strong throughout their education. *Research linking nutrition and academic achievement reveals that proper childhood nutrition can improve test scores, concentration, and cognitive development, which benefits students for years."* A new term has surfaced which includes not only reasoning but mood - *neuropsychological functioning*, which is strongly influenced by diet.

And should poor diet persist over a lifetime then reduced cognitive capacity also endures. ["High BMI affects cognitive abilities"](#). *A poor diet over a lifetime, leading to obesity, will significantly impair overall cognitive function."* Specific foods play their part too, especially super refined carbohydrates. ["A high sugar intake, fat, and fast food meals have a strong relationship with low academic performance and lot of diseases like metabolic disease in other researches of paediatric age group."](#) The other food group which is of particular concern are [Omega 6 fats](#) such as Sunflower and Corn oil. These lipids eaten in abundance inflame the brain interfering with cognitive function. Finally poor diet is also associated with adverse impact on the gut itself where numerous neuro transmitters are produced as [this study](#)

[maps](#) out. Once again besides inflaming the gut and overwhelming the brain, the lack of abundant neurotransmitters inhibits cognitive function and alters moods.

The capitalists are not only responsible for down regulating brain function, but they adapt to it and exploit it by dumbing down their propaganda. This has always been true, but what is different now, is that the internet has made their messaging more powerful. Not so much drip drip, as tap tap on the keyboard, accessing an internet saturated with simplified misinformation and focused messaging taking advantage of what we can define as pervasive cognitive malaise.

Conclusion.

The capitalist class employ tens of thousands of psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists to professionalise their propaganda. These traitors know how the brain works and how to get into the minds of those whose limited experiences, demoralisation and poor diet make them vulnerable. Their target audience are more rural, occupy the most competitive ladders in the labour market and are generally mired in poverty. Their purpose is to ensure that anger is not directed upwards against the rich and powerful, but that it becomes self-destructive by being directed sideways towards the different looking poor. The intention is for the poor to fight amongst themselves.

At the heart of the ability of the ruling class to achieve these divisive goals is disempowerment, the ultimate weapon of oppression. When workers lose control of their lives which disempowerment makes possible, they are more easily controlled and manipulated. That is why transforming society means replacing capitalist private property with workers' collective property. When workers reclaim their property, they reclaim their lives and their security. Only when cooperation replaces competition, can the distracting evolutionary mechanisms needed for survival be toned down freeing the brain's enormous potential.

This article is merely an introduction to neuroscience as an aid to refining our propaganda. To exposing the obstacles and the advantages favouring the capitalist class. By beginning to know how the brain works we can challenge their advantage not materially because we don't have the resources, but tactically and organisationally. At least it will stop impatient comrades dismissing the poor as ignorant and stupid by now understanding how past evolution has been used to shape present behaviour.

Of course, neuroscience does not provide revolutionary political theory, that is a different science. But knowing how the brain works, allows us to refine our revolutionary programme making it more accessible and adequate to the task of transforming society.

* ["The amygdala"](#), a brain structure strongly associated with fear conditioning in the brain, has been a focus of researching where and how we form unconscious prejudice. [In one 2007 study](#), white males were shown unfamiliar faces that varied in skin tone from very light to very dark. Greater amygdala activity was observed in the participants when viewing black faces as opposed to white, regardless of how dark the black faces were." "The most effective method for reducing prejudice so far is called the "contact hypothesis." It suggests that when people actually have contact with members of an out-group, they are more likely to develop positive opinions about them. The contact must be meaningful and valuable to both parties in order to effectively reduce prejudice."

Brian Green, 17th March 2026.