

# The High Windows Articles

by Michael Tsarion

## SYMBOLIC LITERACY II

*The Subversive Use of Sacred Symbolism in the Media*



*Kids won't even find out how much their values have been perverted until they hit high school* - Esquire Magazine

*We have come to expect hidden messages in our kids' TV* - Douglas Rushkoff (*Media Virus*)

Due to chronic symbol illiteracy we tend to be unaware of a great poison in our midst, something that has a profound effect, negatively, on our conscious and unconscious selves. This is the use of subliminal persuasion in media and advertising. This persuasion constitutes nothing less than a psychic dictatorship. It involves the conscious subversive manipulation and public purveyance of words, images, numbers, colors, rhythms, and symbols which are then directed, via the ubiquitous media oracles, toward the limbic areas of the human brain.

The artifice of the Media Persuaders produces an elaborate and insidious cryptic language specifically designed to stimulate fantasy versus reality dichotomy, compulsive urges of the lower appetites, and a plethora of mundane and dissonant drives which conflict with an individual's higher conscious nature and intentions. Constant exposure to such subliminal content serves to undermine the healthy drives. It subverts the natural moral sensibility and ultimately arrests human spiritual maturation. The devastating effects of such subversion on our selves, and on our children, has rarely been explored to any great depth and has yet to be recognized by the public at large who, being victims of chronic "symbol illiteracy," are un-shielded against the constant barrage of subliminal information entering their minds causing, over time, a nightmare list of physical and psychic disorders. In the mind of this author there can be no question of positive social change, no question of either national or global healing until human beings, particularly those in the western world, become lucidly cognizant and profoundly educated concerning the power of symbols, not only as transcendental portals, or mathematical devices, but as weapons in the hands of plutocratic elites, with occult agendas, laboring to arrest the mental, emotional, and spiritual maturation of the under-classes. The alarming existential chaos which the young presently endure, though mostly deplored and ignored, serves as a direct indictment to the existence of the

symbolic subversion I mention. The young are, by definition, closer to the creative force than the average adult. They are also more influenced by the drives of the limbic brain and, therefore, respond with greater zeal to the erotic and even perverse symbolic messages which are becoming more and more pervasive in their life- and think-space. The invasive, clandestinely directed content has been adroitly designed to bypass their moral conscience and rational filter.

*...research has shown that in the first few milliseconds of our perceiving something we do not only unconsciously comprehend what it is, but decide whether we like it or not; the cognitive unconscious" presents our awareness with not just the identity of what we see, but an opinion about it. Our emotions have a mind of their own, one which can hold views quite independently of our rational mind - Daniel Goleman (Emotional Intelligence)*

*It is a great source of error to believe that there is no perception in the soul besides those of which it is conscious - Gotffried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716)*

*Children's television and MTV, in fact, are the easiest places to launch counterculture missiles. The more harmless or inane the forum, the more unsuspecting the audience - Douglas Rushkoff (Media Virus)*

Subliminal messages permeate television programs, computer games, magazines, billboards, products, and musical productions. They are, however, not limited to the ambience of the young. They are just one of the weapons in the arsenal of soul-less, conscience-less, and psychopathic corporations whose entire *modus operandi* concerns profit and dehumanization. All that is truly aesthetic, traditional, cultural or substantial, merely stands in the way of their monopolistic stratagems, their aggressive, relentless efforts at reducing the entire human race to a body of narcissistic, sense-infatuated, desensitized, amoral, immoral or actively criminal "happy depressives"\*\* wielding credit cards.

*I think we are destroying the minds of America and that has been one of my lifelong ambitions - John Kricfalusi (creator of the Ren and Stimpy Show)*

*The language of business is not a language of the soul or the language of humanity. It's a language of indifference, it's a language of separation, secrecy and hierarchy - Anita Rodderick (creator of the Body Shop)*

*...the corporation remains as it was at the time of its origins, as a mad business institution in the middle of the nineteenth century, and legally designated "person" designed to valorize self interest and invalidate moral concern. Most people would find its "personality" abnormal, even psychopathic, in a human being, yet curiously we accept it in society's most powerful institutions - Joel Bakan (The Corporation)*

Business is business we say; people are merely selling their products. If only this were true. A little research and objective observation tells a different tale. The elite of the advertising agencies are extraordinarily educated and intuitive people usually from private schools or hired by prestigious think-tanks. Though it may come as news to the consumer, it is a fact

that selling products is only an ostensible concern to them. Though it may sound rather bizarre, it is their job to implant political and aesthetically conditioning motifs within the brains of their erstwhile viewers. These implanted messages are, more often than not, against the interests of the conscious volition. It is therefore an actual crime to put them out. Their ability to do this successfully arises from the fact that the advertisers are fully conversant with the intricacies of human and social psychology, the operations of the mind and the autonomic motor skills. They study the complex nature of desire, emotion, libido and appetite and many of their researches take them into occult fields, into the realm of sabeanism and magick where talismans, amulets, symbols, mudras, mantras, and rhythms are frequently used for healing and apotropaic means.

*Some of the most talented and creative people in the world are dedicated this work, indeed, the most skillful propagandists of our time are not working for dictators, they are certainly not working exclusively for the Democratic party or the Republican either. They are working for Foote, Cone & Belding, Ogilvy & Mather, and DDB Needham Worldwide - Jane Kilbourne (Can't Buy My Love)*

Down through the centuries symbols are memorized and become part of the collective phylogenetic reservoir. They are in our "Race Memory." When such symbols are used they invariably stimulate reactions, often emotive and sexual. Some were and still are specifically designed to affect the limbic centers of the brain. In primitive cultures we hear of the Voodoo doctor and his attendant zombie. The latter was an ordinary live, thinking person, who was slowly and surreptitiously administered the juice of the *Datura* plant which drugged his senses and consciousness into a state of listlessness and passivity. Each day, lest he revive, the zombie had to ingest more of the potion. Today, we see the same process at work, only with greater frequency and over a larger demographic. In our case, the "*Datura*" is not organic, but auditory, visual and digital. We have ivory-tower witchdoctors and cyber-space sorcerers. Their particular concoction of spells are cast via techniques that go by names such as *Tele-hypnosis, Metacontrast, Hemisync, Synaesthesia, and Embedding*. New techniques, yes, but with the same deadly effect as any past voodoo, sorcery or telepathy. Recently, a professional hypnotist declared that the very same skills used to lull the mind into a state of suggestibility are unquestionably used by advertising agents.

*We must all face the fact that our leaders are certifiably insane or worse - William S. Burroughs*

*You don't understand...It's not about money...It's about power and influence - Michael Ovitz (interview with Mike Rosenfield)*

Yes, it appears that the magicians and wizards, the "enchanters" of the story books, are still alive and well and very busy. Advertisers are the "Leonardos" and "Michaels" of today and are still very much under oligarchic patronage. They are, however, not utilizing their prodigious endowments for the spiritual or cultural uplift of mankind. They are master persuaders and deal in behavioral and motivational sciences. Their *modus operendi* is the systematic erosion of the moral, intellectual and spiritual architecture of society. Cannot the spiritual vacuity and moral degradation of our century be traced to the corruption peddled

by these Apollonian persuaders in their gleaming corporate penthouses?

*A century and a half after its birth, the modern business corporation, and artificial person made in the image of a human psychopath, now is seeking to remake real people in its image - Joel Bakan (The Corporation)*

*No one's really worrying about what it's (advertising to children) teaching impressionable youth. Hey, I'm in the business of convincing people to buy things they don't need - Advertising Executive (quoted from Business Week, August 11, 1997)*

*...In boy's advertising...antisocial behavior in pursuit of a product is a good thing - Disney Marketing Executive*

We readily accept that most other species can be trained and their behavior altered. This occurs either by direct manipulation and "training" or by the circumferential change to a creature's environment and habitat beyond its conscious awareness. And though its sounds controversial, the situation is no different with the human race. The injustices and criminality that proliferates at every corner of the planet is proof enough as to the success of the Pavlovian artifices here described.

*In the cybernetic age, the individual becomes increasingly subject to manipulation. His work, his consumption, and his leisure are manipulated by advertising, by ideologies, by what Skinner calls "positive reinforcements." The individual loses his active, responsible role in the social process; he becomes completely "adjusted" and learns that any behavior, act, thought, or feeling which does not fit into the general scheme puts him at a severe disadvantage; in fact he is what he is supposed to be...What has happened in modern industrial society is that traditions, and common values, and genuine social personal ties with others have largely disappeared. The modern mass man is isolated and lonely, even though he is part of a crowd; he has no convictions which he could share with others, only slogans and ideologies he gets from the communications media - Erich Fromm (Anatomy of Human Destructiveness)*

*The world consists of imaginary people, claiming imaginary virtues and suffering from imaginary happiness - Vernon Howard*

Without personal study or experience one will balk at these facts. The controlling oligarchs have made real sure that little information regarding this subject has reached the mass public. Though there is an unbelievable barrage of advertising symbols in our world, and though it is known that billions of dollars are involved in their production, distribution and monitoring, the public has little cognizance of the impact that they are having on the inner and outer life. Walking around decorated with the logos and brand names of capitalistic conglomerates is considered normal and even chic today. Though thousands of classical creations of music and art are debauched daily under their hand, and though our visual space is cluttered with ad-copy and billboards, few in authority raise a murmur against it. In professional circles the pyramidal structure of profiteering, monolithic corporations prevents those in even close association with the advertising business from seeing its inner workings.

*The man who does not know what it means to be under psychic hypnosis, is probably already under it - Vernon Howard*

In fact, the only way to really comprehend the complete ramifications of their work is to familiarize ourselves with spiritual symbolism and even with the subjects of Tarot, Alchemy and Astro-Theology, etc, It is only through studying the nature of consciousness and its intimate relationship with color, symbol, number and word that we can take back the power we are, unconsciously, placing in their hands. As the cultural critics have asserted, there are few more physical frontiers to for man to conquer. It has been noticed that there is, however, unlimited room for expansion and expression in cyber-space, on the "information highway" in what is called the "data-space." There, symbolic motifs of all modalities can proliferate and literally infest our minds. The danger here is that these images and their frequency come into minds that are almost entirely illiterate in regards the meaning of symbols. There are 250,000 miles of neural threads in the brain, enough to stretch from earth to the moon, and on each micro-meter of these threads there are over 240,000 bits of information. This data is, however, not in words but in pictograms, composite images. There are 37 sensory inputs to the brain and not just the five we have been told about. The image merchants know how to communicate to the deeper strata of the mind. And in order to discover how put the spell on us we need to develop a new kind of literacy and new correlative meta-sight which transcends the linear, left brain modes of comprehension and analysis.

*The man who understands a symbol not only opens himself to the objective world but at the same time succeeds in emerging from his personal situation and reaching a comprehension of the universal...thanks to the symbol, the individual experience is "awoken" and transmuted into a spiritual act - Mircea Eliade*

Symbols have been used by all major cultures and, naturally, there could be no true advance to higher forms of language and communication without them. Symbols are higher forms of communication. They communicate archetypal memes which words cannot convey. However, within the greater "book," so to speak, of Symbolism, there exists a master chapter - that of the Tarot. The Tarot, with its rich and enigmatic imagery, constitutes the key chapter in the great book of symbolism. I have personally found that the esoteric study of the Tarot, and of its sister arts of Astrology, Kabala and Numerology, greatly assists in the awakening of the innate intelligence which I refer to as the "Wisdom Body." Through these arcane arts we succeed in cultivating true "Symbolic Literacy" and the capacity for "Pattern-Recognition." These Arts allow us to shift the intellect, imagination, and attention into a synergetic and polyphrenic mode where the reason and critical apparatus operate consistently at a high amplitude and in which the psyche is protected from the incoming "viral" messages damaging to its equilibrium and core nature. Through them we gain access our inner spiritual "Guides" who have all our answers, thus freeing us from chronic dependency on other people who are, themselves, likewise condemned to rely on the hit-or-miss "advice" of others around them. Working correctly and responsibly with these high Arts serves to liberate the higher will within us and makes it easier for us to detach from unhealthy fears and longings. Having our higher Self as friend and counselor dramatically alters the "ignorance versus knowledge" and "failure versus success" dichotomies in our

favor and allows us to perceive, and heal, the compulsions that chain us to our respective socially-vetted roles. Eventually, we are not only able to release ourselves from our dysfunctional relationships with other people, but also from those lower-emotional and mental labyrinths that so frequently entrap us inwardly. Through these Arts we assume command over our own destinies and can end the habituation and mediocrity which, unfortunately, has defined the lives of the great mass of urban humanity, since the Industrial Revolution.

*...perhaps there is a pattern set up in the heavens for one who desires to see it, and having seen it, to find one in himself - Plato*

The return to sanity, both personally and socially, has been a major theme of innumerable psychologists, activists, and philosophers for decades. The men and women of reason have concluded that something is very wrong, existentially, with Post-Industrial humanity. Experts have gone to great lengths to describe what is wrong with the way urban man lives. However, they offer precious little of substance when it comes to coherent *solutions* to mankind's vexatious problems. We are now in the twenty-first century and the time for "problem-think" is, in the mind of this writer, over. It is now time for "solution-think;" for mankind to proactively face reality in order to change it, and to have zero-tolerance for all the factors which enslave the psyche or the body. This paradigm-shift involves the acceptance and confrontation of the "dark sides" of the human ego-personality, and a desire to see ourselves in totality, for who we are morally and psychologically. It is our habitual avoidance and denial that have brought the world, and humanity, to the brink of ecocide and psychosis. The ego reigns, but the ego is nothing less than the ghost which has arisen from the grave of the Self. The shift also means a return to the wisdom of our ancient forebearers who did things right the first time, and who lived in harmony with the elements and with the flora and fauna. The high Arts of Divination are their solemn and beauteous bequest to us, and a gift that we need to respect and ardently employ in every aspect of our lives. The Divination Arts contain the mystery of the great rites of passage, and of how a man may make the crossing from the "horizontal" plane of ego-life, to the "vertical" one of self-hood. They contain the secrets of how we transcend Karmic existence and become one with our Dharma (life purpose). Within these Arts we find the archetypal and numinous symbols of Individuation which, like a golden key, serve to unlock the gates of wisdom and salvation. As this gate opens toward freedom and empowerment, the vile door to the world's calamity and debauch is closed and locked forever.

*True sanity entails, in one way or another, the dissolution of the normal ego, that false self competently adjusted to our alienated social reality: the emergence of the "inner" archetypal mediators of divine power, and through the death a rebirth, and the eventual re-establishment of a new kind of ego-functioning, the ego now being the servant of the divine, no longer its betrayer – R. D. Laing (The Politics of Experience)*

*...the prevalent sensation of oneself as a separate ego enclosed I a bag of skin is a hallucination which accords neither with Western science nor with the experimental philosophy-religions of the East...This hallucination underlies the misuse of technology for the violent subjugation of man's natural environment and, consequently, its eventual*

*destruction - Alan Watts (The Book: On the Taboo of Knowing Who You Are)*

Central to our healing and empowerment is the awakening of a socially astute hermeneutic regarding the subversive use of symbols and the complete detailed exposure of the subtle means of persuasion employed by those shadowy oligarchs and technocrats who have always believed us incapable of taking responsibility for our own intelligence, our own mental and spiritual evolution. Over 2,000 years ago, the Greek philosopher Plato emphatically warned his society of the consequences to evolution and truth if the "artists" were unrestricted in their influence of the consciousness of mankind (see *Republic*). I believe that he was aware of the existence, even then, of the subversive elements which seek to manipulate thought through that which appears innocent and harmless. In 1835, the French historian Alexis de Tocqueville, phrased the same concern in this interesting manner:

*I fear that the productions of democratic poets may often be surcharged with immense and incoherent imagery, with exaggerated descriptions and strange creations; and that the fantastic beings of their brain may sometimes make us regret the world of reality*

However explicit, the cogent warnings of Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Jean Baudrillard, and others, have largely gone unheard. Nor should we need the great philosophers to tell us that are symbolically literate personages operating in the world adroitly employing their "art" for the pernicious purposes of control and suppression. Theirs is a legacy of what may be called "black magic" practices designed to adversely condition behavior, control thought, and engender all that is sordid and grotesque in the human psyche. Through their malignant manipulation of words, numbers, colors, images, rhythms, sounds, and light, great injustices infest the world. The ancients would not easily have believed their descendants capable of such sacrilege. In historical times, symbols were employed to inspire and to illustrate the subtlest and loftiest of mysteries, and give expression to man's deepest philosophical realizations.

*Among the ancients, who dealt largely with psychical sciences, there seems to have been a common language which could be used to explain the invisible world and its inhabitants; but we of this age have not yet developed such a language. Consequently, men who deny human immortality, as well as men with religious faith who have not...transformed that faith into a fact, nowadays...in attempting to explain psychic fact, call it mysticism - W. Y. Evans Wentz (Fairy Folklore in Celtic Countries).*

*The Egyptians, either by exact science or spontaneously, had arrived at a method by means of which they could rite with distinct picture of material objects, instead of ordinary letters expressing sounds and phrases. These pictures were not ordinary images of the things they represented but were endowed with certain symbolic qualities (Sophia), by means of which they revealed to the initiated contemplator a profound insight into the very essence of substances of things, and an intuitive understanding of their transcendental origins, an insight which was not the result of reasoning or mental reflection, but was acquired spontaneously by means of divine inspiration and illumination. As artistic representations of this phenomenal world, they revealed, in fact, the ideal world of the soul - Plotinus*

*...numbers are not concepts consciously invented by men for purposes of calculation. They are spontaneous and autonomous products of the unconscious – as are other archetypal symbols - Carl Gustav Jung (Man and His Symbols)*

Cynics who continue to doubt whether symbols and images have any lasting negative affect on consciousness had better remember and study the most recent example of mass control through the use of occult manipulation and symbolic suggestion: Nazi Germany. The Nazis openly used ritual choreography, ancient symbols and rallying chants, powerful mystical logos and regalia, etc, to facilitate their designs and give them control over an entire people. It is known that Hitler and Himmler had close ties with occultists and astrologers and took precautions to wipe out those who would threaten their schemes. Evangelists and other members of the religious elite are also expert in mass-suggestion. As financier J. P. Morgan said: *Millionaires don't use astrology...The billionaires do!* The news-anchors are forever subtly emphasizing stereotypes, dichotomy, and dialectical divisions. Sports also provide one of the most adroit ways of creating and reinforcing not only competition mania, but endless allegiances based on dialectical divisions. Dialectics are found throughout the business, political and entertainment worlds: (Levis versus Jordac, Coke versus Pepsi, ABC versus CNN. Stones versus Beatles, Rockers versus Mods. Letterman versus Leno, Russia versus USA, Republican versus Democrat, Conservative versus Liberal, Catholic versus Protestant, Atheist versus Believer, Gay versus Straight, Black versus White, Arab versus Jew, Rich versus Poor and even Male versus Female, etc).

There can be no doubt that, in general, dialectics are a necessary part of human evolution. It is when the dialectical art becomes a weapon in the hands of those trying to lead humankind to moral and psychological perdition that society has the obligation to take resolute action. The danger arises when a powerful philosophical premise is applied to social problems in the same cold, unfeeling and pragmatic manner as a binary calculation is used to solve some mathematical conundrum. Such egregious manipulation is injurious existentially and socially precisely because it is so pervasive and because the injury is often proportional to the natural innocence and impressionability of the victims. Subliminal content enters the personal or collective psyche against the conscious volition and at the cost of that which is qualitatively superior. It is the proverbial enemy within.

*Advertising is designed to generate an inner sense of conflict with the self - Bernard McGraw PhD*

Throughout the ages it has been considered normal and even exemplary behavior to die for a flag. We still assault others over a sport or political allegiance, feel superior due to the clothes, home, or car that we possess. Ours is a time obsessed with comparison and prestige, over-achievement, and the projection of fantasy into reality. It does not matter a jot whether nature, animals, children, the elderly, the invalid, or other nations and indigenous peoples suffer. I have traced many levels of psychosis and multiple personality dementia, as well as teen and adult dysfunction and sexual criminality, to the effects, through the years, of advertising.

*The ancient Romans built their greatest masterpieces of architecture, for wild beasts to*

*fight in - Voltaire*

*America has the most of everything, and the best of nothing - John Keats*

And no man can be happy when his thoughts and behavior are being subliminally manipulated by a decadent technocratic elite bent on programming him as if it were a mere machine. Their creation is not a happy or free man inhabiting a secure Utopia. He is the addicted victim suffering psychic and emotional impotency and enmeshed in guilt and conflict as a result of it. His inner life is a miasma of unfulfilled desires and misplaced allegiances. He is under the "Hex." Once the connection and rapport with the inner self is occluded, we become slaves of external approval and security. Consequently, those who command our adoration must be like ourselves or be those who *appear* to possess a greater abundance of those chimeras which we believe to be of value. Western man replaces life with lifestyle and continues to award himself, and those he gives birth to, for knowing, as speedily and vacantly as possible, everything there is to know about everyone and everything else in the world *other* than the Self. He sees but rarely *observes*. He thinks, but rarely with his *own* mind and rarely about his own moral and psychological welfare. He fights and dies for the preservation and sovereignty of friends, family, countries, nations, and ideals, but is estranged from himself and bereft of personal psychic sovereignty and emotional immunity.

*The twenty-first century will be the era of the World Controllers... The older dictators fell because they could never supply their subjects with enough bread, enough circuses, enough miracles, and mysteries. Under a scientific dictatorship, education will really work... most men and women will grow up to love their servitude and will never dream of revolution. There seems to be no good reason why a thoroughly scientific dictatorship should ever be overthrown - Aldous Huxley (Brave New World Revisited)*

Tragically, that which man consumes also consumes him. Sickened and desperate in his own soul, and knowing next to nothing about his own essence, he charges back and forth vainly with a thousand and one ideas and plans, pathetically administering to the maladies of his equally debilitated neighbors and fellow humans. His mind is plagued with "media viruses" and his libido rages within from all kinds of toxic embedded programming. By divorcing ourselves from our center and in losing our once natural sense of interior life we become a generation of those who must *have* but cannot *be*, who know *what* but not *how* to think. Persona-drives and limbic-drives predominate and compel man to live at the periphery of Being, on the surface of himself. He does not own his *own* thoughts and yet believes himself capable of "independent" thought and choice. True, thought *can* be creative. But thoughts can also be created, and distorted, by agencies that seek to enslave the very soul and confound the natural intelligence of man. Pestilence and injustice ride their steeds through our world, but they go unseen, sowing the seeds of doom among the innocent and pure, within those hearts and minds as yet unprotected by knowledge and awareness.

*When told that man lives in delusion everyone thinks of himself as the exception – hence his delusion - Vernon Howard*

*Emile Durkheim called this phenomenon 'anomie' and found that it was the main cause of*

*suicide which had been increasing with the growth of industrialization. He referred by anomie to the destruction of all traditional social bonds, due to the fact that all truly collective organization had become secondary to the state and that all genuine social life had been annihilated. He believed that people living in the modern political state are 'a disorganized dust of individuals - Erich Fromm (Anatomy of Human Destructiveness)*

The subversive forces that operate as described, and which deal so contemptuously with the "under-classes" they inwardly fear, can be sanctioned, penalized, and even overthrown once we return to the "Symbol Literacy" natural to our ancient forebearers. When the "inner eye" is opened and "Pattern Recognition" becomes as natural to us as breathing, the tables *will* be turned on the subversive malefactors of Madison Avenue and similar corporate tyrannies. After we develop even a rudimentary critical intelligence it will be then that Truth will decide to once more return and dwell among us. Our indifference and neglect has banished both Truth and Virtue to the voids. To welcome them back into the human circle and to be nourished again by their company we must first adopt a zero-tolerance attitude toward any living or corporate entity whose agendas and artifice flies in the face of reason, which contributes to the rape of the earth, and which profits from the humiliation and impoverishment of all sentient and non-sentient life-forms.

*Signs and symbols control the world, not phases and laws - Confucius (551-479 BC)*

The German sociologist George Simmel once said that the educated person was someone who knew how to find out that which he did not already know. If he were alive today he would perhaps agree that the time has come for humanity to get smart, get educated, and get "into the know," about the psychic dictatorship which has claimed the sanity and the souls of millions. In the terms of the Ad-Men, a new hot slogan and meme are needed - ones to appear emblazoned on the virtual billboard that looms over the troubled and hypermanic world...

## **...REVOLUTION, OR REVELATION?**

*For years they have been studying you. The time has come for you to study them!*

\* "smiling-depressives" - a term used by psychologist and social critic Erich Fromm (see *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*)

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