

MIND and MEDIA



Marshall McLuhan, 1964:

“...the medium is the message. That is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium – that is, of any extension of ourselves – result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by [it].”

Distinctions

- Brain: the physical mass at the top of my spine
- Central nervous system: all the neurons in the body and their connections
- Mind: the work of the CNS, including inputs and outputs.

Does this have an inside and outside?

Mind is:

- **What it does - abilities**
 - **What it is - content**

So, there are ways in, and out:

- **These are **media****

▫ The brain is part of the
body

▫ **The body is part of
the mind**

language

- “...the major burden of the coupling between agents is carried by language. Without language, we might be much more akin to discrete Cartesian "inner" minds, in which high-level cognition relies largely on internal resources. But the advent of language has allowed us to spread this burden into the world. Language, thus construed, is not a mirror of our inner states but a complement to them. It serves as a tool whose role is to extend cognition in ways that on-board devices cannot.”

Andy Clark & David J. Chalmers

Enthymeme: An incomplete expression where listeners may fill in the gaps

- “Death Panel”
- “Take back control.”
- “Make America great again.”

Public language

Public mind

Rockpools



Media

- A continuing, and increasing, volume of aural and visual information buzzes between us – a huge quantity of... something. I would call it a *public mind*, in that what goes on there is very similar to what goes on inside the individual minds that generate it: memories, debates, arguments, news, images, fears and appetites, love and loathing.

Media

- Mind makes its own history, from the materials provided – largely by the public mind (Popper's World Three?).
- But the mind so constituted has an extraordinary ability: having been made (largely) by the world out there, it can then proceed to make that world – or, at least, change it a little. In particular, it can contribute to and change, or try to change, the public mind. We are made, and make, as we move from past to future.

From a smiling pose to staring eerily into the distance: Chilling selfies taken by Gable Tostee with his Tinder date Warriena Wright show her in the minutes before she plunged to her death off his balcony

Scots 'have better quality of life than the English': Brussels bureaucrats claim they're more tolerant and their schools are superior

Fuel prices are set to rise by another 5p a litre before the end of the month as soaring cost of oil and weak pound leads to a 'double whammy' for drivers

Spag bol? That's British, not Italian, says Carluccio: Restaurant chain's founder pours scorn on the UK version of the dish

Farage almost blew it for us, claims Vote Leave mastermind: Dominic Cummings says Out would have won by 60% to 40% without the Ukip leader's intervention

Sir Shifty's £2m bonus for key staff as BHS went into administration: Green handed out money dubbed a 'Philip bonus' to 200 employees at the company's HQ

- Bite-sized
- Familiar
- Reassuring
- World-view confirmed

Mind

- **The confirmation effect:**
 - **ambiguity aversion**
 - **positive feedback**



The echo chamber

- “...a situation in which information, ideas, or beliefs are amplified or reinforced by transmission and repetition inside an “enclosed” system, where different or competing views are censored, disallowed, or otherwise underrepresented.
- “Online communities may find their own opinions constantly echoed back to them, which reinforces their individual belief systems.”

The echo chamber continued:

- “People aren't merely uninformed, they're misinformed, their head filled with false data, facts and theories that can lead to misguided conclusions held with tenacious confidence and extreme partisanship.”

Dunning and Kruger.

*“Amazon and Netflix etc. use algorithms
to build a picture of us more reliable
than our own.”*

John Gray

**In the stock market, prices are set
by what people believe others
believe.**

Happiness is confirmation

- A watch to tell us how happy we are
- A pill to cure unhappiness: the American Psychiatric Association has ruled that to be unhappy for more than two weeks after bereavement can be diagnosed as a mental illness.
- A selfie, to prove you're happy!



Unhappiness is conflict

- “Everyone thinks they're the good guys. Americans think ISIS threatens its existence. Iraqis and Syrians think the US is out to destroy Islam. Hollywood makes movies about gallant heroes fighting the alien invader; we think we're the heroes – whoever we are.”

CIA veteran.

