

The Use of British Nursery Rhymes and Contemporary Technology as Venues for Creating and Expressing Hidden Literacies Throughout Time by Children, Adolescents, And Adults

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Abstract

Power and status are captivating, especially the desire for social status and its commensurate authority and security. Cliques, smaller clusters within larger peer groups sharing similar views, behaviors, and attitudes, are a means of attaining societal power.

Because cliques are typically composed of the disenfranchised holding views different from official ones, asserting powerful, contentious statements while escaping retribution and retaining anonymity is difficult. Hidden literacies, i.e., words or phrases with double meanings, are cliques' simple yet subversive communicative format.

Such literacies refute and/or contest official social expectations and afford opportunities to join the current social power structure, as contributions generally disseminate views to larger populations and cause unease among those in power, a central goal.

Written by adults and chanted by and to children, British nursery rhymes of old were hidden literacies. Their verses were powerful, subversive opinions of political, social, or religious commentary regarding then-contemporary events. Likewise, contemporary hidden literacies are technological communications used by youth for clandestine conversing. Although nursery rhymes and contemporary technology are parallel forms of hidden literacies, their authors, contents, audiences, and impacts are diametrically opposed with this paper exploring and discussing these comparisons, contrasts, and implications.

The desire for social status, and its commensurate authority and security, is indeed powerful. Although extant social groupings are situational with desirability and importance dependent upon individuals and circumstances, people have belonged to, rebelled against, and attempted status advancements respective to the groups with which they retained membership throughout history.

Peer Groups and Cliques

Unless an anchorite, individuals form various relationships and friendships with those sharing common interests, views, and backgrounds. Children, adolescents, and adults form peer groups, i.e., smaller clusters of similarly aged friends sharing the above traits. Groups are of varied sizes and permanence; for example, students banding together to support a candidate in a school election will likely disband after voting, while cheerleading squad members may form strong friendships and remain viable for years.

Groups, specifically those composed of peers, are especially important to children and adolescents, as during maturation they increasingly seek distance and difference from family by forming friendships with those their age sharing various interests and similarities. Peer groups offer youth opportunities to develop various social skills necessary to personal and professional interactions as well as those for forming romantic relationships and additional friendships with individuals of varying ages. They also allow experimentation with new roles and interactions, such as directing a group task or assisting individuals of varying ages.

Educationally, Lev Zygotsky asserts that learners of all ages, with assistance from educators and peers, will achieve far more with others than alone; likewise, individuals gain

knowledge from personal interpretations and perceptions of their environment and through social interactions with peers and adults.¹ Essentially, peer groups assist in developing or refining individual self-confidence and sense of self, i.e., personal identity, and they also mimic adult relationships and interactions with others in societal, educational, family, and work settings.²

Naturally, as children and adolescents age and social interactions increase friendships and groups expand, divide, and separate to include more members of varying ages and more groups, as groupings will form among coworkers, community volunteers, or religious congregations. Zygotsky also declares individuals of all ages socialize one another by responding, both positively and negatively, to others' actions.³ For example, Iannaccone states that educators, regardless of previous training and experience, upon employment will adopt their colleagues' teaching methodologies, management styles, and ways of interacting with students.⁴ Such mimicking stems from group influence and presumably affects, in varying degrees, other professional and personal clusters.

Peer groups are natural and beneficial, but this appears to be an inclusive term that should be separated as although the terms "peer groups" and "cliques" are used interchangeably, the two are not the same. A smaller group that splinters from a peer group and forms a separate smaller cluster for power and/or popularity purposes is more precisely termed a clique. For example, a middle school's gymnastic team is a peer group, but if several members band together within it for the exclusion of other members, it is a clique. Essentially, any discrete group with fifty percent or more of its members using their composition to elevate themselves and/or denigrate others may be defined as a clique.

Cliques and Status

Cliques resemble peer groups by being natural formations, but unlike them provide largely negative experiences for members and non-members. All cliques attain and maintain social domination through their power, authority, and coercion of those subordinate with such power

¹ . M. Dahms, et al. "The Educational Theory of Lev Vygotsky: An Analysis," New Foundations, eds. Gary K. Clabaugh and Edward G. Rozycki, <http://www.newfoundations.com/GALLERY/Vygotsky.html> (accessed February 25, 2006)

² . National Middle School Association, *This We Believe: Developmentally Responsive Middle Level Schools* (Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association, 1995), 10–16; James A. Beane, *A Middle School Curriculum: From Rhetoric to Reality*. 2nd ed. (Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association, 1993), 18; Margaret J. Finders, (1997). Just girls: Hidden literacies and life in junior high (Urbana, IL: NCTE), 19–21.

³ Dahms, et al.

⁴ Lawrence Iannaccone, "Student Teaching: A Transitional State in the Making of Teacher," *Theory into Practice*, April, 73–80, 1963.

held by its most popular members and the highest status cliques predominant. Cliques define what is acceptable regarding views, behaviors, and attitudes, resulting in providing informal social control for both those inside and outside the group by dictating dress, friendships, activities, and more.

They also assert dominance and exclusion to those inside and outside of their group, which such power held by its most popular members. Clique members socialize and interact almost exclusively with one another, albeit not necessarily in positive ways. Those in the clique struggle amongst themselves to be its leaders and thus be its most popular members with the highest status, and in doing so create in-fighting and other like power struggles amongst themselves. Clique members are constantly in competition with each other to retain membership and status.

Indeed, members essentially become mirror images of one another by appearing, speaking, and behaving in a nearly identical manner, all of which lead to individuals' strong identification with and dependence upon their clique. However, such conformity is accepted as clique membership provides stability and status. Status is enjoyable for most, and once attained is difficult to surrender or forfeit. Cliques demonstrate that those possessing lesser status and power desire more, as do those already holding higher status.

Those in the clique struggle amongst themselves to be its leaders and enjoy being envied by those outside it, while non-members yearn to join the so-called elite cliques, feeling they would achieve the popularity and status they currently lack and desperately desire. As neither individuals nor cliques wish to diminish or lose power and status, cliques are selective and cautious regarding accepting new members. Individual status affects the cliques' overall power and perception, so lower status cliques naturally seek alignment with those of higher status as such members will elevate them by association.

Higher status cliques are exceptionally stringent regarding additions. The pool of prospective members would naturally be smaller, and for exclusivity the highest status cliques must restrict their size. For all cliques, and typically those of highest status, new members may broaden and dilute a clique's current social standing as well as challenging or changing present members' status, thus altering the group's internal power structure and perhaps also its outward social standing. The highest status cliques would doubtless least desire this.

Cliques as a whole are powerful, which contributes to their power frequently used for instigation of negative acts, with it common knowledge that a group's power and influence

dominates an individual's; i.e. groups are more powerful than their individual members. Documentation throughout history is rife with examples and warnings of the dangers of group thinking and actions over individual ones. Indeed, the Christian Bible states "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment" and "Also thou shall not oppress a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt."⁵ Both admonitions are surely applicable and a reminder of the clique's overall purpose being excluding others to elevate members' status.

Within clique security, individuals participate in negative actions that they would not consider engaging in singly. Negative behaviors are often softened within a group context, becoming easier to perform with repetition increasingly blurring the lines between acceptable and unacceptable. This is especially true of children and adolescents who are still maturing, and because cliques essentially define an individual's social status and provide a network of friends, losing one's membership is to be avoided. If members adhere to clique regulations, they retain and gain acceptance; if not, they will likely be denigrated or ousted, an undesirable outcome.

Adolescents, especially younger ones and those depending upon it most to meet various social and personal needs, will strive to remain members in good standing within their clique at all costs, and if their nonparticipation in a negative act means a loss of clique status or membership, they will likely readily perform as required.

Although cliques are generally associated with youth, they occur in all grades and through adulthood with adult clique behavior varying little from those of children and adolescents'. Adults also suffer pain and identity loss when leaving a clique, especially as they have presumably invested far more time, such as a female holding membership among a group of married women for 30 years and then divorcing, than youth. Unlike their youthful counterparts, adults lack the advantage of beginning anew during successive school years, as the pain of losing a thirty-year membership will likely be far lengthier than an adolescent breaking with a group after several months.

Of course, the delineation of peer group versus clique rests upon the individual, whether youth or adult; those who use membership for separation and belittlement between themselves and others are viewing and using their group as a clique. Those doing the opposite view their set as simply a peer group; recognizing or attempting to effect change of others' negative behaviors again depends upon the individual. However, retaining membership amid such behavior

⁵ 5. Exodus 23:2, 9.

indicates tacit approval and presumably more discerning individuals would be less inclined to associate with those holding views and engaged in behaviors with which they disagree. Regardless, rejection is unwanted and will likely leave scars on even those with the strongest self-concepts.

Youth Cliques and Hidden Literacies

Adult and youth cliques have been intertwined throughout time regarding social status and power, but to function, cliques must have communicative methods for members and nonmembers. One such form is hidden literacies. Finders describes two broad forms of literacies among youth: sanctioned and hidden literacies. Sanctioned forms, such as posters supporting student council candidates, flyers advertising a school dance, or student newspaper articles, are socially permissible and accepted if disseminated.

Hidden literacies, such as notes passed in class, bathroom graffiti, or yearbook signings using coded messages to hide their true meaning are neither socially permissible nor acceptable if disseminated. Such literacies are used by students' cliques to refute and/or contest official expectations as well as demonstrating social superiority and dominance.⁶ Sanctioned and hidden literacies occur among adults as well, albeit in different forms; it is unlikely adults would pass notes at work, although e-mails containing unprofessional content are surely frequently utilized.

Such literacies also allow students and adults to become part, although small, of the current educational or professional power structure by these contributions, which, if disseminated, broadcasts their views to larger populations. While doubtfully effecting change, opinions are heard and likely cause some unease among those in power, a central goal. Veering from sanctioned literacies causes various recriminations, and any group wishing to assert powerful, contentious statements must carefully select their communicative methods to escape retribution and retain anonymity.

A note confiscated by a teacher may result in some punishment, such as staying after school, but an unprofessional email forwarded or sent in error could result in loss of employment and additional sanctions, depending upon content. Naturally, the more sensitive the material and the older the participant, the more risk incurred.

⁶ 6. Margaret J. Finders, *Just Girls: Hidden Literacies and Life in Junior High* (Urbana, IL: NCTE. 1997), 4–5, 19–25, 32–47.

The hidden literacies studied by Finders consisted then primarily of classroom note passing, yearbook signings, and school graffiti. Both coding and resultant power structures were evidenced; that is, literacies were written and communicated in such a way to ensure they would be received and understood only by the writer's intended recipients. For example, classroom notes were passed and received by select groups; all clique members may have folded the notes themselves in one unique way and its written contents contained abbreviations or other symbols that would be understood only by intended recipients.

Likewise, yearbook signings might also include select abbreviations and references to events or other items known only to writers and recipients, with graffiti following the same pattern. For example, messages of all kinds might state, "Remember the BBD party at Ducky's? LOL & BBF!!," or "M the wonder horse's rents went aggro!" The first message requires the reader to have been at the party for understanding, and the second requires knowing to whom the nickname refers with both needing abbreviations translated.⁷

These literacies were in format, or by their wording, hidden from adults and while they continue to be utilized, this research was completed before today's widespread use of technology. Cell phones and computers, youths' preferred communicative modes of the 21st century, have largely eclipsed them although their intended usage is the same.

Technological access is easily available to contemporary youth and adults; the U.S. Census Bureau reports youth home access to computers was close to 86% nationwide and 83% in schools during 2002. Access to home and school Internet nationwide was 64% and 43%, respectively, but numbers for youth using Internet at other locations was 56%. More educated and wealthier households reported higher technology usage and all figures are undoubtedly higher at this later date.⁸ Furthermore, a Harris Poll estimated cell phones usage at 89% nationwide, with youth showing higher usages than adults.⁹ Naturally, adults have access to technology through professional employment. Contemporary youth are usually equally or more adept as adults in technological use, with this knowledge adding to the ease and allure of using technology as a hidden literacy.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Household Computer and Internet Use: 2003, table*, Current Population Survey, 2003 (Washington, DC: U. S. Census Bureau, 2003), <http://www.census.gov> (accessed March 2, 2009).

⁹ *Cell Phone Usage Continues to Increase: 2008, table*, The Harris Poll, 2008 (The Harris Poll Online: GPO Access, 2008). http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=890 (accessed March 2, 2009).

Moreover, like earlier hidden literacies, codes and abbreviations are now utilized within technology for audience restriction. These can range from standard Internet abbreviations such as LOL (Laughing Out Loud) or AFK, (Away From Keyboard), those known only to senders and recipients, or various checks and balances within communication systems, such as passwords or codes necessary to receive messages or proceed further during a certain program or system.

Nursery Rhymes and Technology as Hidden Literacies

However, hidden literacies are hardly a modern practice; they have been utilized for centuries and closely resemble contemporary versions. One powerful past hidden literacy practice mirroring contemporary ones is British nursery rhymes of old. The creation and dissemination of such rhymes were a hidden literacy that allowed expression of non-sanctioned views, with its counterpart contemporary youth technological use.

Harnad notes the significance of communication tools themselves, as they fundamentally transform human action rather than simply contribute to it.¹⁰ Nursery rhymes are commonly used today and retain past events, but their original use, as contemporary technology, reveals revolutionary, powerful tools affecting and changing human communication immeasurably.

Nursery rhymes are short, rhymed poems or tales for children and chanted to infants (i.e., in the nursery) by adults or siblings. Although the history of nursery rhymes is ancient, the majority of British rhymes date from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. Overall, authorship is generally unknown and depending upon hearers' locations, interpretations of single rhymes have varied.¹¹

Many British nursery rhymes are hidden literacies. Such rhymes (e.g., *Humpty Dumpty* presumably referring to a cannon on St. Mary's Wall Church, *Georgie Porgie* attributed to the 17th century's *Duke of Buckingham*, *Three Blind Mice* probably concerning Queen Mary I, or *Jack Be Nimble* perhaps describing Black Jack, an English Pirate¹²) expressed adults' rebellious opinions of royalty and aristocrats, war, politics, societal issues and religion, and other volatile issues. Historically, their content could not be spoken freely due to threat of severe retribution or

¹⁰ S. Harnad, "Post-Gutenberg Galaxy: The Fourth Revolution in the Means of Production and Knowledge," *Public Access Computer Systems Review*, no. 2 (1991) 39–53.

¹¹ 11. *Nursery Rhyme Lyrics, Origins, and History*, s.v. "Nursery Rhyme Index," http://www.famousquotes.me.uk/nursery_rhymes/georgie_porgie.htm (accessed January 22, 2009).

¹² 12. *Ibid.*

death; adults then did not possess the freedom of speech currently found in developed countries.¹³

Adults now freely employ multiple means of expression without fear of official, i.e. governmental, reprisal, but today's youth, under authority of schools, parents, and peers, are not afforded the same freedoms. As past adults composed nursery rhymes, youth have created a system of hidden literacies via technology to veil their negative correspondence and to communicate secretly with, and against, peers.

Hidden Literacies and Users

Perhaps the most interesting alteration of hidden literacies through time is not their form, but their users. British nursery rhymes were composed by adults to protest power structures and distributed to children for dissemination; contemporary technologies as hidden literacies are composed by youth to dispute adult or other power structures, and disseminated among peers. Moreover, unlike nursery rhyme use, today's youth also use technological transmissions against peers to display and assert power and status. Overall, intertwined hidden literacies show such non-sanctioned formats as ever-present, regardless of user, and necessary to adult and youth communication and expression regarding respective power structures and status.

Hidden Literacies and Power Structures

Inherent within adult and youth hidden literacy systems is the creation of a separate power structure that mimics the status quo, i.e., its users are subjected to and follow the exact suppressive system these literacies were designed to attack. Effects of this structure upon yesterday's British is lost to time, but as the hidden literacy system is similar regardless of era, past influences presumably may be surmised by examining contemporary ones.

Powerful language, whether placed into formats such as rhyme, texting, tweeting, or Facebook, is seemingly mitigated by its mediums. British statements doubtless rapidly gained popularity first by their seemingly innocuous rhyme format; clever, entertaining phrases that were pleasing to hear, easy to remember, and enjoyable to repeat or chant. Technology is full of clever symbols, pictures, and graphics, all of which make messages appear entertaining and amusing with its medium satisfying to use.

¹³ *Nursery Rhymes' Lyrics and Origins*, s.v. "History of Nursery Rhymes," <http://www.rhymes.org.uk> (accessed November 16, 2007).

However, there is something vaguely sinister about adults composing rhymes presumably meant for nursery babies that actually hid dangerous protest messages. Rhymes were orally transmitted to children, the safest and most innocent audience, and by their repeated chantings and singings were thus dispersed throughout the population. Here, adults owned the content, but children the rhyme.

Likewise, contemporary youths' technological literacies, couched within techno-speak, appear innocuous to adults. However, their content is as influential and dangerous as former rhymes', with meanings known and intended for youth with technological transmissions reaching intended populations instantly. Here, youth hold the content and the form.

Such transmissions are perhaps darker than rhymes', as composers are writing about others personally known to them, unlike past composers contesting actions and laws of those presumably unknown to them. Moreover, contemporary youths' technological postings are generally protected by free speech and may be accessed worldwide by those who could alter received information or transmit elsewhere, potentially dangerous acts. This becomes more ominous if youth comprehend these ramifications of their technological communications and postings; some do not—but knowledge increases with age and experience.

Rhymes could have lost value, strength, or meaning by their form; there were no guarantees they would be chanted as composed and presumably there would have been alterations due to numbers involved and natural inclinations to change words or phrases that have been relayed by numerous sources, the same as technological postings read and commented upon by many. Composers were also dependent upon children's transmission; an unpopular rhyme (yet highly meaningful to adults) might be sparsely used, meaning its audience would be limited, the same as youth disregarding messages others consider important.

As with British rhymes, today's literacy technologies are dependent upon youth's transmissions. British adults retained their respective power and status separate from children to whom their rhymes were transmitted, but contemporary youth have eliminated adults regarding their literacies; they need neither adult assistance nor expertise as they direct content, form, and audience. They have also demonstrated that, regarding hidden literacies, they are more powerful than adults and can inflict irreversible damage and untold harm in seconds. A nursery rhyme's power is diffused and halted by time's passage; eventually its message's notoriety would increasingly fade or disappear with its actual rhyme becoming dominant. However, contemporary technological messages, once transmitted, cannot be reversed with time often

adding notoriety, especially as the public flocks to the Internet, or other venues, to view salacious postings.

British adults were simultaneously protecting themselves and children through coded rhymes, but children were still used to transmit expressions adults dared not state aloud. It is unknown, and presumably doubtful, whether children were persecuted for chanting nursery rhymes, but the fact remains they were a dissemination tool. Was this truly a safe and ingenious method of adult expression that relied on children's innocence for message transmittal meant as an attempt to effect change for all? Or did adults callously use children to relay dangerous messages, seeing them as disposable venues and disregarding any negative consequences that could befall them from various listeners?

As with most complex situations, answers doubtless reside in the middle. Children were loved then and now, but contemporary adolescence did not exist in the past; life categories were essentially baby, child, and adult. Some 25% of children died before age five, with 40% succumbing before reaching age fourteen. Although the average life expectancy was 35, once reaching that milestone one had a reasonable expectation of living to the ages of 50 or 60, or beyond. Non-royal or noble youth, those most subjected to nursery rhymes, typically began working as soon as possible, usually by age seven or eight. Marriage, too, came early; youth were considered marriageable from approximately age 12.¹⁴¹⁴

It is doubtful rhyme composers considered their affect upon children in any way; they had a subversive opinion to express and did so using rhyme form. The harm, if any, ironically would have originated from those closest to children—parents and peers. Those parents insisting upon a child's chanting a rhyme due to others' pressure, or peers' knowledgeable, higher status children could easily have frightened unenlightened peers into using rhymes and technologies, or more disturbing, enticed unsuspecting peers into relaying respective meanings to those who would demand retribution. For both, the completed action cannot change, meaning the higher status enticers retain and gain power by their influence upon others.

Another power shift involves youth lacking understanding of rhymes or techno-speak and through questioning receiving mixed explanations. Harsh or risqué meanings may be altered with softer language, incorrect explanations offered, or consultants may

¹⁴ *Local Histories*, s.v. "Everyday Life in the Middle Ages," <http://www.localhistories.org/middle.html> (accessed June 1, 2009).

also have misunderstood content and provided erroneous translations. Those knowing the intended translation, especially the negative or scatological, would be in more powerful positions than those having partial or incorrect knowledge.

However, youth questioning seems rare; voicing concerns can be dangerous, with commentary reported to adults or other authorities. Contemporary and past youth presumably would rarely share negative peer information with adults, especially if involving acts they themselves wish to employ. Questioning rhymes and technologies, especially negative ones, also indicates youth questioning peer usage and doubtless brings wrath or ostracism, a dire fate to those deeply enmeshed within peer groups. Regardless, youth canny enough to question would seemingly quickly learn meanings.

Information shared would presumably be concerning exceptionally dangerous and harmful activities, but only extremely small groups would have this awareness. Even so, those involved in such behaviors would already hold much negative power, making increasingly difficult for others to expose such acts. Depending upon the activity, reporters could assume an equally powerful retribution waiting and remain silent, or become more vicious by threatening users with divulgement, meaning each group fears the other. Regardless of knowledge sets, the same result remains: those with knowledge retain and use their higher power and status against those with lesser.

Power Struggles among the Status Quo

Hidden literacies are used by those whose power is unequal to that possessed by the status quo, with the exception of technological transmissions of powerful youth against lower status peers. Regarding rhymes, it is widely assumed that their composition is anonymous, but unknown and lost to history are differing details.

Rhymes were part of the oral tradition and hidden literacies; composers would not have written or signed verses. It seems unlikely that rhymes would have been completely anonymous; presumably at least some composers would have claimed authorship or been discovered, and rhymes written by several individuals would have made authorship less secret.

Time is unkind to those who created rhymes during eras of oral communication; some authorship was undoubtedly known then, but lost as rhymes' importance and their users faded. Still, presumably there are few, if any, extant recordings of punishments for reciting nursery

rhymes, whether by children or allowed by parents, nor do any recriminations regarding nursery rhymes involving their traditional uses appear in standard reference sources. Discovering authors in ages past would have been extraordinarily difficult, but more importantly, it is doubtful those in power would have made concerted efforts at discovery.

An important power shift shows rhymes and technological transmissions allow all power to remain with the sender, not the receiver. Rhymes chanted by multitudes of children made authorship rather moot; however, technology is never anonymous as originators of any technological action can be discovered using proper methodology. Regardless, seeking retribution for either would have brought additional, unwanted attention to the ideas those in power wished to suppress along with admitting that criticism was heard, affording those of lower status more power. Discovery actions are usually reserved for instances when official prosecution is necessary, but while rhymes and technological transmissions may be negative, they are usually non-criminal.

Retribution attempts reflect badly upon current power structures; needing to respond to transmissions demonstrates weakness and perhaps dissatisfaction—and thus agreement—with content. And, those within the power structure providing commentary also place themselves in danger as words are remembered, especially as power alliances frequently shift and change. Speech agreeable to one structure may be equally disagreeable to another.

Unlike rhymes where children are transmitting messages to adults, technology's literacies involve youth on both sides; its senders are those youth possessing higher status than their lower-status peer receivers. Lower-status peers may transmit negative messages regarding higher-status ones, but it is likelier fear of retribution would prevent such actions. Disturbing considerations is that unlike rhymes, technologies target known individuals and are far less anonymous. Receivers may know senders, but do not possess the ability, drive, or support to confront, uncover, or halt actions involving them. As with rhymes, ignoring transmissions is often the chosen action of lesser power groups, meaning continuing lesser status and lower self-esteem that may never be completely overcome.

Technological hidden literacies pitting youth against youth appear the most sinister and dangerous, as they are possessing and using adult knowledge and skills against peers. Rhymes heard by powerful adults were more annoying than harmful; technology negatively targets individuals and can have a detrimental impact to both senders' and receivers' future development

and well being. As all participants are immature youth and technology continues to expand, potential usages and results remain infinite, a frightening consideration.

Future Considerations

How many additional power shifts are there among hidden literacy users and receivers? Doubtless a spiral exists; each twist narrows and categorizes users to minute degrees with further exploration seemingly of interest. Still, the central point remains: separations have and will continue to occur among and between adults and adults, youth and youth, and adults and youth; separations have and will continue to occur among and between those understanding rhymes' or technologies' intended content and those who do not, and those possessing higher knowledge have and will continue to claim more power and status than their lesser-informed counterparts.

What, then is to be concluded regarding hidden literacies, regardless of era? Seemingly, they demonstrate human nature changes remarkably little over time and as they accompany various peoples living through the ages their forms are reinvented to serve current needs and circumstances. Power and status are always unequal; there will always be those who desirous of acquiring or gaining greater power and status, always those attempting to prevent such rise. The less-powerful positions usually resent and rebel against the more powerful, risking retribution. Likewise, these literacies, as the circumstances they represent, provide both comfort and discomfort. Hidden literacies are one communicative method allowing power structures, naturally occurring products of societal interaction, to continue. Their forms and longevity alone seem justification of recognition, with other forms doubtless continually appearing throughout time.

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