Complementary Truth-handling Strategies

Mediating the relationship between the "Last class" and the "Liar class"

This exploration was evoked by the lack of evidence for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and the affirmation by Ray McGovern, co-founder of the Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (USA), that "No President has lied so boldly and so often and so demonstrably" (Independent on Sunday, 9 November 2003). The leaders of the Coalition of the Willing were complicit in this approach to truth. The world is now witness to "Liars' Summits" of the most blatant kind. But, as George Bush himself declared: "I'm sick and tired of lies and deception"

Commentary

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The classes in the above figure are interrelated in complex ways. They have a particular relationship:

- **"Liar class" and "Last class":** Both are focused primarily on survival. In effect both lie, but the "Last class" lies in the event of force majeure, whereas the "Liar class" lies because it is the force majeure. The former is at a major disadvantage and seeks to avoid the consequences, whereas the latter has a major advantage and seeks to exploit it. The former lies to live and the latter lies to lie. The "Liar class" only tells the truth to sustain a larger lie, whereas the "Last class" only lies to sustain a larger truth. This relationship has been extensively studied in politics down the ages in terms of the exploitation of the "Last class" by the "Liar class" and the often desperate and violent struggles of the "Last class" for freedom and justice -- despite the vested interests of the "Liar class". The "Liar class" may be readily seen as a predator preying on the "Last class" as its prime source of sustenance. The condition of the "Last class" encourages this relationship because of its dependence on the "Liar class" for leadership and sense of coherence and order. The "Liar class" lies to the "Last class" as a prerogative of power -- "because it can" -- and because of the ease with which it can evade responsibility for any misrepresentation for which it is subsequently challenged. Lying is evoked from the "Last class" as a consequence -- "because it has to" -- in order to ensure its survival.

- **"Righteous class" and "Reframe class":** Both are primarily focused on working with truth. In effect both are dedicated to vision: the "Righteous class" to the vision inherited from the past (whether as a sacred text, the law, a military or training manual), whereas the "Reframe class" derives its essential dynamics from revising the future. The former honours the old "book of truth", whereas the latter is dedicated to writing a new "book of truth". The mutual dependency of these classes is due to the gradual exhaustion of the apparent validity of the truths promulgated by the "Righteous class". The "Reframe class" is called upon to develop "new thinking" and "reform" that the "Righteous class" can then appropriate to promulgate as the new truth (as a reformulation of the original truth). This is most evident in reformist thinking in religion, but is equally evident in the case of the military (who, in the case of the Pentagon, recently called upon Hollywood to enable them to develop better military scenarios and war games). Of course factions within the "Righteous class" may be highly resistant to, and critical of, the new thinking of the "Reframe class" (as in the case of the Vatican response to...
"liberation theology" in Latin America. The "Reframe class" tends to "dance" and "play" with contrasting visions of its opponents, whereas the "Righteous class" is extremely attentive to the struggle against any opposition, whose role it may even simulate to hone its skills (advocatus diaboli, Red Team, etc)

* "Alter class" and "Business class": Both are concerned with tactical and strategic action in response to imbalance: the "Business class" is preoccupied with "profit and loss", whereas the "Alter class" is concerned with perceived "inequality and injustice". The mutual dependency here is is evident on the one hand in the highly critical attitude of the "Alter class" to the "Business class" as typified by attitudes towards capitalism (over the past century) and globalization (over the past decade). At the same time, as many have remarked, it is the "Business class" that keeps the system working in which the "Alter class" is able to continue its critical activity. Some fruitful partnerships have resulted from their collaboration. The "Business class" is also happy to benefit from some of the radical thinking of the "Alter class" in redesigning those of its operating structures perceived to be outmoded or inappropriate (as typified by the use of "Alter class" consultants)

* "Salvation class" and "Research class": Both are primarily concerned with out-maneuvering an opponent: for the "Salvation class" this takes some form of "evil", whereas for the "Research class" this takes the form of out-smarting competitors and opponents (whether to ensure primacy of publication, obtain funding, acquire patents, gain political advantage, or obtain a Nobel Prize). The complicity between these two classes is related to their directive involvement in top-down change -- a preoccupation with an over-arching value framework. For the technocratic "Research class" this is associated with the identification of technologies that will reinforce technocratic values and the position of those who control them -- a world order empowered, enabled and sustained by technology. It is most evident in high-tech, high-investment undertakings (nuclear energy, telecommunications technology, etc). For the "Salvation class" the transcendental values are non-material and associated with the human spirit, variously understood. But, just as with technocracy, it is associated with a form of theocracy -- whether explicitly hierarchical or charismatic.

* Proximity (peripheral triangles): Those classes indicated as contiguous in the figure result in intermediary conditions:

  * "Liar class" and "Reframe class": The mutual dependencies of these classes give rise to an intermediary "Research class" typified by government- or lobby-funded "think tanks" that are expected to orient their research on demand to legitimate certain strategic priorities (weapons, nuclear, etc), threat/benefit misrepresentation (star wars, energy, "research" satellites, nano, etc), security (police surveillance, intelligence research, etc), dubious research (tobacco, GM, etc), distortion of research process ("scientific whaling", dubious pharmaceutical products, racial intelligence, anthropological pillaging, etc), and monopolization of intellectual property. It is of course the "Reframe class" that is most skilled at creatively reframing the strategic research priorities of the "Liar class" in order that they appear to be for the highest public good (satellites for "environmental monitoring", or genetic engineering to "safeguard babies with birth defects" and "provide food for the hungry").

  * "Liar class" and "Righteous class": Here the mutual dependencies give rise to a "Business class" that is best understood in terms of "business as usual", irrespective of any questionable ethical context. Historically this has been most evident in the complicit association of religions with highly unethical actions of government -- notably in the case of repressive dictatorships or nationalistic movements. It is currently more evident in the willingness of key governments who plead publicly for a reduction in the arms trade but act covertly to facilitate the sale of arms wherever possible. Analogous situations apply with respect to human rights and environmental issues. The "Business class" may even frame its activities in terms of "God is good for business" -- to associate the values of commercial enterprise with the highest ethical values.

  * "Last class" and "Reframe class": The interaction between the deprived and underprivileged "Last class" and the innovative "Reframe class" is evident in the emergence of an intermediary "Alter class" that seeks to address the challenges of the "Last class" in new and more fruitful ways. This is the application of "new thinking" to empower the challenged. The "Alter class" is however most challenged in the application of its own practices to empower itself and to counter its tendency to imitate the dysfunctional dynamics of those it criticizes or engages in altercation. The creative, innovative -- even reckless -- quality of the "Reframe class" tends to translate into a "revolutionary" approach to the challenges of the "Last class" -- with its own dangers.

  * "Last class" and "Righteous class": The interaction between the "Righteous class", as "those who know" what action is appropriate, and the "Last class", most in need of remedial action, leads to the emergence of an intermediary "Salvation class". This is typified by the action of so-called 'do-gooders' who endeavour to remake the "Last class" in the image of the "Righteous class" (caricatured by early efforts to cover nudity in hot climates, to be later followed by exhibitions of nudity by tourists to those climates). In its extreme form the concern is the salvation of souls -- at any cost to traditional cultures or lifestyles (or even to the life of the individual concerned).

* Sub-Hemispheric triangles:
  * Research class -- Liar class -- Business class: Defining an arc of expropriation
  * Business class -- Righteous class -- Salvation class: Defining an arc of directive imposition.
  * Salvation class -- Last class -- Alter class: Defining an arc of concern and empowerment.
  * Alter class -- Reframe class -- Research class: Defining an arc of development.
Hegemonic impact of the "Liar class"

This exploration was inspired by the euphemism in the travel industry by which "first class" is distinguished from "economy class" -- and the recognition that in terms of truth-handling the former might be better understood as the "Liar class" and the latter as the "Last class". Ironically it is those in the "Liar class" that are most economical -- with the truth.

The beginning of the 21st century, with the aid of the internet, has made the degree of lying by establishment leaders apparent to a far greater proportion of the population. It is no wonder that a declared strategy of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), in the Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century (2000) specifically included: "Control the new 'international commons' of space and 'cyberspace',...". Steps towards this are to be seen in the proposals for the US-dominated UN to control the internet -- to be discussed at the World Summit of the Information Society (Geneva, 2003). [more].

The challenge for society is that when the core leadership of the United Nations is so evidently associated with lying, the question is why should anyone assume that the influence of such leadership with regard to truth-handling should not permeate all such institutions in which their standards apply. An interesting example is the case of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) whose "mission is to provide the European Union with a high-quality statistical information service". In 2003 it is however the subject of a major investigation into long-term fraudulent financial transactions that enabled three top officials to divert millions of euros into secret bank accounts [more]. More interesting is the fact that this fraud was discovered by chance. But even more interesting is the fact that no question is raised as to the possibility that the statistics produced under such corrupt leadership may themselves have been fraudulently manipulated in some way -- at the request of interested parties -- and in exchange for further financial rewards. The focus is on tracking the fraudulent financial transactions and not on the possible distortions in the "high-quality" of the information service and their strategic implications for European policy-making.

This case illustrates the major dilemma for the "Liar class". How does a member, or representative, of the "Liar class" prove that he or she is not lying? How can Eurostat prove that its statistics have not been falsified in some subtle way under such leadership? In the UK, the Labour government under Tony Blair is faced, after the Iraq WMD disaster, with the consequences of its long-term policy of "spin". How does it prove that it is not being economical with the truth in its management of information? How indeed can it prove, for example, that official statistics on "unemployment" are not being falsified, if only by selective presentation of information?

Given the long string of broken promises associated with failure to act on electoral manifesto commitments (UK Freedom of Information Act, etc), and on formal aid commitments to developing countries (Afghanistan, etc), for example, why should it be assumed that any declaration by a member of the "Liar class" should be taken at face value? As suggested in the figure above, members of the "Liar class" distort the truth at their convenience, because they have the power to do so.

The irony is that the efforts of the "Liar class" to control the internet and the media, through which the degree of lying is revealed, have resulted in ever more invasive measures to obtain the truth about others through electronic surveillance. But, as the intelligence debacle associated with WMD revealed, the processing of "intelligence" gained in this way is now distorted and politicized to an unknowable degree in response to the strategic needs of members of the "Liar class". As with traditional leaders surrounded by sycophants, they themselves are now faced with the greatest of difficulty in determining the truth relating to any situation -- if indeed they have any need of it.

The obvious response by the "Liar class" -- to any implication of being economical with the truth -- is denial. As figures of authority they are able to add to any simple denial an expression of outraged affront that their honour is being impugned by such "totally unreasonable implications". Regrettably they are able to use the power of their position to go even further:

- **bribery** may be used to discourage revelations unwelcome to the "Liar class" -- whether with governments (aid for votes), their representatives, or potential whistleblowers.

- **legal threats** may be used, because legal harassment may be sufficient to discourage those with lesser means. Members of the "Liar class" are therefore able to use the system that is designed to ensure justice in order to protect their degree of perfidy. It is no accident that they have even ensured that key members of their class are immune to legal prosecution -- whatever the facts. This has been only too evident in the case of members of the legislature -- and those holding the highest office -- most notably in democratic countries of western Europe.

- **physical threats** to life and property may be used, especially now that political assassination has acquired new official legitimacy and the forces required to implement it are available. The extent of "dirty tricks" practices by corporations has been widely documented -- notably including the "accidents" to which those seeking to expose their lies are exposed

- **career threats** may readily be used to ensure that the individual is assured of no further advancement in his or her profession, or may be excluded from any such employment

- **cover-up** is widely used by tampering with evidence or witnesses so that no case may be effectively presented
• **manipulation of time and space** can be achieved to undermine due process. Scheduling can be delayed as in the case of publication of reports of "public inquiries" (e.g., the Hutton Report relating to WMD in the UK) or in the case of legal proceedings involving prominent persons (as with the pedophile/murder trial in Belgium). Space can be manipulated as with the policy to distance protesting demonstrators from the White House, whilst allowing demonstration of support in its proximity (as with the policy of distancing civil society venues far from parallel UN Conference venues).

• **revisionism** is a procedure used to "clean-up" the historical record, whether by suppression of information or the investment in presentations of alternative versions of the truth. It may include documented demonstrations that it was members of the "Liar class" that were the originators of some much appreciated social innovation, denying the often sacrificial role of others when its value was questioned.

• **public relations** in the form of news management and spin is used to forcefully present alternative images so that any questions relating to past truthfulness is quickly forgotten. In fact public relations has become the acceptable vehicle through which the "Liar class" disguises the blatancy of its operations.

But, perhaps much more regrettable than any of the above, is the facility with which members of the "Liar class" collect, appropriate and celebrate symbols of righteousness, honour and moral integrity as a cosmetic concealment for their continuing propensity to lie. This process -- enhanced in every way by public relations -- may be seen in operation in:

• **deception**: A lie is necessarily explicit. But deception is a much broader practice that can include all kinds of deliberately misleading omissions, suggestions, and nonverbal implications. Although natural to human relationships, as a means of gaining advantage, members of the "Liar class" transform it into an art form that undermines human relationships.

• **human rights**: Members of the "Liar class" are fulsome in their praise of "human rights", making every effort to be associated with heroic symbols of response to injustice. It might even be asked whether the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was put in place, with the dedicated support of the "Liar class", in order to provide a decorous cover for its activity -- for all time. The Declaration provides a menu of criteria behind any of which the activities of the "Liar class" can be concealed.

• **awards**: Members of the "Liar class" need to use a full array of awards and prizes to give recognition to the values with which they need to be associated in order to conceal their degree of dissociation from such values. The cynicism with which members of the "Liar class" associate themselves with awards, and fail to recognize merit in the wider population, introduces a degree of cynicism that undermines the values of society that such awards are designed to honour.

• **degraded fashion**: In order to be perceived as leaders, members of the "Liar class" are under considerable pressure to associate themselves with innovations in design and taste in decor, clothing, cosmetics, art, lifestyle, and entertainment. Since others then follow their leadership the continuing pressure for further innovation results in a greater and greater degree of devaluation of the simpler qualities of life to which members of the "Liar class" attach little significance. Others are therefore pulled by tastes, acclaimed as superior, to undermine their relationship to qualities that are more accessible to them -- in favour of a pace of changing fashion tastes to which they are challenged to rise and maintain.

• **corruption of the legal system**: If ever members of the "Liar class" fail to manoeuver successfully and are embroiled in legal proceedings against them, it becomes quickly apparent that -- even if convicted -- somehow their sentences are reversed on appeal, or they are given suspended sentences, or subsequently their sentences are drastically shortened. This recognition that the system of justice favours the "Liar class" is one which significantly influences the perception of other classes and completely undermines confidence in the legal system. All recognize that it is foolish to seek redress against the "establishment" by legal means.

• **spurious argument**: Through their use of specious and spurious arguments -- presented with appropriate gravitas, brio or charisma -- members of the "Liar class" accustom the wider population to a degraded form of dialogue

### Suspect framings by the "Liar class"

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<td></td>
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<td>Enlarge laboratory budgets</td>
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The above schema does indeed provide a useful way of reviewing the activities of the different classes and their relationship -- as widely documented in the media and via the internet. It is psychologically convenient and reassuring to identify with the positive attributes of one class -- and to recognize the problematic attributes of other classes with which one has to deal.

But, perhaps more interesting, is the value of the schema with respect to one's personal involvement in all the classes -- to whatever degree:

- **"Liar class"**: Who does not lie or engage in deception in some measure -- if only in games of skill and bluff? Survival in a competitive environment currently requires a degree of deception.

- **"Last class"**: Most would consider themselves to be deprived in some way. Indeed it has been argued that the richest are those who feel most deprived, even to the point of "starvation" -- but at a psychological level at which "hunger" may be difficult to satisfy.

- **"Righteous class"**: Who does not feel righteous about some issue? Who is not prepared to articulate vigorously (in some field of expertise) what is right, how things ought to be done, and what it is appropriate to believe in?

- **"Reframe class"**: Who lacks the imaginative ability and inclination to reframe how the world should be understood or organized -- whether artistically, through innovation, or through some new philosophy?

- **"Business class"**: Who is not engaged in some kind of "business" on which their survival, if not their thrival, is dependent? And despite the horrors of the world and the challenges to one's community, is the attitude "business is business", and "business as usual" then often appropriate?

- **"Alter class"**: Is it not the case that most people engage in some measure in criticizing the existing regime, including their own behaviour, and endeavour to think through alternatives -- if only as the wishful thinking of armchair revolutionaries? But this may well take the form of a creative, fix-it mentality in response to immediate challenges and opportunities.

- **"Research class"**: Who fails to respond to the pressures of their environment by seeking ways to reposition themselves to their particular advantage -- whether through socially or environmentally irresponsible initiatives, complicity in their misrepresentation, or covert action?
“Salvation class”: Who is not involved in some charitable action to remedy the condition of others -- if only advocating to them actions and beliefs that derive from a particular philosophy or belief that one would like them to adopt (for their own sake)?

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