

# Cognitive Dissonance in the Society of Ahriman and Lucifer

By Richard Cooper

In psychology the experience of cognitive dissonance is used to describe how an individual experiences psychological reality when he is forced to hold two contradictory points of view. Should the individual fail to unravel the contradiction with which they are thus presented, they will then deny the situation and so experience 'dissonance'. For example, I have the talent and the desire to be a musician yet I feel unable to finish my training because I fail in a number of tests due to laziness. I am consequently ashamed of my behaviour; but instead of seeking the underlying cause, I rationalise my desire away by saying that I never really wanted to be a musician in the first place. As long as I am unable to see and question my motivation to be a musician, combined with its awkward 'lazy' opposite motivation, I will remain caught within a contradiction. The dialectic remains unconscious and I effectively acquiesce to live the lie rather than develop self-knowledge. This is a particularly modern problem for we see how a whole network of lies can establish itself; each lie builds on the ignorance of the contradiction that precedes it as an interlinking network of false information.

This is how totalitarian systems are established and how discrimination and bigotry go unchallenged. It is how verbal injunctions such as 'speak when you are spoken to' or 'don't talk back!' seek to define the behaviour and thinking of the child who is not to question authority and to fear the expression of its own ideas.

*A "primary injunction" (a) "Do X, or I will punish you" need not be verbalised but may take the injunction "You must do X, but only do it because you want to".<sup>i</sup>*

Such ideas were the basis for the work of anthropologist and founding thinker of cybernetics<sup>ii</sup> Gregory Bateson. He analysed the early lives of schizophrenic patients, and from his reflections on what he had seen, established the idea of the 'double-bind'. The double bind works as a communication of messages that establish a negative, dependent relationship; a relationship formed by the combined dynamics of a conscious and unconscious message;

*The classic example given of a negative double bind is of a mother telling her child that she loves him or her; while at the same time turning away in disgust (The words are socially acceptable; the body language is in conflict with it).<sup>iii</sup>*

One extricates oneself from a double bind relationship by reframing it; by refusing the demands on both sides of the double bind we challenge the people and events that have established its force. When verbal injunctions are identified, we can challenge their authority, inwardly or outwardly, by saying 'who speaks when I am spoken to in this manner?' or 'in whose authority do you assert that to me?' or we can simply say 'I'm sorry I find that tone demeaning and disrespectful, I refuse to accept its truth'. The terms of debate have thereby been changed because the assertions have been challenged. This is an important distinction to make. Bateson surmised that for schizophrenic patients the double bind is presented continually and habitually within the family context from infancy on; *'Small children have difficulty articulating contradictions verbally and can*

*neither ignore them nor leave the relationship*'. The child internalises a system of contradictory messages. The experience of challenging relationships of all kinds, reflect this difficult dynamic of psychological co-dependency and control. But at the same time such relationships are an opportunity. They are the basis for an individual to re-establish conscious autonomy over previously unconscious aspects of their lives.

A more insidious example of the double bind can be seen in the recent film starring Leonardo Di Caprio, *The Revenant* December 2015<sup>iv</sup>. The main star (Leo) is fatally wounded by a bear. The film follows his perilous convalescence, his suspension on the border between life and death as he is transported by his comrades through the snowy wilderness. One of the team of trappers wishes to kill him and while he is aware of this fact, he is unable to speak out or raise alarm as to his impending danger. The murderer of his son (seen previously) comes close to Leo, bound on the stretcher, and whispers that if he should want to be put him out of his misery he must communicate his assent by blinking ('You will consent to your own murder but only because you want to'). The camera holds a close up of his face before Leo inevitably has to blink, and the murderer then feels he has the licence to murder him by burying him alive. The film itself meditates on the retribution for the murderer, on the resolution of evil within human society and its relation to mystical esoteric imagery.

What should we make of experiences of cognitive dissonance in relation to the wider political and cultural world? Individually we are challenged to lay bare the discrepancies in the reality we are faced with. We notice that perhaps next time our fish pie should have less milk; or that the roof is in dangerous disrepair. Does this process of rectification reach a limit at a certain pre-defined point? We notice that we must face up to our fears and face our responsibilities in relation to work or relationships. Why should this process stop? This is what drives us to want to incarnate anew as we purvey from the spiritual world the earthly life ahead of us. As we develop ourselves as individualities we question the political, cultural and economic assumptions and ideas that surround us. As Aristotle said, 'fully realised human beings are by necessity political animals', for we are impelled to notice the cognitive dissonance within and around us. When we are accustomed to its 'sound' we can thus recognise for example when the double bind is put to political use:

*"They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us" (Donald Trump, presidential announcement speech, June 16, 2015); "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." (George Bush September 20, 2001), "You should not be walking through the lobbies with Jeremy Corbyn and a bunch of terrorist sympathisers." (David Cameron December 2, 2015), "We may have occasion in our lifetime to once again rise up in defence of our freedom, and pay the wages of war." (Against going to war with Iraq: Barack Obama, 2 October 2002).*

Anthroposophy recognises two Beings who influence the extending and constricting in the human being. One is Ahriman, who arises within the experience of dualistic anxiety as we struggle to maintain the balance between soul and spirit within the physical world. On the other hand we have Lucifer; that being who grants us a striving for goodness, who helps us to awaken to our sense of self. One can however phenomenologically identify, ever warmer, the third being; that being that arises through their conscious synthesis and control. Man is awakened to spiritual life in a process of rebirth in Christ. Life presents the possibility of the view of Golgotha. On the left Lucifer wishes us to repeat the past. On the right Ahriman wishes to freeze and crystallise all that has become

unconscious habit. The freedom in Christ is the freely chosen sense of responsibility and love for the whole phenomenological experience, the specific perfection and beauty in one. This brings with it the power to challenge oppressive authority; *'But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak'* (Mathew 10:19).<sup>v</sup> For the spiritual life also transforms the dynamics that persisted in the older forms of oppression. The double bind and contradictions are resolved to the enrichment and birth of something which was not previously perceived. Henceforth in Christ, we have the power to bind or to loosen, to reveal or to cover the sins of others; with all its implications for human and spiritual community.

How are we to understand world politics in relation to these spiritual realities? We intuit that politics has become ever more meaningless and corrupt. A kind of spell has been cast on the modern world where it has gradually been insinuated that the neo liberal, protection of landed interests and multi-national business is the only pragmatic political option. Meanwhile, the transcendental and occult realities of geopolitics are left unexplored.<sup>vi</sup> Through the twentieth century certain aims and objectives within the occult have overlapped with those groups such as the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations and the Bilderberger Group, et al. The phenomena of Communist Russia with its Gulag complex, repression of intellectuals and totalitarian secrecy has created a spiritual reality in the world that has hidden behind the hypnotised veneer of Hollywood fairy-like perceptions. When not understood in the intellectual soul, symbols and tainted mythological stories carry their power into the unconscious and affect man's life forces. Such manipulation by unconscious coercion was historically denoted as witchcraft.

*"In the technotronic society the trend would seem to be towards the aggregation of the individual support of millions of uncoordinated citizens, easily within the reach of magnetic and attractive personalities effectively exploiting the latest communications techniques to manipulate emotions and control reason."*<sup>vii</sup>

The manipulation of democracy by an oligarchical elite was outlined by Plato over two thousand years ago in the Republic! The Timocracy Plato describes of honour, virtue and religious devotion is replaced by the worship of power and wealth.<sup>viii</sup> How antiquated such discussions feel now, yet how strangely relevant and in need of renewal!

Rudolph Steiner warned of such developments and the present crisis of true governance is testimony to the failure to adopt the threefold-social-order that Steiner advocated. The threefold-social-order of autonomous polity, culture and economy, is the only framework of social organisation to avoid the recurrence of plutocracy and oligarchy, and in effect it is the only transparent and moral order available to recognise scientific and spiritual laws. Anthony Sutton produced two books that document the plutocracy in the twentieth century: *Wall Street and the Bolshevik Revolution 1974*, and *Wall Street and the Rise of Hitler 1976*<sup>x</sup>. The collaboration between business interests in Russia and America throughout the period before and after the Second World War and continuing through the Cold War is there described in stark relief to our more common historical understandings of the twentieth century.

The long term goals and methodology of these vested interests are clearly laid out in the policy papers and publications from the major global think tanks such as the Brookings Institute or the RAND Corporation. My previous article, in description of Agenda 21, spoke of the

implementation by stealth of a political project called 'Sustainable Development' inaugurated at the Earth summit in Rio in 1992. The new name for this political project, coordinate with a new timeline, is 'Agenda 2030', announced September 25-27 at the UN headquarters in New York; *"never before have world leaders pledged common action and endeavour across such a broad and universal policy agenda."*<sup>x</sup> Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development outlines its objectives of global entitlement for multi-national companies. Its goals for the next 15 years are a mixture of lies and deception to cover up the dominance of the economic over the cultural and political spheres of interest. Sustainable development is the product of a global community where true political engagement is denied, culture is slowly eroded, and the economy demands cultural and political compliance.

All the while, global geopolitics has become a series of knee jerk reactions to ever recurring crisis. This is managed within a system that uses the previously identified double bind on a grand scale. If esoteric oppression is unchecked and contradictions fail to be perceived, historical change can be brought about through polarisation, intensification and crisis (the problem is created, the reaction is experienced and the solution is given). As Rudolf Steiner highlighted, Hegel's thought leads us to the border of the spiritual world. As new initiatives are not taken up, older Luciferic impulses fill the vacuum left when mankind fails to progress further. Let us look at some of the major events of the first 16 years of the twenty first century: September the 11<sup>th</sup>, Fukushima, the Financial Crisis of 2008, the growth of the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Each has facilitated far reaching changes to the life of rights and culture.<sup>xi</sup> Perception management and public relations institutes have almost a century of experience in the management of social policy.<sup>xii</sup> However, what kind of rights and culture are these? Are they the rights and culture that emancipate and enlighten modern man?

To work against the resistant powers in the world we must have a methodology; we can then engage with the documents, texts and realities that history has left in its wake in a productive way. For Lucifer wants me to remain in self-referential distraction, in 'goodness' and blinding light, and Ahriman in the darkness of the unconscious. One of the major contradictions of the twentieth century, and unconscious predicaments of the twenty first, is that we should participate in seemingly enfranchised political life; yet hidden groups dictate the course of events. The experience of Christ in the etheric is a means to see through deception and illusion and awaken to the needs of the present and the future; toward a culture of educated spiritual awareness. It is thus that I may become a true political activist of the spirit and cease to be lost in antipathy against straw men. Rather than to the double bind that restricts us, perhaps we should look to the great commentator on Aristotle, foremost philosopher in Islam, Averroes (Ibn Rushd). He described a thinking that can awaken to 'double meanings'. An individual who studies himself and the world with interest can patiently hold onto contradiction until it matures and becomes the ripened fruit of spiritual acumen - the ability to see things from diverse and divine perspectives;

*'The double meaning has been given to suit people's diverse intelligence. The apparent contradictions are meant to stimulate the learned to deeper study.'*<sup>xiii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Koopmans, Mathijs. *Schizophrenia and the Family: Double Bind Theory Revisited* 1997.

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<sup>ii</sup> **Cybernetics** Norbert Wiener defined cybernetics in 1948 as 'the scientific study of control and communication in the animal and the machine.' The word cybernetics comes from Greek (kybernetike), meaning "governance", i.e., all that are pertinent to (kybernao), the latter meaning "to steer, navigate or govern", hence (kybernesis), meaning "government", is the government while (kybernetes) is the governor or the captain. Wikipedia.

<sup>iii</sup> **Double Bind** Wikipedia

<sup>iv</sup> **The Revenant**. Interestingly, Gnostic philosophy is woven in imagery throughout the film, whose theme is essentially a meditation on evil, karma and the spiritual path.

<sup>v</sup> **Bible King James version**

<sup>vi</sup> **Rudolf Steiner** identified from the Apocalypse of St John: the East as the Rainbow people, the middle European as the Cloud people and Western man of the Anglosphere as the Men with the Fiery Feet. He Relates these to the Thinking, Feeling and Willing aspects of the human being.

<sup>vii</sup> **Zbigniew Brzezinski 1970, *Between Two Ages : America's Role in the Technetronic Era*** (born 28 March, 1928) Zbigniew Brzezinski is a Polish American political scientist, geostrategist, and statesman who served as United States National Security Advisor in the administration of President Jimmy Carter from 1977 to 1981.

<sup>viii</sup> **Plato The Republic**. The Classical Greek philosopher Plato discusses five types of regimes (Republic, Book VIII). They are Aristocracy, Timocracy, Oligarchy, Democracy, and Tyranny. The tyrannical man is the son of the democratic man. He is the worst form of man due to his being the most unjust and thus the furthest removed from any joy of the true kind. Wikipedia.

<sup>x</sup> **Sustainable Development Agenda 2030: The new Agenda 18**. 'Never before have world leaders pledged common action and endeavour across such a broad and universal policy agenda. We are setting out together on the path towards sustainable development, devoting ourselves collectively to the pursuit of global development and of "win-win" cooperation which can bring huge gains to all countries and all parts of the world.' <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

<sup>xi</sup> **The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013** amended the Smith–Mundt Act of 1948 and the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of 1987, allowing for materials produced by the State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) to be released within U.S. borders. Wikipedia. The amendment sanctions state, domestic and foreign propaganda.

<sup>xii</sup> **Public Relations** Ivy Lee, the man who turned around the Rockefeller name and image, and his friend, Edward Louis Bernays, established the first definition of public relations in the early 1900s as follows: "a management function, which tabulates public attitudes, defines the policies, procedures and interests of an organization... followed by executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance." See also **Social Defences against Anxiety: Explorations in a Paradigm** Editor: David Armstrong, Editor: Michael Rustin Part of The Tavistock Clinic Series.

<sup>xiii</sup> **Source: The Decisive Treatise, Determining the Nature of the Connection between Religion and Philosophy by Averroes (Ibn Rushd) Ibn Rushd (1126–98)** Ibn Rushd was a defender of Aristotelian philosophy against Ash'ari theologians led by Al-Ghazali. Although highly regarded as a legal scholar of the Maliki school of Islamic law, Ibn Rushd's philosophical ideas were considered controversial in Ash'arite Muslim circles. Whereas al-Ghazali believed that any individual act of a natural phenomenon occurred only because God willed it to happen, Ibn Rushd insisted phenomena followed natural laws that God created. Ibn Rushd had a greater impact on Christian Europe: he has been described as the "founding father of secular thought in Western Europe" and was known by the sobriquet the Commentator for his detailed emendations to Aristotle. Latin translations of Ibn Rushd's work led the way to the popularization of Aristotle. Wikipedia.