

We the people of the United States are engaged in an asymmetric *state-capture* war.

We are losing this war.

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The reasons we are currently losing this war:

- Our leadership doesn't correctly identify the enemy.
- Our leadership doesn't understand how the enemy is fighting.
- Our leadership doesn't have an orientation that would be necessary to acquire, and then to act on, such understanding.

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This essay contains these three parts:

A. UNDERSTANDING FOR ACTION

A description of the model I am using to analyze this American state capture. This model's emphasis on social structure over individual behavior specifically supports the development of interventions.

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B. MY DIRECT EXPERIENCE

A description of my attempts in the last few years to communicate this model to political leadership, and the failures of these attempts.

C. INTERPRETATION

The conclusions I've drawn from these failures, and a statement of direction.

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A. UNDERSTANDING FOR ACTION

I am framing this interpretation using C.P. Snow's "Two Cultures" description of the alienation between the *literary mind* and the *engineering mind*. (This is my choice of terms; Snow's words were "humanities" and "science".)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Two_Cultures

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The literary mind uses *language for description*.

The engineering mind uses *models for construction*.

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All contemporary political commentary comes from the literary mindset.

My thesis: the absence among our leadership of the engineering mindset, with its creative capacity for the generation of healing interventions, underlies this failure of our leadership.

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If some thing under discussion is broken, the training of the literary mind provides no analytical tools for mentally taking that thing apart, seeing how the parts interact and how that leads to a broken whole, then using that information for devising a plan to fix it.

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The engineering mind might, or might not, have a specific technique for mentally taking the thing apart. But even if it doesn't, it has a general approach to analysis that enables it to search for a model of what is *inside* the thing.

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The engineering mind thinks of social organization primarily *structurally*, only secondarily behaviorally.

Structural thinking leads to models that one can play with, symbolically or physically, in order to modify outcomes.

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Codifying individual behaviors (cf: the Ten Commandments) is useful for imposing orderly individual behaviors on a population, but it provides no basis for understanding, and effectively responding to, collective antisocial behavior such as state capture.

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The all-too-common “good people/bad people” framing has no utility in the engineering-mind approach to intervention into collective antisocial behavior.

The engineering mind focuses on *structural analysis* of state capture, which I am finding to be very productive.

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Individuals with engineering minds are plentiful in many fields, but seem to be absent among the authors of the contemporary political commentary I’ve read.

Invariably my reaction after reading even a brilliant piece of political analysis is:

“True, but not useful”.

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My engineering mind is seeking ways to be both true AND useful. It thinks about politics in terms of *structural patterns* that give visibility to opportunities for intervention.

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Example: This *Essay on Parasitism* applies the engineering approach to state capture:

melconway.com/Home/pdf/WhatIsMAGA.pdf.

On page 8 you will see an adaptation of biology's *parasite* model to state capture.

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Here is the essence of the engineering contribution to this approach:
>>Importing and adapting a model from a foreign discipline.<<

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Why do we bother with this complication? Because, in this case, the enemy is a shifting, multinational aggregate, not a conventional domestic political actor one can point to. The abstraction works, and the conventional political cause-effect story does not.

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In order for this new conception of the enemy to work, one must deal with the concept of *emergence*. This is a pattern (or class of patterns) we barely understand that is alien to the conventional chain-of-proximate-cause notions we all hold.

<https://melconway.com/Home/pdf/EmergencelsConcrete.pdf>

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So this engineering-mind theory has a big problem: it's incomprehensible to the literary-mind political analysts who need to understand it.

But this engineering-mind theory offers a methodology for generating healing interventions, which literary-mind approaches don't.

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Here we're seeing a concrete and substantial social cost arising from the division of the Academy observed by C.P. Snow. I will comment on this more in the INTERPRETATION section at the end of this essay.

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Here is another example of model adaptation from an outside field. Earlier in the Essay on Parasitism you will see an adaptation from the field of medicine of the two-level *germ-theory* model of disease.

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Two centuries ago the germ theory forced practitioners to distinguish two categories of phenomena:

internal process and external presentation.

Practicing this distinction created an explosion of new approaches to disease intervention, and eventually a biotech industry.

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Political theory has yet to make such a process/presentation distinction as described in the Essay on Parasitism, and thus has not benefited from the generative power of medicine's approach to intervention.

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Parasitism and germ theory are two examples of
>>the adaptation into politics of models from another discipline.<<

This is not mere literary analogy.
Something much deeper is going on.

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These model adaptations are applications of the widespread engineering practice of
>>abstracting the structures of understood systems into *reusable patterns*<<
and then
>>applying these reusable patterns in solutions of new problems<<.

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This engineering practice could be applied to political thought but has not yet been exploited. I attribute this missed opportunity to the mutual alienation of the Two Cultures observed by C.P. Snow.

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The Essay on Parasitism offers a prototype of the synthesis of the Two Cultures applied to politics. My research of the last few years suggests that there is great promise in this approach.

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The work has already begun. Page 2 of my resume

melconway.com/resume.pdf

describes the application to politics of several patterns my research of the last six years has already uncovered.

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There is another lesson here, about the distinction between *social structure* vs. *individual behavior* in this approach to analysis.

If you look up definitions of “state capture” you will typically see a mention of corruption as a cause. But *corruption* is a human concept arising from attempts to regulate individual behavior.

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But in Nature, parasitism is not corruption; it’s one of several stable forms of life-coexistence that have successfully evolved.

The engineering mindset looks at that stability and sees a general lesson about structure that supersedes teachings about individual behavior.

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Our political enemy in this asymmetric state-capture war long ago learned a lesson that we are refusing to learn:

Creating *uniform behavior at scale* requires *enforcement at scale*.

Political literature often refers to this lesson as the “authoritarian playbook”.

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The necessity of enforcement at scale leads one to the conclusion that there must exist hidden *political-enforcement networks* involving money, violence, and/or other threats and inducements behind the absolute coherence of the Republican Congress.

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One hears: “Republicans are afraid of Trump”.

No.

Republicans are afraid of the CONSEQUENCES of crossing Trump. Between Trump and those who wander from Trump are...what? Other people.

See 8:00-11:56 of

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqCnUxA-BIU>

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With rare exception these intermediary people are the ones directing and leaving the threatening phone messages. Their connection to Trump is via a messaging network. This is one example of an enforcement network. There are others, donors, for example.

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We are seeing substantial and growing evidence that such enforcement networks are necessary to the coherence of current right-wing politics, not only at the national but also at the state and local levels.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/9gM1YHu4uWY>

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These networks are vulnerable to disruption, in some cases simply by making their operation widely known, or by exposing the roles of key individuals who would prefer to operate in secret.

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We have a history of private intimidation evolving into public violence.

The proposed “Anti-Weaponization Fund”

IS NOT a reward for loyalty, but

IS a cover for the payroll of a proto-Gestapo militia intended to disrupt the orderly midterm transfer of power.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sturmabteilung>

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Enforcement at scale is a necessary part of the authoritarian playbook. If this proposed form of the “Anti-Weaponization Fund” doesn’t succeed, you can expect another approach to funding a proto-Gestapo to appear.

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B. MY DIRECT EXPERIENCE

I have suggested the enforcement-network idea in writing to many leaders involved in this war, including Senators, print and TV journalists, academics, and one magazine editor. If there was any response, it was polite dismissal. Mostly I got crickets.

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Here is full documentation of one case in which I sent to several Democratic Congressional leaders a concrete proposal for a simple low-risk activity that could flip some votes of a few Republican Representatives even before the midterm election. Again, crickets.

<https://melconway.com/Home/ENproposal/README.pdf> .

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C. INTERPRETATION

There are many possible interpretations of the above inaction of American political leadership. The one I find most plausible is a simple conceptual block, powered by C.P. Snow’s alienation between the Two Cultures.

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Snow's thesis, originally a statement about the higher education system in the UK, is equally applicable to the US.

It is a corollary of Conway's Law:

A division in our education system has produced a division in its product, the educated American population.

<https://melconway.com/Home/pdf/Body-Building.pdf>

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I have come to name these two sub-populations according to the ways their brains were shaped by years of drill:

The reading-list (literary) folks, and

The problem-set (engineering) folks.

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Our electoral system further selects for lawyers within the reading-list population. A problem-set person might occasionally appear in the Congress, but (except for the recent additions of military veterans) he or she rarely stays around long enough to achieve seniority.

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As a consequence of this division plus other selection pressures, our leadership has no capacity to respond other than superficially to enemy moves within the state-capture war.

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Litigation and prosecution we call “accountability” comprise after-the-fact responses to antisocial symptoms arising from an underlying structural disease. We are not addressing that underlying disease because we do not understand how it works.

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So we treat the disease symptomatically at the presentation level, rather than at the process level. It’s like treating an infection-related fever with cold compresses.

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I am offering this Essay on Parasitism as a prototype of the *synthesis of the engineering and literary mindsets* directed to the defeat of our enemy in the state-capture war:

<https://melconway.com/Home/pdf/WhatIsMAGA.pdf>

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