TWO FACES OF AUTHORITY

The leader’s tragic quest

Thieu Besselink

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of Doctor of Laws of the European University Institute
Florence, December 2008
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ABSTRACT

This thesis observes how modern leaders of Western society publicly engage in an unrewarding quest for a durably authoritative identity and it asks why rulers are so troubled in cultivating a credible role of authority. The author argues that modern authority itself has disintegrated with the change of its understanding and the diffusion of fixed authoritative roles and that this is accompanied by an identity crisis. He asks how modern rulers respond to the disintegration of a fixed, shared social reality in late modernity, and to the fact that our main legitimating mythologies - such as that of (political) representation, which once ordered the allocation of authority - no longer provide the reassurance and belief in ruler’s authority.

To understand the nature of authority and its disintegration, the author explores rulers’ consciousness by categorising their responses in two archetypical models of authority, inspired by Machiavelli’s Prince and Shakespeare’s tragic hero. They represent the authority-effects of fear and reassurance and the two modern modes of authority cultivation: increasing social distance and decreasing social distance.

The thesis argues that modern authority is tragic because the logic by which the dominant archetypical roles try to authorise themselves is self-defeating. It illustrates this with a history of authority which describes the characteristically modern drive for the exposure, immanence, and transparency of authority, informed by a desire for emancipation and mastery, and how it is paralleled by a degradation of authority and these typically modern archetypes that continue to determine Western culture.

Reintegration of authority would require a more dimensional understanding of the concept. The author trances the four major roots of authority (authorship, authorisation, authenticity, and augmentation), and suggest they represent the subjective, objective, individual, and collective dimensions of authority which together form a whole system of meaning and creation.
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‘Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall’

‘Perfect love casts out fear’. 1 John 4.18.
The story of authority is a tragedy, and this account tries to show the ways in which the modern ruler embodies its unfolding. It is a painful tale about a quest full of fear and indeterminacy in which our leaders struggle to establish authority to themselves and to their audiences. These struggles show that it is not so easy to earn the respect of a modern citizenry, and that leaders have difficulty to find the authority from which to unite a people behind common goals and institutions. The Western world was never so rich, so secure, so healthy and educated, and never were we spared from war on our own territory for so long a period of time. However, never was there so little confidence in those who symbolise authority.¹

Neither have we seen so many leaders publicly question their own legitimacy. What does it mean that leaders are on a public quest for authority? That is the question which inspired this thesis. Did authority disappear, at least partly, from society? And is that a problem, or have we finally reached the democratic ideal of self-governance without clear figures of authority? Experience suggests otherwise. We might hope that society can do without authority. But authority serves the purpose of creating new shared social reality, and to help people rise above themselves and go further than where their own beliefs would be able to carry them, like the nurturing authority of a parent over his child. But also, authority is what enables someone to stand up against the order for the sake of the order. Without authority no one would ever defy expectations of others. We expect a leading figure of society to be able to stand up for the good of society, but is there something in the nature of modern consciousness that makes it more difficult for him to do so? Leaders seek to regain respect and trust, but why do the roles and strategies of our rulers perpetuate the distrust they try to fight?

What I will discuss is that, whereas in the past, institutionalised roles fixed the images of authority and the behaviour appropriate to the kind of authority exercised, today the figure of authority has to produce by himself both the imagery and the behaviour appropriate to his condition. Kings used to enjoy an unquestioned right to rule, but also parents and teachers used to enjoy socially undisputed respect. Now our leaders have to continuously establish their authority. Not only is it difficult to be convincing in the eyes of the public, but we can even observe leaders having difficulty establishing a compelling identity towards themselves. Who am I? What kind of leader am I? How to lead in these

¹ The ruler, or leader as I will also refer to him, is a central figure of authority in society. For the purposes of this book he is a political leader or even a governing institution.
unpredictable, fragmented times? The ruler can no longer rely on the grace of God, aura of monarchy, sanctification through his representation, or title of his office. He has to create in new ways a bond of authority in the absence of a ‘mythology’ that makes his position of power both intelligible and acceptable. The question is how leaders and their institutions cultivate their authority in this environment?

The fact that the question is asked, not only by me, but also by my colleagues, journalists, and leaders in business and politics, suggests that something which was solid before is uprooted and liable to change today. Some speak of a crisis. I am not the first to raise the issue, and many have sought to name the matter, but talk of crisis has remained a vague and troublesome vogue. Not only is the language of crisis attractive and good for popular headlines, its vagueness is as popular as its dramatic content. Is it about leadership or trust in leadership? The legitimacy of figures of authority? Or authority itself? And how are we to understand these concepts anyway? At any rate we are left with a sense of unease and perhaps frustration with regard to how authority is organised in society. Our leaders in office usually take the blame, but even though they are unlikely to release us from our pain, they are at least as unlikely to be the reason for that pain.

In what follows I describe the sources of the pain. At its root is authority’s ambiguity. This ambiguity has always been there, it is in the nature of authority, but the way rulers and society deal with it distinguishes one culture from another and makes a period one of chaos or of harmony. Central to my thesis is that there is no escape from the modern question of the source of authority and the fact that we have no adequate instrument to deal with the empty void at the core of our political and social authority system. Political or legal representation have not provided the stable belief and respect in rulers and have not dismissed leaders from having to cultivate their own authority.

People have pondered the sources of authority, the right degree and its just location; they have feared their dependence on a charlatan but have also asserted society’s need for true leadership. Now that the modern project has surpassed itself however, with the

2 This does not mean there are no deep rooted archetypes in the structures of our unconscious to which we respond. It is just the socially formed emotion of authority that fell apart. It also does not mean that old symbols no longer work at all, Bin Laden manages his performances well and makes sure that we see him the way he wants, transformed from freedom warrior in the desert to learned and serious player in international politics when he is filmed in his library.

corrosion of modernity’s political, economic, religious, and social institutions and the accompanying surge of meaning searching, there is a peculiar concern with this most ambiguous of social bonds. In a sense the possibility for authority has disappeared with the fading of shared authentic and indisputable social experience. While we will find all kinds of authoritarian models - such as the father, the expert, the educator, the guru, the saviour, the independent consultant, and many others - the very understanding of authority as that ultimate creative source of shared value seems lost. The father who authorises, or legitimates, his daughter’s marriage – gives it value – has disappeared from our consciousness, both actually and metaphorically. What remains are abstract notions and metaphors which are used and misused at will by proud social and political thinkers.

Whatever we make of it, the archetype of authority has been rejected over the past few centuries by the conscious mind, but lives on in the dream like structures of our emotions and unconsciousness. In the light of modern emancipation, authority still seems to constitute a dirty word for most. Especially since the Cold War, the dominant view of authority has been shaped by the words of Orwell’s 1984, Huxley’s Brave New World, Arendt’s The Origins of Totalitarianism, or Koesteler’s Darkness at Noon. It is what the totalitarian experience left us with, and justifiably so. The feeling that authority is necessarily polluted is not foreign to Western culture and it shows not only that we love freedom and do not wish to tolerate domination, but also that we have little social or psychological means by which to come to terms with society’s indispensable presence of authority.

It is not only dirty though, and often we long for leadership with authority. The leadership and trust we seek is not a new Messiah who will gather a following by promising rhapsody, a Pied Piper of Hamelin who seduces us, because we fear the weakness of the people (and ourselves) who lose their senses under his spell. Instead we want someone with character, skill and courage who engages our values and puts them to creative use: A Mandela, Churchill, Walesa, Roosevelt, or a Ghandi. Authority is therefore value laden, and necessarily so. When talking about authority we inevitably challenge or support people’s self-conceptions and beliefs, which is what makes it such a seductive, but also dangerously sensitive theme to write about.

I want to explore the nature of this dirty thing and a good place to start seems the name we chose for modern leaders because it betrays a deep rooted ambiguity as regards the fear and desire humans cherish for authority. The emblem of ‘minister’ or ‘executive’
suggest that the business of leading is a servant’s job devoid of an autonomous will to create, decide, and act in the world. But this title covers up the fact that they do act. The reality of the matter is that their name gives the follower an opportunity to feel safe behind the shared illusion of his self-determination. It is a normative prescription of what the ruler should be, and as such it is to ease the fear for being deceived by power. How do we know that we are not dealing with a shadow, a charlatan, a false prophet, a hypocrite, an intrusive for-your-own-good mother, or a withholding critical father, all of them dying to have submissive subjects who will admire and follow and agree? Authority confronts us with our human vulnerability in this sense that if it is not us who are seduced into infantile surrender to a saviour, than certainly the weak willed masses are, causing also our freedom to be restrained.

This is the origin of modern cynicism and fear towards the mysterious appeal of authority. Its cloudiness then, has much to do with the fortunate fact that authority is ambiguous. Both in terms of its incapacity to provide universal truth and because it cannot be said to be either nurturing or repressive, good or bad. As a child we need the nurture and security of our parents, as an adult we need to become authorities ourselves. Sennett points this out so well when he says that ‘Adults fulfil an essential part of themselves in being authorities. It is one way of expressing care for others.’ But even in adult life human beings search for meaning and guidance, preferably reliable and durable. This searching seems universal in both social animals and humans, and arouses respect for the assurance and judgement that a person or symbol claims. But such respect will make us vulnerable, just as it makes another liable and powerful. We may forget that we have a will and judgement of our own when we lose our sense of self under the seductive sway of charismatic leaders, but we can also grow and come to know new realities that previously lay beyond our own capacity due to the trust that we invest in the authority. That is the ambiguity of authority.

When, however, we disbelieve the ruler’s intentions, or when we simply fear our yielding and dependency on this strange invisible power that an authority figure holds over us, a desire awakens to expose the mystery, and find the real human, principle, or source behind the claim to authority. When we succeed and we see him only as the next individual with a claim to higher value his authority dies a certain death because exposure is an assault that no imagination can survive. If that time comes, the executive can no

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longer rely on his unassuming name, and his authority needs ever more resourceful clothing to ease the pain of subjects who are reluctant to face the necessity of law, meaning, and assurance. But the modern subject does not tolerate the theatre of authority and the reaction of the modern ruler does not satisfy the need for reassurance.

There was a time in which the authority of rulers was in a similar crisis, and that had everything to do with the social turmoil of the period and its rapid transformation. Let me introduce the problem by analogy.

When in 1513 Machiavelli interrupted the writing of his *Discourses On The First Ten Books Of Titus Livius* in order to write a leader’s handbook for the Medici, called *The Prince*, he was confronted with the decline of common institutions that could represent a ‘legitimate source’ of authority, and what was left of traditional agreement on the nature of legitimacy was violently reduced to insignificance by the rivalries between numerous city states, religions, the papacy, and imperial power. Rulers came to power as usurpers more than anything else and in the wake of what would later become the modern state, cities and factions fought one another, the empire, and the pope to the point where no claim to rightful rule enjoyed time-honoured acquiescence. Political instability was the rule rather than exception as city states changed from republics to principalities or the other way around, and both changed to suit the style of every new authority claimed. Emperors in the 14th century could not hold their claim to feudal lordship and were left with a power based on the number and strength of their allies and on their mere capacity to enforce. The Papacy could prevent Italian unity from coming about, but could not build its own, and in between a variety of republics, dukedoms and despotisms coexisted with various traditions of authority or no tradition at all, in which case power was held by sheer luck or force.

It was a period that didn’t only break tradition by force though. After three years in office in the government of Florence, Machiavelli witnessed Amerigo Vespucci setting sail

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5 ‘At the side of the centralizing Emperor appeared a usurper of the most peculiar kind; his vicar and son-in-law, Ezzelino da Romano. He stands as the representative of no system of government or administration, for all his activity was wasted in struggles for supremacy in the eastern part of Upper Italy; but as a political type he was a figure of no less importance for the future than his imperial protector Frederick. The conquests and usurpations which had hitherto taken place in the Middle Ages rested on real or pretended inheritance and other such claims, or else were effected against unbelievers and excommunicated persons. Here for the first time the attempt was openly made to found a throne by wholesale murder and endless barbarities, by the adoption in short, of any means with a view to nothing but the end pursued. None of his successors, not even Cesare Borgia, rivalled the colossal guilt of Ezzelino; but the example once set was not forgotten, and his fall led to no return of justice among the nations and served as no warning to future transgressors.’ Burckhardt, Jacob (1960). *The civilization of the Renaissance in Italy.* London, New York, The New American Library. P 42-43

6 Ibid. p.40
on his second journey to the East Indies. Columbus had just discovered the New World, the effects on communication of the printing press that Gutenberg had invented some 50 years before had become apparent, the Jews had been expelled from Spain, and in 1510 Martin Luther went to Rome to fight the corruption of the Catholic Church. The world was changing as established truths and social meaning were brutally contested and traditional authorities were challenged relentlessly. This is the age that brought forth the *The Prince*.

It was not uncommon to write a manual, or a *mirror of princes*, which is exactly what the *The Prince, or, Il Principe*, is. It met the demand of rulers who were searching for their new role and power basis. A demand that re-emerges in the 21st century where we find academics and advisors writing about the ways our rulers should act in order to regain their ‘legitimacy’ and credibility, or basically how to be a leader. Machiavelli’s is a study of how naked power can be transformed into durable rule - a task as much for usurpers of the renaissance as for elected governments in contemporary democracies. And although I do not intend to write a manual for current rulers, I share Machiavelli’s concern for the process by which power becomes authority in a society that has lost its common mythology. What Machiavelli taught was that the cultivation of authority is no easy process, and certainly not a rational one, but that in times of disbelief and relentless plurality of convictions it is a pragmatic craft that deals in deception, whether for good or ill. Some of Machiavelli’s advice will sound true and even necessary for today’s ruling class, but I will also be sure to add a dimension of love to the pragmatism of *The Prince*.

In describing the troubled journey of authority figures I try not to stick to single disciplines, and instead I leave the inquiry relatively open-ended just so that it is the themes and questions that are guiding rather than its genre. But because of the way I try to weave together abstract interpretation with historical experiences the arguments will come together only after the picture has been given colour. This means that the insight is in the intersection of trends and thoughts which cannot be presented in bullet point syllogisms, but have to be spread out over different kinds of analysis on a singular theme. A short guide through the argument will therefore be helpful. In what follows I introduce the forces that played out in the development of my argument and present what is at stake.

The first thing at stake is this study itself, because it takes up, maybe foolhardily, an issue that cannot be satisfactorily treated in its entirety in a single book. This thesis still poses the fundamental question of authority however, precisely because authority figures
themselves do, as a sign of a major shift in the way Western consciousness evolves. Namely, that authority is increasingly experienced as something every individual creates for himself, and that as such individuals experience the friction and uncertainty that accompanies the process of finding new ways of relating to one another. The magnitude of this theme can discourage social inquiry, but it is important make a start with the attempt at exploring and redefining the foundations upon which rulership is based in a society that knows it is experiencing a fundamental change in its social and cultural structures and institutions, even though the precise nature of this is not always clear. That is the underlying motivation for this thesis.

We live in a time where academia has expanded, but the scope of individual study has steadily shrunk. There is an indisputable need for specialised knowledge, but our system promotes specialisation at the expense of synthesis and innovative integration. The differentiation in competing disciplines makes students blind to one another’s insights, and the tyranny of scientific form on social studies often proves more restrictive to independent thinking and collective understanding than a stimulus to wonder. What is more, we study the observable and attempt to capture it in abstract principles but in the process we often forget the experience behind the appearance, mostly because it cannot be measured appropriately. But the true being of things lies in these experiences and they will never be measured appropriately unless we include that most delicate of instruments - the human himself. Next to the study of social theory I have used my experience in order to make sense of observations, and ask of the reader to use his so that he can imagine by empathy the forces at work.

This essay will fall short in scientific precision, but not because I believe that such precision is irrelevant, on the contrary. But the nature of the social world leaves an unavoidable tension between what occurs at the individual level of human experience and a more or less shared social reality that stretches over time and larger groups of people. The tension makes it difficult to determine the precise connection between the specification of a particular empirical reality and its generalization. To engage in a study that attempts to bridge this chasm inescapably omits specific cases and details that differ from the broader interpretation and risks loss of relevance to other realities beyond examples given. I run the risk of oversimplifying reality or false generalization, and neglect of variation. The art is to strike a balance, and gather sufficient force of argument to make

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7 I take such imprecise terms like post-modernism or the new age that are being used frequently a a sign of this.
a case, using studies that have already been done and combining observations and insights from the various disciplines. The gain would be an analysis of structural properties that make social relationships of authority and their institutionalisations visible which otherwise would not be available to inquiry. If one is willing to suspend, for a moment, the degree and number of responses to the current social condition there will emerge a pattern in the kind of problems and experiences authority figures and the institutions they embody share and in the kind of responses to them. These kinds are my conclusions, and their purpose is simply to provoke the same old questions related to new circumstances.

The specific things this thesis adds to the big question of authority are:

- How the modern archetypes of Machiavelli’s New Prince, and Shakespeare’s Tragic Hero, develop and still determine the way we see authority.
- How these archetypes ultimately fail in the context of post-metaphysical authority.
- That the archetypes of authority in the post-modern era can be defined not as alternative species of the genus authority, but as species ins search of a genus.
- A whole system theory of authority that explores the different roots of authority, uniting the personal, collective, inner and outer dimensions of authority.
- Illustrations of the observation that in response to a discourse or drive for transparency - as the modern expression of emancipation and mastery – rulers employ strategies of intimacy and detachment to cultivate their authority.

By following the traces of the leader’s cultivation of self I study his ideal typical consciousness in the modern context. My starting point hereby has been Max Weber who notes that in no instance does ‘domination voluntarily limit itself to the appeal to material or affectual or ideal motives as a basis for its continuance. In addition every such system attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy.’ The cultivation of this immaterial thing ‘legitimacy’ – understood as authority - is what we should look for when trying to find out more about the ruler’s self identity. This identity has a shared social dimension however, and tells us something about the society we live in. As Weber has it ‘according to the kind of legitimacy which is claimed, the type of obedience, the kind of administrative staff developed to guarantee it, and the mode of exercising authority, will all differ fundamentally. Equally fundamental is the variation in effect. Hence, it is useful to
classify the types of domination according to the kind of claim to legitimacy typically made by each'.

This thesis is not concerned with whether Weber’s typology describes reality, ideal types are but a tool to make reality understandable, but it uses his insights to build other perspectives through which we can interpret the world. As Weber also knew, there is no way of telling what an action means and what its intention is by just observing it. But by interpreting action and speech we can try to understand (verstehen) social behaviour and gain knowledge about its causes and effects. The study of human living together depends on an imaginative mode of interpretation. We cannot understand consciousness by simply looking at actions. So I encourage empathy (Einfuehlung) and a re-living (Nacherleben) of the archetypes I describe so that the reader may recognise them or not within him or herself and find out what insight they may give. This thesis asks the reader to imagine and re-live the ruler’s agony and visualise the image that the archetypical rulers discussed have of themselves, as this way the reader’s own experience can recognise his strategies and worries.

In the first part of this study I ask who the modern ruler is. What does his authority consist of and how does he cultivate it? Conceptually I need to present a theory of authority and the source of the problematic relationship rulers have with their authority. Therefore I trace the meaning of authority back to its historical context in chapter one in order to discover what it actually is rather than defending a version of what it ought to be. My point here is that we ran out of categories of legitimacy that have durable, shared social credibility and therefore we need to invest in the sources of authority behind the contingent social images that we produce if we are ever to deal with the problem. The problem being that the reality of domination is disturbing and laden with hidden and explicit conflict. Authority remains ambiguous at its core therefore. It is not and can never be calm and fearless, easy, or lastingly peaceful. The grey back that protects and leads the tribe causes peace, but there is always the possibility that the tribe be organised otherwise and with another grey back on top.

The nature of authority which I explore in the first chapter turns out to have four dimensions: Authorship, Authorisation, Authenticity, and Augmentation. They represent a

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holistic approach to authority which includes the personal, objective, social, and systemic, bound together by time and space. Within these dimensions we search for shared understandings that relate the world of power to our sense of self so that we can appreciate the inequality and differences of insecurity between the ruler and the ruled. As will become clear, the understanding of authority under modern consciousness does not see all four as forming one whole and rather focuses on one of them to describe or give expression to authority. The images and archetypes that emerge from this searching on the social level don’t come without serious effort. We call them law, God, or democracy, but can they appease our conflicting thirst for independence and security?

Chapter 1.1 discusses the place that legitimacy has in the study of authority. Chapter 1.2 traces the origins of the four dimensions of authority in the western world. And chapter 1.3 looks at how authority breaks down in order to understand why rulers have such difficulty cultivating authority in a culture of transparency.

Machiavelli and Shakespeare witnessed the birth of the modern ruler, and although much has changed since, their times and insights still determine our collective consciousness. Chapter two uses insights from the psyche and historical circumstance of Machiavelli’s New Prince in order to understand rulers of today. It also looks into the performative aspect of authority, the way it is enacted and communicated. The fundamental question of my thesis concerns the change and disappearance of roles when authority is no longer self evident in the order of nature and lost its place in the God-given hierarchy of society. Authority becomes increasingly a matter of authoring a credible identity. Machiavelli and Shakespeare mark this shift. Chapter 2.1 explores this dramatic dimension of authority and looks at the importance of a ruler’s enactment of his role.

Chapter 2.2 looks at the need authority figures have to establish authority to themselves in order to be able to do so in the eyes of others. The way a figure of authority tries to cultivate his ‘legitimacy’ is often a reflection of the way he attempt to justify his position to himself. The reality of respect and authority is as much a matter of a ruler’s inner beliefs as it is of external recognition.

Chapter three dives into the inner world of the second archetype, that of Shakespeare’s tragic hero Hamlet. Authority is tragic in nature because it can never fully
realize itself, it remains ambiguous and above all subject to time. The modern death of authority is a sign of its tragic nature.

In chapter 3.1 I explore the tragic nature of authority with Hamlet as its modern exponent. The unbearable lightness of being is the condition under which our archetypes need to cultivate their authority. Hamlet responds in a reflexive way, setting him against the action driven Prince.

Machiavelli’s Prince and Shakespeare’s tragic hero represent the modern embodiment of the two faces of authority; the one that inspires awe and the one that takes care, the hard side and the soft side, the one that increases social distance and the one that closes social distance, the outside and the inside, the cunning and reflective, or perhaps the paternal and the fraternal. In chapter 3.2 these two faces are discussed in more depth.

In the second part I ask how authority vanished from society and left us with its pastiche. I argue that the images and beliefs we cherish about authority are a fragmented imitation of the original four dimensional authority that I discuss in chapter 1. In order to make the fragmented condition of authority intelligible, I need to cover some historical ground which places the modern strategies of cultivating authority in perspective. The disappearance of authority then means three things;

1) it means that authority lacks an integrating mythology which can give the inherent human fallibility, uncertainty, and mystery of the world a significance that transcends the dichotomy between emancipation and mastery, awe and reassurance, fear and desire, or close and distant. Modern archetypes of authority are unable to make the experience of authority one that augments, or makes complete. In other words, authority has difficulty giving assurance (value) when we profoundly doubt the order of the world and the process by which authority is cultivated

2) Together with tradition the roles by which authority is recognisable have lost their univocal meaning. This means that roles are no longer invested with the sacred or social significance by which the person who enacts them can speak from a larger order or tradition. There are no roles (priests, executives, a demos, etc.), in other words, who have the authority to to authorise or make true and respected that which they have created, or authored(a constitution for instance).

3) Fear and distrust for authority have driven us to expose, distrust, or ignore authority ever further. This means that our culture follows an exposing self-defeating myth (illusion)
of the immanence of authority.\(^9\) We have heightened desire for authenticity of which we
expect that it compensates for the lack of the other three dimensions.

This disintegration of authority has seen a particular development in recent decades
which are characterised by what I call a *culture of transparency*.\(^{10}\)

In *chapter four* I deal with the intersubjective aspect of authority as mythology. I will
use the word mythology throughout this study because it refers to an integral vision on
social reality and it is not limited to either social or political beliefs as with ideology, or to
doctrine as with modern religion. It is rather the entire frame within which we conceive of
ourselves and how we relate to the world. Besides being a source for normative reference,
myth originally served a pedagogical purpose, teaching us about our psychological
development and the ways to cope with the pain, mystery and ambiguity of life. And it is
precisely because the reality of authority calls forth these very questions of insecurity that I
believe the term mythology is appropriate. This chapter already reveals a clue to the way
out of authority’s disintegration, as mythology seeks to integrate and facilitate the
experience of being alive. But the form mythology can take today is circumscribed by a
reflexive consciousness, and so needs to be both individual and universal, not just
communal. But a modern ruler in his modern role cannot be the author of a new order but
can only share the mere activity of sharing – because there is nothing else that speaks
through him.

In chapter 4.1 and 4.2 I elaborate on the transformation of authority from the Roman
understanding to medieval and modern principles of reason and justification. Machiavelli’s
Florence was the place where the representative democracy was made possible by this
new world view of man-made authority. What I will argue is that when western society
started seeing the production of authority as a human endeavour, representation became
the dominant metaphor through which it was understood and accepted politically. The

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\(^9\) Immanence comes from the Latin *in manere* ‘to remain within’, and usually refers to the philosophical and metaphysical
idea of the divine as existing and manifesting in the phicial world or the mind, rather than existing beyond human
knowledge. I refer to immanence in relation to authority as the belief that authority is created by humans, and therefore
cannot be sacred. I argue it can and should be both human, and thus fallable, and sacred. In the social realm it helps for
personal and social health to treat certain relationships as sacred because it fosters respect. Out of fear we might want to
disrespect authority and try to expose the King as just another fallable human being. The tension is between that fear
for being ruled maliciously or giving up our freedom to an untrustworthy person, and the need for assurance from an
authority figure (whether human or institutional) that can unite a collective.

\(^{10}\) There is an enormous body of literature which attempts to describe the condition of the last few decades. Post-
modernity, late-modernity, new capitalism, or post-structuralism are words that are used to describe our time. The
culture of transparency is in many ways a radicalization of modern thought and circumstance while at the same time it
provokes new phenomena such as a widely shared celebrity cult and unprecedented distrust in political institutions and
their disintegration.
problem that this metaphor of representation made evident however, was that it turned out difficult for humans to justify their basis of authority without the backup of a higher force. Before that time social authority invested in the ruler was more a matter of his place in the natural order of things, attributed to him by God. A mythology integrated the experiences of life with its organisation, its pleasures and its discomforts. With the disenchantment of the world, however, authority became liable to a modern fear of dependence. Its ambiguity awakened suspicion and disbelief in contrast to, for instance, tribe’s people who feel no need to question their authority system, as it functions well in relating people to themselves, each other, and the world. I argue that because the modern man wants to remake himself and his world, instead of living it the way he has inherited it, he has difficulties accepting an external source of order.

Chapter Five explores the forces of exposure that lead to a culture of transparency. They are the modern drive for emancipation and mastery, the appeal of transparency, and the search for immanent, intimate authority as a surrogate for divine charisma.

In chapter 5.1 I characterize modernity by the two forces of desire for mastery and the desire for emancipation. These are characteristic for every human being, as every person is asked to become an adult and thereby to emancipate from his parents and exercise mastery over himself and his world. But the nature of society is different from an individual life cycle. True, whatever it is that a society sees as the image of trustworthiness and strength will have the power to sanction. But we gradually lost the necessary homogeneity and stability to form durable and productive images of authority. This does not mean no images are being made, but the ones we have are informed by a belief in the immanence and masterability of the world, and hence put the burden of creating lasting value on the shoulders of mortal beings. Whereas the church could once represent the eternal authority of God, symbolised and enacted in the building of imposing cathedrals, our own times reject the surrender to even a benevolent authority, and resist the imagination of authority. That is the problem we are facing. For as Hannah Arendt notes, ‘to live in a political realm with neither authority nor the concomitant awareness that the source of authority transcends power and those who are in power, means to be confronted anew, without the religious trust in a sacred beginning and without the protection of traditional

and therefore self-evident standards of behaviour, by the elementary problems of human living-together.\textsuperscript{12}

The environment in which the modern ruler finds himself is therefore paradoxical and demanding. Authority is asked to be absent in order not to threaten our liberties while it is asked to be present in order to lead us to safe havens in a world of insecurity. The underlying structure of this dynamic is that of authority’s ambiguity itself and the modern incapacity to deal with this uncertainty. Liberal democracy can be seen as a product of this incapacity. It is reflected in the paradox of modern law in which we ask the law to order our lives because social institutions like the church have lost the authority to do so, but we forget that the law is based on the very authority that gave the power to order in the first place.\textsuperscript{13}

As a result rulers must give the impression that power is \textit{absent} where it could possibly compromise autonomy, and that it is \textit{present} to give the feeling that someone or something has the power to change the various degrees of existential misery into security and happy sanctuary. So power is asked to be naked and transparent, simple and controllable, to the extent where authority can no longer survive. Because, as will become clear, what is completely familiar, controllable, visible and intelligible holds no authority – in the same way that the Mona Lisa lost her aura after showing up on the cups.

Paradoxically leaders are saddled with the task of crafting an authentic public personae, at a time that the crafting itself - the formation of public myths - is distrusted. We are afraid such a myth entails superstitious irrationalism or that it hides controlling structures of power that curtail our autonomy behind our backs. In this environment the social and psychological production of a ruler’s role becomes ever more difficult and the lack of standards as to what it means to be a leader has thrown the modern ruler in confusion about his identity.

In short, we emancipated from religious dogma, tried to grow up to intellectual maturity. But what should come in place of the defeated mystery of old traditions we are still trying to find out. ‘Ah the old questions, the old answers, there’s nothing like them!’

Hamm says with fervour in Beckett’s Endgame. In this story they are the questions of the modern ruler.

Chapter 5.1 also deals with representation as source of legitimate authority. For some decades now rulers and thinkers are on a self proclaimed ‘quest for legitimacy’, an often unrewarding mission in pursuit of social meaning, which resembles in many significant ways the fall of feudal order with the advent of the city states in Italy, or later with the French Revolution. In this chapter I trace the history of democracy as the search for mediating myths that can aggregate fear and desire for authority. Politically representation has been the primary myth that mitigates the desire to emancipate from authority. But this myth has not been able to meet the hopes for freedom. Its quest for an immanent source of authority ran aground on a disillusion with the ever imperfect instruments of democracy. The inevitable failure of representation is but another expression of the social tragedy of modern authority: that we long for the authority that gives security but that there is none in any absolute sense because we are fundamentally vulnerable and without certainty. The more authority asserts itself therefore the more it makes us face our weakness, which is why we tend to reject it, but the more we challenge what frightens us the less it has the power to reassure.

In chapter 5.2 I give an illustration of how transparency is neither and both emancipatory and controlling. Through the modern metaphor of the glass house I show how it is engraved into our culture.

Chapter 5.3 takes the disenchantment of the world and the self-searching drive for authenticity a step further into the present and I explore the seductive nature of authenticity. I relate this drive for authenticity to the alleged legitimacy crisis that came with the cultural revolutions of the 1960’s where authority was so violently rejected in the West. It shows how the same longing for authenticity points to the bankruptcy of modern authority.

The culture of transparency I describe in chapter Six follows from the forces of exposure. It is on the one hand the desire to make things intelligible, and on the other to make them controllable. Modernity is characterized by an increasing social, economic, cultural, and political complexity however, and it has become increasingly difficult to know and control society. Next to a human need for security and predictability, the desire
to see and control can be seen as a reaction to diffusion and a denial of the fundamental nature of this diffusion then.

In Chapter 6.1 I describe a current sense of crisis in politics. The sense that citizens have less trust in politics, institutions, and leaders is accompanied by a certain indifference towards them. In this short chapter I describe the most recent conditions under which rulers attempt to regain their credibility.

In the third part I explore the two ways in which the troubled leader deals with an environment in which his authority is disbelieved. The theory of authority and the forces of exposure which ended in its crisis come together in the concrete articulations of leaders whose authority is denied.

It is not just that authority began to disintegrate with modernity when it started to name itself, there is another argument: that authority has systematically sought to reinvent itself in a context where it was death sentenced. The consequence has been a response of increasing and closing social distance by rulers towards their ‘following’. Both taking place against a backdrop of a culture of transparency.

So I divide the world in two kinds of claims to authority; one that increases the gap between the citizen and the ruler, and another which decreases social distance. They are metaphors and do not pretend to describe the whole of social reality. But they give a frame through which the events of 21stC politics can become intelligible. In this study they are illustrated by a series of cases that fit in either of two modern archetypical forms of cultivating authority, exemplified by the New Prince of Machiavelli, and Shakespeare’s tragic hero. Each case exemplifies the modern ruler’s self, expressed through one of the remaining strategies for self-legitimation or even the avoidance of justification all together. Each case also represents the crisis of authority more generally, even though every time in slightly different ways.

Chapter Seven deals with the father face of authority, with the distant Prince who poses himself as undeniable by inspiring awe through a feeling of necessity and seducing through an illusion of simplicity. Chapter 7.1 is an account of how security issues like the War on Terror as treated by the Bush Administration embody one of the few strategies available for surrogate authority, namely by an appeal to necessity. Chapter 7.2 deals with the charismatic seduction of simplicity.
In **Chapter Eight** I illustrate how leaders reduce social distance as a response to the culture of transparency. Power simulates its own absence in order to recover a glimpse of legitimacy when it feels it cannot justify its existence. In Chapter 8.1 describe how the self-reflective display of the Third Way and the World Economic Forum are an expression of a general ‘quest for legitimacy’. The reason is that here the world’s most prominent political and economic leaders gather and reflect on themselves and the problems they encounter as leaders.

In chapter 8.2 I will then look into the seductive and destructive functions of intimacy and authenticity illustrated by the Presidency of Bill Clinton. Chapter 8.3 then deals with the self-exposure of a Dutch politician whose manner of self-legitimation would have been unthinkable a few decades ago, but it represents the essence of a moral and emotional movement towards transparency and intimacy between leaders and citizens. In him we can recognise the archetype of Hamlet as well as the failure of self-revelation as a strategy of legitimation.

Chapter 8.4 analyses the drive for transparency illustrated by the European Union and its attempt to authorize itself by seeking closeness to the citizen.

Finally, in **Chapter Nine**, I analyse the crisis around the Hungarian Prime Minister who was challenged for telling the truth about his lies. In his story the consequences become clear of the culture of transparency. In a way he unifies both inspiring determination with self-revealing honesty and transparency. In describing the culture of transparency, which forms the cultural environment for these specific and radicalised reactions to the crisis, I look into the European leadership involved in the making of a new supranational order. Together they form a structurally distant body with a sense of crisis, whose strategies for openness and closeness provoke more suspicion and rejection than belief.

Illustrating the two faces of modern authority with historical leaders in telling situations of crisis will bring distant and close authority to life. Both kinds of responses are to make decisions seem unavoidable and actions appear to have lasting value, but in their manifestation the first makes itself noticed with a dreadful ‘shock and awe’, while the other complies with the denial of authority.

On the one hand they tell a timeless story about the paradoxical way we attempt to cope with human vulnerability, which is a struggle to balance our dependence and fear for
authority. We need authority but also resent it, and resent it because we need it. On the other hand these responses are articulated in ways specific to our times.

The very strategies that the modern ruler adopts to gain credibility are not without paradox or problems either. The ubiquitous self-revelation of the ruler destroys his authority more than anything, and yet he is drawn to it, feels obliged or even is obsessed with self-exposure. Society asks for transparency in order to be able to trust again, but the more we see, the less we seem to believe. This is the irony of our time. Whereas every leading institution wages a war against distrust, the people from whom they seek approval seem increasingly disinterested and distrusting. Because a lack of trust is thought to reside in the lack of legitimacy our leaders look for the latter, but find only themselves on display. Trust, I argue, comes from authority, not from legitimacy. And legitimacy is born of authority, not trust. In the chapters that follow I will describe the process whereby the figures of supposed authority search for, cultivate, and ultimately often destroy their own authority.

What I am saying is that the ambiguity of authority is difficult to bear, and is often asked to be reduced in order for people to live fulfilling lives. Audiences need to cope with their fear for authority and their simultaneous need for it in a way that makes this situation bearable, or even enjoyable. Strictly speaking this is the responsibility of every individual, but the reality is that as a society we do not show the capacity to cope collectively. Perhaps this is because the way authority’s archetypes have been given form are so deeply disappointing. The ways in which authority is attempted by the modern ruler are often a means of avoiding the difficult task of responsibly producing a credible image of authority, and speaking with love directly to the unconscious structures of fear and desire.

In western cultures instead of asserting the God-given right to rule our leaders need to stage their powerlessness in order to recover a glimpse of simulated legitimacy. And every opportunity to add to one’s credibility with illusory arguments of universality or necessity, making them appear to be directed from an outside source, is grasped with both hands because who wants to risk rejection and participate in the tragedy of a world without justice? Becoming a credible leader, I argue, had to become an attempt to avoid responsibility and resistance by simulating authority’s absence or hiding its contingency. Or at least, modernity invited rulers to do so. Whether they chose the easy and somewhat immature way or whether they stood upright to defy the expectations of a sometimes fearful crowd has been up to individuals within their historic circumstances.
If there is a normative element to this thesis it is the call to rulers and ruled to be courageous in their imagination of possible authority relationships. Rather than discussing whether we should re-enchant society, or secularise it further into rational procedure, the question should be what attitudes institutions and individuals should take with respect to their dependence on each other. When rulers, media, and academia speak of a crisis, then this is a call to adventure, the purpose of which is to create new significance in times where social meaning is too much in turmoil for a simple one-size-fits-all ideology. Only if we nurture the four dimensions of authority in relationship to one another we will find a satisfactory system, effective roles, nurturing relationships of authority, and trust.
PART I

PART I. WHO IS THE MODERN RULER?
Perturbed rulers of today will find the root of their concern in early modern Florence, because Machiavelli’s prince is probably the first well depicted worrying leader in western history. Of course kings and lords had been preoccupied with their power and status before, but their roles were clear and the belief in their authority was always related to how well they managed to perform that role. With the emergence of the New Prince a new kind of cultivation is required of the ruler. He comes to power by what were hitherto considered illegitimate means. That is, not in accordance with the natural order of inheritance and divine right. So whereas before the king could specialise in the perfect performance of his role - the hereditary king - the New Prince has no clear common meaning upon which he could rely to make his theatre meaningful. Or at least, he had to be far more resourceful and creative to legitimate himself. The character and methods of Machiavelli’s Prince are not the only origin of the modern ruler, however. In many ways his opposite, but sharing the struggle with his illegitimate rise to power, is the tragic hero who we became familiar with through the plays of William Shakespeare. I ask myself, who is this modern ruler, embodied in these two literary figures? And in what does his authority consist? What is the condition under which he emerges?

But before that, however, it is good to specify the terms of the discussion and examine authority itself and dissect the riddle of authority. A riddle conjures up a picture of something that is hidden, or intangible. Its root is connected to ‘read’, however, which itself is an offshoot of the Sanskrit word ‘radh’, which means to accomplish, or glean. The riddle therefore has meaning and solutions. The meaning and solutions I refer to are not the same as the answers to a crossword puzzle, but they are the kinds of answers one can get from a myth or a piece of art which transpire something of the universal condition of existence in a way that is at the same time personal and different to each viewer. The question ‘what is authority?’ has never been answered in an uncontested and straightforward manner. That is because it is a riddle rather than a puzzle. I would therefore like to explore this question in a more searching manner by looking into the origin of its uses and the questions of how it relates to legitimacy - with which it is so often confused - how it is made, and how it breaks down. This will yield different dimensions through which we can give meaning and find solutions in authority. Furthermore,

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following on what I said above about authority’s ambiguity I probe deeper into the question why it is such a confusing concept in the first place.

Although I am primarily interested in the figure of the leader and the way he cultivates his authority, even a hero cannot do without an audience. I therefore also look into the conditions for authority which are shaped by the audience - as they are the final interpreters of a ruler’s significance.
1. WHY HIS AUTHORITY IS AMBIGUOUS

Like light, the nature of authority depends on how you look at it. Is light a wave or a series of particles? Or can we only say that it is an energy that autonomously travels through empty space, conveying information from one place to the next? We need no quantum theory to figure out that objective authority is a fantasy, and the fact that there is a word for it does not mean there is something out there that we can measure. But it is an important fantasy, the experience of which is real. How should we then study it? As a right to rule, or the recognition of that right? As a capacity to influence belief or as the power to command respect? As a discourse or a process by which we imagine a reality of asymmetry? Is it a religion, illusion or myth that structures the way we understand and recognise the world? Could it be seen as a biological response to perceived superiority, or is it a form of superiority? Is it a deception of dependence and a sign of weakness as de la Boétie might say, or an expression of freedom as Nietzsche would describe it?

These questions should wake us to the different natures of authority. When we speak of legal authority it is often in the sense of the authorities holding power over us, or the legal system controlling our behaviour and beliefs. When someone has a skill or accumulated knowledge we might say he is an authority in the field, art, or discipline. If there is such a thing as natural authority we find it in the parents vis à vis their children when they are young. Otherwise we might refer to the authority of the state, which to us moderns means so much as having given our consent to be subjected to its laws - as though authority where something of a reciprocal arrangement that arises from agreement – or we see it as the monopoly of violence which the state imposes. Intuitively we all have a feel for what authority is, but to make it tangible turns out to be quite difficult. The reason for this is that the dominance on which it is based is changeable,
whereas the reason communities create authority relationships is because they seek something of a lasting value.

The reason why authority exists is because value and meaning are have no objective significance in an ecosystem - where value and truth is determined by the sum and balance of all processes, effects, and relationships within the system. Lack of objectivity makes mysterious and creates the need for (a relative) certainty upon which we can evaluate, because if all was clear we would not need authority. So authority is that type of fiction by which we attempt to protect ourselves against, or perhaps rejoice in the uncertainty of life. In any case, it gives us structure or coherence and therefore it is the source of value. For instance, a game can only be played because it has rules and a certain coherence which determine the relative value of whatever happens in the game. In Roman times the Latin word *auctor* referred to the person who could provide credible guarantees about the quality and effectiveness of what he or she did, like the rules of a game determine what quality means and what moves are seen as effective. I will come back to the origin of the word authority but from this it is already clear that authority is related to integrity, or coherence. So we are dealing with something that creates, gives and cultivates coherence and meaning.

How can authority give (or be) coherence? By judging and reassuring. Fathers and the legal system have this in common that they judge and reassure. They judge because they tell us about who we are and say something about the value of our actions. Have we been good? They reassure by providing predictability and a belief in their strength, which is the psychological guarantee for truth and protection.

In the prologue I hinted at the double nature of authority, that it harbours both fear and desire - for if it can create, it can also obliterate. The reality behind a persistent ambiguity of authority is, and will remain, a mysterium tremendum et fascinans (“the mystery that repels and attracts”). The mystery hides the fact that we *are* authority, and

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15 We find at the same time its creative, independent, and productive parts in the etymology of the word ‘author’. The Online Etymology Dictionary writes: c.1300, autor “father,” from O.Fr. auctor, from L. auctorem (nom. auctor) “enlarger, founder,” lit. “one who causes to grow,” agent noun from augere “to increase” (see augment).

“[W]riting means revealing oneself to excess .... This is why one can never be alone enough when one writes, why even night is not night enough. ... I have often thought that the best mode of life for me would be to sit in the innermost room of a spacious locked cellar with my writing things and a lamp. Food would be brought and always put down far away from my room, outside the cellar's outermost door. The walk to my food, in my dressing gown, through the vaulted cellars, would be my only exercise. I would then return to my table, eat slowly and with deliberation, then start writing again at once. And how I would write! From what depths I would drag it up!” [Franz Kafka]

16 Otto, R. (1917 (1923)). *The Idea of the Holy (Das Heilige)*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. Theologically this fear stems from the incompatibility between te human ego and the purity of the divine, or between the separateness which the human mind creates and the infinity of God.
that each and every one of us harbours a dreadful, dark and abyssal kind of power which sits seemingly uneasy, in reality rather effortlessly, next to an infinitely kind and reassuring force. When confronted with authority we encounter both these parts of ourselves. No need to say, an encounter with ourselves is not every time a pleasant incident, as the numinous is not altogether free of the ominous.

Rudolf Otto explored this double nature of the sacred in his famous work ‘Das Heilige’ of 1917. After travelling all continents to study the various manifestations of the divine across societies Otto came to describe ultimate authority not as some supreme God figure, but as the non-rational sense of truth and awe one is able to get from the experience of the sublime, of what he called the numinous. The trouble with the term is that it escapes precise description as it refers to an experience, more akin to perhaps the beauty of music. Two aspects are always present however, namely that of ‘daunting awfulness and majesty,’ and ‘something uniquely attractive and fascinating.’ From the awe inspiring element comes the sense of mysterious wrath and judgement, whereas from the beautiful part follows a reassuring and heightening experience of grace and divine love.¹⁷ These are the two faces of authority then, which I will come back to in chapter 3.2. They are not as abstract as they may seem.

A mother or father decides on the right or wrong of the child as long as the child has not grown up. They inspire awe as a teacher just as a judge inspires awe because he has the power to decide. Because we are dependent on his judgement for reassurance and the value of our actions, whoever it is that holds authority over us affects our sense of self. It is only natural to fear the power of authority therefore, even though that same power permits the figure of authority to protect us. A child might be frustrated in his desires by the authority of his parents, because they might not give him what he wants, but what he fears even more is that they might abandon him. So because we depend on authority we search for guidance to find out whether we can trust this particular embodiment. This is our miserable condition, always searching for ways of finding out what we cannot do, namely whether this or that authority is believable enough for us to surrender, if only partially. The challenge is to find out what is credible - for the audience to judge and for the author to embody. Finally what we will find is that what is credible depends on the time and place, but universally we rather look for something lasting and undeniable. Something that nature happens not to offer, and so the art of authority is in its capacity to

¹⁷ Ibid.
project an image of lasting value, despite the law of change. Or is it possible to find assurance in something other than permanence or universality?

So the pain of it is that we can never really know the truth about authority because we have a hard time determining the kind of strength or truth that authority is based upon. There is a difference between the nearly indisputable authority of an artisan or athlete on the one hand, when it concerns their superiority and insight in their field, and the authority of a politician, boss or father on the other. It is difficult to tell what parents, bosses, teachers, and politicians use their positions for and what their claims to authority entail. What makes that we believe in a leader’s capacity and trustworthiness? There is no science for that. We are left to inquire and guess after the validity of their appearance, and this constitutes the inherent misfortune of power; it is always up to the subject to make sense of what authority is.18 It is up to the citizen, worker or child to interpret the image he is presented with, to evaluate, believe, be drawn to, and to submit to it.

We therefore fear authority’s possible abuse, or our being seduced and deceived by it. We seek for guarantees in our rulers that would prove their authenticity, their competence and uprightness. But unlike with a craftsman, whose true skill is clear from the product of his labour, a father or a politician cannot give us guarantees. We are compelled to keep on searching then, and we ask: is it good natured or oppressive? Does it create a new reality, or does it suppress one? Is it in line with the normative order of society, with my own ethics, or is it malignant and evil?

The fact is that we are attracted to strong personalities, deeply entrenched social rules, and powerful institutions even if we don’t believe they are legitimate or in line with our convictions.19 That is the power of authority. I will write a little more about this later, because it is the origin of most misunderstandings in the literature on authority and legitimacy, but let us first ask about the context of authority’s ambiguity, as it is reflected in political thought of the western tradition.

Ambiguity of authority is also reflected in where authors have traditionally tried to place its origin. Next to an inherent ambiguity of awe and love, fear and reassurance, terror and desire etc. there is the social question of its origin and location vacillating between the

ruler and the ruled. The modern understanding of authority in politics relies on the tradition of two schools, the first of which is in line with Étienne de la Boétie, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Max Weber. Authority is seen as the conscious voluntary servitude to power, which means that the locus of authority is sought, both normatively and actually, in the audience rather than the author. It has managed to remain fairly separate from another tradition which sees authority as a mostly involuntary servitude. Of this school Niccolo Machiavelli, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Theodor Adorno, and contemporarily Stanley Milgram may be representative. It recognises that there is something more to authority than reason or belief, and that we humans respond to certain images with a deference similar to that which children naturally demonstrate to their parents. Both schools agree however, that authority transforms brute power into a social relationship. And authority figures embody this transformation in the roles they play, the language they use, the status they claim, and the imagery that they evoke. Awe and reassurance are mediated and embodied in a social bond about which the author and the audience share a compelling story.

It is a bit of a hazard to venture into the forest of entangled meanings of authority and tease out a feasible theory that serves the purposes of this study. And it should be clear that I do not claim a final say on the matter. But the concepts of authority that I found in sociology, psychology, politics, anthropology, philosophy and literature, despite their essentially contested character, would need some sort of integration in order for the following observations to make sense.

Maybe a good place to start is with the origin of the modern perspective we take on authority. For since the early modern period sacred and empirical authority have been confused with normative or legal legitimacy, and this hasn’t made things easier for the student. The terms authority and legitimacy were originally well distinct. The Roman word *legitimus*, referred to the ‘legitimate ruler’, he who is invested with the right to command in accordance with the law of the land and the will of God, in contrast to the ‘tyrant’, who came to power by secular means. So legitimacy was purely a notion by which to judge

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20 Stanley Milgram conducted a famous experiment propelled by the question how Nazi camp workers could simply follow orders that to any one’s standard outside the regime seem to go against humanity itself. According to Milgram, every human has the dual capacity to function as an individual exercising his or her own moral judgment and the capacity to make their own moral decisions based on their personal character. What is still a mystery is this, what happens to the average person who is obedient to authority when it overrides their own moral judgment? It turned out that 65% of Milgram’s subjects knowingly followed the order to give a series of 450 volt shocks to who they thought were other learning subjects. Under the right circumstances people voluntarily obeyed orders that went against their own moral judgment, which suggests that authority works not only on a moral dimension, or even a rational one, but can bypass both.
good from bad power, ‘good’ being defined by the norms of the social group e.g. religion. There was no division between legality and legitimacy, terms that didn’t exist until the early modern period. Because the law was God given until man started making his own laws.

There were three ways in which legitimacy was recognised. Public authority rested on the natural order, which was God’s will. Alternatively, the ruler came to office by inheritance. Or he was elected and confirmed. Authority, on the other hand, was what could validate the legality of a ruler! I will come back to this below, but what this means is that authority was the source of legitimacy. It is the real social power that can define what is good and what is bad – even though this still doesn’t tell us a lot about the specific nature of authority at any given instance.

When the ideas of authority and legitimacy secularised, the fundamental political riddle governing western political thought became, as Sheldon Wolin put it ‘how to combine vast power with perfect right.’ Up until this date there has been an ever growing body of literature engaging in the battle of moral politics that has given us innumerable conceptions of the good and the just that ought to make for an effortless transition into painless domination. But to define authority as the right to rule obscures the view of what it really does. Rights are of the same stuff as is legitimacy, about which no one dares to speak the truth, afraid that it disappears as silence with its utterance. The truth being that there is no right, and no tangible authority that validates that right. We have only images by which we try to relate our passions to the social world. Even though this still sounds shocking to most of western philosophy its implications have been well documented by the renaissance political writer and advisor to the Medici family Nicolo Machiavelli. From him we will hear a lot more in this thesis because he marks an important turn in the understanding of authority by which authority becomes split up in power or domination on the one hand, and Rousseau’s normative legitimacy on the other.

When Nicolo Machiavelli wrote Il Principe he must have been aware that it would raise a good deal of dust - dust that hasn’t settled to this day. No one could imagine a book that advises rulers on how to get to power in illegitimate ways, and acquiring by secular means the social authority that makes him seem to be legitimate. The fact that Mussolini wrote a
preface to the Prince and cited him regularly in his speeches did Machiavelli’s reputation little good amongst liberal democrats. How he came to write this book becomes clear when looking at the circumstances under which he wrote. Although his exact intentions with the book are still being discussed, it seems he wrote it for a very specific historical situation that, he thought, could bring an end to the turmoil and foreign besetting of Florence. It was that particular constellation of circumstances in which virtù and fortuna seemed to coincide which made Machiavelli believe that his dream of a unified Italy, ending the endless domestic rivalries and wars with foreign powers, was finally realisable.23

In 1512 Pope Julius II provides Giovanni and Giuliano de’Medici with a papal army to recover Florence. The republic under which Machiavelli served at the Chancellery fell, the Medici got back in power and Machiavelli lost his job. Though in exile he decided to take responsibility and write down what he had learned in order for those in power to be able to realise his dream. The circumstances were fortunate as Giuliano’s brother Giovanni was elected Pope Leo X, who on his turn appointed his cousin Archbishop of Florence, establishing the Medici as heading both church and state. Once before a similar situation occurred, which Machiavelli describes in Il Principe, and that was with the rulership of Cesare Borgia, Duke of Urbino, who knew himself supported by his father Pope Alexander VI. Describing this situation Machiavelli asserts that the virtù, or cunning of Borgia and the fortuna of the pope being his father, offered a powerful opportunity (occasione) to remake the political community.24

Machiavelli’s Prince, originally titled ‘De Principatibus’ (of principalities) and later changed to Il Principe, was dedicated to Giuliano de Medici, but Giuliano was assassinated in 1516, so Machiavelli changed the dedication to his brother, Lorenzo de’ Medici (2nd), who governed Florence with his brother until his brother’s death.25 An assassination was

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23 Amongst Machiavelli’s most important concepts are Necessitá, Fortuna, and Virtú. Virtu is the word Machiavelli uses to describe a number of things, but inmost cases it refers to the prudence of the ruler, the feeling for the game and his ability to rule. Fortuna, on the other hand, is the factor of inevitable change. Fortuna is described as a woman, the Goddess of change and circumstance and of human good and evil.

24 We know Cesare Borgia as a ruthless ruler, and because Machiavelli used him as a model for the Prince, Machiavelli’s words inspire a certain fear. Machiavelli himself did not approve of especially the cruel actions of Borgia, but only pointed out that if one is saddled with certain circumstances and one desires a certain outcome, ruthless action may be necessary.

25 In a letter to Francesco Vettori, dated 13th December 1513, he has left a very interesting description of his life at this period, which elucidates his methods and his motives in writing “The Prince.” ‘I have noted down what I have gained from their conversation, and have composed a small work on “Principalities,” where I pour myself out as fully as I can in meditation on the subject, discussing what a principality is, what kinds there are, how they can be acquired, how they can be kept, why they are lost: and if any of my fancies ever pleased you, this ought not to displease you: and to a prince, especially to a new one, it should be welcome: therefore I dedicate it to his Magnificence Giuliano.’
to be expected as the brothers ruled rather poorly and could have used some of the advice that Machiavelli attempted to provide them with. What Machiavelli wrote was not to flatter the Medici, for he knew well that to gain the favour of a prince one needs to tell them what they want to hear, but instead he criticised their way of rule. The Prince is a critique of the prevailing Medicean understanding of the art of the state which was characterised by favours and patronage aimed at controlling vital institutions of the republic. Machiavelli’s analysis of the human spirit as ‘much more taken by present concerns than by those of the past’ is a shot at the heart of Medici rule, as Machiavelli points out that ‘when they [the people] discover the good in present things, they enjoy it and seek no more. In fact, they will seize every measure to defend the new prince so long as he is not failing otherwise’. There is hence no excuse for blaming the people and the only conclusion the Medici can draw from this is that they are lacking in their duties as competent rulers. For ‘if he [the prince] carefully observes the rules I have given above, a new prince will appear to have been long established and will quickly become more safe and secure in his government than if he had been ruling his [hereditarily] state for a long time.’

Why did Machiavelli write The Prince if not to please the Medici? Machiavelli was convinced that the insights he obtained were of precious value and could help to bring about the peace he hoped for as the circumstances were right. He was looking for the kind of leadership that could relieve his beloved city state from violence and corruption. What was that insight? In Discorsus rerum post mortem iunioris Laurentii Medices (A Discourse on remodelling the Government of Florence, 1520-21) seemingly irreverent Machiavelli remarks that the great political philosophers of the past, in particular Plato and Aristotle, had to resort to writing about great republics as they didn’t know how to found them. This may sound crass but it refers to the sense of reality that he saw missing in their writings on political life. Not that he was without respect for his predecessors; much of his own work

Although Machiavelli discussed with Casavecchio whether it should be sent or presented in person to the patron, there is no evidence that Lorenzo ever received or even read it: he certainly never gave Machiavelli any employment. Although it was plagiarized during Machiavelli’s lifetime, “The Prince” was never published by him, and its text is still disputable. Many scholars have interpreted The Prince as an attempt of Machiavelli to regain his job by flattering the prince with the gift of good advice. Naturally he would have wanted a job again, but the motivation behind his book was far more than that. He calls this indirect government, in which the blame for necessary unpleasantness is taken by others (P IX). He attacks the friend and favours approach for ‘friendship acquired by price and not by greatness and nobility of spirit are bought but are not owned, and at the proper time cannot be spent’ P XVII Instead fear works better than favours. (P XIV)

In Chapter I Machiavelli starts with ‘All states, all powers, that have held and hold rule over men have been and are either republics or principalities. Principalities are either hereditary, in which the family has been long established; or they are new.’
build on them. Most notably maybe we see Plato’s observation of oligarchy as representing the excessive rule of wealth for its own sake and democracy as the disparity between desire and autonomy, in which the latter steadily is the legitimation of the former. But the distance between the way republics ought to be according to philosophy and the reality he saw was all too disturbing to accept. Political theory of his day exhibited the very same ‘inability to found’ as we see today, and philosophy thought it could educate princes into virtuous authorities. His contemporary Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), for instance, the Dutch humanist, published his Education of a Christian Prince in 1516. Following the tradition he maintains that the personal virtue of the prince is his most important trait and that such virtue is best secured through a thorough philosophical education. In accordance with tradition he assumed an important relationship between moral goodness and actual legitimate authority whereby morality and obedience were effortlessly, but erroneously intertwined. This confusion naturally found its way to the ‘mirror-of-princes’ handbooks, the medieval literary genre in which Machiavelli wrote the Prince, and which aimed to provide rulers with advice on the art of ruling. Much like today’s political philosophers and other advisors on matters of state, the authors of mirrors believed that rightful rule could only emanate from the morally virtuous character of the ruler himself. Princes were advised that if they desired a stable and lasting reign they were to adhere to the standards of moral integrity. The reasoning behind this advice was that, if you did good you earned the right to be obeyed and respected. And with legitimacy being the right to rule the circle was thought complete. A title to rule, it was assumed, would secure obedience. But confusion starts with the question in whose eyes the ruler has a title, for with that question the contingent nature of a ‘right’ becomes apparent. If it is the right granted by the people in power, whether noble or plebiscite, the ruler is safe, if, on the other hand we speak of the moral right, thought up by the philosopher, no prediction can be made as to what his friends and foes believe of him, whether they harbour contempt or nurse respect. And because the order of the world had collapsed with the breakdown of hereditary kingship, no king could be said to have the absolute right to rule. So Machiavelli wrote precisely for the ruler who did not have the

30 (D I 58, II 2).
31 Thus rulers were counselled that if they wanted to succeed—that is, if they desired a long and peaceful reign and aimed to pass their office down to their offspring—they must be sure to behave in accordance with conventional standards of ethical goodness. In a sense, it was thought that rulers did well when they did good; they earned the right to be obeyed and respected inasmuch as they showed themselves to be virtuous and morally upright. But every one who has read Dostoevsky’s ‘The Idiot’ knows otherwise
32 Respect is here referred to as the emotion rather than a matter of observing etiquette.
right to rule. Lorenzo de’ Medici II was a perfect example. He did not only come to power by a coup, lacking all traditional legitimacy, he was also weak and inexperienced and lacked all the personal charisma of the early Medici. That is the condition of the modern ruler, and Machiavelli asks himself how anyone in this position, in which the modern ruler inevitably finds himself, can hold on to his power and cultivate authority.

For Machiavelli the Prince’s real-life authority depends not on the judgement of Aristotle - next to whom he has often been perceived as the fallen brother - but on the prudence of the prince and the awe he manages to inspire. He has to present himself in a credible manner such that he can hold on to his power, but at the same time he also has to transform himself because he cannot remain a usurper. He needs to do something to evolve into a ‘legitimate’ and respected leader. That is the modern question of authority. It is this that leaders are looking for, but cannot find outside themselves.

Very little seems to have changed with respect to the kind of advice that mirrors of princes give. The modern mirrors are divided in those who speak about the need for deliberation and transparency if a state or decision is to be legitimate and accepted on the one hand. They assume a normative basis beneath an observable world, inferring real life consequences from normative deviations. Judgement is confused with explanation. On the other hand there are the real politics and management books that follow Machiavelli, if poorly understood. Machiavelli is not concerned with judging power legitimate or illegitimate, rather he wished to study the process by which authority is formed, how usurpation is transformed into durable rule. This question is not only relevant for principalities, but bears the same significance for republics and democracies. Although a new government may have been chosen according to ‘legitimate’ procedure, it alone does not inspire a relationship of emotional authority or a belief in its authority. The answer of Machiavelli being a new science of politics which does what is necessary to engeneer a following. The point here is that authority is much more than moral legitimacy.

In Machiavelli’s days ‘legitimacy’ was reserved for a very specific kind of traditional authority, namely that which one obtains through inheritance. The basis of all other forms of authority accepted as rightful leadership was a consequence of the virtù and prudence of the ruler and the circumstances in which he finds himself. Hereditary God-given authority was the ideological background against which usurpers had to work, just as popular sovereignty is the scenery in which ruler’s act out their roles today. But neither then nor today could ‘legitimate’ rulers sit back and be respected. Utopian visions of ideal
states of legitimate power Machiavelli therefore sees as a dangerous neglect for the world of how it is in favour of how it ought to be, threatening to inspire unrealistic and self-defeating action.

'It appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of the matter than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen, because how one lives is so far distant from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation; for a man who wishes to act entirely up to his professions of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil. Hence it is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity'33.

The Prince and Discourses intend precisely to close this crevice in political thought and provide a new science of politics.34 At this point it is essential to understand that what Machiavelli addresses in his work is a new kind of political figure whose authority did not reside in tradition: the ‘New Prince’. The new prince radically breaks with this view of authority. At the time Machiavelli wrote, society was believed to accord to a natural order, a legacy from medieval times. God was the source of all authority and below Him everything had its proper place. A disturbance of that order would create chaos, and usurpation, seizure of the crown without the hereditary right, was a crime equalled to regicide. ‘Legitimate’ was the prince who inherited the throne and was thereby endowed by the blessing of God. But what changed for the new prince is that such blessing was no longer sufficient, or sometimes simply not even sought after. Dante already noticed that hereditary kingship was no guarantee for virtuous rulership and in renaissance Italy cities could be alternately a republic or principality headed by either nobles or merchants like the Medici. The divine order of legitimacy was challenged in other words and accordingly Machiavelli sought a worldly ethics that needed no celestial sanction. The virtù he preaches is the prudence with which authority is crafted in a time where no moral order can hegemonise the realm of legitimate authority. Where, in other words, no authority, be

33 P XV The context in which Machiavelli used the word ‘wrong’, though, was that of a moral order from which all deviations were considered ‘wrong’. The belief in a universal order is no longer widespread today, which changes the meaning of Machiavelli’s ‘wrong’. Furthermore, both Plato and Aristotle tried to discover the nature of politics through metaphysics. They saw existing regimes as necessarily imperfect, just as a horse is but a reflection of the perfect ‘idea’ horse. But this imperfection didn’t mean that the principles against which they judged regimes were therefore wrong. But Machiavelli rejected metaphysics altogether

34 Although the realistic or secular study of political life had already earned an audience in Italy as early as 1400 with the publication of Caluccio Salutati’s The Tyrant
it of the Pope, the Emperor, the King of France, Luther, or the merchant Medici. With Machiavelli, therefore, authority became separate from legitimacy.
Whereas Machiavelli was interested in the workings of authority, western philosophers, princes and students have mostly tried to define criteria with which to discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate authorities. Awarding value to the things around us is an expression of the basic human search for coherence, but even though a vital activity it does not teach us about the nature of legitimacy or authority. The trouble then remains that, rather than acknowledging the fact that legitimacy is purely meant to distinguish a king from a tyrant, or a good from a bad regime, modern thinkers have tried to find immediacy in legitimacy. They try to give criteria for the real legitimacy. To show how fruitless this effort is and to suggest that it is perhaps more interesting to observe and create ways of cultivating a belief in worthwhile rightfulness I will later ask the question where our authority comes from, and how we justify the power and/or influence that comes with it.

But before I do that it is necessary to explore the current understandings of the idea of legitimacy. There are at least four ways in which legitimacy is understood today - often used in combination with one another – and I will briefly discuss them. Philosophers see it as a normative assessment; to discriminate tyrants from kings, or bad regimes from good ones. A regime or leader can possess legitimacy as a sort of resource - necessary for his rule. And it possesses legitimacy when it complies with the moral standards that philosophers think up, or adhere to values which are assumed to be universal. In democratic theory, legitimacy is conferred by the people unto government, the expedient instruments for which are elections, or referenda, but final realisation remains an ideal.

35 See for instance Stillman. His definition of legitimacy ‘can discriminate and judge illegitimate the tyrannical policies of government with “good title” to authority, the lying propaganda that contradicts the value patterns of society, the Hitler who leads to the destruction of value patterns, and the government whose minimal order-keeping is not compatible with the demands for order and progress from the value patterns of society.’ Stillman, P. G. (1974). "The Concept of Legitimacy." Polity 7(1): 32-56. p.50.
Or another standard view of legitimacy is that ‘power is legitimate to the extent that the rules of power can be justified in terms of beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate.’ Beetham, D. (1991). The Legitimation of Power. London, Macmillan. p.17.
Legitimacy has little to do with the experience of authority here and is above all an argument about what authority should be.

What in political science is called ‘pluralist theory’ sees legitimacy from a realist point of view and takes it to be the *popular attitude* that can be measured as support for leaders or regimes. But in fact it corresponds to a favourable or informed response in public opinion polls. This is usually seen as a resource that regimes need for their stability, and whose lack leads to a crisis. It recognises that legitimacy has something to do with authority, and therefore with some sort of support, but it is also coloured by the democratic ideal according to which legitimacy is the resource that is conferred by citizens on the state. Or if taken further, the state itself has no autonomous existence and is but a result or the various voices of society which ultimately together form the one legitimate voice. Whether or not opinion polls give an accurate insight into people’s attitudes, the question remains what this information tells us about authority. And what is legitimacy?

Is a regime legitimate if all people express their support, or would a little over fifty percent be enough? And what does this knowledge really add to the health of a community? What does it say about the effectiveness or nature of authority relationships in society when a certain percentage of people answers yes or no on the question of whether they support their leaders? It would not teach us more about authority than a child would teach us when angry at its dad for not giving the candy it asked for.

Also in the pluralist view stability became a factor in the analysis, and so only the opinion of that group which maintains the state apparatus counted - an expedient answer to a philosophical question. And furthermore, what does attitude tell us about the social emotion of authority? If my response to the poll is negative, do I not respect the authority

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37 Legitimacy as an “evaluative” concept by which “[g]roups regard a political system as legitimate or illegitimate according to the way in which its values fit with theirs.” Lipset, S. M. (1960). *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. London, Heinemann. p77


of the state? Or do I just not like it? Or trust it with my money? It is hard to tell because underlying normative judgements are confused and intertwined with the reality of authority.

A third school tries purposefully to combine normative and support theories by expecting legitimacy to result from the correspondence of values between citizens and politicians (and academics). Beetham writes that 'legitimacy is the compatibility of the results of governmental output with the value patterns of the relevant systems. (...) legitimacy is [therefore] dependent not upon popular feelings about government but on the compatibility between output and values.'\textsuperscript{41} Here the empirical output, attitudes and normative value system are combined to define legitimacy.\textsuperscript{42} But again, this is but a normative view of what rights the state has to govern, and its expedient exponent denies 'legitimacy' to dictatorships or hereditary kingship.\textsuperscript{43} This school does not simply observe the absence or presence of value correspondence, but prescribes correspondence. There is a normative claim, the purpose of which eventually is to have the ruler’s values and output adapt to that of the people in order to make for ‘legitimacy’.\textsuperscript{44} None of these concepts can help us see beyond the preacher.

But there is a fourth way, in which legitimacy is understood as a ‘metaphor which we employ to describe circumstances where people accept the claims made by rulers.’\textsuperscript{45} And it is the making of claims that should interest us, the language used, that is, for relating ourselves to an image of power or for constructing a myth. Rodney Barker observes that in a society without traditional class divisions, grand narratives, or coherent collective identities, the justifying ends for government are ever more contested, more varied, and less hegemonic. This makes it easier to recognise that what the business of legitimation is

Governments here are legitimate only when the results of governmental output are compatible with the value patterns of relevant systems. Ultimately a normative presupposition of democracy underlies this conception though which makes correspondence a matter of the values of the author rather than the people.
\textsuperscript{44} See Stillman for instance when he writes ‘In sum, then, legitimacy is the compatibility of the results of governmental output with the value patterns of the relevant systems. This definition has many implications…First, legitimacy is dependent not upon popular feelings about government but on the compatibility between output and values.’\textsuperscript{45} Stillman, P. G. (1974). “The Concept of Legitimacy.” \textit{Polity} 7(1): 32-56.
all about is the making of claims to rightful rule, rather than the attempt to deduce what rightful rule is. The social aspect of cultivating one’s authority is therefore a discursive activity by which claims are made to rightful (for whatever reason) rule.

Weber understood legitimate domination this way and I will take some space to discuss his ideas as our current understanding of authority is mostly shaped by this account. Here rather than understanding authority as legitimacy, like the normative schools do, legitimacy is understood as authority. That is, the moral dimension is taken out and reduced to a belief in rightful rule. Legitimation can now mean two things. It can be the claims that rulers use to cultivate an image of authority, or it can be the sanctification of someone or something by whoever or whatever can arouse the recognition of his or its authority in others. Sociologist Max Weber uses the first understanding here. ‘The basis of every authority,’ he writes, ‘and correspondingly of every kind of willingness to obey, is a belief, a belief by virtue of which persons exercising authority are lent prestige.’ So authority is a belief in legitimacy and it makes for voluntary obedience. What does this imply? Following Weber, Geatano Mosca observed that

‘Political formulas are [not] mere quackeries aptly invented to trick the masses into obedience. Anyone who viewed them in that light would fall into grave error. The truth is that they answer a real need in man’s social nature; and this need, so universally felt, of governing and knowing that one is governed not on the basis of mere material or intellectual force but on the basis of moral principle, has beyond any doubt a practical and real importance.’

Belief is therefore neither entirely voluntary nor the consequence of some sort of false consciousness. Here legitimacy is still taken as a short cut to understanding compliance, even though in the more advanced investigations compliance does not follow from a philosophical or moral rule. ‘We do not comply because we legitimate compliance, but we cannot readily comply unless we legitimate compliance, because legitimation is a

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46 Ibid.
49 This idea is picked up by few sociologists, but a particularly thorough understanding is shown by Mitchell, who writes that subjects need to see the authority under which they live as legitimate so that they can ‘see order in the universe in which they live which will render meaningful, and therewith acceptable, their position.’ In the process, subjects are able to accept ‘the deprivations, which are entailed in that subordinate position, by fitting them into a larger pattern.’ ‘Partly from the cognitive need for order, partly from the need to see meaning in their own position in the world and in their own share of the good and evil things offered by life, they must believe in a pattern in the world’s affairs. This is why they wish to see power exercised legitimately rather than illegitimately’ Mitchell, G. D. (1979). A New Dictionary of Sociology. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, p14
dimension of compliance. It does not precede it. Barker sees that there must be something in us that makes that we comply, but that it is not the case that we first confer legitimacy on a ruler who we then obey.

The confusion has led many students to infer ‘legitimacy’ (as in support and normative endorsement) from obedience. But people may have various reasons for their compliance or disobedience - belief in rightful rule being only one of them. Weber knew this as no other although he has often been accused of inferring justification from compliance. The fact of an order being obeyed for instance is not sufficient to be able to say that it was due to force. It could have been due to the command being accepted as a valid norm. But it is difficult to say what reasons there were for obedience. He writes:

‘Psychologically, the command may have achieved its effect upon the ruled either through empathy or through inspiration or through persuasion by rational argument or through some combination of these three principal types of influence of one person over another. In a concrete case the performance of the command may have been motivated by the ruler’s own conviction of its propriety, or by his sense of duty, or by fear, or by “dull” custom, or by a desire to obtain some benefit for himself. Sociologically, those differences are not necessarily relevant. On the other hand, the sociological character of domination will differ according to the basic differences in the major modes of legitimation.’

Weber justifies his use of ideal types with the argument that reasons for action cannot be derived from simply observing the action. Idels types are a way to understand (verstehen) behaviour when you can’t look into people’s heads. By separating the meaning of an ideal type from the actual meaning of individual action an ideal type thus doesn’t use meaning to explain behaviour, it uses behaviour to specify meaning (legal, traditional, charismatic). In this way I am, like Weber, concerned with meaningful action, not with behaviour.

Some say that ideas or beliefs cannot be separated from actions though, but that is not what Weber does, as he doesn’t try to infer intentions from actions. He does not say, this or that person does this or that because he believes such or so. He gives us tools to be able to start understanding people by giving three ideal typical figures (charismatic,
traditional, and legal rational) whom we follow like watching a movie where we listen to the voices in the heads of these main figures.

So for Weber legitimate authority is both contributing to actual domination - the acceptance of claims to rightful rule - and it is a claim that is trying to justify the ruler who wants to have rightful rule. But he seems ambiguous about the role of justification. Though he treats authority as a form of power without coercion, he does assume a form of persuasion, a form of justification that needs to take place. But authority is ‘incompatible with persuasion, which presupposes equality and works through a process of argumentation. Where arguments are used, authority is left in abeyance.’\(^5^4\) Authority, in other words, does not need reasons, because it is guaranteed in symbols rather than justified in words, as we all recognise from the assertions; ‘Because I say so’ and ‘because I am your father, that’s why.’ We accept authority because he is who he is. Not only who the authority figure is personally, but also what he is socially and archetypically. And who he should be in order to exert authority depends on what the community deeply feels as superior judgement and strength. It is assumed and understood that if asked to explain himself the authority could and would do so, whether this is true or not. As soon as an authority figure is asked to account for himself the situation is subtly but significantly transformed, for the relation of trust and acceptance is suspended in that moment.\(^5^5\) If the authority responds by arguing in earnest rather than claiming respect he seizes to be an authority and starts to persuade. When trust exists, however, the audience acts as if they were persuaded, whereas in fact they simply trusted the authority of the speaker. Similarly, as soon as an authority uses violence or threatens, respect transforms to force and authority becomes an (attempt at) coercion. So only when trust is lacking, persuasion and violence replace authority.

Authority is claimed therefore. In his 1918 lecture at Munich University Weber famously defined the state as ‘a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.’\(^5^6\) Note that it is the claiming that specifies its identity.

\(^5^4\) Hannah Arendt What is Authority? In ‘Between Past and Future, six essays in political thought’ P. 84
\(^5^5\) A mistake made by most students of trust and legitimacy is ignoring this dynamic, or missing the link between legitimacy and authority.

\(^5^6\) In the same text he explains: ‘Like the political institutions historically preceding it, the state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e. considered to be legitimate) violence’
‘If the state is to exist,’ Weber follows, ‘the dominated must obey the authority claimed by the powers that be. When and why do men obey? Upon what inner justifications and upon what external means does this domination rest? (...) To begin with, in principle there are three inner justifications, hence basic legitimations of domination.’

All ways in which authority is perceived, according to Weber, can be understood as either traditional authority, charismatic authority, or legal rational authority. Traditional authority simply follows from long-established social structures - the ‘eternal yesterday’. Hereditary monarchy is probably the most obvious example. It has its roots in myth, in precedent and hereditary custom, in the elders, lore and ritual or in legend. It makes that British government works without a written constitution. Organically developed societies are build upon this form of authority. In particular situations people make extraordinary claims to extraordinary authority in the service of a new order, thereby rejecting the traditional authority. This is what Weber called charismatic authority, or the gift of grace.

What do leaders have when they are attributed charisma? That question Weber shared with Freud, who also had been curious to find out because there is a sense in which charisma seems both dangerous and redeeming. Strangely enough, however, the reason why someone was attributed such grace seemed trivial. Where does this awkward excitement come from that some figures of authority can inspire around seemingly trivial aspects of their personality, for instance? Both Weber and Freud could not see the rationality of it but they recognised that this personal power could make people trust and accept the authority of someone who neither inherited his position nor was appointed formally. They assumed that authority and legitimacy therefore had to be based on some sort of illusion. As if to say, this charismatic leader actually is not legitimate, we only think he is because he has rendered himself mysterious. This kind of reasoning is only understandable from a secular point of view however. Weber and Freud inherited Machiavelli’s world of profane passions and did not believe that God actually bestows his grace on leaders. So whenever we come to see such grace and transcendent power in a man, whether he be called Jesus or Napoleon, it must be due to worldly forces rather than due to something sacred.

Freud and Weber’s scepticism led them to assume that there must be a secular and irrational need behind the belief in charismatic authority. They could not imagine that the
human yielding to celestial charisma is an innate and sincere desire for emotional integration rather than necessarily an illusion. Both had to explain the belief of men, whether in God or in the graceful authority of a leader, as the result of earthly needs and did so by assuming that the charismatic leader manipulated the masses with a mysterious illusion of his powers. In reality it is at least as true that the people use religion and charismatic leaders to relate to their own passions, their insecurity about existence, or their need for love and hope. The question is not whether there is an actual grace bestowed on charming leaders by a bearded man in the clouds, but in what need charisma fulfils and what it nurtures or neglects. In this sense charisma is an illusion that it is a created shared belief with the implicit agreement to treat this leader as if he or she has divine powers which make it easier for people to overcome their egoistic fears. Of course these same powers can also increase or redirect these fears, as we have seen with the Nazis for instance. It nurtures belief, and neglects reason. But it is rational to believe when by doing so you can reach emotional peace and courage. Religion and charisma can be vehicles for that.

For Weber charisma arises out of crises, and in the midst of an ungovernable chaos he believes that it is people’s need for order that makes them see in someone the exceptional capacity to assure their angst. He is interested only in the question why and when people feel the need for such a figure, and his answer is that charisma is a sign of conflict and upheaval. Once on the scene, Weber asserts, the god like figure takes the conflict into a stark symbolic clash of passions and identity. This is right, and that is wrong, and so simplifies reality so as to enable people to focus their energies. Freud, on the other hand, describes society as in lasting discontent and chaos. Only the charismatic leader can lead them to renounce their passions and commit to civilised behaviour. Like religion he is the repressive force that makes morality and turns obedience into willing avowal. Without this force society regresses into chaos which it cannot rationally resolve.

Charisma as used by Weber is unstable because its powers are a shared illusion, so in the end the ruler must be exposed as false. Weber gives the example of the Chinese emperor who prays to the gods in times of flood. The fact that the floods remain is taken

as a sign that the Emperor is an impostor and needs to be punished as a usurper. In the same logic elections are often lost and won on the waves of economic fluctuation.59

Weber also saw the necessity of charisma though because the power of such short lived spectacle as a charismatic leader brings to the stage can be used to form laws and institutions - ‘ordini e istituzioni’ - as Machiavelli would say, that are the institutional forms, norms and procedures necessary for durable rule.

For Freud charisma has a different function though. Because the masses do not want to renounce their passions, he maintains, they need to follow an illusion which responds to the deep desires of the psyche. The illusion that charisma gives is that the figure of authority protects and reassures his followers. They seek to propitiate him like a substitute father whom they love for his protection and fear as the mysterious stranger who comes in to cut the meat on Sundays. ‘We know that the great majority of people have a strong need for authority which they can admire, to which they can submit, and which dominates and sometimes even ill-treats them.’ And ‘all the features with which we furnish the great man are traits of the father.’60 Like charisma, religion for Freud is therefore just an infantile displacement of the father. This makes that for Freud all authority is charismatic and religious! Which is true in a sense, even though it is not always transcendental, but that doesn’t imply it is regressive or a pathetic solution to our docile passions. In any case, the leader in Freud is not a redeemer who provides a channel for the passions of disorder as with Weber, but rather a father figure to whom people can allow themselves to yield again.

The charisma I have been talking about so far is the charisma of two founding fathers of modernity. Both Weber and Freud embody modern consciousness as the structure of their reasoning has been engraved even in today’s students of man. But charisma has not always entailed the same experience as described by them. The divine king or the priest of ancient times had also followers who depended on him, for sure, but the dependence was not complete. The king was not the emotional master of his subjects but only an instrument of an outside power. Like our governments are subject to the laws they enforce, so the divine king can be held to the word of God when he does not himself observe the God he preaches. Freud’s father figure on the other hand, is the secular

59 …But this praying to the Gods originally was a means to atone oneself with nature, the same way a rain dance is not to make rain, but to accept its absence
authority to whom we personally surrender. His authority is not based on myth, as Freud himself wants us to believe, but on shame and fearful dependency of a child.61

The last form of legitimate domination which Weber describes is when people follow rules and formal procedures which they believe are justified. The defining feature of legal-rational authority is maybe that it is based on non-hereditary and non-historical images. Instead, it is about security derived from human artefacts such as the law, science, and bureaucracy. The personal authority of the king is then translated into abstract rules and habits. So charisma is routinised in offices and institutions which the gracious leader or regime have left behind. Like relics of a saint their presence still radiates some of the sacred aura which once roused the people’s exhilaration. The inevitable Fall of the ruler transforms the irrational energies into orderly institutions and bestows upon a remainder felt legitimacy. This is how most of sociology has understood the phenomenon and these are the ideal typical forms described by Weber, but in reality there is no reason why authority could not be based on many other grounds.62

Whatever the ground, it is by such guarantees that coercion is transformed into a relationship of voluntary obedience, however lenient that is interpreted. Weber thinks that it is the belief in legitimacy that makes authority. But if authority is the belief in legitimacy, why is it then, that we feel so attracted to ruler who we know are malignant? Weber could say that this is because there is something in us that justifies the atrocious behaviour of a leader based on the claims to legitimate rule he makes, but the psychological reality of it is that we tend to justify our compliance only after the fact, or under the influence of authority.63 This poses a moral problem for theories of legitimacy because they assume a rational consent of some kind which in reality is not always measurable.

Weber does not recognise that one can also feel a bond of authority while not recognising the rational or moral legitimacy of the authority figure. What Sennett noticed is that we can feel attracted to strong personalities we do not believe legitimate.64 This is only possible if the process by which people experience authority of others is separate

from the content of what they perceive. And this is precisely what Freud has demonstrated. Whereas Weber assumes the credibility of the leaders is in the image he presents, Freud shows how we can come to see someone as having authority over us not by accepting the image presented, but by projecting an image onto the authority figure. He describes how people carry images of power that are formed in childhood with them into adult life. The parent figures make a deep impression on the child and determine large parts of our emotions towards others.

In a way charisma is the authority that people acquire through the projection of an image of trustworthiness, superhuman capacities, or mysterious insight which sets the charismatic ruler far away from his followers. Although the authority has a hand in what he projects, it is mostly a projection onto him coming from the follower (or patient), drawn from collective archetypical images such as that of the father or of ‘mana’, but also from a personal biography or circumstantial indicators of trust. So due to these projections the power of charisma lays way beyond mere popularity. The authority of the ‘Primal Father’ figure is formed both by the experience and fantasies of the individual child and by the mythology that human society has abundantly provided throughout its existence.

Depending on how the authority relationship changes during the various developmental phases that humans can go through, relations of authority are interpreted in different ways. The same way a child has no internal point of reference apart from his instincts, and can not perceive of himself as apart from his mother, the adult continues to risk a regression to the comfortable and secure reliance on an absolute authority which requires no responsibility for one’s own creation, one’s own opinions, actions, and good or bad fortunes. This archetypical desire for surrender is both the soil in which authoritarian leaders grow and the reason for which authority and legitimacy are separate.

There was a group of researchers who half way the last century found new ways of looking at the complex relationship between beliefs, legitimacy and authority. Their efforts

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65 In Jungian terms, it is the authority that emanates from the “mana” personality, the already distinguished out of the ordinary person, whether politician, religious leader, genius or psycho analyst.
66 In Jungian psychology Manna is the archetype of inner strength and spiritual power. In ancient cultures, a phallic symbol would refer to this power, implying fertility, strength and healing for a family of society. An archetypical image to which we respond is not a near conscious projection however. 'The unconscious, regarded as the historical background of the psyche, contains in a concentrated form the entire succession of engrams (imprints) which from time immemorial have determined the psychic structure as it now exists. . . . It is intelligible, therefore, that avowedly animal traits or elements should also appear among the unconscious contents by the side of those sublime figures which from oldest times have accompanied man on the road of life.' Jung, C. G. (1924). Psychological Types or the Psychology of Individuation. New York, Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc. p.221
culminated in the famous study, *The Authoritarian Personality*, Theodor Adorno and Horkheimer which showed that what people are willing to believe is not simply a matter of credibility or legitimacy of the ruler, of idea’s or rules that they are presented with. It is also their need to believe which makes for their acceptance. And the need for authority is shaped by culture as well as by psychological disposition.

Erich Fromm, a former member of the Institute of Social Research, had posed the theory that after the breakdown of the established feudal authority structures people in the Western world have been ambivalent towards their newly acquired freedom. What he called the ‘sadomasochistic character’ referred to the often unconscious wish to escape the burdens and responsibilities which came with the lack of a stable and imposing authority structure. This immature character made people susceptible to totalitarian seduction and propaganda.68 People in whom the susceptibility to totalitarianism is strong have an emotional need for external authority, which manifests itself with respect to the parental figures first, he claimed.

He contributed to Horkheimer’s *Studien Über Autorität und Familie* (1936) from which *The Authoritarian Personality* would later be a derivative. This study gave empirical evidence for the theories developed about authority and found a relation between beliefs, attitudes and the role of fascist ideology in individual personalities. The famous F-scale they developed indicated the sensibility to totalitarianism (or pre-fascism). The way authority was experienced by individuals interviewed was related to the family situation, meaning that in people who had authoritarian parents (fathers described as distant, stern, and hardworking. And mothers described as morally restrictive, submissive, fearsome, and self-sacrificing,) the need for submission was stronger than those who described their parents as un-authoritarian (words used to describe them were; intellectual, easygoing, serious, authentic, relaxed, mild, sociable, understanding and warm).

Horkheimer and his colleagues made an effort to place these tendencies in a historical context. Personalities, they argued, change over time and change with socio-cultural context. Personality and its experience of authority apparently change over time. The authoritarian family of the 30’s has disappeared with the development women’s emancipation, declining birth rates and changing beliefs about the proper roles within the family and society, for instance. This inevitably has an effect on the development of the

child and his character. Social and political psychology has tried to distinguish the traits of rulers and the circumstances which augment the probability of someone being attributed the authority to influence belief, opinion and behaviour. But because circumstances change the authoritarian personality as described in the studies of the Frankfurt School will probably be difficult to find today, in the same manner as Freud’s simple hysteric is no longer among us as a type of patient. Such differences between individual people and circumstances will continue to determine the kind of authority relationships that we observe, but more importantly, for my purpose, also ruler’s consciousness changes with time. Someone feminine, intimate, and empathetic as President Bill Clinton would have been unthinkable half a century before.

Like Adorno and Horkheimer I describe authority as a social emotion. At least as far as ‘authorisation’ or legitimation is concerned; the interpretative relationship between author and audience, or authority figure and subject. I will talk about other dimensions of authority in the next chapter. The point here is that authority is an emotional thing more than a rational one, and has a social dimension. Since Aristotle and Plato there has been a stubborn belief that emotions (pathē) are feelings or passions that just happen to us and are usually dangerous. But emotions are ways of experiencing the world and giving things a meaning, while at the same time they are strategies that allow us to cope with that world. Though we know not enough about emotions for a general theory, we can specify a number of ways in which they play a role in our lives and experiences.

Modern neurology and psychology is often tempted to see emotions as temporary reactions of the body, measured with MRI and PAT scans, but the social and indeed historical dimension of emotions was already recognised by Aristotle and Freud. Anger or anxiety, for instance, may endure and pertain over long periods of time, but they would be difficult to measure. The emotional experience of one generation or civilisation is therefore not necessarily the same as those of the next, depending of the dominant self-conceptions of that place and time. Three dimensions make up the experience: our biological evolution explains why we are afraid of lions, but also why we feel deference to asserted authority. Psychologists call experiences that spring directly from biology the primal appraisals of emotions. The other form of appraisal is cultural. Our culture adds to the way we understand and experience the world, which again is through emotions, but it is also our culture that defines which emotions are acceptable and which are not, and how we can interpret them. This is the kind of appraisal which requires more information than the first
for an experience to become meaningful. Our life experience has a further bearing on the way we understand and the way we can experience the world. These three dimensions are necessary parts of authority. There is something to be said for authority being also a primal emotion, but it certainly has a large cultural (moral and social) dimension and a very personal one which is related to one’s own growing up into an autonomous adult.

For authority to get its shape, like resentment or shame, one has to be aware of the kind of things that are recognised as having high status in society, what is considered strong and what is considered weak. So the fear and recognition of an authority figure as your father may last a lifetime, but not necessarily so. It needs, as opposed to the fear for a lion, a rather large amount of cultural and social information for such fear to exist over time or in the absence of the father.

Emotions are also strategies, as Sartre persuasively argued in his book *Emotions*, and do not merely happen to us as Aristotle would have it. Emotions change us, or better, we change ourselves through our emotions. Through anger for instance, we place ourselves in a judgmental position, lifting us from the humiliating situation that roused our anger. Authority functions in a very similar manner. Nietzsche speaks about resentment when he describes the Judeo-Christian rejection of all authority that is not God’s. It is a strategy, he claims, of the dependent who have to justify their weakness to themselves. What was good and noble becomes evil, wealth and power become polluted, and not having them becomes a virtue - a source of pride and esteem or a reason for self-righteousness.69 Whether or not this is a historically accurate analysis or not, it describes the social psychology of an inverted self-legitimation. This ‘transvaluation of values’ is the way in which the weak express their resentment and recognise their impotence by cultivating an identity of superiority.

The archetypical figure that surpasses this kind of resentment is the *Übermensch* for Nietzsche. Although Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* is free of justification, and lives his life by his own standards, he still has a sense of his own worth and authority which fulfils the function of justifying his privilege. The follower, on the other hand, always has to justify his dependence to himself, whether by a sense of his own weakness, his proper place in the world, or a sense of his superiority as bondsman.

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Because emotions have little to do with truth, other than that they in themselves are truths, or actual experiences, they do not have to be related to something real in the world. I can feel the authority of a person who according to whatever standards ought not to have it. A person may say, ‘rationally I know that this spider is harmless, but I’m afraid all the same’, or as I told my mother when I was little, ‘I know that Santa Claus isn’t real, but I still feel afraid when I see him’. This may be the result of a complex inner conflict, for instance between a social norm and a primal emotion, or another form of cognitive dissonance.

All this is to say that authority is not simply a belief in legitimacy, universal, a biological reaction, or something that is inherent in a leader figure. It is a complex interpretation resulting in an image of strength and an emotion of trustworthiness. And this interpretation is coloured by need, fear, love and desire, but also by personality, character, biology and culture. Following Adorno and Horkheimer Richard Sennett inquires into the social organization of emotion itself, and asks how different kinds of emotions are organized differently in modern society. Whereas in Adorno and Horkheimer the elements of authority are presented, for Sennett the process by which an interpretation of ‘images of strength’ takes place is yet unclear.

Sennett is struck by the observation that today ‘formally legitimate powers in the dominant institutions inspire a strong sense of illegitimacy amongst those subject to them.’ While at the same time these figures exert a strong authority over people; they succeed in translating their power into images of strength, of authorities who are assured, judge as superiors, exert moral discipline, and inspire fear. To say that this is merely an adolescent experience, as would Freud, is just too simple because it would not be irrational to rebel against images of authority that really are lacking in integrity. Sennett isn’t satisfied with what Freud would see as the attraction resulting from an infantile regression alone. The bond that is created between ruler and ruled despite the rejection of the authority he sees as a bond that exists because of the rejection. The need for authority, he argues, arouses and augments the fear for authority as it not only threatens to take away our liberties, but we are also frightened by the idea that we ourselves may give away our liberties because we so desperately want someone to take care of us.

71 Ibid.
It is extremely difficult to admit the need for authority in modern society, as the modern Western view of human nature sees autonomy as its greatest good. Admitting our dependence would mean to admit our weakness and incompleteness as human beings, which damages our sense of self-worth. It is therefore not safe to admit our dependence, which must consequently be masked and rendered acceptable by declarations of rejection. This way the rejection of an authority’s legitimacy becomes a strategy for self-preservation. Compare this to the traditional view of legitimacy which recognises that ‘despite the need to see power as legitimate, it is often looked upon as illegitimate by those over whom it is exercised.’ We remember Machiavelli’s assumption that the commons do not want to be governed, that power is more often than not perceived as coercive control rather than as legitimate authority. It is usually assumed that in order to be perceived as legitimate, power ‘must be subsumable under a more general pattern or order of meaning.’ If it ‘obviously fails to conform with that order its claims to legitimacy are refuted.’ Machiavelli made a similar statement when he warned new princes of freshly usurped principalities that if they would not be perceived to conform to the traditions of the city state they would soon lose their authority. The difference however is in the consequences of such refusal.

If we follow Freud, Adorno and Sennett authority is still felt, even though legitimacy is not believed. Subjects may rebel, or attempt to destroy the authority by acts of violence or withdrawal, but there is still a feeling of need towards the authority figure. And the violence or withdrawal may be a way of overcoming that need. For the pluralist sociology of legitimacy authority itself is overthrown because there is no difference between authority and legitimacy. They assume leaders lose their grip on people when legitimacy lacks, making the state, family, or organisation impossible to steer without coercion. But if the reaction to an image of authority does not entirely depend on its (moral) content, states and other relations of domination may well exist in the absence of a belief in legitimacy, but not in the absence of a belief in authority.

This should be enough to uproot most modern ideas about legitimate authority because it means that even though I thought an authority or his command was
illegitimate, the moment I obey his authority rather than his reasons I changed my belief about what is immoral, if only for a moment, and I suspend my own authority to trust this figure. The power of authority is precisely the ability to change what I believe and my actual disobedience may still be a sign of respect for authority.76

Legitimacy does not exist because it does not refer to a reality out there. It has a function in the interpretation of authority relationships however, but not in any one-dimensional way. That the story does not end here should be clear. Because for a modern reader this conclusion begs the question whether it would be possible to live with an authority that allows for personal autonomy? Autonomy develops itself in relationship to an external authority over time, like a child matures in relationship to his parents, teachers, bosses, or the state. Authority figures can even help show us our ability to respond (response-ability) and choose rather than be simply subject to what an awesome figure claims or what our fears and desires propel us to. This is hopeful for liberal democrats. But before we can start thinking about new social political systems we need to understand the nature of authority on a deeper level. I will keep to that task in this thesis. In the above I moved the dilemma from a normative discussion of legitimacy to a multilayered exploration of social and personal dynamics of subjective (moral and emotional) interpretation and objective states of belief and domination. In the next chapter I break the nature of authority up in its four dimensions and want to show that authority is a creative (and destructive) force, a meaning giving force, an autonomous, and unifying force. Because the question of the modern ruler is how to create new meaning in a world that challenges all meaning, how to assist in the unification of fragmented individual interpretations, and how to reinvent his authentic role and proper ‘dramatic’ expression?

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76 The Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary describes authority as the ‘power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behaviour.’
To ‘make the world anew’ was the imperative that Machiavelli gave the prince if he wished to hold on to his power. He had to ‘found’ a new estate of which he was the author, at least, if he had come to power by usurpation. But this piece of advice also betrays the very essence of authority: to create. I realise that this is not the standard understanding of authority today. As described above, for a long period of time it was voluntary obedience, unrelated to coercion or rational conviction, and currently it doesn’t matter whether compliance is voluntary or not, as long as there is a conferred right to coerce - whether that right comes from a fiction in the sky or the fantasy of ‘a people’. The foundation of that right to rule has changed with the fashionable ideology of the day, but generally most people still believe that a right is all there is to it. What we call legitimacy is but a historical shared understanding. What sounds rightful to one, does not so to the other. Contingent descriptions of what makes a thing believable, trustworthy, and respected cannot grasp the deeper nature of authority, because every contextual meaning is created and authorised by authority. Actions or people we call legitimate have been sanctioned by something, that is. Because our contemporary concepts of legitimacy can no longer help us understand how authority works, what it is, or how to foster it, we have to go back to the very origin of authority and see in what it consists.

By following the etymology of the word back to its origins we do not merely give another definition of authority, or the next normative account, but we can evoke the feelings and experiences from which the social and psychological understanding of authority arose.

The root of our authority we find in ancient Rome. I do not suggest that the Roman order of authority was some sort of paradisiacal harmony, on the contrary. In a way the origin of the word authority marks the beginning of authority’s corrosion. As soon as the unspeakable had to be named, and the order was no longer self evident, the West set off on a long emancipatory road towards a society of elementary particles and a enchanted disenchantment – a belief in secular and one-dimensional immediate authority.

What makes the Roman uses of authority so fascinating is that they are derived directly from the ancient understandings of the natural and tribal cultures, but made intelligible to
moderns by what Dante would have called the spirit of Virgil - who had Aeneas bring
civilisation through Man’s reason, intellect, and moral or aesthetic faculties. That is,
authority is a primal process of creation which is related to our day to day experience
through human civilisation. The Roman origins of authority are so important due to their
honesty about authority’s nature, it does not tell fairy tales about its moral good, nor does
it reject it as the evil of all evils and enemy of freedom.

Roman authority describes reality at the same time that it accepts that reality. It does
not try to find an ideal otherworldly state of affairs and does not try to resist the world as it
is by judging good from bad regimes. It accepts and rejoices in the absence of rights and
universal principles of justice without falling into nihilism. By analogy, the Greek telos, or
Dharma which means nature in ancient Sanskrit more or less in the same way as it was
used in ancient natural law. It refers to the orderliness of the world and that which dictates
the appropriate behaviour of every thing in it. It is the dharma of a fish to swim for
instance. There is no necessary opposition, therefore, between the is and the ought and in
this way authority was not dependent on an outside justification, but was rather aligned
with the most undeniable force, which is the necessity of nature.77

The reason why Roman authority can ignore these modern inventions is because it
does not seek authority outside its personification. To the modern mind authority of a
statesman or an institution is derived from the will of the people, from God, or the ruler’s
skill and sentiments, but to the Romans the whole point of authority was that it was not
derivative of anything and rather the source itself.

‘Authority’ is derived from the Latin word auctoritas which has its root in augeō,
meaning ‘to augment’ or ‘to make whole’ or ‘complete’. It would be a mistake however to
take augmentation to mean a simple addition. Because the notion of augeō recognised
the fact that on a deep level nothing can ever come from nothing and that everything is
therefore a creation out of what already existed. Auctoritas describes thus at its very core
the very origin of things and their cultivation.78 In this picture of authority we catch a
glimpse of the divine and of that which makes whole what was already there. It is the part
that got lost with modernity. There are other derivatives of the idea of auctoritas, however,

77 A century before Weber, Friedrich Shiller spoke of Entgotterung, of the disenchantment of nature which we find in all
realms of life. Where science objectified nature and expunged divinity, it eliminated value and meaning as well with the
subjectivity that nature was denied. Before the modern age nature was endowed with authority on human affairs and
had its proper value.
78 See for instance Cicero Oration Pro Domo c29, Titi Livitus: Ab verbe condita, Liber VI.
Another element of auctor is aug-co, or augere, meaning ‘to increase’ and make complete.
which developed during Roman times and which survived the age of modernity.\textsuperscript{79} I will complete the picture with these other attitudes in order to allow relations with our own conceptions to appear and show how we are left with only these derivatives.

The place \textit{auctoritas} took in ancient Rome is best understood by looking at its organising function in society. The two principal constituent groups of the Roman Republic were the people and the Senate (\textit{Senatus Populusque Romanus, S.P.Q.R}). Whereas the people held the power (\textit{potestas}) to select the candidates for the throne, voicing their choice in whatever manner, their voice needed to be ratified, authorised, or legitimated, by the authority (\textit{auctoritas}) of the Senate. Only then could a king or consul assume the robes and responsibilities of his office. The role of the people is clear from the meaning of \textit{potestas}, which comes from \textit{posse}, meaning ‘to be able’, and refers to the capacity to create new, but still unrealised possibilities. \textit{Potestas} is a social function however, attributed to the people, whereas \textit{auctoritas} derives directly from the personal condition of the \textit{patres} (the father-figure like members of the Senate who fulfilled this role in analogy to the \textit{pater familias} of the family). The \textit{auctoritas} of the patres then augments, or validates the possibilities given by the people.

The four roots of authority each teach us about a different capacity. The first sense of authority is \textit{auctoritas} as \textit{authorship}, which refers to its founding and cultivating capacity. \textit{Auctoritas} as \textit{authorisation} is what validates and adds value. Next, \textit{auctoritas} as \textit{authenticity} relates to the personal and autonomous source of authority, usually related to personal character, insight, self-respect, honour and the prestige attributed to it. All three have to do with \textit{augmentation}, with refers to making things whole, belonging to a greater context. They all share the same root of augmentation, but all do so in a different way.

In the figure below the different manifestations of authority are placed on the dimensions of personal – collective, and the dimension of inner - outer. They plot the different claims or states to authority available. The diagram does not give different views of the same phenomenon we call authority but it shows that authority is spread over all dimensions. We cannot take one of these and say ‘there it is, \textit{that} is authority’. It is this multidimensional character which makes it such a difficult concept for study. Each of these dimensions is necessarily and intrinsically related to the others.

\textsuperscript{79} The existence of other etymological relationship has confused many scholars, but for me they actually help to make sense of history and the evolution of human consciousness. For a discussion about different meanings of \textit{auctoritas} see Heinze, R. (1925). \textit{“Auctoritas.” Hermes 60.}
Every dimension itself consists of many different levels of understanding. The words I put in them are by no means exhaustive and are easily complemented as soon as we understand the frame of thought that goes behind them. In the upper right we find the creative character of authority. This is an objective thing, even if it is a performance, as the performance is simply there, just as representation is an act of bringing a legal state, something, or someone into being. So this is the realm of actuality. It is also the realm of real power and coercion for instance. To study it we apply empirical evolutionary science which divides and subdivides, looking at hierarchies within the realm of behaviour. This dimension is studied by the behavioural sciences.
In the upper left the inner world of individual consciousness, integrity and character are represented. It is not true, but true to something – the self -, or truthful. It is the most personal dimension, necessarily involving the psychology and consciousness of the authority figure (or that of the audience member for that matter). This is the centre of intention, the place from which authority is exercised, but it is also the self which needs to be respected in order to be authoritative, truthful, and autonomous. This is the realm of Freud and Jung. In the lower left the interpretations of differences in strength are made. It is where the roles and identities are negotiated between people. It is the hermeneutical dimension of collective meaning inside a particular culture or hegemonic discourse. \(^{80}\) In this quadrant we see the biggest disintegration today with fewer meanings and roles being shared. The lower right dimension represents the effect of the whole organism, or the ecology formed by the different systems, behaviours, meanings, and intentions together. This is a systemic dimension, studied by Weber and Marx.

These dimensions are well known, especially in philosophy. The fourth dimension is simply the interrelated effects and manifestations of the three dimensions in the world. We see that all the elements of authority and its formation come back in these dimensions.

Upper left and right, and the lower left are essentially Plato’s the good, the true, and the beautiful (or what he considered he divine nature under the threefold modification of the first cause, the Logos -, and the soul, of Mythos of the universe). We recognise them also in Karl Popper’s three worlds of the subjective, cultural, and objective; or in Kant’s three critiques: science (Critique of Pure Reason), morals (Critique of Practical Reason), and art or self-expression (Critique of Judgment). What for the Hindu is the unity of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer, or what the Egyptian called the trinity of Osiris, Horus, and Isis, for the western world starts with the ‘word’ that brings a new reality into existence. John (I:1-5) talks about the Father who creates when it recounts that ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’.

In western theology authority could then be described as follows. Starting in the upper right dimension, it says that the truth creates (authorship). God the Father is the origin. He imagines, so to speak, the things that are created. In society this is represented by the legislator, or Founder.

\(^{80}\) Authors who focus on this realm are Gadamar, or Habermas for instance
God gives endurance to His creation by relating it to the world. The creation is given meaning and form through His judgement and reassurance by which God is the omnipotent judicator with infinite mercy. In the guise of Jesus Christ (Messiah in Hebrew, meaning the anointed = authorised), the Son of the Creator is atoned with the Father through his appointment when he is sent to the earth, cultivating God’s image and giving a body to the source. He represents the word, as it is through the world that we relate to the world.

Like the son is authorised by the father - both in Roman law and universally in ‘primitive’ societies - the role of Jesus Christ was to relate the meaning of creation to the human source - to the ‘I’. This is what the Senate did for the Romans, it embodied their identity. Although the Father is the ultimate source, it was the Jesus Christ who authored the Gospel, which is the this-worldly manifestation of the Spirit (auctoritas divinae scripturae).

Then the Holy Spirit adds evolution to the creation. By marrying the mind to the heart it transcends fixed states, as the phrase ‘love will set you free’ suggests. In psychology this is the love and insight that set one free from the fear and desire that prevent growth. Jesus receives his true character when Christ enters his body, this is the model for the Christian notion of authority (authenticity). The spirit cultivates the attitude of that autonomous factor of the psyche (the authentic, or individuated self) which can decide and is independent from fear based needs. It is also the destroyer therefore, making space for rebirth by destroying old patterns, unconscious attitudes, values and beliefs.

The Spirit, or authenticity, recognises that the ‘I’ is part of the Other. The element of the spirit sees and recognises. It observes and recognises itself in the other like the lord can see a slave within himself, or the other way around. The Spirit, thus understood, embodies in-sight. This is what characterises character and authentic judgement. It transcends opposites between author and authority, ruler and ruled, good and bad, etc. and holds reality in aesthetic arrest – without the desire to go near, or the fear that drives away. Authority then has an aspect of the beautiful to it, which is concerned with the truthful attitude, the right measure, towards something or someone. This aspect of authority is represented by the seers of society.

Academic disciplines generally specialise in one of these dimensions, but they all exist by virtue of one another, which makes it difficult to study them in isolation. It would take
another study, or perhaps an entire discipline, to develop these dimensions and their interrelationships in detail. The scope of this thesis does not allow for that here, and I will instead weave them into the historical roots of *auctoritas*, which I describe below.

The changing meaning over time of *auctoritas* is a reflection of the variety of roles in which it has been embodied. But rather than writing the history of these changing roles I want to place the four understandings next to one another so that they form a whole, as they were all already present at the start. In short, this start was where auctoritas referred to the sacred law and a founding power of a sacred nature which served both the ordering and description of sovereignty. In the Middle Ages however, religion took the place of sacred law and externalised its source to an angry man in the sky. God became the giver of commands and the only source of authorisation, mediated by the church of course. By the early modern period, politics became the kiln in which secular authority was forged. Now Machiavelli pressed his princes to craft new states and cultivate influence and respect in order to gain both common wealth and personal prestige. And today, after the illusory experience of nationalism, we celebrate the authentic rational and autonomous individual who is attributed all authority even against the odds of life’s contingency. So each attitude has its heyday, with which I mean that over the course of history the emphasis of its meaning has travelled from one root to the next. But let’s continue with the three attitudes towards authority, as I will discuss the disappearance of authority in the next part of the book.

*Authority as authorisation* we find in the Roman *auctor*. The *auctor* is *is qui auget* – the one who augments, or authorises – the act or the juridical situation of someone else. Who, in other words, gives it its value, the value that the other cannot give himself. In private law this would mean that the pater familia, (the archetypical *auctor*) authorises or legitimates the wedding of his son for instance, which in and of itself would have no meaning. In addition he exercises the guardianship over his wife and children, and as their tutor, or protector, he sanctions their social/legal actions. As I mentioned, in the public realm *auctoritas* was used analogously as ‘patriarchal authority’ (*auctoritas patrum*), which was always associated with ‘the authority of the Senate’ (*auctoritas Senatus*), and later to the *Princeps*. It denotes the *role* of the council of elders, of approving, like the father, the

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resolutions of the popular assemblies before they could become law, and it was well
distinct from potestas and imperium, the power and influence that come with the
positions of magistrates and the power of the people of Rome. In De Legibus (1st
century BC) Cicero refers to the relation between power and authority as “Cum potestas in populo
actoritas in senatu sit.” (“While power resides in the people, authority rests with the
Senate.”). Authority, here, is in the role therefore, directly derived from the archetypical
image of the father. But this public role or function is never completely distinct from the
person who embodies it, and is sometimes even completely indistinguishable from the
natural person.

The Senate held actoritas in Rome, but their authority was not based on the fact that
they were chosen or appointed, nor on their blissful consecration, their right to
command, or their military power. In the mind of Cicero and his fellow citizens, the
authority of the Senate yielded from the character, accumulated actions, and the history of
its members. The Senators had all served as magistrates of the Republic and in that
capacity exercised the potestas. Their responsibilities, experience in war and hardship, and
the insights gained in life by governing the Roman land and people provided them the
respect and honour with which they exercised their authority in the form of an ‘advice’.
The advice, however, was ‘more than a counsel and less than a command; rather a counsel
with which one could not properly avoid compliance’. It gave them the trust as a class
and institution to make and suspend the law or to legitimate the magistrates. This insight
also led Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben to place real authority in the state of exception
where no enforced law applies. The mutual affinitive relationship between authority and
power are apparent now, at least, as long as authority is seen as something ‘real’ and felt,
rather than a philosophical exercise or legal title of some kind. Power makes authority and
authority makes power, in the same way as respect makes authority and authority makes
respect. This is one reason why people have confused the terms so often, not least the
Romans themselves.

The second insight into the attitude or dimension of actoritas is that of authority as
authenticity. Authenticity means genuine, truthful in substance, and worthy of respect. As
authority it refers to a personal characteristic. As I said before, it is difficult to judge the

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82 Theodor Mommsen, Römisches Staatsrecht (Leipzig, 1887-88) III. 2 p.1034
Giorgio Agamben identifies the roman concept of actoritas with Weber’s charisma and Schmitt’s Führertum, both of
integrity of a natural person from the outside – we then come in the ambiguous realm of social interpretation and cultural or interpersonal value. The self-create character, or autonomy of a person may be recognised or it may be attributed to someone. In Roman times this was generally understood to deserve respect. It is a source of prestige, but more generally it commands respect and gives one the power to determining reality and arouse belief. To this class of personal authorities the Romans also counted their poets, priests, philosophers, and scholars, who were revered as seers or experts. They could ‘see’ better than others. Their opinions and councils were opinions and councils just as those of any one else, but the source of their advice – namely of an ‘enlightened’ mind and soul – made them truth or sometimes even law without even the legal title to bind.

Cicero would name among the sources of personal authority the qualities of nature, virtù and time, by which he meant the honour, original talent, wealth, experience, knowledge, and age. And these would naturally blend with the public authority of the Senators. Historically the authority of the Senate grew larger during the later Republic, beyond an incremental patriarchal authority, and the respect paid to the personal qualities of the Senators participated in this growth.

The man who most closely embodied auctoritas in all its facets, but above all in personal character was the man who carried its name, Octavian Caesar Augustus (63 BCE – 14 CE). Octavian took the role of Princeps, but even more than the members of the Senate, the Princeps exerts his authority by virtue of his character. No one had expected anything from the young Gaius Octavian, son of an equestrian and nephew of Gaius Julius Caesar. But in 46 BC, after he survived a shipwreck and reached the camp of Julius Caesar to fight under his command against the forces of Pompey, Julius Caesar, impressed by Octavian’s courage, secretly changed his testament and took him up as heir. After Caesar was assassinated and Octavian was informed about his inheritance, which included Caesar’s name, properties and an army, he decided at 18 years old to go to Rome and claim his position from Mark Anthony, who had taken the throne, to end the civil war and restore the Republic. By diplomatic skill, boldness and a cunning use of his name he managed to obtain support and win a set of wars until by 31 BC the western half of the Roman Republic territory had sworn allegiance to Octavian, and after the war of Actium and the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra, the Eastern half followed, making Octavian ruler of the Republic. So far he had acted like a founder, wiping out the old and restoring a new Republic using the
special powers which the Senate had bestowed upon him. He was now consul, commanding the Roman legions, and the hero of the city.

But rather than attempting to become dictator, in January 27 BC he “hands the Republic back to the people”, and offered to relinquish most of his powers. He had completed all he wanted, so he claimed; vengeance on his ‘father’ Julius Caesar, and restoring peace and the Roman Republic. But riots broke out in the city streets and the Senate was in shock. The Republic was still much too fragile and the civil war might start again if it was left with the vacuum that Octavian might leave. Thus an extraordinary settlement was reached by which next to proconsular authority over the West, Octavian was given the name Augustus.

What’s in a name, one would ask? But the word augustus (literally the sanctified) was hitherto only used in a religious sense. It shares its root, augeō, with auctoritas but refers to a divine authority over humanity and to nature itself. This went beyond all constitutional definitions of Octavian’s status and placed him in the realm of extra legal authority. He was given a new name to purify him from the cruelties he had to commit during the war so that he could, so to speak, be reborn and resurrect like a God. In fact, he was sanctified in many ways with the symbols of Roman religion and statecraft. His virtues were commemorated in a golden shield (clipeum virtutis) in the senate house at the Forum and he could have the oak corona civica at his door, used for victorious generals on their entry (later replaced with the ‘remember thou art mortal’. No superfluous luxury for a series of emperors prone to megalomania), and laurels at his doorstep, declaring his home the capital. His name means authority, above all in the sense of divinely authorised. In a similar way, Jesus would receive the adjective Christ, which comes from Chriein, meaning the ‘anointed’, which is the Hebrew mashiach, or the Greek χριστω, translated ‘christo’ in Roman characters. So next to Jesus Christ, Augustus makes for the prototypical charismatic (Christ imbued) leader.

In 23 BC there was a second settlement after Augustus had resigned from the consular office. This decreased his formal power, but again increased his informal authority. Although he still had many offices, none of them put him above the Senate. Still his person was so extraordinarily powerful that all he wished for would immediately become law. He never presented himself as a king or autocrat though, and he continued to walk unattended through the streets of Rome, needless of protection and stressing his equality.
with the people. He continues, in other words, to identify himself as citizen rather than as a ruler, while at the same time his presence commands divine authority.

This is the ambivalence which every ruler has to reconcile within himself, just as every subject has to square his desire to be free with his desire to be judged. Augustus could not and did not claim to be part of the plebs in order to win their approval, as some politicians tend to do today. And at the same time his refusal to be called a king gained him his position. This was both an astonishing act of self-presentation, and a genuine expression of his relation to the people. That this was what the people felt as well is illustrated by the riots in the year following. When, in 22 BC, Augustus again failed to stand for election as consul the plebeian people feared that ‘the defender of the people’ was being forced from power by the aristocratic Senate. For the next three years the citizenry allowed only one consul to be elected, leaving one place open in case Augustus decided to take it up. But Augustus never took it up. Instead, by 19 BC the Senate bestowed upon him the right to wear the consul’s insignia in public and before the Senate. This assuaged the people as they didn’t seem to care whether he actually was or wasn’t a consul, as long as he was given its status and appearance.

Rather than consul, Augustus preferred to be called Princeps, or the ‘first citizen’. The Princeps possesses no official power but guides the republic from the outside as the rector rei publicae, the ruler of the commonwealth, on the basis of his personal pre-eminence. The most virtuous citizen (optimus civis) becomes the first amongst equals. We get a revealing insight into the idea of authority when reading Augustus’ Res Gesta. Here he gives his views of the events after being named Augustus; “After this time I was superior to all by my authority (auctoritate omnibus praestit), but I had no more power (potestatis... nihilo amplius) than the others who were also colleagues in the magistracy.”

Western democracies have been struggling with this significant division: how to unite the strong informal power of the Machiavellian executive with the weak formal power by which an executive is merely to execute the popular will. This struggle is a resistance to the idea that real authority by nature is not bound by law or formal positions. While the Senate still makes up a regular constitutional body, however irregular its function, the Princeps knows no distinction between his public role and private person, he is the first citizen. Augustus, for instance, opened up his house to the public, eliminating all distinction

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84 André Magdelain, Auctoritas principis (Paris, 1947) p vii 53
between the private and the public. Like the senators before Augustus, the authority is with the natural person as much as with the formal status of that person. The Princeps defines authority, therefore, as authority defines the Princeps.

But to say that his house was the ‘polis’, and his very existence was defined by his being the Princeps, didn’t mean that his private life was public property, nor that his private virtues and vices had a direct bearing on his public authority. There was no conflict between Augustus publicly advocating traditional family values and him privately involving himself in numerous intrigues and scandalous behaviour. The filming of his private life would certainly yield sensational material for today’s reality soaps, complete with the public debauchery of his family, murder of kin, and incest. This did not bear upon his public virtue nor did it harm his value for the Republic. His honour, as Cicero sometimes called it, was not so much a result of his family affairs, but of his personal behaviour in public.

The third significance of auctoritas is that of authority as authorship – of foundation and cultivation. As augére suggests auctoritas includes the continuous cultivation and increase of principles handed down from the originating moment. The author is hereby also a gardener who not only plants new seeds, but also cultivates his hortus. Our current word “author” means “founder”, to do with the origin of a creative act, or indeed the planting and cultivation of something new. It is closest to the first sense, but has additional significance. The authorship of something is constituted in the darkness and mystery of a beginning without a prior cause. That is part of an authority’s enchantment. The author is the only one who exercises his liberty because his action inserts something novel into the world though not caused by anything, whereas the foundation turns into a cause itself of whatever it is that follows.

Mythology is such a foundation. Across time and space human communities create their own existence, their origins, and their relationship to the world through myth. Not just because mythology speaks about the creation of the world or of a ‘people’, but because it creates meaning and understanding. For the Romans it was perhaps Virgil who versified the Roman people and related them to their mythic origins in Aeneas’ travels.

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85 Like Italian fascists opened up the headquarters in Como to the public
86 With respect to Octavian’s escapades there is also another reason for the lack of upheaval, as Norbert Elias describes. Whereas before the mere suspicion of adultery could seriously disgrace a consul or other public figure, with Augustus these activities had become mere gossip of little consequence. Elias, N. (1998). On Civilization, Power and Knowledge. Chicago & London, Chicago University Press.

Besselink, Thiëu (2009), Two Faces of Authority: The leader’s tragic quest
European University Institute
DOI: 10.2870/44263

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Through an act of imagination he enabled people to come to grips with the mysterious beginning without cause. And it takes a true master of authority to be sensitive to the need for such imagination. Augustus appointed Virgil precisely for that purpose. And after him, Machiavelli and the founders of the new world would avail themselves of Virgil’s poetic invention for their respective purposes of creation. And so the universal story is recreated and cultivated.

The creation must justify its origin however, and in that sense auctoritas may well, as it does today, refer to rightful ownership, (of the title to rule for instance), but it is based on the fact that it was he who produced the article of property in question, or who is the source of a doctrine, decision, or an opinion. To be an author implied – and this is crucial – that independently of his legal status or moral qualities, the author carries grounds for others to follow or obey voluntarily what the author authorises. And these grounds come from either of two things. Either the author takes responsibility for what he created, stated, or carried out. Here authority refers to the respect due to he who is the accountable originator of something that others follow or accept. Or it refers to the author’s claim to respect, which he can transfer to those who comply with him. Either way, he has acquired the rightful ownership of his words, like an author is owner of his artefacts, and needs no external validation.

As Princeps, Augustus could give public advice to the Senate. He was not only the leader of the state (dux) by virtue of his authority, in the form of the respect for his initiatives and proposals to the Senate on crucial issues (as auctor), but the very Senate which carried them out could do so precisely because he himself had authorised it. This leaves unmoved the fact that the magistrates themselves did possess the coercive power for execution, but to a large extent their office was legitimated by Augustus – who had gradually taken over the original founding authority of the Senate. He had become the source of meaning and value by becoming, as he called it “the author of the best condition of state,” i.e., auctor optimi status. His authority is not based on some higher ground therefore, no ultimate principle or externalised God, he is God, the ultimate creator, and he is authority independent from any external justification.

87 Compare this to the psychological notion of self-ownership. Not needing external validation is an essential element of mature authority.
88 André Magdelain, Auctoritas principis (Paris, 1947) p 56-62
This may seem to contradict his name, because was he not called Augustus, the sanctified? Sanctified by whom? Nothing comes from nothing, which is why the root of auctoritas is to augment something that already is. But in this case Augustus is sanctified by the order of the universe – he was divine.

The locus of authority was clear in Roman times: it was with the Senate (auctoritas patrium or auctoritas senatus), but with Augustus authority became a matter of the emperor (auctoritas principis), with the trustee, or the guardian (the pater familias, or the auctoritas tutoris), and then there was the auctor in Roman private law (auctoritas venditoris) which we find in the Law of the Twelve Tables (Lex XII Tabularum) of 450 BC. The latter needs a little attention still because it lays out well how authority relates to ritual. The ritual here was called municipatio, and it enacted the process by which one person’s claim to his property was formally and publicly dissolved and another person’s claim was acknowledged in the presence of at least five other citizens. The ritual demonstrates that this person owned the goods, in the same way that the author of a text is the owner of his words. Auctoritas is thereby the capacity to speak with consequence, the guarantee of a title that makes the transaction valid.

So, what the life of Augustus shows is that authority is not merely an abstract image of some kind, let alone something absolute or objective. But it is not independent from actual capacity and insight (see in) either. Augustus for the first time united within himself the three elements of auctoritas, allowing for the fourth to come about. He initiates and is the author of his state, he bears the personal weight of moral credibility and character which enables him to judge and reassure, and his opinion authorises law and new realities. For authority to be durable therefore there needs to be some true core to it that isn’t easily shaken by the test of real circumstance or scepticism.

The story of Augustus shows that a ruler needs to prove himself worthy to rule, and thus superior in some way. This is why the abstraction of ‘the people’, can never be the source from which authority springs, even though while factually the people set the conditions for authority. An office or a role, on the other hand, needs to be invested with the status of authority. Often in primitive societies the leader of the tribe is treated as superior because every leader of the tribe is attributed superiority. He is stronger by definition. He is the strongest, oldest, most courageous or wisest because he is the leader, until he proves otherwise. Still it is society that defines what this superiority is and who possesses it. So it is society as a whole which has to make sense of authority. Richard Besselink, Thieu (2009), Two Faces of Authority: The leader’s tragic quest European University Institute DOI: 10.2870/44263
Sennett captures this condition by defining authority as ‘an attempt to interpret the conditions of power, to give the conditions of control and influence a meaning by defining an image of strength.’ Whatever is defined as authority, whatever is consecrated with society’s or the subject’s trust, is able to validate, augment, create and define reality. These can be times, places, or people, and they receive their status from perceived personal worth and acknowledged institutions, but also from memories, associations – conscious or unconscious –, and expectations they call forth.

What I also take from Roman practice is that there is in effect an artificial distinction between epistemic and executive authority. The authority of those who are in positions of authority, like political leaders and parents, shares the same ground with the authority of those who are an authority in a certain field, like experts, artists, craftsmen and specialists. There are different ways in which they warrant their claims, and with different effect, but both can speak with authority. That is, with an influence on the meaning of things and the capacity to judge and reassure.

This also means that the content of what an authority figure claims is less important than the guarantees he can display, at least, as long as the content is not challenged. But these do not spring strictly from his person, or from his office, but from the asymmetric and socially embedded interaction between author and audience that allows the authority to command attention and confidence, respect, and trust. His guarantees make for the fear for his judgement or withdrawal of his reassurance. Or – and this is important to see – it gives the capacity to make an audience act as if this were so. Augustus may have been a great man, but surely he had also many flaws. His godlike status he got not merely through good behaviour, or his actual superhuman capacities, but equally due to a cunning acting out the role he knew would resonate with the people of Rome. The magic of insignia and the way he earned them, the theatre of refusing power, averting the threat to the people’s liberty, but giving in to their need for a father figure, it all sets the stage for a credible character.

I consider the Roman idea of authority ‘honest’ in that it recognises both its human origin and the psychology of its contingency. As the word ‘author’ suggests, it is in the creation of something. That makes authority a performativ relationship. For Arendt the

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90 There is no way of telling what does on in people’s heads and there may be a million reasons for the behaviour they display. What matters in the real world is the effect on reality
American constitution is such an act of authority, by which the Founding Fathers created out of nothing a new order. In modern culture we struggle with the idea of authority as being something that is in what we do, rather than what we are. But to see it as an action brings us much closer to the psychological reality of authority and gives us better analytical tools with which to observe society.

For the Founding Fathers the problem was that something new needs to be given a meaning, needs to be justified by an authority. But without a precedent, and with the intention of a revolutionary break with the past, what was there to authorise the constitution? What the Founding Father had not been able to do was to leave the authority in the moment of creation. The words of Jefferson, ‘we hold these truths to be self-evident’, communicate an ambivalent message. It wants to escape the Christian heritage of absolutes, and by creating a new order they actually do so, but at the same time it still tries to imply a God given order, so as not to invite resistance to human made laws. Reference to ‘truth’ and ‘God’ continue to evoke a transcendental origin, and by posing them as ‘self-evident’ they avoid human resistance to them, suggesting that these laws had come down from some higher realm, as did the tables of Moses, and not from the Fathers. It was not enough that the representatives created a law, instead ‘the people’ needed to be evoked as a disguised source of transcendental law.

91 Compare Jacque Derrida’s mystic origin of authority. This founding moment implies a performativé force of interpretation, according to Derrida: “Its very moment of foundation or institution (which in any case is never a moment inscribed in the homogenous tissue of history, since it is ripped apart by one decision), the operation that amounts to founding, inaugurating, justifying law (droit), making law, would consist of a coup de force, of a performative and therefore interpretive violence that in itself is neither just nor unjust and that no justice and no previous law with its founding anterior moment could guarantee or contradict or invalidate.” Derrida, J. (1992). “Force of Law”: ‘The Mystical Foundation of Authority’. Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice. D. Cornell and M. Rosenfeld. New York, Routledge.


93 “Focusing on the famous phrase, ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident,’ Arendt argues that the new regime’s power, and ultimate authority, derive from the performativé ‘we hold’ and not from the conservative reference to self-evident truths. Both dramatic and non-referential, the performative brings a new political community into being: it constitutes a ‘we’. This speech act, like all action, gives birth, as it were, to the actor(s), in the moment(s) of its utterance and repetition. (...) for the sake of politics, for the sake of free political action, Arendt cleanses the declaration and the founding of the violent, conservative moments, of the irresistible anchors of God, self0evident truth, and natural law. There is to be no ‘being’ behind this doing. The doing, the performance, is everything. On Arendt’s account the real source of the authority of the newly founded republic was the performative not the conservative moment, the action in concert not the isolated acquiescence, the ‘we hold’, not the self-evident truth. And the real source of authority in the republic, henceforth, would be the style of its maintenance, its openness to refounding and reconstitution.” Bonni Honig: Toward an Agnostic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity, in Butler, J. and J. W. Scott (1992). Feminists theorize the political. London, Routledge. Pp.216-217
permanence and stability of law (if it would not have a degree of permanence it would not be law) depend on the changeability of continued action.94

Authority in other words, is in its cultivation! And there are two ways in which this is true. The first I just mentioned, as it is in performative ‘creation’ (authorship). The second is in the performance of one’s role, the identification of both ruler and ruled with their appropriate part (authorisation) It is no accident that power is always surrounded by an array of theatrical gestures, costumes, stage devices, and imposing sceneries which facilitate the claims laid on the follower’s consideration, respect, and trust. These rituals paint the picture which the audience will interpret as the imagery of authority after which they can feel safe to temporarily trust their will and judgement to the projector of these images. A coronation ceremony transforms someone who might as well be pretending to be a king into a real monarch by putting a crown on his head (Richard III). If, on the other hand, the emperor strides amongst his subjects without his clothes, the lack of insignia can accomplish the reverse. So, we speak of authority when an audience accepts the claims to authority - or is willing to act as if it did.

I have attempted to build an understanding of authority from the ground of its origins and illustrate it with historical uses and attitudes towards it. By breaking it down to its various roots I have wanted to show how authority is not merely a discourse, a belief, a matter of force, or the power of seduction, but that it is our way to cope with the tragic fact that existence transcends categories. It is the way, or the experience itself. For that reason the fourth nature of authority – augmentation – is the whole ecology of authority, including the process, the evolution, and transformation of the three into a whole that has the effect of a durable yet dynamic shared authority.

1.3 BREAKDOWN OF AUTHORITY IS A CRISIS OF IDENTITY

If subjects die to their subject self, and are reborn into a master’s consciousness, they have liberated themselves from the oppression of their masters as indeed Étienne de la Boétie observed. But what the liberation of this kind entails is more than just an unencumbered passage to freedom, because it not only unshackles the chains of domination, but it also bereaves the former self of its former meaning. It is ironic therefore that the modern observer is surprised by the experience of an authority crisis, because it is precisely what he had intended - be it inadvertently - with the modern project of emancipation. The agony is part of a liberated mind and of a liberated people. But what is this crisis and how do we experience it?

Coming to a versatile conclusion on the nature of authority I ought to say a little more about its breakdown. In what follows I will look into the sequence by which authority erodes so as to find a frame for interpretive analysis. By first briefly describing how the personal bond of authority dissolves, the break-up of the social bond becomes understandable.

In the end authority rests upon the fear and respect that the perceived superiority of an authority figure can inspire in us. In some way the authority must be seen as ‘Other’ therefore - to know or be something that we do not understand or cannot attain. The audience cannot understand the authority’s self-assurance and this places him in another realm. Not objectively of course, but the differences in status and strength that we create in society are lived as if they were an uninvited. Nonetheless the Otherness inspires fear and respect. What I do not understand, or what seems unattainable or mysteriously hidden holds power. And because the authority has this particular insight we fear his judgement when he appears to sees right through us. That is a major function of the church or of its priests, of oracles and ‘seers’ from other cultures, who knew how to interpret the symbols and how to conduct the rituals. The same is true for other figures of authority who claim to represent the people best, read the stars or signs of the economy. But if we no longer see *him* as Other, what then remains of his authority?
To stop fearing would mean the end of deference to authority. Machiavelli and Weber knew this as no others. The charismatic ruler, who, like the new prince, comes to power by overthrowing the established order, has created an authoritative image of himself which reaches beyond human measure. But as the fear for his person wanes due to his inability to fulfil the promise or because he can be challenged and so turns out to be vulnerable like the rest of us, so does his authority. Sennett argues that if this is so there should be a trade off between the psychological legitimacy of an authority and the freedom from fear of his subjects. The less the fear, the less the respect.

But he also observes that this may be true for prophets and redeemers but not in general. Because it would mean that the more we know about the inner world of the ruler, the less we would be able to respect his authority. To lose fear means that the authority needs to lose his threatening ‘otherness’ so that we can recognise him for what he is, namely a mortal and fallible human being like ourselves. And for that we also need to recognise ourselves as possibly autonomous. So in order to recognise authority we need first to see it up from close - to demystify the enigma of his superiority.

For a ruler to demystify himself entails a risk therefore. Namely that people lose their fear and respect for him. Intuitively this sounds wrong, though true for many instances. Is there a way to lose one’s fear without losing respect per se?

I think there is. In 1909 Freud and Jung crossed the pacific together to visit Clark University, and they used the time to analyse one another’s dreams. At one point Jung wanted Freud to elaborate with further associations to an aspect in one of Freud’s dreams, but Freud refused, telling Jung that to reveal himself further would be to risk his authority. “At that moment he lost it altogether,” Jung later commented.95

Carl Jung turns it around, and suggests that fear for self-revelation is a sign of weakness because Freud’s inner authority was not strong enough to support even his own fears. This means that the strength upon which one’s authority is based can be of different kinds. We feel with Jung that somehow it seems Freud has something to hide which he himself is afraid of. How could he ever be reassuring to his audience?

This touches the core of my thesis. Leaders who have nothing to stand on only have their character to go by. Just as colour springs from the suffering of light, as Goethe describes the process, so character comes about in the full current of human life, where we

learn to overcome the paradox of impulse and responsibility, permanence and change. The responsive struggle that led to the person who we are makes for a unique inner strength (or weakness) which no amount of demystification can expose as false. When this self meets another self, there can be respect for that uniqueness.96

Demystification is the getting closer to authority and to start to understand the differences between master and follower. Differences of strength may still remain therefore, but the authority is no longer in a different realm. This is what happens to adolescents of most ancient and indigenous cultures during the rites of initiation. Their subject psychology is transformed into that of a warrior, or a responsible member of the community. How? They first disconnect from their parents, usually taken away by a group of men, after which the novice is set of into the desert, forest or the wilderness alone. After that he will go through hardship of some kind, experience pain, shock or a glimpse of death after which he is resurrected and initiated into the knowledge or the tribe. Only then he is reabsorbed by the community, but now as a different person. His relationship to his parents has changed. The fear is gone because the rite of passage has given him autonomy and respect of his own, but that doesn’t mean he has lost respect for the elders. The elders have just taken a different role towards the young adult. The medicine man may still hold the authority of a seer, and his parents may still command respect by their knowledge and experience, but the relationship is one of self-responsibility. And this responsibility is bearable because embedded in the order of things, obtained through guided individuation. Otherwise, independence is but an agonizing experience.97

This was the insight that Hegel shares in the Phenomenology of the Spirit of 1807. In the chapter ‘Lordship and Bondage’ he describes how the relationship of authority changes when lord and bondsman recognise each other in themselves. Hegel’s effort was driven by his quest for the individual’s liberation and he set out to describe the mental journey that people undertake when setting themselves free from authority without negating the existence of social difference. He did not fool himself with an idealised vision of a happy modus vivendi; however, but recognised that a free mind is a divided mind, torn between the recognition of authority and lonely independence, unprotected by the

97 These rituals regulated both community and personal psychology of its members, but in our society such rituals are mostly lacking. Even in private life we often seem unable to separating from our parents, and psychology has remarked that children reach adulthood ever later because of it. But in public life there is even less of a possibility to transform peacefully into a relationship of respect. Elections are public rites that sanctify the authority of the government, but do they not rather deligitimate the former government instead of legitimating the present one?
larger order. Or, for the lord to be free would mean to oscillate between a sense of superiority and the recognition of his own dependence on the bondsman's recognition of that superiority. This is the basic condition of rulers.

The journey starts with conflict. This conflict takes place at the level of bare existence in which both lord and bondsman need to see themselves affirmed in the actions and desires of the other. The bondsman and the lord fight for recognition of their own existence, struggling for approval of the other so that they can feel they matter. It cannot be a battle to the death or complete domination because then there would no longer be anyone significant and other to recognise us. The relationship is one of mutual dependence, in which the lord gives meaning to the bondsman and the bondsman gives pleasure and recognition to the lord. The path to liberation starts when the bondsman recognises that he has an independent consciousness, the key to which Hegel saw in the fact that the bondsman works and possesses a craft with which he creates what the lord needs. Liberty then is in the power of the bondsman, it has to be taken and cannot be given by the lord. The stages to liberty are four, according to Hegel, and each stage is accompanied by an identity crisis, comparable to the transition of one development stage to the next in Erik Erikson's theory of maturation. At every stage the subject changes the way he sees the world and negates the beliefs he held before about himself and the authority. At every stage, therefore, lord and bondsman experience a crisis of authority, a reorientation of the meaning of power.

The psychological development goes through different stages of rejection, liberation and recognition. The first stage is that of withdrawal, which Hegel has called stoicism. The person under authority starts to detach from the world to an inner place from where the authority figure can be observed without direct involvement. When someone has brought himself to this level of consciousness he does not actually do anything or even feel that much because he identifies his consciousness with a purely intellectual activity. It is recognisable in people in therapy who can talk about their mental problems with great lucidity and understanding, but do not show the slightest inclination to act upon them and they seem rather detached from their own condition. To this category I also count the widely cited apathetic citizen.

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In the second phase the authority figure loses his moral superiority in the eyes of the bondsman and his claims to legitimate authority are disbelieved. This is what Hegel calls scepticism. ‘Scepticism carries into realisation what Stoicism merely notionally thinks.’

This is a stage in which the scepticism and distrust of the authority do not liberate a person from the emotional dependence on the master, but prompts the negation of his authority. Authority is rejected, but still very much felt. Protests, terrorist attacks, electoral sweeps, and NIMBI behaviour (Not In My Back Yard) are usually of this kind. Politically it seems that since the 1960s our times have been characterised by the first and second phase. At least, many observers have noted this very spirit of rejection and negation.

These stages make most sense in a Freudian worldview, which so profoundly influenced the 20th C. Both in terms of his emphasis of the human drives and fears as well as in terms of his belief in reason as the solution the rejection of authority Freud’s influence embodies these two phases. His therapy was entirely based ‘on the opinion that one can cure people by helping them to know the truth about themselves.’ And this in turn was particular congenial to the modern democratic thought.

The process by which power eventually shifts takes place in the stage which he called the ‘unhappy consciousnesses’. Here the experience of opposition between master and bondsman is overcome when the bondsman recognises his own desire for servitude as the origin of his oppression, and the master recognises in the slave his own dependence on the slave.

Here, either all authority is lost and no deference is felt towards the figure of authority, or a form of respect remains but without the belief that his or her authority is omnipotent. Authority is then a matter of superior insight and inner strength based on autonomy. But this situation places the burden of judgement upon the individual, who will as of then have to decide for himself what his significance is in life, or consciously choose to surrender some of the meaning making to another source.

Such recognition unsettles authority and makes its tragic nature apparent. Hegel here attempts to save the depths of tragedy from sentimental feel-good fantasy and wed it to

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enlightenment. Namely, he recovers an idea of progress towards liberation, but without implying that this is a carefree kind of paradise. Hegel pictures still another level of development which is a state of rational harmony and cooperation in which the spirit of enlightenment overcomes and supposedly allows for perfect concord. It is a mythology, a psychological possibility perhaps, but by no means a likely future to which we necessarily progress.

The disappointment in authority is tragic. We wanted there to be a ruler with superior insight who could release us from our responsibilities, from our pain and from our anguish. Instead our freedom meant responsibility. But how much freedom can we bear? How much responsibility can we take? This question has been asked before, but usually with respect to the subjects of authority while neglecting the figure of the author. There is one such figure who exemplifies the origin of the ruler’s freedom; the New Prince of Machiavelli.
CHAPTER TWO

2 WHO IS THE NEW PRINCE?

We have seen what authority is made of, what it is for, and how it breaks down, so now I want to talk about the modern incarnation of a new kind of authority, a new kind of personality which defines the birth of modern rulers’ consciousness. We will see how the modern ruler develops particular sources of authority very well, but has difficulty forging them to a meaningful whole.

At the basis of modern authority we find Machiavelli. His thought was a response to a series of crises facing early 15thC Florence. Citizen participation was first presented, after Ancient Rome, with the founding of the Florentine Republic. What seems normal to us, was and is a problem for the self-understanding of the early modern man, which at the time pushed the state to the verge of destruction. Machiavelli’s work is a reflection of a growing modern self-consciousness, dealing with questions of authority and the order of nature.  

Most books about the Prince are concerned with what it is that Machiavelli’s ruler does. He manipulates in Gramsci and Strauss, or he liberates in Rousseau and Skinner. But who is this figure, destined to search for his authority and use brute force, deceit and play to manufacture credibility? The New Prince is the leader figure who emerges from the crisis of authority. When the King’s mystic body was shattered to little pieces, and the

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104 Most present readings of Machiavelli even make him into a communitarian democrat, or classical republican, wedded to peace, popular participation and civil liberties.
order of nature was disturbed, each piece claimed its own authority and so transcendental value became history. Roles where uncontested before, they came with their own authority within the order. Although the renaissance of Machiavelli still knew roles, they had stopped to be self-evident, and the Prince played one of them: that of the virtuous executive - a human creator of order.

We still live with the legacy of the virtuous leader – who got his authority by means of his own virtue or prudence. Our governments and companies are headed by him, but his identity remains somewhat obscure and in order to understand the nature of the crisis in which the modern ruler finds himself we need to understand the character of his prototype. The key to understanding Machiavelli lies in his rejection of transcendence. The immanent or worldly humanism means that his political realism seeks to unmask myths and illusions about political life of both reactionaries and utopians. Man for Machiavelli is an inveterate spinner of fancies and delusive images, concealing the true nature of events and judged only by the consequences of his actions.

How the New Prince is defined by his immanence and how his authority is shaped by the responsibility he takes for the order of his state is perhaps best conveyed by Dostoevsky, who gives a profound insight into the Prince’s consciousness with a parable from his Brothers Karamazov (1879-1880) called ‘The Grand Inquisitor’. Machiavelli’s prince had been a major inspiration for the book. In the story Jesus the Messiah comes back to earth at the time of the Spanish inquisition. But when he and his miracles are received with joy and admiration by the people, the inquisitor has him arrested, thrown in the cell, and sentenced to the fire.

That night the inquisitor comes down the cell and asks Jesus why he is interfering with the work of the church as his actions undermine the authority of the church - which until then cold act in the name of the Lord. The Inquisitor then asks him the same three questions that Satan asked Jesus in the desert during the temptation of Christ; the temptation of making miracles material by turning stones into bread, the temptation of revealing the mystery by casting Himself from the Temple, because if he believes in the power of God the angels would sure save him, and the temptation of authority by the promise of worldly rule over all the kingdoms of the earth.

105 I use virtue as Machiavelli did of course, which stands for ability and prudence in the cultivation of authority.
The Bible recounts the story that Jesus withstands these temptations in favour of freedom. But the Inquisitor rebukes the arrogance of Jesus and argues that most people will not be able to handle the freedom of choice and the responsibility that comes with having no higher authority that sanctions that choice. By choosing freedom Jesus condemns the majority of humanity to suffering existential insecurity and no hope of redemption. So the Inquisitor offers his consciousness to mankind by keeping reality from them. Instead he gives them miracles, mystery and authority, in order that they can be happy and innocent. He gives them bread, something to worship, and the rules of the church in exchange for their freedom. And it is no great loss, he claims, for in that dreadful condition of freedom life is ugly, brutish, and short.106

Tragically the people can only be happy, he assumes, when they are not ruled by the Inquisitor, but by him in the name of Christ. Only in the name of Christ can the church give direction, just as only in the name of democracy can current rulers go to war. So the Inquisitor pretends in the name of Christ and sacrifices his innocence, selling his soul to the devil in order to keep mankind innocent and content. With such a sacrifice for the good of society, is he not much worthier than a Saint?

The people will follow him, he claims, because they are hungry not for bread alone. By nature man is able and disposed to search for someone to worship:

‘So long as man remains free he strives for nothing so incessantly and so painfully as to find someone to worship. But man seeks to worship what is established beyond dispute, so that all men would agree at once to worship it. For these pitiful creatures are concerned not only to find what one or the other can worship, but to find community of worship is the chief misery of every man individually and of all humanity from the beginning of time. For the sake of common worship they’ve slain each other with the sword. They have set up gods and challenged one another, “Put away your gods and come and worship ours, or we will kill you and your gods!” And so it will be to the end of the world, even when gods disappear from the earth; they will fall down before idols just the same.’107

Dostoevsky shows that part of people which wants to worship, wants to believe, and searchers for submission to a divine and established power under which they can feel safe. Modern man lost the Gods as instruments for creating social and psychological harmony in the full knowledge that pure beauty, security, or absolute authority does not exist. What

106 This description comes from Thomas Hobbes’ state of nature in which man is presumably free. Hobbes describes this freedom as a state of war where all fight all as there is no common authority.
107 Dostoevsky The Brothers Karamazov Chapter 5 ‘The Grand Inquisitor’
remains when we ignore the dark side of freedom and deny the frightening part of authority is kitsch. Kitsch in the idols we worship and kitsch in the images we believe.

So now that the Gods are dead the modern ruler has a choice: to try to establish his authority as something that is established beyond dispute, like something totalising and necessary. It is the modern struggle with freedom that tends to drive it towards totalising systems. Communism, fascism, but also meritocracy, capitalism, and democracy take these characteristics of a pastiche of God or a kitschy version for His political substitute.

If that no longer works, because kitschy Gods and democracy are not so good at reassuring people on the long run, the modern ruler needs to manufacture a shared belief in his person. 108 It is what Machiavelli prescribes in the Prince, not out of bad will, but out of a sense of pure necessity. Without a deep sense of life’s absurdity and its simultaneous wholeness authority itself is exiled to the realm of sentimental pastiche. 109 But this does not bother the Grand Inquisitor.

He who provides the bread and the play is easily mistaken for the “Lord and Giver of Life”. 110 The Inquisitor continues saying ‘Thou didst reject the one infallible banner which was offered Thee to make all men bow down to Thee alone - the banner of earthly bread; and Thou has rejected it for the sake of freedom and the bread of heaven.’ So Christ refused to ascertain social justice by sacrificing freedom for bread whereas he should have brought necessity to the people and shown them why they needed order.

The second temptation is that of the literal religion and the search for meaning in material miracles. He says ‘the secret of man’s being is not only to live but to have

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108 The story of modernity and reassurance is understood more or less in the following way: that modernity tried to replace the faith in God, tradition, and transcendental truth by a subject-centered philosophy that believes in the human capacity for reason. Since the French Revolution emancipation to maturity of this subject was added to the project. Maturity is here the taking of responsibility for one’s own judgement and actions based on critical reasoning rather than external forces, Gods, or truths. This humanist ideal has been implemented with a totalising tendency for progress and universality as emancipating rationality itself became a totality with the goal of normalizing differences, a unifying whole with the promise of absolute knowledge. The unassuring paradox then is that of individual responsibility and an absolute truth.


More than just the dross of art, for Adorno, kitsch ‘lies dormant in art itself, waiting for a chance to leap forward at any moment. Fickle, like an imp, kitsch defies definition. The one enduring characteristics it has is that it preys on fictitious feelings, thereby neutralizing the real ones. Kitsch is a parody of catharsis… It is useless to try and draw a fine line here between what constitutes true aesthetic fiction (art) and what is merely sentimental rubbish (kitsch).p.12

Kundera writes in the Unbearable Lightness of Being that:
‘The feeling induced by kitsch must be a kind the multitudes can share. (...) Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession. The first tear says: How nice to see children running on the grass! The second tear says: How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children running on the grass! It is the second tear that makes the kitsch kitsch. The brotherhood of men on earth will be possible only on a base of kitsch.’ Kundera, M. (1985). *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. New York, Harper & Row.

110 The word ‘lord’ comes from ‘hlafweard,’ meaning ‘he who guards the loaf’
something to live for.’ Without a meaning and purpose to life he would not go on living. But Christ leaves it up to our free consciousness to choose this meaning, and to decide on good and evil for ourselves. The spiritual agony that this responsibility brings along is intolerable for those who do not share Christ’s consciousness and therefore we rather have peace, or even death, rather than freedom. So the Inquisitor offers the miraculous, rather than the divine in order to protect man from his hubris. He is happy to provide an idol image in a clear and simple story on the duty of man, the meaning of life, and the promise of a pure identity.

And finally Jesus is accused of keeping happiness from the world by refusing to take authority. ‘Hadst Thou taken the world and Caesar’s purple, Thou wouldst have founded the universal state and have given universal peace.’ He does not take up the responsibility and decide over good and evil by creating a new order, he simply leaves ages of confusion and instable community. The Grand Inquisitor knows he ought to be the agent of necessity however, and not of justice, because we humans are not God. He creates order for his people, and bears the burden of knowing that it is not just, while concealing this injustice from the people.

Men cannot live unless they live together, and they cannot live together if the people see their rulers for what they are, namely rulers. The popular desire is not, according to Machiavelli, to rule, but not to be ruled. Nonetheless they must be ruled. This sets the problem for modern government: to rule the people without their developing the intolerable sensation that they are being ruled. What makes that people not want to be ruled is their reluctance to face the reality of necessity.

The New Prince was invented in order to not only re-establish physical order in Italy, but also to substitute Jesus by building durable relationship of authority with the people under the condition of this intolerable sensation. To this end the prince must be virtuous, but that does not mean he has republican virtue, or moral virtue, or any other devotion to a particular moral cause, he is simply able and prudent to appear as a good leader.111

The kind of authority Machiavelli talks about does not derive from abstract principle or higher morality. This has led many to think of him and his advice as a-moral and unscrupulous. Shakespeare, for instance, has not done Machiavelli’s thought a favour by associating it with a villain like the Duke of Gloaster, for Machiavelli never intends his

111 Even though Machiavelli believes the public good is served best in a republic (D II.2)
princes to become villainous, quite on the contrary, a ruler should aspire for glory and how to obtain glory is what his books the *The Prince* and *Discourses* intend to teach. Whether in a principality or a republic, to preserve the wellbeing, safety and independence of the people and the state any action, however unjust or severe, is legitimate – acceptable that is.\(^{112}\) This is different from what many authors claim when they invoke Machiavelli’s ruthlessness in proposing the justification of means by their ends, for it is a conditional proposition.\(^{113}\) ‘Since all human affairs are ever in a state of flux, and cannot stand still, either there will be improvement or decline, and necessity will lead you to do many things which [morality] does not recommend.’\(^{114}\)

Morality is here nothing more than the current norms of good behaviour, whether religious or found in the philosophy of legitimate power. The rule of law, its institutions and its myths of legitimacy are most important to transform the authority derived from greatness of a leader into durable rule, but when necessity requires it the leader better act outside morality and outside the law. All this is not to promote cruelty because ‘(s)til, it cannot be called virtù to kill one fellow citizens, to betray friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion; by these means one can acquire power but not glory.’\(^{115}\) An authoritative ruler may be feared therefore but should never be hated.\(^{116}\)

Another frequently misinterpreted phrase that I want to bring up is that according to Machiavelli it is better to be feared than to be loved. The reason is that love changes with the winds, whereas fear is lasting he claims. We tend to discard these words as merely fruit of a power seeking mind, but fear is probably the most essential emotion in the experience of authority, despite its negative associations, because from the fear for the judgement of a true authority, or for the lack of his care we recognise authority.

The power to inspire awe is as relevant in republics as it is in principalities we learn. And in both individual agency – virtù for Machavelli - takes a central place. The prudence, skill, strength and ability of a ruler to found and reform civic institutions – ordini – is as important in principalities as it is in republics, especially where it is the ruler(s) who has to rid the republic from its natural tendency for corruption.\(^{117}\) Republics can live longer

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\(^{112}\) *Discourses* Book III CH 41 (D I.9)

\(^{113}\) ‘E nelle azioni di tutti gli uomini, e massime de’ principi, dove non è iudizio a chi reclamare, si guarda al fine.’ (If there is no court of appeal one looks at the objective.)

\(^{114}\) *Discourses* I.6 (From now on written as D I.6)

\(^{115}\) *The Prince* VIII (from now on written as P. VIII ) It could be argued that in this particular use of the word glory can be seen as that particular kind of prestige that we call legitimacy

\(^{116}\) (P XIX)

\(^{117}\) It is clear to Machiavelli that no state is permanent and every regime will perish over time. Republics seem most adapt though to confront change and therefore may be expected to have a longer life.
because they are more adaptable and more diverse, but they cannot use their diversity well due to their slowness of decision, for which they would need a dictator function as the Romans had for ‘important things’. They become corrupt and authority goes stale if ordinary means are not revived by ‘extraordinary means’. Deteriorating republics need extraordinary means, meaning ‘notable and excessive executions’, which requires an extraordinary authority that does not depend on law.

An execution may be a particularly horrible punishment, but because it is essentially a symbolic act it would be enough to show the necessity of government in other ways. The best example in contemporary western politics would be the ‘War against Terrorism’, which president Bush launched not only against fundamentalist attackers of the World Trade Centre, but against his own people in order to establish his authority. Part III will deal with this in more detail.

Having dealt with the circumstances under which the prince arises and the role he plays in making for his own legitimacy, the character of the prince, his virtù, should give an insight with respect to the pragmatics of legitimation. Most important is his capacity to dissociate his role from his person and morality from politics. He needs to know when to be transparent and when to be discrete, he needs to know when to be pious and when to sin, when to be the servant of the people and when to resist their expectations.

What is often underexposed in this respect is the fact that it is not simply for the gain and exercise of power that these characteristics are important, but that these characteristics of virtù are responsible for his credibility and authority. The authority required for founding or changing a state cannot be derived from an external source alone but needs to come from the people’s realisation that a ruler is necessary on the one hand and, on the other, from the ruler’s prudence in cultivating an image of authority. And both are conditioned by ‘fortuna’, the accidental circumstances that make for the virtù or agency to be fruitful or not.

118 (D I 49, 33)
119 (D I 7, II 34)
120 (D I 18, II 16)
121 (D III 1, III 3)
122 Though ultimately fear alone is not enough to secure authority, as the authority breaks down when the fear wanes or turns to anger. See CH 1.3
Machiavelli recognises ‘the prince’s desire to command’, but also that men don’t wish to command, but wish not to be commanded.\(^{123}\) That makes it difficult to live in a community when they see their rulers for what they really are. This sets the problem for government: to rule the people without their developing the intolerable sensation that they are being ruled.\(^{124}\) Of course this problem only arises in a modern society which is losing a sense of natural order and with a subject-centred ideology of emancipation.

What makes that people do not want to be ruled is their reluctance to face the reality of necessity, Machiavelli claims. Government is therefore the agent of necessity rather than justice, because we cannot afford justice, even though we like to think we can. Would the ruler only act out of a modern or Christian ideology of justice, rival wolves would tear him and his people down. A principle of modern government therefore is the need to bring necessity to the people, so that they can survive, while concealing it from them, so that they can be happy and innocent.

Concealing the workings of government in order to reduce the fear for authority equally involves allowing the ruled to perceive themselves as following their own necessity. Machiavelli uses a metaphor: “wounds and every other ill that man causes himself spontaneously and through choice, hurt much less than those which are done to you by someone else”.\(^{125}\) The ruler merely presents himself as the servant of his follower’s desire and necessity. When government claims to be merely executive, like Moses, who was said to be a ‘mere executor of the things ordained by God’ its inner directions pretend to take direction from an outside authority, whether God or ‘the people’.\(^{126}\) But because executions need an executor, the real workings of power remain obscure.\(^{127}\)

Whereas in Aristotle appearance reflects political reality, Machiavelli’s executive does not show its true workings. The problem of transparency, which we will encounter throughout modernity, and throughout this thesis, is set up here. That we might want to know what is in a sausage, but we often actually don’t because it might spoil the taste.

So the executive has to make his influence someone unnoticed. But Machiavelli’s executive is not merely invisible either, for it cannot work without making an impression,
without legitimating itself and presenting itself, and thus cannot always hide behind another authority. To remind the people why they need a government it needs to reveal its inner truth at times. Only when the executive executes does appearance correspond to reality and can government be transparent. The execution is thereby a symbolic act, whether in words or cruel deeds, and not usually inspired by the law. It shows the ‘bare life threat’ at the same time that it creates a myth of authority.\footnote{128}

Giorgio Agamben describes sovereignty in contemporary western societies as increasingly securing its place by means of evoking a ‘state of emergency’, which is the modern equivalent of ‘bringing necessity to the people’.\footnote{129} At other times ‘it is necessary to be a fox to discover the snares and a lion to terrify the wolves’ because human nature is not entirely good, he cannot show his true nature with impunity and has to be a great pretender and dissimulator.\footnote{130}

‘Therefore it is unnecessary for a prince to have all the good qualities I have enumerated, but it is very necessary to appear to have them. And I shall dare to say this also, that to have them and always to observe them is injurious, and that to appear to have them is useful; to appear merciful, faithful, humane, religious, upright, and to be so, but with a mind so framed that should you require not to be so, you may be able and know how to change to the opposite’.\footnote{131}

This doesn’t contradict the assumption that the self-legitimation of a ruler is the cultivation of an authoritative persona and a credible identity, that needs to be believed by the cultivator and, though to a lesser extent, the public. The motivation for deception can perfectly derive from an authentic personality with the intention to do the right thing, or conform to the self-image of a rightful ruler.

As the desire of the people is ‘not to be commanded’, government must let its ‘executions’ appear to come from the people.\footnote{132} Even though the people as such can never actually rule themselves as there always needs to be an instrument by which a multitude of voices is transformed in one, all government, whether republican or princely, must appeal to the people. Not because they are impartial or good natured (as is assumed in democratic theory), but to make them responsible and in order to involve them in their administration.

\footnote{128}{The ‘bare life threat’ is how Giorgio Agamben describes the act of bringing necessity to the people.}
\footnote{129}{Giorgio Agamben ‘Homo Saucer’, ‘Stato di eccezione’ Authority is then sovereignty as described by Carl Schmitt in his book \textit{Politische Theologie} (1922) “Sovereign is he who decides on the state of exception”}
\footnote{130}{P XIII}
\footnote{131}{P XIII}
\footnote{132}{Execution here also refers to all other effecting of government}
need for government which they would rather disregard. In this sense government must retain the ambivalence to act in exception of the norm and against public expectations, while at the same time doing so in the name of the people. It must project itself as saviour as well as servant and in the absence of a dominant mythology that sets the norm for ‘legitimate’ authority, it is the personal skill of the ruler that determines his success at creating a sense of tradition and rightfulness.

Now we can understand why Machiavelli advises the use of secrecy as a means of transforming usurpation into durable legitimate rule. Not everything should be transparent as otherwise he would not be able to carry out his responsibility of commanding, which the people in some way resent. Next to the use of secrecy there are five other ways the New Prince cultivates his authority:

In order to provide security first, what characterises him is his use of fear, political punishment and violence in order to inspire awe, eliminate corruption, and to remove a possible challenge to his authority. For that he needs to be excessive and notable, but above all he has to know how to take responsibility even for those circumstances where no law can protect or prescribe a proper course of action. As such, the law needs to be lent a hand by an illegal actor for its enforcement. A rational republican authority loses its weight when people are not reminded of their need for an authority. This is why a republic may have to appoint a dictator or provide for the executive function which can decide without appeal in states of exception. With only ordinary means of government, meaning the use of lawful institutions, authority in republics will not survive and they will turn corrupt. It requires intrinsic foresight and extraordinary modes of execution, or a

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134 At the same time Machiavelli asserts that all government must build on the people as well though. In Chapter IX of the Prince he says: ‘Besides this, one cannot by fair dealing, and without injury to others, satisfy the nobles, but you can satisfy the people, for their object is more righteous than that of the nobles, the latter wishing to oppress, while the former only desire not to be oppressed. It is to be added also that a prince can never secure himself against a hostile people, because of their being too many, whilst from the nobles he can secure himself, as they are few in number. The worst that a prince may expect from a hostile people is to be abandoned by them; but from hostile nobles he has not only to fear abandonment, but also that they will rise against him; for they, being in these affairs more far-seeing and astute, always come forward in time to save themselves, and to obtain favours from him whom they expect to prevail. Further, the prince is compelled to live always with the same people, but he can do well without the same nobles, being able to make and unmake them daily, and to give or take away authority when it pleases him.’

135 This last thought I will have to elaborate later as it differs somewhat from Machiavelli’s original. It implies that there’s a way for rulers to defy the expectations of the public while doing so in the name of the people. Confronting them, in other words, rather than pretending it is them who willed it in the first place.

136 ‘Those States consequently stand surest and endure longest which, either by the operation of their institutions can renew themselves, or come to be renewed by accident apart from any design. Nothing, however, can be clearer than that unless thus renewed these bodies do not last. Now the way to renew them is, as I have said, to bring them back to their beginnings, since all beginnings of sects, commonwealths, or kingdoms must needs have in them a certain excellence, by virtue of which they gain their first reputation and make their first growth. But because in progress of time this excellence becomes corrupted, unless something be done to restore it to what it was at first, these bodies
renewal by extrinsic accident to revive belief in secular authority.\textsuperscript{137} And for these extraordinary modes the Prince needs to claim and take an extraordinary authority,\textsuperscript{138} which cannot appeal to law in the existing order. It is a foundational act of pure auctoritas. The law, so important for republics, lives in a trade-off to longevity and needs to incorporate unlawfulness as extraordinary execution.\textsuperscript{139}

Second, he is mysteriously hidden behind his appearance of mere executive, as though he takes directions from an external authority. The real workings of power are rarely revealed to the public, and with good reason because in an age of suspicion a transparent ruler has difficulty surviving. He needs to use an indirect form of government therefore since his words are open to challenge and the power he exerts is suspect due to the fact that his power has been self-chosen rather than ordained by God or simply invested in his person as with Augustus or the Roman Senate. He therefore needs to make people’s ‘wounds seem self inflicted’ as that leaves them no occasion to protest.\textsuperscript{140}

Third, the prince does not what pleases the passions of the people, because that would not only ruin him but also the country. Instead he is the agent of necessity, which is why the cause can at times justify the means.\textsuperscript{141}

Fourth, the new Prince needs to found a new order, which establishes him as the author, and hence the authority of the state.

And fifth, he is an actor, playing the role of a legitimate ruler, as he came to power by illegitimate means. A usurper therefore who chooses his own role and he is the maker of his own authority.

The New Prince had the advantage that in renaissance Italy an ordinary man, if he had the necessary virtù and fortuna, could make it to prince, as did Francesco Sforza in Milan necessarily decay. (…) As regards commonwealths, this return to the point of departure is brought about either by extrinsic accident or by intrinsic foresight. As to the first, we have seen how it was necessary that Rome should be taken by the Gauls, that being thus in a manner reborn, she might recover life and vigour, and resume the observances of religion and justice which she had suffered to grow rusted by neglect.’ D Book III, ch1

\textsuperscript{137} D. I.7, 34, D.II16
\textsuperscript{138} D III.3
\textsuperscript{140} D I 4
\textsuperscript{141} ‘It appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of the matter than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen, because how one lives is so far distant from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation; for a man who wishes to act entirely up to his professions of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil. Hence it is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity’ P XV

Besselink, Thieu (2009), Two Faces of Authority: The leader’s tragic quest
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for instance. But his power would be based on his skill indeed, and not on divine right. He is a usurper, in other words, and his question always was how he would turn naked power into durable rule now that the order within which he played his role was fundamentally challenged. Machiavelli sets out to describe the path to power for a freshly ascended usurper.

Machiavelli was a republican, as becomes most clear form his works the Discourses and History of Florence. The question is, however, why would a Republican write a handbook for usurpers? So far there have generally been two answers to this question. The one follows Gramsci and Strauss, arguing that he is no Republican after all. The other follows Alberico Gentili, Spinoza, Diderot and Jean-Jacque Rousseau, who argue that 'While appearing to instruct kings he has done much to educate the people. Machiavelli’s prince is the book of Republicans.' But no evidence of a hidden agenda is found in his text.

What many tend to forget is that Machiavelli’s Republic is a Roman Republic which involves popular, princely and aristocratic power. The power of the people as the power which emanates not from a right but from the fact that a king is not a king without his followers, and from the fact that no one has authority if it is not accepted by his audience. In this model princely authority is the executive power to get things done and the aristocracy ideally form the community of the senate, of knowledge and earned stature. If there is one thing that becomes clear to the good reader however, it is that Machiavelli doesn’t give a universal blueprint for a pre-eminent power constellation, but rather frames his advice in the context of specific circumstances. When the populace is corrupt a quasi kingly power should be given the emphasis (podesta quasi regia), at other times, Machiavelli suggests, the people should be more actively involved in the matters of


143 Le Contract Social (3. 6) ‘En feignant de donner des leçons aux rois il en a donné de grandes aux peuples. Le Prince de Machiavel est le livre des républicains.’ And in a note, ‘Machiavel était un honnête homme et un bon citoyen ; mais, attaché à la maison de Médicis, il était forcé, dans l’oppression de sa patrie, de déguiser son amour pour la liberté. Le choix seul de son exécrable héros manifeste assez son intention secrète ; et l’opposition des maximes de son livre du Prince à celles de ses Discours sur Tite-Live et de son Histoire de Florence, démontre que ce profond politique n’a eu jusqu’ici que des lecteurs superficiels ou corrompus. La cour de Rome a sévèrement défendu son livre : je le crois bien ; c’est elle qu’il dépeint le plus clairement.’ (1782) Gentili in De Legationibus 3.9
governance, but it was always clear that even principalities need republican elements and vice-versa.144

Therefore, the way authority is claimed and cultivated depends on the situation. It is no longer one-dimensional as in a divine monarchy or Greek democracy, but crafted according to necessity. That the Prince must rely on the illusion of necessity, however, is because he came to power by usurpation. Would there be a shared understanding of a natural order, accompanied by the rituals that align people with their proper place in it, he would not have this problem. But then again, the humanist world view could no longer sustain such a shared understanding.

What Machiavelli tries to describe, namely that different strategies of cultivating authority are needed in different circumstances, betrays a belief in the idea that authority is something that can be made, like a clock. Using the right instruments, the right planning and elements, you can construct a fruitful relationship of durable rule. These instruments are kinds of actions and attitudes that the Prince can adopt. But describing the talks of the ruler as such also tells us something about what kind of person the ruler must be: someone who sees his authority as the product of his strategies (and some luck).

Readers of Machiavelli, even today, frown at the idea that rulers are advised to seize power, but in reality it has become the modern condition. Elections make the process less violent, but each new government wins by the defeat of the former, and rather than a positive approval by the people the popular vote is but an instrumental ritual by which offices are distributed. The new executive may have won the elections, but the difference with winning a battle for a city state is not so big. He comes to power by a ‘legitimated’ form of usurpation. But because anyone could have been in his place, he needs to justify himself and win his credibility after, not before, the moment he comes to power. The mere fact of being elected no longer provides him with such authority, if it ever really did.

Because the New Prince didn’t come to power through divine election but by human choice, his new role is to find new grounds upon which that choice is justified and proved worthy. Here begins a process of differentiation by which ever new grounds for authorisation are claimed. What makes power legitimate? Who or what and under which circumstances is authorised to rule? And authorised by whom, or what? There is no

144 When he was asked to advise the Medici on a new constitution he recommended a Republic.
univocal answer to that any longer so new strategies are sought by which to rule, and a new theatre is tried that ought to create a new myth: the myth of the virtuous leader.

The shared experience of a natural order was disturbed, so what would a man-made order look like that could substitute the divine order? For Machiavelli and his contemporaries this became a *virtù ordinata* – the materialised virtù of the prince. This was a way of aligning the individual experience (namely an individualist humanism) to the order of society. The Prince had the task of founding this new order, and only the one who has the virtù that it takes is the legitimate ruler. In a way the Prince fulfils the role of Theseus. Chaos and confusion left the fifteenth century wanting for the heroic demigod. And rather than proposing evil-doing Machiavelli gave words to the need for such a mythical hero figure and his task of foundation. The paradox is that in his methods he is like king Minos (who we will meet in chapter 3), challenging the natural order and trying to run a church without religion - founding a state on the basis of fear and in the absence of a shared experience.

Because every new claim or act against the natural order of things is tragic, as it sets in motion nervous currents of insecurity and distress. That is the agony attending the attempt to find new stability. The important thing to take from this chapter is that Machiavelli’s humanism implies a multiplication of roles that authority figures have to fulfil or even create. Up until that time drama served the projection of perfect resemblance to a divinity. The king had to act like a king, conduct the ceremonies and follow the rules of inheritance and kingship in general. But with Machiavelli everyone can become a God, played out to his own fantasy. The modern Prince is a self-conscious actor. The next section explores the role of drama in the cultivation of authority.
2.1 THE RULER AS ACTOR IN THE DRAMA OF AUTHORITY

‘All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts’

(Shakespeare As You Like It: act 2, scene 7, lines 138-42)

The dramatic presentation of the self in everyday life has fascinated humanity throughout history. In the ancient tradition of theatrum mundi the world is portrayed as a stage on which the drama of social interaction is played out and as the scenery against which our roles become meaningful. The metaphor of life as a stage travelled from Plato and Horace, to the early Christian writers such as Saint Paul, it found reincarnations in Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s El gran teatro del mundo, in Shakespeare and Molière, but the theme can equally be found at the origin of the social sciences with Honoré de Balzac’s Comédie Humaine. And yet it has been rediscovered as perspective on the world only recently.

Maybe most prominently in the academia it was Erving Goffman who observed how the public decorum served people’s self-presentation which, following certain public conventions, arouse the necessary credibility that makes social communication possible.145 If the full consequences of this understanding are appreciated we have to conclude that when credibility depends on the dramaturgy of a person’s self-presentation, notions of authority also become meaningful only when seen in relation to the role he is acting out. Weber may have conflated legitimacy with authority, but he did observe the importance of presenting a credible image of authority. ‘In no instance’, he writes ‘does domination voluntary limit itself to the appeal to material; or affectual or ideal motives as a basis for its

continuance. In addition every such system attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy.\textsuperscript{146} What he meant by that is not that power needs to be legitimate by some normative standard or that it is acquired by the right kind of procedure. Weber talks about an activity of government, an attempt to render itself credible. The end to which belief is cultivated coincides perfectly with that of Goffman’s self-presentation. Namely, to arouse credibility in a particular kind of identity, one with a particular kind of prestige we often call ‘legitimacy’, or authority.

A great deal can be learned about the nature of self-presentation and the cultivation of authority only by looking at Hamlet or Richard III, but, outside literature, little has been studied in depth concerning the social and psychological grounds of authority. A beautiful insight has been given by Clifford Geertz though. He shows us the place of ritual and presentation at the courts of Bali where supreme political authority, called ‘negara’, is entirely and honestly based on the art of staging the closest likeness to the cosmic divinity of Shiva. It is worth quoting at length for he makes the point that will underpin my arguments in a most eloquent way.

Geertz writes: ‘The expressive nature of the Balinese state was apparent through the whole of its known history, for it was always pointed not toward tyranny, whose systematic concentration of power it was incompetent to effect, and not even very methodically toward government, which it pursued indifferently and hesitantly, but rather toward spectacle, toward ceremony, toward the public dramatization of the ruling obsessions of Balinese culture: social inequality and status pride.

It was a theatre state in which the kings and princes were the impresarios, the priests the directors, and the peasants the supporting cast, stage crew, and audience. The stupendous cremations, tooth filings, temple dedications, pilgrimages and blood sacrifices, mobilizing hundreds and even thousands of people and great quantities of wealth, were not means to political ends: they were the ends themselves, they were what the state was for. Court ceremonialism was the driving force of court politics; and mass ritual was not a device to shore up the state, but rather the state, even in its final gasp, was a device for the enactment of mass ritual. Power served pomp, not pomp power.\textsuperscript{147}

Statecraft for Western European monarchies has been understood as a matter of acquiring enough resources to maintain control over a territory, and though ritual and display were always present they weren’t recognised as the substance of statecraft, but rather as its fringes, attributes or insignia. In Bali however, state resources and efforts

where primarily aimed at sustaining the ceremonies on which its very authority was founded, to play the role of Shiva as perfectly as possible. If the rituals were conducted well enough credibility was aroused in the rightness of the monarch's rule, and hegemony was assured. This makes explicit how important it is that guarantees are given in a credible way, and that what is credible is culturally determined.

Most ideas that have dominated political theory after the Second World War, both the ideas of power as well as that of authority, have been understood in ways incompatible with this view of political life. For those who follow Rousseau or Locke, the ritual is a mere celebration of the people's sovereignty, whereas the realist can only see it as the display of a state's power to coerce. But theatre determines how we experience authority, and so it properly lays at its basis. Though rituals exist only by virtue of belief, their significance is determined by the need to belief in them and the need to justify and represent reality in a comprehensible and acceptable way. Political theatre, architecture or spectacle therefore also fulfil the desire for suspended disbelief rather than being mere instruments for manipulation.

So not only does authority need to be enacted, the very enactment is what makes authority. A society in which the images of authority are well established has a relatively clear script, such as that of the Balinese court, but in times of crisis, or when no one image is hegemonic, performing authority becomes more difficult because it has to found a new script. To create is not easy, as the experience of the American Founding Fathers and Machiavelli's Prince prove.

What did the ruler do in early modern times to cultivate his authority? He built impressive palaces that were not just a sign of his power but were meant to create his own authority and justify his privilege to his peers, his public and himself, he surrounded himself with images of his proper strength and he acted as the image he aspired. Something changed in early modern Europe however, and authority took a different course. Though even the most villainous character needs to take account of the rules of the natural order, the renaissance ruler could dissociate himself from that order and act self-consciously within it. The birth of this 'New Prince' is eloquently documented by Shakespeare's Richard of Gloucester, later Richard III, when he discovers that to get to the crown he should reinvent himself. The duke of Gloucester recognizes that it is his ability to

148 Henry III, for instance, spent about two years of royal revenue on the building of Westminster Abbey in order to justify his feeble kinship. See Paul Binski, Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1995)

Besselink, Thieu (2009), Two Faces of Authority: The leader's tragic quest
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create a credible character that leads him to the crown and he decides to become a ‘hypocrite’, but in the Greek sense of hypokrites, meaning actor. Most democratic theory of today would claim that the audience writes the play, that the people determine what legitimacy is, but even though there is a role to play for members of the public the authority a ruler has depends on his power to inspire belief in his character.149 This is the Duke:

Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And cry ‘Content’ to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
I’ll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;
I’ll slay more gazers than the basilisk;
I’ll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it farther off, I’ll pluck it down.

Richard III is not the legitimate heir of the throne but yields to the renaissance villain disregarding the natural order just by playing role. And he can do so because Shakespeare understood that the ruler is burdened with the acting of a part, and presenting the world with an image. Shakespeare shows the ambiguity of authority, or of social life in general. A lion remains a lion even if he lives among deer, but humans are suggestible and can change roles. Machiavelli’s sense of what it is to be a person of virtù comes close to what Shakespeare makes of Richard III as the prince above all else must acquire a flexible disposition. Shakespeare was familiar with The Prince and in Elizabethan England it had inspired the necessary fear. The play of Richard the III was a way of dealing with this fear by showing that the villain would eventually fall. But what it also shows is that in a world of no religion, that ruler is best suited for reign that is capable of varying his conduct through

149 The Oxford English Dictionary (v3) defines Authority as ‘The Power to inspire belief’
good and evil as fortune and circumstances dictate.\textsuperscript{150} The Prince is conscience of his own acting, and knows that goodness and rights are not sufficient to guarantee neither his reputation (glory and credibility), nor the stability and safety of his office and his state.

With Machiavelli the ruler becomes the author of his own authority. The prince is a founding father, a creator and redeemer of social reality with the ability to create new political orders, to unite and emancipate Italy, and thereby attain perennial glory. Machiavelli’s new prince had to be a new Cyrus, a new Theseus, a Moses. Not a Cosimo de’ Medici.

In a way Machiavelli is saying nothing very new, as from the dawn of homo sapiens authority has been represented by the father as symbol of the human artifice. In Palaeolithic caves of the French Pyrenees or Spanish Cantabrian hills we find little figures in the wall paintings that give a first hint at this. The male figures are all dressed up, whereas females are represented naked. Anthropologists have found that the female presence was experienced as mythic and magical in and by herself. She is not only the source of life, but she represents the mystery of nature itself, with even her cycles following the seasons of the moon. The male, on the other hand, has gained his power by his particular and limited social function. Both Freud and Jung recognised that children experience the mother as the force of nature and the father as authority, that which brings order in- and gives meaning to social life. The mother nourishes us into the world, but the father traditionally initiates us into our social roles. A task that involves the creation of man-made meaning.

This is not a discussion about the division between male and female roles, but about the relation between costume and authority. The fact that the figures who represented authority were dressed in costume tells us about the theatrical nature of authority. Costume means as much to Palaeolithic households as it does to kings and ministers today. The difference with the New Prince, however, is that he fashions his costumes to his liking in an expedient manner rather than in line with the cosmic order.

The relationship between the theatre and reality of authority is intriguing. There remains an interesting interplay between perception and enactment, and between belief and presentation. To illustrate, in Peter Sellers’s last film \textit{Being There}, after the Jerzy

\begin{footnote}
150 Other than Richard III, Machiavelli does not promote villainy, all the contrary, the virtù and prudence that Machiavelli teaches aim at the security of the state, the prince and his glory. ‘Still, it cannot be called virtù to kill one fellow citizens, to betray friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion; by these means one can acquire power but not glory.’ (P. VIII)
\end{footnote}
Kosinski’s novel, Chance Gardner, a quiet and somewhat retarded gardener, is apparently by pure chance mistaken for someone of great knowledge and authority. He attempts no enactment of this authority, but is simply taken to be one. His followers find in Gardner all the peace and reassurance that they need, that is to say, they project an image of strength upon him even though the man is not hindered by even a glimmer of intelligence, insight or capacity for guidance - he can’t even take care of himself. The only characteristic which prevents him from falling from grace is his contentment and complete and utter self-acceptance. Sellers describes the character as a man who is sublimely content with no past and no future.151 This acceptance does not give him his authority, but does prevent him from sabotaging himself.152

Just as people can ascribe authority to someone who claims none and does not even have any over himself, so also no matter what a ruler may believe about himself or claim, his audience can decide whether or not they accept these claims. This is marvellously depicted in Monty Python’s Holy Grail, where King Arthur encounters two peasants on his land but is confronted with their disbelief and insensitivity to his claims to authority.

Peasants: ‘I didn’t know we had a king - I thought we were an autonomous collective’.
Arthur: Be quiet! Arthur says. I order you to be quiet!
Peasants: Order, eh? Who does he think he is?
Arthur: I am your king!
Peasants: Well, I didn’t vote for you. You don’t vote for kings. Well, how did you become King, then?
Arthur: The Lady of the Lake, [angels sing] her arm clad in the purest shimmering samite, held aloft Excalibur from the bosom of the water signifying by Divine Providence that I, Arthur, was to carry Excalibur. [singing stops] That is why I am your king!
Peasants: Listen. Strange women lying in ponds distributing swords is no basis for a system of government. Supreme executive power derives from a mandate from the masses, not from some farcical aquatic ceremony.
Arthur: ‘Be quiet!’
Peasants: ‘Well, but you can’t expect to wield supreme executive power just ‘cause some watery tart threw a sword at you!

151 Movie: Life and Death of Peter Sellers (2004) Stephen Hopkins
152 This is a very unstable situation though and will not be able to withstand a challenge to authority
Arthur: ‘Shut up!’

Peasants: ‘I mean, if I went round saying I was an emperor just because some moistened bint had lobbed a scimitar at me, they’d put me away!

Arthur: Shut up, will you? Shut up!

Peasants: Ah, now we see the violence inherent in the system.

Arthur: Shut up!

Peasants: Oh! Come and see the violence inherent in the system! Help! Help! I’m being repressed!

Obviously Arthur in the film neither had the personal qualities that could help inspire awe of some other kind, nor the social status that a shared system of habits and beliefs could bring about. No matter how much Arthur believes himself to be a king, if his theatre does not fit the mythology of his people – if his role is not recognised – his game has little meaning.

To end with a last illustration of the complex relationship between theatre and authority, there are instances in which personal inner strength, self-respect, and belief can be recognised by an audience. In the first Act of Shakespeare’s Tragedy of King Lear, the king, now in his eighties, disposes himself of his kingship and his virtuous daughter, but pretends he is still king. These decisions would eventually lead to his madness and death, but before that time we see his struggle with authority. When his loyal servant Kent, whom Lear had dismissed, comes in disguise to offer his services again the king asks: ‘who woulds thou serve?’ ‘You’, Kent replies. ‘Dost though know me, fellow?’ ‘No, sire; but you have that in your face which I would fain call master.’ ‘Whay’s that?’ And Kent replies ‘Authority.’

Even though the king has no formal position and did everything to unking himself, his servant recognises his authority. What is it that Kent sees in the face of Lear? That the man has superior judgement? That he ought to be King? Or that kings cannot lose their divine authority? Or is it Kent’s response to an archetype that Lear may embody? Kent refers to an inner authority rather than a title or position, but still he sees in it his face. In part at least Lear’s authority belongs to his persona therefore, the part of us intended for others to see (personae, meaning mask). And in part the player King’s authority is a result from Kent’s projection which Lear’s persona intended to invite. The bond between the two is hereby marked and although Lear’s authority is certainly of an inner kind, it is not so in any simple
way. It is that same bond of interconnection which allows for a mutual relationship of respect and authority which Hegel writes about in the Journey of the Spirit.

In what follows, I want to explore this inner authority and its cultivation a little further, as it refers both to the authority that rulers cultivate for an intimate audience of those on whom his social recognition depends, as well as to the authority, or should I say respect, that leaders establish to themselves.
Rulers are human beings like the rest of us, trying to make sense of the world. But social science has tended to treat the leader as a flat and power-seeking persona. The way people have written about this persona differs with time though and from extensive reviews follows a demarcation of periods in which the leader is characterised in different ways. When still under the influence of the magic aura of authority, social science saw leaders as superior beings with special qualities. Between 1900 and 1950 this led students to look for these special traits that would make for a ‘great man’. Since the 1940’s the leader is less seen in terms of his traits and defined more in terms of his behaviour. That was thought too one-dimensional and the relationship of influence and power between leader and follower became the main focus. Since the 1960’s academics discovered that great leaders come up in special circumstances, which led most people to take a deterministic approach.

The psychology of Freud, Frank, Fromm, Erikson or Levinson sought the source of authority in the father figure. A dynamic between the embodiment of the superego and projections of love and fear onto the leader by a crowd who is looking for an emotional outlet in times of insecurity. Then the person of the leader was detached from his role, and people started seeing authority dynamics in terms of expectations of that role. And yet another school could see the leader only as an agent with objectives and abilities for change, as in late Taylorite management literature of the past few decades.

But treating leaders as people who, like subjects, can only be what they are due to what they think and feel about themselves we find in only very few writings, the best of which are probably preserved in works like those of Shakespeare or Marcus Aurelius. This concerns the authority that a ruler establishes to himself. What a leader’s own sense is of his authority not only determines that he is that author of his own role, but it also conditions the extent to which he can assert his authority, and even affects the authority that others can project on him. This is the dimension of authenticity, where the deepest

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and most personal - and paradoxically also the most universal – inner dynamics of authority take place.

This personal authority is based on the leader’s self-respect. Every person may have a different basis upon which he grants himself respect, but there are generally two reasons: competence and ethics. What the authority figure or his organisation will ask is therefore: am I capable of being a leader? And, am I a good leader? If either of the two is negative he will be in a difficult and agonising place from which it will be hard to exercise his authority because this inner authority allows one to discern other authorities and defy its expectations. This part of authority is not legal, archetypical, ideological, or expert, but personal. And therefore it is changeable. It changes over the course of a lifetime, becoming more self-creative with awareness and experience. But although a ruler can acknowledge and use the law, status, or tradition, he will at some point face the fact that all these external grounds are contingent. The question will force itself upon him what – if not these external grounds - makes his authority rightful.

Even though the perception and experience of authority do not depend on moral agreement with the authority figure, as we know from Freud, still a strong influence goes out from the desire to govern and to be governed on ethical principle (whatever that principle may be). A basic cognitive need of human beings is a sense of order, and our system naturally seeks patterns in chaos. Subjects to power seek order in the universe and a sense of rightness gives that meaning which renders their subjection acceptable. Deprivations are rendered tolerable by fitting them into a larger pattern. Rulers do the same. They try to be accepted by their subjects and seek to render their domination justifiable because they like to believe that what they are doing is right, by whatever standard.

They need to legitimate themselves, their power and privilege just as citizens need to justify their obedience. I propose that justification is not to be understood as a rational process, but as an often unconscious attempt to act in accordance with a self-concept. That is it a psychological rather than a philosophical process. So when rulers have difficulty cultivating their authority, the ruler’s consciousness is an important place to look for answers to the question how that is so.

156 “the foundation of such governmental power as is exercised both with a consciousness on the government’s part that it has a right to govern and with some recognition by the governed of that right.” Sills, D. (1968). International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. USA, Macmillan Co & the Free Press. p244
In his soliloquies Shakespeare allows us to witness the inner world of Richard II, whose character rather than murderous and tyrannical is that of a pampered narcissistic poet. In a cell he observes his thoughts and pitifully tries to link his cell lyrically to the world outside, forcing himself to be creative. He is conscious of the fact that he is responsible for the inner theatre in his head and he thinks about what this implies.

Thus play I in one person many people,
And none contented. Sometimes am I king;
Then treason makes me wish myself a beggar,
And so I am. Then crushing penury
Persuades me I was better when a king,
Then am I kinged again, and by and by
Think that I am unkinged by Bolingbroke,
And straight am nothing. But whate'er I be,
Nor I, nor any man that but man is,
With nothing shall be pleased till he be eased
With being nothing.
(V.5.31–41)

His fall from the throne he sees as a fall into the void, but then he muses on the experience of his lost identity, sublimating it. He needs to come to terms with his new identity, and justify his position but this is a struggle.

What is rarely noticed then is that rulers justify first and foremost to themselves, as a matter of psychological ‘necessity’. In Weber’s words, ‘he who is more favoured feels the never ceasing need to look upon his position as in some way “legitimate”.’ By need, I do not necessarily mean the physical need or an imperative element of the definition of a ruler, but it is rather deduced from the regularity with which a rightful identity is claimed and the psychological trouble humans have when acting against their self-understanding, even in the absence of an audience. However, whether in a given instance a ruler acts out of need for self-legitimation or out of empathy, calculation, or dull custom, is impossible to tell in general terms. The need for self-justification therefore remains a

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hypothetical motivation for elite behaviour. But what we can say is that, as Weber notes, ‘custom, personal advantage, purely affectual or ideal moves of solidarity, do not form a sufficiently reliable basis for a given domination.’ This can mean that he needs recognition of others or from himself. This implies, as I suggested before, that the theatre that rulers display is not just to arouse credibility in others. Even though self-presentation cultivates recognition in others, we and those close to us are most important for our self-confidence and self-respect.

Axel Honneth gives an interesting, but normative account of recognition. For him the possibility of realising one’s identity, needs and desires as an autonomous and individual being depends on the development of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem. Each of these relationships to ourselves corresponds to a form of recognition. The emotional support as we experience it in primary relationships deals in trust and the confidence we develop in ourselves. A cognitive respect for the law or other authorities for Honneth reflects the respect we have for ourselves as ethical beings. And social esteem within a community of values is related to the worth and value we give to ourselves. When any of these relationships is violated, such as in abuse, denial of rights, or exclusion, Honneth refers to them as the social pathologies which violate the good life.

In this threefold description of a person’s self-relationship, we recognise three dimensions in which leading figures establish authority to themselves. To 1) esteem yourself is to give yourself a value, you authorise or legitimate yourself in other words. With 2) self-respect you will respect your inner self and your awareness. Because what does it mean not to violate yourself? The ‘self’ we are talking about is the awareness of one’s autonomy - about who you are. Richard Sennett recovers an old understanding of respect by recognising its roots in autonomy. For him respect ultimately means to accept in others what one does not, or even cannot understand in them. This way the other is treated with dignity because his autonomy is treated as equal to your own. But the act of

159 When Weber speaks about the ‘need’ that rulers show to justify their privilege, he infers a motivation from behaviour, which he himself recognised is impossible, and so has to qualify that statement with another which says that rulers and states behave ‘as if’ that was the case.


allowing the other his autonomy strengthens one’s own character at the same time. It is a
gesture only people can make who have sufficient self-respect.163

This means that the respect for oneself recognises and accepts also that part which is
autonomous in oneself. We often call it being true to oneself, or authenticity. It is much
more than the respect for external moral laws, as Honneth seems to suggest, but really
refers to an autonomous ethics from within. To respect a law or other people’s integrity is
something that follows from the recognition of, and respect for, what one knows is the
right thing to do. This differs somewhat from how we have understood the Classical Greek
adagium that to know the good leads to good action because it presupposes that one
respects the self who knows.

Authenticity then, is in someone’s autonomy, or belonging to oneself; something that
is self-originated and which therefore possesses original or inherent authority - by
definition. But an important ability that comes with authenticity is the capacity to defy the
expectations of the other, because self-respect elicits behaviour that commands respect
on the basis that you act not out of a thirst for external validation but from an inner sense
of what is right - paradoxically irrespective of oneself.164

Then, as a third aspect of self-authority, there is the 3) self-confidence which entails the
belief, the faith, and trust in oneself that provide the creative force for authorship.165 There
is an entire cult of self-mastery in the West which is largely based on this capacity for self-
actualisation and achievement.166

Without an authoritative relationship to oneself a relationship of authority to others
becomes very difficult. With difficult I mean that it must rely on strenuous inner tensions
and reliance on the weaknesses, or dependence of the other. It is very much like in a love
relationship where co-dependency can last a long while, but it is draining and destructive
for both partners when the care for one another is in reality a form of manipulation for
approval as a surrogate for self-respect. This is different however, from an interdependent

164 Due to constraints on space I will not elaborate of the division within the self such as has been done by psychoanalysis
and psychosynthesis, but the self that is defied in an autonomous act is the self that wants, fears, and possesses while the
self hat has the capacity to decide against these is the consciousness of an observing ego (super ego).
165 Hegel in Lordship and Bondage writes in paragraph 187. ‘Self-consciousness must, however, express itself as the
negation of all mere objectivity and particularity. This initially takes the form of desiring the death of the other at the risk
of its own life. Self-consciousness must be willing to sacrifice everything concrete for its own infinite self-respect and the
similar respect of all others. A life-and-death struggle therefore ensues between the two rival self-consciousnesses.’
166 Very influential in the U.S on the belief in self-confidence, self-creation, and self-belief have been the movement of
Neuro Linguistic Programming, developed by Richard Bandler and linguist John Grinder, and motivational speakers such
as Napoleon Hill and Tony Robbins
bond in which partners also share responsibility for one another’s wellbeing and development, but from a stance of mutual respect.

In the establishment of authority to oneself all three dimensions play a part, the first of which I’d like to explore in some further detail now. Notice how these three elements fulfil the same function as authorship, authorisation, and authenticity.

Only when a ruler starts ruling, when he starts creating and governing ‘his’ citizens, will he cultivate an authoritative identity in their eyes. It is logical therefore that most time is spent in cultivating and pursuing self-esteem, and recognition by others may only be a way of attaining this. Self-legitimation, which is the term Barker uses for the activity by which people present and identify themselves predominantly to themselves, may also have less to do with securing compliance of the people than with the confirmation of a ruler’s identity. For that reason the ruling elite is a relatively autonomous community within which recognition can be mutually exchanged. As an EU official reminds us in an interview with the anthropologist Hooghe ‘[w]hat is relevant is the image one has about oneself, and about the policy one is making. That is where a commissioner and a director general must lead, and you can give the staff the opportunity to collaborate in that. That is what public interest is. Outside influences do not weigh [very much].’

The European Union is a good example precisely because of its distance from people’s daily experience and its newly formed elite. The relationship that is forged between the various levels of the elite forms a system in which identities are reciprocally cultivated and reinforced. This is so for national elites, but particularly also the case for the ruling class of the European Union for instance. Unlike subjects, the governing elite of Europe have developed a common history and identity with distinct understandings and practices. They could do so maybe even better than national rulers for, as Beetham and Lord put it, the justification that elites at a European level give for their authority ‘rarely percolate out beyond a narrow elite group; nor do they need to, it could be argued, since these institutions are not dependent on a the cooperation of a wider public to effect their purposes. It is not the direct cooperation of ordinary citizens that is required to maintain

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the authority of the UN, of GATT, or NATO, etc., but that of the member states and their officials; and it is for the behaviour of these alone, therefore, that considerations of legitimacy are important.\textsuperscript{170} In addition, members of this group can be expected to endorse the norms and conventions of international political culture especially when their national situation is one where the belief in their legitimacy is challenged, in order to regain some of the stature that comes with this culture.\textsuperscript{171}

State citizens take extremely little interest in political affairs and their organised opposition is not to be expected. But the concerns of national political elites are all the more articulate. In that sense they are the citizens of Europe, for claims and counterclaims to legitimacy are made between the Union and states. However, that citizen cooperation is not required on a national level is usually overlooked by political theorists and the normatively inclined political scientist. For an explanation of ideas and actions common to governing elites in a given time and space we therefore better conceive of rulers as forming part of ideological communities in which their discourses and social practices develop.

The obsession in the literature of the past decade or so with something called a ‘legitimacy crisis’ has failed to see that the language of crisis used by the members of the elite was in fact aimed at that very elite, often only discussed in close circles of elite conferences such as those of the Third Way or the Council, and consequently failed to understand what was going on. What was going on was that governing elites spoke in a language designed for their mutual legitimation. And the ideology that provided an authoritative language was that of democracy in increasingly direct forms, transparency and accountability.

Compare what Joseph Schull wrote about the pre-1989 Soviet Union: ideology was no means for persuading the underclass but served precisely to justify, authorise and cultivate the identities of the cadre. ‘The masses were simply not the audience to whom political claims were legitimated. In these societies, ideology was essentially the language of political elites who constrained each other to obey its conventions. When the leaders of these societies used ideology to legitimate some claim, they were speaking to their colleagues as the co-tenants of ideological orthodoxy, not to the population at large. This


Of course the argument also runs the other way around where rulers retreat from the international scene when the prestige it entails is weak or absent.
is not to say that Marxism-Leninism was not propagated to the masses in such societies. Of course it was, but this was not the arena in which ideological discourse (as opposed to propaganda) was taking place.\footnote{Schull, J. (1992). "What is Ideology? Theoretical Problems and Lessons from Sovjet-Type Societies." Political Studies 40(4): 728-41. p.737}

Though elites do not need citizens for their self-legitimation, this is not to say they do not care what ‘the people’ think. But instrumentally they only do so to the extent that they think that people can affect their possibilities for cultivating a credible identity. Elections may take one out of office for instance. But rather than a means of according ‘legitimacy’ on rulers, or giving consent, elections and opinion polls often provide rulers with a means in the struggle for respect from one another.

This is important to notice because it means beliefs about authority and ruler’s self-concepts are formed mainly within the small group of peers and direct contacts of the elite, and less through the interaction between ruler and ruled. If we wish to understand what drives a ruler’s actions and the kind of authority he is after we should study his self-understanding and that shared by his peer culture. Naturally every individual is driven by personal motives, desires, and values, but so are cultures and social groups when they follow certain internalised values. These determine part of the leader’s consciousness, and give insight into the significance of their actions. We are used to seeing propaganda and mass rallies as a means to persuade ‘the people’, and of course they also do, but more importantly they convince the ruling class itself, as it is the kind of behaviour that forms part of the ruler’s identity and as such makes sure that the ruling class can continue to see itself as ruling class.

For instance, in the \textit{Protestant Ethic}, Weber describes the self-justification of the worker, which is the way people in capitalist/protestant society prove their worth to themselves. In the protestant worker’s case his proof exists of savings, self-control and denial of earthly pleasures. If we were to do the same exercise for democratic rulers, what would he want to prove to himself? Paradoxically, salvation for the democratic ruler is in his transparency, responsiveness and denial of his power.\footnote{There are many other languages that lend prestige, as Bourdieu teaches, but some are more dominant than others or gain more salience in different times. ‘Indeed, it appears that images of linguistic phenomena gain credibility when they create ties with culturally salient aesthetic, moral, scientific, or political arguments. And, conversely, ideas about language often contribute to legitimation (or, in Bourdieu’s term, misrecognition) of political arrangements’ Gal, S. (1998). Multiplicity and Contention among Language Ideologies. Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory. B. B. Schieffelin, K. A. Woolard and P. V. Kroskrity. New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press. pp 323-324} This doesn’t mean he cannot derive pleasure from power, but his confrontation with the populace reminds him of his


\footnote{173 There are many other languages that lend prestige, as Bourdieu teaches, but some are more dominant than others or gain more salience in different times. ‘Indeed, it appears that images of linguistic phenomena gain credibility when they create ties with culturally salient aesthetic, moral, scientific, or political arguments. And, conversely, ideas about language often contribute to legitimation (or, in Bourdieu’s term, misrecognition) of political arrangements’ Gal, S. (1998). Multiplicity and Contention among Language Ideologies. Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory. B. B. Schieffelin, K. A. Woolard and P. V. Kroskrity. New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press. pp 323-324}
role, which is servile to the will of the people. Weber’s protestant worker probably also got
satisfaction from his work, but his cultural environment directed him to asceticism, as
enlightenment and hyper-modern politics moves the leader to a slave morality. This does
not mean leaders with slave morality do not strive for power or authority, they just use a
kind of jiu-jitsu move by which seeming weakness is a strategy which they believe will
cultivate their strength and credibility.174

The nuance here is that ultimate motivation is not power or recognition, but to prove
one’s self conception to oneself, and proving it to others may be a means of trying to
prove it to oneself.

In this sense, the self-presentation of the elite is not merely some conspiracy-like
strategy to forge a docile public or spectacle to entertain the masses,175 but also a private
show in which on the one hand the governing elite justify their actions and identities in
reaction to their own felt need for justification.176 This is what makes people who think of
themselves as victims act like victims, and those who think they are rebels act like rebels.
On the other hand the elite also ‘act upon a conception of themselves and their role which
simultaneously shapes and justifies their action.’177 In order to be able to understand why
this mode of legitimation changed, we need to consider that ‘legitimation is an expression
of identity, and is in this respect reflexive, rather than, necessarily, published to a wide
audience.’178

Modern sociology has assumed that the need to believe in the legitimacy of authority
is the single most import element of a political character. Leaders look for a moral
justification. But as we have learned from Freud it is not morality upon which authority is
based, and by analogy neither is a ruler’s authenticity. A ruler’s sense for his authority is
sooner governed by his sense of self - which is as much a product of his fears and

174 In some cases the ability of a leader to show their weakness is a strength, in others is is a misguided strategy which
leads to disillusion as we will see later.
175 ‘A first characteristic of these situations is that persons involved are subjected to an imperative of justification. The
one who criticizes other persons must produce justifications in order to support their criticisms just as the person who
is the target of the criticisms must justify his or her actions in order to defend his or her own cause. These justifications
176 Many see the act of legitimation as a form of deceit. Goodin, R. (1980). ‘Rites of Rulers; Manipulatory Politics’. New
Haven & London, Yale University Press.
178 Ibid. P.167 Weber observed this ‘meaningful action’ in a bureaucrat who works with a certain devotion. ‘To act
otherwise would be abhorrent to his sense of duty. Weber, M. (1978). Economy and Society. London, University of
California Press. P.31
I will use the term legitimation in the sense mentioned here and legitimacy as the set of believes about rightful
authority and the conditions under which it is voluntarily accepted.
insecurities as it is of his beliefs - than by a sense of moral coherence. This doesn’t preclude the influence that moral beliefs can have on people’s sense of themselves, but it does extend the ways that we can understand activities of self-legitimation.

So rulers look for power, they even look for moral justifiability, but more they search for recognition and self-respect, whether in line with morality or not, and this is found in their authenticity - a congruency with their sense of self. This doesn’t mean one cannot play a variety of roles and act out personalities in public and in private, but it does entail a deep acceptance and consonance. A ruler can act immorally and against the grain of all expectation, and still feel justified. Caligula is probably the classical example. Were he to act against his proper ethics he would create an unbearable cognitive dissonance, the result of which would either be a loss of self-confidence, schizophrenia, or an adaptation of his ethics.

Authority, prestige, distinction from the ordinary, and self-esteem are cultivated through rituals and performances, but most of these are unknown to the larger public. When Tony Blair declared in 1997 that 'The elites of Europe have paid insufficient attention to the people of Europe', he did so addressing not the people, but the Council in Noordwijk. This could be interpreted as a concern for democracy, it could at the same time be seen as the cultivation of a credible identify by Blair in front of his peers, claiming authority on the basis of his democratic personality.

Because, on the whole, theories of legitimation focus almost exclusively on the relation between the ruler and the ruled and look mainly at what is believed by the citizen, they miss the process of socialisation amongst the elite and often lose objectivity towards ruler’s activities. There are authors who recognise the internal dynamics of elite though. In international relations it is recently acknowledged that it is rational for elites to take over normative commitments from the environment in which they operate, but it is still predominantly assumed that this is so due to the material benefit that adherence to such norms would yield.

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179 Recognition and self-respect are sometimes conflated because recognition is to do with self-esteem as I tried to explain in the above. Self-esteem is grounded in a self-concept distinguished from others, and involves a self-evaluation of one’s competences and worth. But worth is relative to something else, which is why self-esteem depends on recognition relative to others. Self-respect is on the other hand is an autonomous emotion and is to do with authority's dimension of authenticity, it suggests that the one’s character is self-contained.


The impotence of self-legitimation for the break down of authority is hardly ever observed. It means that a ruler needs to be able to establish authority to himself first. That is, he needs to be able to create, to preserve and to renew the respect he has for himself. Although it is certainly possible to uphold a contrived image of strength, it is incredibly difficult and psychologically distressing to do. An actor can fool the public for a while, but he cannot fool himself without a straining tension waiting to appear through his facade. Sooner or later he will be reminded of his own deceit, upon which his part will crumble not only in his proper eyes but also in the eyes of his audience the minute his authority is challenged. And when this happens few people are persuaded by his performance. The likelihood of forging a credible identity, an authoritative image that is, will be reduced to the extent that craving subjects have a need to believe in it. The same is true for authority of fathers, bosses or politicians. This is beautifully exemplified by Shakespeare when, near the end Richard III, as an actor and a ruler, starts doubting his own rightfulness and thereby loses all authority. It becomes his ruin.

It is now dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes. I am.
Then fly! What, from myself? Great reason. Why?
Lest I revenge? Myself upon myself?
Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
O no, alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself.
I am a villain. Yet I lie: I am not.
Fool, of thyself speak well: fool, do not flatter.

(Richard III, Shakespeare V.5.134–145)
It is not doubt about a decision that makes him weak, but doubt about his own identity as a ruler. He created a role for himself but stops believing it, stops accepting it as the way things ought to be. His loss of self-respect reveals his weakness to others as well, which breaks the spell. Whereas before he could even court the wife of the man he murdered, after his dream of self doubt when he courts Elizabeth for the hand of his nice he has lost rhetorical dominance, forcing him to accept Elizabeth’s challenge of his authority.

What a leader believes about himself has real consequences for the way he can govern. We only have to look at the former communist regimes which show a very similar logic to the loss of personal confidence in private life. Di Palma described the process as follows:

‘Once communist regimes lost their will and confidence - that is, once they abdicated - the gates were open to the venting of popular resentment. The reverse dynamic is also true. To be sure, the surge in mobilization was not the sufficient or main cause of abdication: everything points to a crisis that took decisive shape at the core of the system. Nevertheless, when a loss of confidence occurred at the top, the ensuing popular mobilization tended to confirm communist regimes in their belief that they had lost the right to rule-and hence to repress.’

What counts for subjects also counts for rulers. Their loss of confidence whether in the other or themselves results in an altered identity and hence an altered relationship. ‘When rulers believe that their right to rule needs no popular verification, two consequences follow. (1) Those subjects who fail to recognise the rulers’ right to rule are not thereby impugning the rulers; rather they are impugning themselves. And (2) if a crisis of legitimacy eventually strikes - that is, if the rulers lose confidence in their right to rule - it becomes very difficult to stop the crisis. A “virtuous” regime can live without popular support; it can hardly live when it no longer believes in its own virtue. For at that point it loses the courage to rule against popular sentiments’.183

So the theatre of rulership is essential, but so is the capacity to establish authority to oneself. Shakespeare’s Richard III is like the prince in Machiavelli, but fails notwithstanding in his thespian arts. He falls because of self-doubt.184 It comes as no surprise therefore that King Richard is dethroned in his second attempt to seduce a woman when he had lost faith in himself as ruler. He lost his seductive power over her, and symbolically he lost his

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183 Ibid. p.56-7
184 He wins his first courtship of Ann, using extraordinary rhetoric. He loses the second of Elisabeth when he asks the hand of his niece. He gains the crown by deception and dread. What makes him fall is that he is too cruel, and so loss of fear means loss of authority. His interior self in the nightmare speech is the development of a conscience where the workings of his inner self are revealed to himself. At the insight of what he sees in himself he loses his self-belief, losing his self-authority. This insight is a condition for a non fearful self-authority though. An authority based in autonomy.
seductive powers over the people. His loss of confidence and self-respect mark the moment at which he recognises the bondsman in himself - his inner weakness which throws the myth about his self-invented kingship into doubt, exposing him as merely miserable and human.

It turns out that he cannot rule a people without respect for his role within the order of nature. He breaks the rites and rules of kingship, because as a modern ruler he can, but pays the price by having to govern by sheer deceit and personal power.
CHAPTER THREE

3 WHO IS THE TRAGIC HERO OF MODERNITY?

When Minos, King of Crete, was contending with his brothers for the throne he had appealed to divine right as the ground upon which the throne was his. He prayed to the gods to send him a sign in the form of a bull, rising from the waters, which he pledged to sacrifice to Poseidon as symbol for his service. A marvellously white bull had come ashore, and Minos did become king. But the animal was so splendid in its majesty that Minos was persuaded to substitute the godly bull for one of his own in order to keep the beast amongst his cattle, in the hope Poseidon wouldn’t notice. The Kingdom flourished, conquered the seas, and Minos was admired for his virtue. But the queen, Pasiphaë, was taken by an inexorable desire for the bull which Poseidon in his rage had sent upon her, and she asked Daedalus to craft for her a wooden cow with which she could deceive the bull and secretly pair with him.

How could she know that she would be giving birth to a monster? After all, her husband was himself the fruit of an affair between a heavenly bull and his mother, Europe. Zeus had taken her to Crete, carrying her on his back disguised as a bull, and their unification bore the so respected Minos. But now this monster left a stain on the soul of the king. Again Daedalus was called upon to put his talent to use for deception. Both ashamed and afraid of this new thing, the king summoned Daedalus to create a labyrinth so misleading that the monstrous Minotaur could be safely hidden away inside. Minos knew what he had done, and couldn’t blame his wife.185 His authority rested on deception

and a broken promise of divine right because he had given his private desires preference whereas his ritual investiture through Poseidon’s bull consisted in the promise to sacrifice and surrender his private person to the public cause.

The sacrifice of the bull was to prove his selfless compliance with the functions of his role. Instead, the king became a tyrant as the rites of passage into his authority turned out to be invalid. Every role is sanctioned by the ritual that society has defined for it. Disrespect for the rite separated Minos from his community, and the community from itself, breaking it up in as many voices as there are individuals. Such a community lacks social authority and can be governed by force and illusion only.

The self-created tyrant is a curse for himself and his community, no matter how his community seems to prosper. Hunted by his own knowledge of his betrayal, and therefore by the fear to be found out, he anxiously tried to defend his self-achieved independence. He will always have to watch his back, and always have to deal with the knowledge that his power and his person lack the security of ‘legitimacy’. All depends on his inner strength and capacity to believe his own authority.

Crete waited for the hero Theseus, whose authority is in his self-achieved submission. We know many such leaders who come in on horseback and claim the role of the impartial outsider hero. And we have become particularly accustomed to them as populists. But they need not be. Although, even if Theseus had good intentions and would want to follow the rites of authority, he would still have to step into the part of servant human god. But what if there is no role to which he can submit? What if society has no rituals that fruitfully invest the ruler with authority? It is the task of the hero to discover and create the role and purpose to which he will submit, but it has become increasingly difficult. Theseus founded Athens. That has always been the hero’s task, to found. It is just that this task becomes more difficult if the crafting of new authority itself is suspected.

The tragedy of modern rulers is their fruitless search for such submission. Next to the New Prince there is the modern Tragic Hero as second archetype of authority. Whereas the Greek hero had to fall because his hubris and human fallibility made it clear that omnipotent authority was only for the gods and not for humans, the modern tragic hero demonstrates his sufferings and human ‘authenticity’ in order to replace the absence of a God with the warmth of intimate trustworthiness. The tragedy is that his attempt to surrender, whether well intentioned or for private gain, makes his followers feel vulnerable.
and unprotected. How can a man like any other provide the judgement and assurance to structure the chaotic cruelty and meaninglessness of existence into orderly laws of truth and justice? He cannot. He is exposed as an impostor and brought to fall or ineffectiveness by his own fear and self-doubt.

At this point I should introduce the other figure to the modern stage: the self-reflexive Tragic Hero. Our politics are full of them, and so are history and modern literature. He projects the negative of Machiavelli’s Prince and represents the weaker but more loveable character of the touchable ruler. Of course we will find both faces of authority in contemporary rulers, and even in the very constitutions of our democracies they co-exist, albeit in uncomfortable tension. The New Tragic Hero is cut out of the same cloth as the New Prince, both are self-made and free from a judging God. But their characters show opposite sides of the modern coin.
What runs like thread through this entire thesis is that authority is a tragedy, and that modernity's trouble in accepting tragedy is the same as its trouble with accepting authority. The free Western individual sees problems as puzzles to be solved with the belief that they are misunderstandings or simply a lack of information and tools. An authority figure is to solve problems and provide assurance, but some problems have no solution and some situations have no rational assurance no matter the amount of research and dissection. Authority, just like the rest of the world, remains ambiguous. The tragedy of authority deals with this tension therefore; a paradoxical relationship between fate and chance, between free will and destiny, between an inner flaw and outer circumstance, between Appollonian and Dionysian, between universal truth and particular historical situations, between what we can change and what cannot be changed, between noble and vile, between tragic and pitiful, between blindness and insight, between heroic defiance and ignominious inertia. In the current literature, there are two kinds of views on authority, the modern traditional view which laments the end of authority and the postmodern radical view which rejects the need for authority, each siding with either sides of these tensions. But they both fight on the same ground. Authority has not died, but is has merged into modernity itself, and shares the same tragic fate.

This tragedy we find in the arguments of Hegel and Freud for instance, where they describe modernity as the struggle between chaos and order. For Hegel this is the energy of hatred and irrationality in collusion with the enlightened rational community. Freud describes it in *Civilization and its Discontents* as the struggle between Thanatos and Eros. The tragedy is that the modern Eros drives us to desire freedom above all else, but freedom hovers over the nightmare of chaotic social breakdown.

It is this tension which causes the agony because recognising the tension is the recognition of an imperfect world that doesn’t yield to the laws of reason. Because tragedy exists by grace of a paradox which is inherent to our strange but natural appreciation of

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what we generally believe should be rejected: the suffering of a noble person. What is so
beautiful about the death of Hamlet or Atigone’s desperation? Tragedies do not portray
what should occur, so morality is not a factor in its beauty and inspiration. Rejoicing in this
inevitable injustice does not mean we have to be Machiavellian, however, and throw away
justice, on the contrary. But it does mean we are free to decide on our own lives and that
at the same time we are painfully human; ambiguous, not all powerful, and changeable.

Neither enlightenment optimism nor protestant pessimism leaves this possibility for
tragedy open and so authority becomes unbearable under its weightlessness. Because
what is authority if it has no permanence? Or, as Kundera would put it in *the Unbearable
Lightness of Being*, what is authority in ‘the profound moral perversity of a world that rests
essentially on the nonexistence of return’? Because authority is not reliable, universal, or
durable it cannot give the security we tend to seek.

Machiavelli’s prince lives the splendid lightness of everyday life without the burden of
a broader meaning. His authority he has by chance (Fortunà) and skill (Virtù), throwing into
doubt the previously self-evident order of the universe, but he must make his position
seem not light and rather weighty and grave: the authority. Only by illusion of his
universalità and perpetuity the New Prince has authority. This is why Nietzsche and many
after him thought that tragedy and God – e.g. authority - must now be dead because we
don’t accept externally imposed fate as part of what gives meaning to our lives and
societies.

For Nietzsche we can only act with purpose under the protection of a myth which
masks the irreducible uncertainty and chaos of reality. For him the death of God has
purged us from the shadow in our soul, which gave way to rationality and contingency, a
disenchantment with the world, and the progress of liberal democracy.187 But do we have
to believe in fate in order to experience authority?

On the other end there are authors who, in the footsteps of Foucault and Derrida, think
we should no longer want the oppressive metaphysics of Greek tragedy, and ought rather
battle for openness and celebrate the human carnival of contingency. They say there is no
tragedy, no absolute authority, because the categories in tension no longer have the same
significance to us as they had for the Ancient Greeks for instance, they have become

optional. And that is for the better because now we can imagine our own destinies and identities.

As mentioned above, both voices are expressions of the same condition. One wishes to emancipate, desires to be free and fight all else that endangers individual autonomy. And the other voice calls for community, realising that he is alone and insignificant. But isn’t this dichotomy between freedom and assurance in itself the essence of tragedy?! The capacity of free choice entails the realisation of responsibility and even loneliness, and thus tends to inspire a desire for security and non-freedom. The self-reflective nature of modernity, what Giddens calls reflexivity, which realises that the modern ideal is irresolvable, embodies tragedy. That is not a mere imaginary or discourse - it is the condition of being alive.

The fact that legitimacy has no place in modernity any longer, other than as a speech act, compels the ruler to search for it. Not knowing whether he is right or wrong, legitimate or not, any caring and reflective leader is bound to doubt his own authority, which paradoxically and tragically is not favourable to his position, nor to society. Because on the other end the mass of mankind desires an element of omniscience in its authorities, whether religious, military, political, or executive. They want clarity because it relieves them from doing any thinking for themselves and protects them from taking on their shoulders the unbearable responsibility for good and evil. This is not necessarily true for individuals, but it is the way western society is organised.

The self-reflective nature of modernity brings forth a self-reflective hero. His condition is tragic as his assignment is to hide his authority or deny it. When Machiavelli exposed authority for its brutal nature, he advised to hide the naked truth with the illusion of legitimacy. By practicing the art of illusion he tries to hide authority’s contingency. But the uncertainty of life exceeds the rules we impose upon it and with the slightest scratch the cracks of doubt come to the surface.

Around the same period of Machiavelli, in Shakespeare’s time, the ancient regime of undisputed metaphysical lucidity and the new order of human uncertainty intermingled uneasily. People were pressed to obey by homilies of the state and various variants of the Christian church. But the practical politics of Machiavelli had reached the English island as well, which filled the Elizabethans with horror and spite, while at the same time it

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prompted them to question the expediency of action rather than its morality. They suddenly had to think about how to craft respect. It is here that Shakespeare introduces a new character onto the early modern scene: Hamlet.

The play starts with the anxiety that surrounds the change of power over the kingdom and the moral corruption of new usurper Claudius. The final years of Elizabeth’s rule, during which Hamlet was written, were filled with a similar dread concerning the succession of the queen, as there were no legitimate heirs apart from James I of Scotland, her enemy. Hamlet muses on the breakdown of legitimacy when pondering the condition of man, questioning belief, criticising his ‘rotten’ state, and lamenting ‘times out of joint’. And in England, like in Italy, the authority of the throne became ever less self-evident, as is suggested by the struggles with the House of Commons of James I, and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 by which English Roman Catholics planned to blow up parliament and King James I for his low tolerance of Catholicism.

Unlike the New Prince, Hamlet is unsure about his world and acts tentatively. In fact, the entire play is filled with uncertainties about causes of events, the emotions of its characters, and even the reasons for Hamlet’s action are not based on certainty, throwing in doubt the appropriateness of his killings. The tragic condition of modernity is characterised by the self-questioning for which western individualism is known. It is the time where Montaigne would question the world of experience as mere appearance behind which humans could never hope to see ‘reality’. Hamlet is conceivably the prince of inner self-doubt and his story deals with the trouble a would-be ruler goes through in dealing with a world in which the truth cannot be known.

His father, King of Denmark, is killed by Claudius who took the throne and married Hamlet’s mother, the queen. In the old days, as the ghost of Hamlet’s father reminds him, a son was strictly obliged to avenge his father’s murder. But Hamlet is hunted by the ambiguity of his legitimacy. Doubt about his right to the crown hampered his attempt to revenge his father and take his place as king of Denmark. He cannot find any certain moral truths that justify his revenge. He has no gangster morality (or that of a knight for that matter) with which to defend his honour, instead he has qualms about avenging his father and take what is his. He is questioning what is instinctive and preordained by God; that the legitimacy of the king is in a God ordained succession. Is revenge good or evil? Is it his responsibility to take vengeance? And is Claudius truly guilty and unworthy of the throne? The old codes are challenged by a modern, bothered consciousness and Hamlet embodies
the self-questioning ruler who ultimately falls prey to his own doubt, imbalance and sense of guilt. Where does that leave the modern leader?

Hamlet philosophises. The most intelligent ponderings spring from this troubled mind. He can analyse and think up reasons for action, and by the same capacity with which he doubts himself he can justify himself. But he cannot believe and step into an audacious role of authority. It is normal for people to act even in the absence of certainty since uncertainty is the condition of life, and what we expect from our leaders is that they have the capacity to act under ambiguous and often contradictory circumstances, but Hamlet refuses to. Instead he strives for poetry and beauty of soul while his unwillingness to accept his tragic fate is the cause of a good many violent deaths, poor rule, self-contempt and finally his downfall.

Contrary to the New Prince, the new Tragic Hero tries to reassure his audience: not by being powerfully upright but by pretending to be harmless, just like Hamlet pretends to be mad so as not to be seen as a threat to the throne. Hamlet feigns stupidity and madness in order to distract the attention of Claudius away from him. But behind the mask he harbours a secret sense of superiority. He is smarter, more honourable, and the victim of his evil uncle and wanton mother.

Like every ruler, he needs to find a way to justify himself, to himself and to others, and he finds his justification in his suffering over the death of his father and the promiscuity of his mother. This makes suffering his guarantee, his proof of genuineness, of truth and authenticity. He is the archetype that represents a malfunctioning modern authority who may perhaps best be characterised as an idealistic seducer in the name of freedom and transparency, while he can give neither freedom nor transparency. He legitimates his choices with his suffering. What the one sided modern ruler suffers over is precisely the tragedy, ambiguity and uncertainty of life. An authority makes choices over irreconcilable alternatives acceptable (like between two different but equally valuable interests), Hamlet

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189 Nietzsche writes for instance that “In this sense the Dionysian man has similarities to Hamlet. Both have had a real glimpse into the essence of things. They have understood, and it now disgusts them to act, for their actions can change nothing in the eternal nature of things. They perceive as ridiculous or humiliating the fact that it is expected of them that they should set right a world turned upside down. The knowledge kills action, for action requires a state of being in which we are covered with the veil of illusion. That is what Hamlet has to teach us. (…) (He) cannot move himself to act because of too much reflection, too many possibilities, so to speak. It’s not a case of reflection. No! The true knowledge, the glimpse into the cruel truth overcomes the driving motive to act, both in Hamlet as well as in the Dionysian man.” Nietzsche, F. (1871). The Birth of Tragedy. Basel. Chapter 8 57

190 All modern tragic hero’s that came after him shared this fate, for instance Christopher Marlowe’s Tamburlaine (1587) and Doctor Faustus (c. 1588) introduced the overambitious hero, awe-inspiring in his ambition and magnificent even in his fall

Besselink, Thieu (2009), Two Faces of Authority: The leader’s tragic quest European University Institute DOI: 10.2870/44263
does so by showing his suffering over the difficulty of making such a choice. In a way these strategies of suffering, ‘false transparency’ and ‘false authenticity’ ‘replaced’ authority today in many ways. I will discuss these in part III.
3.2 THE TWO FACES OF AUTHORITY

There are always two faces to authority; the one that inspires fear and the one that reassures, the one that creates distance, the other that seeks closeness. But against the background of the secular modern search for authentic and transparent authority the two faces can be represented as two different roles of the modern ruler. These roles exemplify two different ways of cultivating authority and for the purpose of this thesis they are embodied on the one hand in Machiavelli’s New Prince, and in Shakespeare’s tragic, reflective and self-doubting hero on the other. Of course, if we would look closely neither would turn out to be a pure form of its own archetype, but that is the nature of ideal types, they are a tool for understanding, not for measuring observations.

Both characters have a lot in common and most fundamentally what makes them modern is their self-manufactured nature. They are leaders who invented themselves and their roles have not been handed down to them from God or society. And the fact that they can, that the Prince nor Hamlet are bound by divine right or sacred social expectation, makes them vulnerable and subject to a constant need for justification.

Hamlet and the New Prince not only represent the self-creation so characteristic of modern individualism, but also show two different attitudes which are nevertheless often united in one and the same individual or institution. Both are products of modernity and therefore share a certain self-reflective consciousness. The modern Prince is aware of the roles he can play and use to induce the illusion of authority, whereas Hamlet, for instance, is wracked by self-doubt and reflective questions on the nature of his authority.

The relation between authority figure and audience is defined by the search for signs of trustworthiness. When roles and titles cannot provide this trust and reassurance, other warrantees are sought and one of these is found in the character and personality of the ruler. And people try to get an idea of this character by seeking an intimate relationship with the ruler. This search gives the authority figure the power to ‘convince’ his audience by means of his self-expression. Both archetypes attempt to provide this intimacy their own way. Modern authority needs proof of its authenticity - something that in the age of post-modern reproduction there is so little of - which the one shows through his
indignation and the other by exposing self-revelation, the one through the illusion of simplicity, the other through the performance of his suffering and transparency. They are two faces of the same coin. They together form a complete image of the forces behind modern authority. But because modernity experiences a crisis, so do these archetypes.

Machiavelli’s Prince acquires authority through the awesome fear he manages to inspire in his followers and peers. He is a master of pretending omnipotence because he is attempting to provide the same universality and security as divine right once provided. So he must make his actions seem to come from a higher source, and the only sources left are ‘necessity’ and ‘the people’. He has to, and cannot do otherwise, because he makes the world anew, creating a new order after his usurpation. And who is he to do so? Certainly not God. Shakespeare on the other hand, combines his insight in the ruler’s mind, with the tragic nature of authority and society’s need for order. Like the New Prince, Shakespeare’s heroes act against the legitimate order of things, and come to power by usurpation. But none of his plays, not even Macbeth, portrays usurpation as necessarily evil.191 King Lear, for instance, accepts the artificial nature of social life, but refuses to accept the doubt cast over the need for a divine order. Rather than relying on the Christian dogmas of Elizabethan society he returns to the nature of man and builds up patience, fortitude, love, and sacrifice, rather than wealth, freedom and power, as the human needs to meet a world of cruelty, lust and greed. Machiavelli’s Prince is incapable of these. Not because he is an evil man, however, but because the tragedy of his condition is that sacrifice and honesty inevitably mean his downfall as he lives in a hostile environment in which he chose to rule by concealing the workings of power and ruling by influence rather than trust, fear rather than love. The ‘mirror of princes’ teaches the techniques of how to transform naked power into durable rule, such that people believe the New Prince has been ruling forever and accept him as rightful ruler.

Authority exists in a person or institution when it is perceived to have the power to judge and reassure. When gives Hamlet superior judgement and the power to reassure? The face of the transparent hero relates to his men as brothers. Metaphorically we relate to our brothers as equals, but they are a trusted party who is allowed to give us advice, and they may reassure us with the knowledge that we are together in affronting a difficult

191 Macbeth’s immense ambition is aimed that the seizure of Scotland’s legitimate crown. But he goes through great pain before he reaches the decision to go against his sense of ethical obligation, which is to serve the king as he believes in his sacred ruler (in Hamlet: Claudius speaks with irony though ‘There’s such divinity doth hedge a king that treason can but peep t what it would’ 4.5.120-21). the normal order does not do so unreflectively. we see that he it is not clear for him
192 Richard III has royal blood for instance, and a better claim t the throne than any one else in the play - after he murdered the, of course.
reality. Our fathers on the other hand have the awe inspiring authority which teaches and directs us. The New Prince plays the father. He is opaque and remote, and rather than relying on his title he plays to the emotions of dread and terror to secure his position. He rules like the sovereign who stands within and above the law, who decides on the state of exception, when there is no regime in place.

Hamlet, undoubtedly the most sophisticated expression of a modern ruler’s inner world, reflects rather than acts, contemplates his formal duties but comes to little action. He justifies himself to himself with many excuses rather than reasons for action, explores himself and searches for legitimacy. And he finds his justification in his suffering over the death of his father and the promiscuity of his mother. His suffering makes him superior in a way, because it propels an inner necessity.

These archetypes may seem somewhat dark and pessimistic. Machiavelli’s Prince has a bad name for his ruthlessness, and Hamlet is not exactly the epitome of a credible and reassuring authority figure whom we would necessarily trust with important decisions over our lives. But they both represent a different face of authority which can have either creative or destructive effect, foster trust or distrust. Carl Jung would probably call them archetypes of the shadow, or of immaturity. Like Jung I do not see them as ‘bad’, but they are unfulfilling if not transformed by each other and integrated with the personal, collective, subjective and objective dimensions of authority. They need to be integrated for them to form a viable long term and nurturing imaginary of authority.

To make the two faces tangible I refer to an experience of Jane Tompkins. In A Life in School she writes about the experience of her own authority in school and realises what prevented her from exercising it.

‘In order to win my students’ love, I would try to divest myself of authority by constant self-questioning, by deference to students’ opinions; through disarming self-revelation, flattery, jokes, criticizing school authorities; by accepting late papers, late attendance, and non-performance of various kinds. Meanwhile, in order to establish and maintain my authority, I would almost invariably come to class over prepared, allowing no deviations from the plan for the day, making everything I said as complex, high level, and idiosyncratic as possible lest the

Archetypes are not the same as archetypical ideas. An archetype is a model that exists preconsciously and can therefore not be represented. In biology a ‘pattern of behaviour’ has a similar nature. It orders consciousness, but not in a straightforward way, and it is recognised in by the pattern of images and projections.
students think I wasn’t as smart as they were. I would pile on the work, grade hard and--this must have confused them--tell them that all I cared about was their individual development. If I alternately intimidated and placated the students it’s because I was threatened and felt afraid, afraid of my students and afraid of the authorities who had stood in judgment on me long ago.’

It was her own fear for authority and need for recognition that prevented her from integrating an authoritative personae in her character. There are two ways in which she reacts to her own worry, one of which is reluctance to defy the expectations of her students, whether actual or imagined, and an attempt to seduce them by means of either placing herself on the same social level of authority or revealing her own insecurities as to win her students’ sympathy. But in her attempt to be authentic by revealing her insecurities, she in fact communicates her approval seeking to the class. The other side she shows is one by which she increases social distance, showing that her guidance is a necessary force without which students would be lost. She would attempt to inspire awe out of an immature fear within herself. Students might fear her power and judgement, but she could not reassure them, achieving maybe fear but not authority.

Jane has a colleague though who never had trouble in class. She writes:

‘The image of authority is embodied for me in teacher. Mrs. Colgan in 1B (..) I saw in her the two faces of authority: the desire to lead gently, to be kind and affectionate, to love; and the necessity to instil fear, the desperation of having to beat back the enemy by whatever means.’

The two faces Tompkins describes in Mrs. Colgan are, unlike her own, the mature appearances of the fraternal and paternal presentation of authority. She was able to lead gently and be firm if necessary. These two faculties seem so simple, to give love and reassurance while inspiring awe if necessary, but they are the result of a long maturing process. Jane had her own journey of the spirit:

‘I became aware that childhood experiences of authority had controlled, without my knowing it, the way I exercised and failed to exercise authority as an adult, and that it was the reality of what had happened at P.S. 98 [her class], more than my present one, that had been dictating the terms of my university life, day to day. Fear was the underside of that life. Much of my behavior had been ruled by it. The fear stayed buried, controlling me secretly, because, though I became learned, was taught four languages, three literatures, and many other things beside, I’d not
been taught how to recognize and face my fear. Learning this for myself has been frightening and discouraging and a long study. But for me, it seems, there was no other way.’

Jane Tompkins lays out my thesis in most telling words. Her experience is one in which her self-doubt prevented a durable relationship of authority as she sought after approval from the students she was to teach. She feared authority herself which prevented her from authentically presenting a self of authority. She could neither be a credible first amongst equals, or guiding force in the background, nor could she inspire awe and command respect. She tried to play both roles, but neither was convincing.

There are two things I take from this. The first is that there is a tension between the two faces of authority, which on a personal level have to be reconciled in the same person. The second is that as long as the authority figure has not developed a mature and autonomous character, the exercise of authority becomes difficult.

Beneath the blatant choice between love and fear there is the battle between good and evil, between the sacrificial Thesieus and self satisfying Minos. It is difficult to resist the question whether the leader should be dreadful or tenderly devoted to our reassurance, but the tragedy of authority resists the very answer to that question. During the journey of Hegel’s agonising Spirit we see how the tragic battle between two egos battling for status drives both the master and the slave to their spiritual deaths as they solely seek the recognition of the other without granting their proper respect in return. But through its very dismemberment and negation the spirit restores its unity. Or perhaps better, the presumptuous individual who believes himself completely autonomous is put in his place by tragedy when it shatters his hubris and resolves him back into a connection with the collective. It is observing this transcendence which makes tragedy rewarding.

Like Hamlet or the Prince the characters in Hegel’s phenomenology are artists of their own character, but they do so by a willing sacrifice of self-image. Whereas these figures are certain to be restored after their downfall, real tragedy never gives such certainty however. The sacrifice of one’s personal desires in the service of greater duty does not guarantee a rational conclusion of transcendence and may well leave one dead or unrewarded. The tragedy of life is that even relinquishing personal gain to a greater good does not give any
certainty of whether even that is realised. It is the action from this uncertainty and powerlessness that makes the hero. \textsuperscript{194}

Modern authority is continuously threatened by either its explosion or its implosion. Awe inspiring authority explodes when the subjects of authority find out that their leader is not the real Messiah but a fraud. We can expect riots on the streets or attempts to overthrow the ruler who has deceived his people. When the tragic hero is found out however, he loses his audience’s respect and withers from the screen. His authority implodes under the lightness of his character. He does not show the backbone that it takes to reassure, but he does not call the wrath upon him over his deceptive deeds as he never really acted in the first place.

Concluding on who the tragic ruler of modernity is we can say that he has two faces. Machiavelli’s Prince is tragic in his struggle for trying to make his role seem permanent whereas it is contingent, and so needs constant strategies to hold up the illusion. He is an author or creator, he is also continually finding strategies to authorise himself which fail to provide a lasting assurance. He can also rely on a subjective and personal power which we call charisma. Shakespeare’s tragic Hero may be able to invent himself, but he is tragic in his lack of authentic creative force. He authors very little and instead represents the reassuring, meaning giving part of authority. Both are struggling because they reject fate, God, or another transcending source of authority. \textsuperscript{195}

What the modern ruler needs to learn, therefore, is to accept the impertinence of images of authority, and the fragility of man-made roles, rules, and relationships. The Prince needs the care, idealistic spirit, and brother like attitude of Hamlet to assure a voluntary obedience and lasting credibility. Hamlet needs the Prince’s power to found and

\textsuperscript{194} As Kierkegaard put it, the biblical hero Abraham who was prepared to slaughter his son without the promise of nirvana is ‘great with that power which is powerlessness’ Kierkegaard, S. (1985). \textit{Fear and Trembling}. Hammondsworth. P.50

Across cultures this kind of sacrifice is recognised as good because it requires extraordinary greatness of character. But at the same time also extravagant impiety only flows from an exceptionally spirited and talented personality, which can be both egotic or for the greater good. The sacrifices made by Camu’s Caligula are as breath-taking as Martin Luther King’s courageous surrender to his fate. They at least faced their shadow. It is with the empty inhabitants of T.S Elliot’s Waste Land, and those who populate the limbo of Dante’s hell who never made the choice to live and therefore ‘have no hope of death, and their darkened life is so mean that they are envious of every other fate’. Like Hamlet they never made a choice, never took a risk and never straightened their backs to stand up despite uncertainty.

\textsuperscript{195} Transcendence in theology is often used to refer to the idea that God is outside of and beyond the material world and not manifested in the world. Kant defined it as that, which goes beyond (transcends) any possible knowledge of a human being. In phenomenology, the transcendent is objective and not just a product of our consciousness, so that which transcends our own consciousness. Here it means that what needs to be overcome is the idea that personal, social, subjective, and objective dimensions of authority are separated, or that one of them can represent ‘real’ authority.
manifest in the world for a lasting credibility and respect. By using each other’s qualities they would integrate the subjective, objective, personal and collective dimensions of authority.
PART II

PART II. HOW AUTHORITY WAS EXPOSED

And new philosophy calls all in doubt:
The element of fire is quite put out,
The sun is lost, and the earth, and no man’s wit
Can well direct him where to look for it.
And freely men confess that this world’s spent,
When in the planets and the firmament
They seek so many new; they see that this world
Is crumbed out again to his atomies.
’Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone;
All just supply, and all relation:
Prince, subject, father, son, are things forgot,
For every man alone thinks he hath got
To be a phoenix, and that these can be
None of that kind of which he is, but he.

The first tragedy of authority is that it can never fulfil its promise if we hold on to a purely rational world view. There is no state in which we atone vast power with a perfect right to rule, and there is no rational cooperative society in which lords and bondsmen/dependents have given up their respective roles. Instead, as long as there is society, there are instances where relationships of domination have to be interpreted and negotiated. Authority can never fulfil its promise of reassurance because it is always threatened by its recognition – there is always the possibility to challenge or resist authority by showing that it is not universal or lasting, and there is always the possibility that we simply to lose our awe or respect for it.

The crisis that follows recognition brings with it a crisis of identity for both ruler and the ruled. Rulers are therefore always threatened by this due to the inherent ambiguity of authority. The fact that subjects can recognise the human fallibility in their leaders and institutions, and those leaders can recognise that their prestige depends on the people they command makes us free. But freedom is not in the least a happy-go-lucky circumstance, and in actual fact rather traumatic. As soon as man-made authority is exposed and recognised for what it is, it can no longer give us its fulfilling protection.

Exposure is what western civilisation has been all about however. And that is the second tragedy. In this chapter I trace the fear for authority in its different forms. What was present with Machiavelli’s Prince and Shakespeare’s heroes and villains has shaped society such that distrust has been embedded in its very structure and allowed fear for authority to grow, propelling people to look up their authorities from close by in the hope they’d lose their fear for them. Demands for transparent politics and intimate relationships with the leaders of society signify a search for guarantees, but all we find is emptiness and anguish.

Politically, I argue, the main forces of exposure are expressed in the invention of representation and the will to emancipation by trying to make authority and authority figures transparent. What I mean is that once authority named itself, when someone said ‘authority is…’ and it had to become immanent, authority begged a question. Where is it, and can we define it so that we can be reassured about its nature? The enlightenment tried to answer this with representation, but thereby only shifted the burden from a fallen God to an undefined ‘people’. Who is represented? The question suggests there is a substantive locus of authority. If you follow the procedure you will find the origin, but at the end ‘the people’ turn out an empty fount. Exposure here is the attempt to make
authority immanent by a strategy of authorisation. But the dimension of authorisation is empty when not supported by a creator and something created (who authorises? And what truth did it create?), and it needs its complementary dimensions to have durable intersubjective and interobjective substance.

The attempt to make authority transparent is another form of exposure. It marks a new stage at which the West tries to answer a conceptual question empirically. The question it tries to answer is where authority is, with the assumption that it is now hidden somewhere in a God, or a role playing person. The enlightenment deeply installed a desire for transparency in western consciousness and incited a search for ways of undoing authority of its mystery. Paradoxically, the nature of authority is that it affects what we believe, and so is easily used to make itself seem visible. The modern charismatic leader is a clear example of an authority figure who manages to show himself and the world as visible and without secrets. He harbours a mysterious power, but often by virtue of a rare openness and display of inner emotion as we will see in part III. Next to representation as institutional response, the charismatic personality is the private response trying to make authority immanent in the person of the leader and his institutions. Charismatic leaders and institutions get a sense of tangibility by displaying themselves and exposing themselves in a non self-effacing way. The strategy of immanence follows the logic of authentication, and again is insufficient.196

On a personal level authority is always threatened by its inherent tension, but it is the task of rulers and collectives to fashion metaphors that adapt authority to new circumstances in a way that nurtures mutual respect and establishes an order that helps to relate to the chaos, complexity, and diversity of life. These metaphors would fill up the emptiness and take away the anguish would they relate the individual to his inner world and outer state in satisfactory ways. They can, however, also deepen the fear or hide the abyss under but a thin layer of sugar-coated belief in legitimacy. I argue that this is what Western society has tended to do in the late modern period when it either has recourse to a surrogate saviour or puts our hopes in impartial and transparent procedures. Neither of them survives a self-reflective consciousness because people will know, at some point, that ‘the people’ do not exist as one voice, and saviours are only saviours if we let them.

196 Strategy does not imply here that it is always a conscious decision to ‘be’ charismatic, nor is it fake or pretended. It is simply what still commands respect by virtue of its nature.
Hannah Arendt too proclaimed the disappearance of authority and laments the lack of founding action. But to say that authority actually disappeared may sound polemic or simply untrue, as we still feel and see relationships of authority all around. As children we can still feel the authority of our parents, if only at times, and entire populations can still be swept by the appearance of a leader to whom they attributed the power of redemption. We still assess the images with which we are presented, within the terms of their trustworthiness, and even do so on an unconscious level. There remains present, in other words, an aspect of authority across time and space which speaks to our very nature. I find it therefore gratuitous to make a clear case for rupture with the past, even though in many ways I claim that the signs of the time are telling us exactly that. So I propose a different reading of this loss.

At the time that Arendt had published her book on the *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Theodore Adorno with whom she had worked at the Frankfurt school, posed the rival theory of authority I discussed in chapter one of this study. He sought authority in the need and susceptibility for certain images of authority, which he measured on the famous F-scale as we have seen. In other words, authority is not something that can get lost, and totalitarianism is not simply the violence of a regime, but it is innate in human beings and its form and existence is as much a matter of the audience’s psychological need as it is an imposition of an evil usurper.

Also Lincoln argues that authority has not disappeared at all, because there have always been asymmetrical relationships in which an effect of authority could be and was produced. Instead, what has changed, he claims, are the ideological warrants used to support authority. And this happens every time a different discourse takes a dominant position in society. As for epistemic authority, appeals to reason (an historical and constructed notion itself) only proved credible after revelation lost its reliability in the eyes of the moderns. For many writers like Lincoln, invoking the will of the people does exactly the same as divine right once did.

But there is a real difference between the ‘will of the people’ as a source for authority and divine right, and the difference is in the place where authority is sought. It is not in the

197 ‘to live in a political realm with neither authority nor the concomitant awareness that the source of authority transcends power and those who are in power, means to be confronted anew, without the religious trust in a sacred beginning and without the protection of traditional and therefore self-evident standards of behaviour, by the elementary problems of human living-together.’ Arendt, H. (1977). What is Authority? Between Past and Future. H. Arendt. Harmondsworth, Pinguin. p141

tradition of the Senate, nor in the transcendental judgement of the Lord, but in the immanence of you and me. But if it is in me, then how can it be in the ruler, or the system as well? The crisis is thereby not simply one of ideology - of authorisation, that is - but also the authentic source of authority has become unclear (who is the real authority?), the founding act of the author has got lost (the people have not yet found a way to author), and as a consequence there is no ecology in which individuals can justify their dependence to themselves without losing a sense of autonomy.

The importance is precisely in the undeniable fact of relativity and the absence of a balanced order. Universal symbols of authority like the father or representation have collapsed together with a willingness to boldly imagine old and new ways of presenting, accepting and rejecting authority. All the Gods are dead, the tale is told a thousand times. Politics and economy took the central stage as organising systems with their own expedient organising principles. The meaning making, which economy and politics originally served, seems to have become more difficult in these realms. For the casual observer they seem involved with strategy and methods for the allocation of resources, status, beliefs, and power. But there is still a will to create a shared social reality which can nurture social relationships of authority in society. So in reality authority is not missing but the old method by which to imagine new forms of respect is lost. How it got lost is the subject of this part. What the disappearance of authority concretely means are three different things;

1) It means that authority lacks an integrating mythology which can give the inherent human fallibility, uncertainty, and the mystery of the world a significance that transcends the dichotomy of domination – subjection by making the experience of authority one that augments, or makes complete. In other words, authority has difficulty giving assurance (value) when we profoundly doubt the order of the world and the process by which authority is cultivated;

2) That together with tradition, roles by which authority is recognisable have lost their univocal meaning. This means that roles are no longer invested with the sacred or social significance by which the person who enacts them can speak from a larger order or tradition;

3) And that fear and distrust for authority (and thus for our own weakness) have driven us to expose, distrust, or ignore authority ever further. This means that Western political
culture is based on distrust rather than trust, manifested in the desire to expose all metaphors of authority as dangerous and untrue. The tendency is to forget that metaphors are meaning making tools, and therefore can be used for deception as well as nurturing.

All three threads of reasoning have their origin in modernity, but they have all seen a particular development in recent decades which are characterised by what I call a culture of transparency.\(^{199}\)

In all layers of human organisation people have come to recognise this ‘decline’ in authority. Ultimately futile attempts to pretend there was a way to create the heavens in our own image, as in a way the modern project of making authority a human affair should be read, turn against us now that instruments of political representation and inviolable charters of human rights have been exhausted. They do not elicit trust or are abused to wage wars which violate the very purpose of these instruments. Talk of declining authority is fashionable, as is that of crisis, but it is most obvious that something is going on when probing those communities in which authority takes a most visible place, as opposed to others where the routine of our daily duties takes care of the living together and the money-making. In ecclesiology the question of authority in the Christian church has never been pondered with so much worry for instance. Furthermore mass democracy seems ungovernable in the media and information age, the welfare state and industrial society turn out to be unsustainable under globalisation, and science is challenged by relativity, schools struggle with new forms of respect between teacher and pupil, and families have to renegotiate their relationships.

The words that surface to describe this new condition are in themselves a sign of crisis. Post-modernism, neo-liberalism, new individualism, risk-, consumer-, information-, and post-industrial society, in a way all try to name the failure of a model. They allude to a new era which declares the decline of another.

By the end of the nineteenth century the imperfect realisation of liberal democracy was lamented for its unsatisfactory compromises, and after the First World War, new and even more fatal attempts were made to realise ‘the will of the people’ in fascism,
communism, and Nazism. Then, after the totalitarian experience, authority not only faced a serious rejection but became ever more dispersed over new roles, institutions, and new podia, with the media becoming a centre of authorisation.

The modern project of western democracy has also reached its limits in terms of the trust and engagement that it manages to arouse in its citizens. Political leaders lament the voter’s apathy and his distrust of politics. The cause is often sought in the moral stigmatisation of politicians, the opportunism of executives, fraud, and a democratic deficit. Some say ‘the political’ itself is lost, but what we are doing is denouncing a betrayal of particular democratic promises rather than describing the condition of modern authority. Distrust of and yielding to images of authority are inherent to the human condition, which is why we need a myth to mediate between our fears, necessities, and consciousness. The idea of representation has long tried to fulfil this function on a social level, but it carried the seed for its own erosion from the start. It sprang forth from a disillusion about actual existing democracy and was built on an illusion of authority without pain. The modern desire for immanence, its distrust of metaphor and the death of God gave rise to representative democracy, as a rational solution to an emotional problem. But elections lasted only until we discovered that ‘procedural legitimacy’ does not engender trust and authority. Instead of dealing with the fact of uncertainty and developing means by which we can relate to it, society tried to make authority apparent, unambiguous and transparent.

In what follows I will look into the forces of exposure which characterise modernity, but I will also try to describe the cultural condition we are in and which shapes our and our ruler’s consciousness. Besides the forces of exposure this new condition which I call the *culture of transparency* has particularly been formed by the experience of the post-war period. I need to say a little bid about the manifestation of authority in the war and after war period before I continue with the culture of transparency. In a period of life threatening crisis people form different kinds of social bonds than in a period of peace and prosperity. The history of authority is discontinuous here in the sense that when we look at European rulers from that period such as Churchill, Roosevelt, or even Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini we discover that they seemed to have no doubt what so ever concerning their leadership or authority, and had no difficulty eliciting trust from their audience. They did
not have the problem Jane Tompkins had concerning fear for authority, even though there was a personal difference in whether they had the capacity for both faces.200

War and other disaster confront us with reality and the necessity of survival which is a condition under which social bonds form on a less elective base. Stakes are higher, consequences tougher, and disorder more apparent which augments the insecurity and therefore the need for reassurance. But it also forces people to make the hard choices through which their character is formed. These contingent factors of influence on ruler’s consciousness do not challenge the socio historical development of the modern search for exposure of authority however. Even the totalitarian regimes could only form an intense relationship of authority on the basis of the modern imaginary of emancipation and the exposure of authority. Both communism and fascism use the metaphor of transparent relations of authority which give people the possibility to accept and justify their subjection under the pretence of emancipation. Both successfully cultivated a mythology of popular authority.

After the Second World War the paternalism of the fifties could count on a regime of regularity, hierarchical relations, and one-dimensionality. Authority seems more solid and accepted than ever. But the nineteen sixties show that the forces of exposure, which manifest in a widely shared struggle for emancipation, continue to determine our relationship towards authority. The sixties are remembered as the time in which hierarchy and rigidity were rejected, formality ridiculed and religion derided. But the seeds of the sixties were already present at the conception of modernity.

It is not so useful to see the historical events that I describe as the causes of the current crisis, they are instead rather illustrations of a logic and culture which progressively developed. The underlying logic of the history of authority shows how the trinity of authority (authorship, authorisation, and authenticity) continue to exist, but go separate ways. Authorship has become dominant in the modern belief that we can make the world over whether with science or socialism. But this new freedom from the tragic order of the world also brought a new responsibility. The burden of all judgement and assurance now

200. Roosevelt for instance, and in his negative perhaps Mussolini, had the brotherly attitude which gave people a sense of closeness to them. But there was no doubt about the awe inspiring force of execution that they were able to manifest. Roosevelt is known for his “fireside chats”, a weekly radio addresses where he came into the living rooms of the American citizen for an informal talk. But he could also handle the distance that comes with heavy executive tasks as is related in Burns, J. M. (1956). Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, 1882-1940. New York, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. In the movie Tea With Mussolini of 1999, directed by Franco Zeffirelli, we get a sense of the closeness people feel to il Duce.
weighs upon the shoulders of fragile human beings. The double resentment of depending on authority, but wishing to be free propels us to seek resolve of this burden in the right kind of authorisation for every new relationship of dominance - like trying to find the right coding for the game which would finally justify control.

In the latest stage of authority’s remarkable history leaders seek authority through the expression of their authenticity. Authenticity is about truthfulness and genuineness, which is self justifying. When something is recognised as authentic, there is no further need for external authorisation. Because roles and their meaning in society have detached, like signs and signifiers have no collectively recognised stable relationship, it becomes ever more difficult to differentiate truth from illusion. How to be recognised as an authentic authority is a question rulers are forced to ask themselves, just like companies are concerned with how to advertise their products and services as genuine. Because there is no undisputed external authorisation embedded in one’s title or role, appearing authentic is way to completely avoid matters of justification and deriving all assurance from the ruler’s personal character.

This part is concerned with the forces of exposure which disintegrated the ecology of authority and shared mythologies under which roles and relationships of authority could provide reassurance due to a shared language and interpretation of what makes a trustworthy authority.
‘We know the scene: there is a gathering, and someone is telling a story. We do not yet know whether these people gathered together from an assembly, if they are a horde or a tribe. But we call them brothers and sisters because they are gathered together and because they are listening to the same story. We do not yet know whether the one speaking is from among them or if he is an outsider. We say that he is one of them, but different from them because he has the gift, or simply the right – or else it is his duty – to tell the story.’

This is Jean-Luc Nancy, trying to capture the practice of authority which we call myth. Our leaders, whether recognised as such or not, have the duty to tell the story of our existence and to cultivate mythology. Or perhaps differently, all the people who take up this responsibility are what I consider figures of authority. The hero takes responsibility for a new reality, shared by his people.

‘He recounts to them their history, or his own, a story that they all know, but that he alone has the gift, the right, or the duty to tell. It is the story of their origin, of where they come from, or of how they come from the Origin itself – them, or their mates, or their names, or the authority figure among them. And so at the same time it is also the story of the beginning of the world, of the beginning of their assembling together, or of the beginning of the narrative itself (and the narrative also recounts, on occasion, who taught the story to the teller, and how he came to have the gift, the right, or the duty to tell it).

202 Weber would refer to them as the ruling class as they are the ones making claims to rightful rule, but my difference with Weber is that they make also claims for others, which rather than claims I would call narratives.
He speaks, he recites, sometimes he sings, or he mimes. He is his own hero, and they, in turns, are the heroes of the tale and the ones who have the right to hear it and the duty to learn it. In the speech of the narrator, her language for the first time serves no other purpose than that of presenting the narrative and of keeping it going. It is no longer the language of their exchanges, but of their reunion – the sacred language of a foundation and an oath. The teller shares it with them and among them.²⁰³

What makes political authority sustainable is this practice of mythological authority. If it still sounds too far removed from our political and economical reality that is because we grew up with the idea that stories are for children or for demagogues. But in effect the thoughts we think and the spaces we live are shaped by myth. It turns time such that it becomes tangible, so that out of the contingent matter of events and human memory we can imagine there to be continuity and a pattern in the chaos. This pattern becomes the origin and warrant for legitimacy.

Even if Virgil was assigned by Emperor Augustus, his writing still provided the princeps and the Roman Republic with an origin. That is because mythology is not just the narratives and poems we find in Homer’s Odyssey, the Bible, or the Bhagavad-Gita, but because their actualisation in memory, in experienced ritual, and in the consecration of a certain order is what makes them myth. The primal authority was that of the father, which has been sublimated to the ancestors of archaic cultures, and which later developed into the spirit deities and finally into the gods.²⁰⁴ Law, commerce, craft, art, poetry, wisdom and science, are grounded in myth, and also our present day ideologies have their roots in the eternal effort of myth to deal with mundane chaos by finding security in narratives that relate us to our environment. These narratives often juxtapose the eternally ordered world of the heavens to the disorderly and imperfect world of the profane.²⁰⁵ And by acting them out in ritual, whether as elections or tribal initiation, we socially acknowledge – authorise – a version or reality which relates our psychological disposition to the external world. Ritual, then, is the kind of play in which the instinctive forces of civilized life have their origins, as Johan Huizinga observed in his historical anthropological study of play.²⁰⁶

But gradually with modernity ever fewer people participate in the play, or the number of plays has become such that it is hard to see what role to take or which rules to follow in order to be credible and meaningful. What is true for the shared myths of society is also true for the individual images of authority in society and for each figure of authority. Therefore I will first explore the process by which society’s myths have been exposed and then home in on how the leading class is exposed, or rather how it exposes itself.

For tens of thousands of years humans have lived by mythologies that structured their lives, communities, and personal experiences in a way that made this strange and painful existence meaningful, understandable, bearable and even enjoyable. Myths are neither lies nor ideologies. They are the poetry by which humans express their experience of life. Religion then, is a formalised and regulated appearance of the deeper structures of a collective psychology. Myth took care of personal growth, guiding each individual through the inevitable phases of life, through the inevitable encounters with death, desire and survival. And it civilised communities into peaceful acceptance of the inevitable pains of living together. Indeed it nourished the needs of the soul which has to reconcile its freedom with its need to be assured. It is what kept the social group healthy by providing guiding narratives and rituals that assist people to pass from one life face to the next, and from one authority relation to the next.

The chief of the tribe or the early pharaoh would cultivate his authority through a narrative that relates human inequality to the mystery of the world, explaining the way things are without having to justify existence. This is said to be the function of ideologies, but that is not quite the same. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz describes ideologies as part of a larger cultural system which enables individuals to make sense of their world. In that sense mythologies and ideologies are similar, but ‘ideology’ as we know it is a modern invention. Although ideology assumes there is a truth, a standard against which to judge, a reality out there, it is a literal or moral reality which ideology pursues. Mythology on the other hand refers to the dream-like description of a universal human experience, rather than a norm. It is the sublimation of primordial images and experiences such as that of parental authority. It is metaphorical rather than idealistic, harmonising rather than justifying, pedagogical rather than indoctrinating, and rather than a political programme or a compass for decision-making, mythology is an internal road map of experience, beyond morality, drawn by people who have travelled it.
This doesn’t mean myths cannot be taken also literally and turned into an ideology, as has happened with most religions that survived in western society. And of course it can be abused for political purposes. But what I am interested in is the importance of integration of social, emotional and psychological needs by which we can tame our fears and experience respect for our governing institutions, for the people which run them, and the people they govern. The story of modern democracy deals with finding myths that overcome the humiliation of obedience. And such a myth was found in ‘popular sovereignty’. The myth of popular sovereignty is expressed in many ways, but primarily through the idea and institutions of representation, and those of human rights. They have served for centuries as a half satisfying solution to the crisis of authority. That is the subject of my next chapter.

In a new era, though, where truth itself is challenged and where often there is no distinction between the real and its artificial resurrection, mythology becomes just another narrative that we can consume at will for our own pleasure. Traditions take the colourful shape of local costumes and exotic food, accompanied by entertaining but empty rituals and festivities.

Hegel, observing the modern condition, writes in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*:

‘Statues are now corpses whose animating soul has fled, hymns are words which faith has abandoned. The tables of the gods are without food and spiritual beverage, and games and festivals no longer restore to consciousness the blessed unity between self and essence. Lacking in the works of the Muses is that strength of spirit which saw certainty itself spring forth from the crushing of both gods and men. Henceforth they are what they are for us, beautiful fruits plucked from the tree; friendly fate has offered them to us, as a young girl presents this fruit.’

And if at one side authority’s mysterious nature is not taken seriously, on the other side sacred texts and ideologies are taken to the letter in order to give the illusion of security. Fundamentalists are simply those who cannot bear the ambiguity of existence and for whom living along a grid of rigid rules may seem a suitable remedy. Theirs is as empty a response as that of the clever sceptic. With the death of God, there grew the desire to found a new mythology in order to regain the power of foundation that went missing. Nietzsche would search for Greek creativity, Yeats tried to find it in a new tragic joy, the Jacobins hailed an enlightened unity of ‘the people’ while Rousseau places his natural community against the modern, and the Nazi’s staged and restaged the ancient myth, but

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207 Hegel, G. (1807). “Phenomenology of Spirit.” section VII, C ‘revealed religion’
what characterised them more than anything else was their will to find new foundation. But such collective foundation has become impossible with the modern self-consciousness.\textsuperscript{208} Myth now understands that it is mythic, but also that it lost its mystique, its absurdity, and savagery. Because where it was once creative and original speech through which the world reveals itself – and so creates itself – now it has become an irrational and extraneously detached story.\textsuperscript{209}

Heidegger calls it ‘Being there’ (Dasein), and if Dasein is being authentically in the world as a human being, then myth is being communally, expressing or revealing the very nature of its existence.\textsuperscript{210} We often think of Greek and Roman mythology as dealing with valiant heroes who embark on a solitary journey of the soul, or a patriotic battle. What is so common about that? The hero’s quest is at the same time pragmatic and symbolic, because his battles are both against the Trojans as against his daemons from within, his adventures join the individual to the collective, meaning to existence, and so allow for an experience that is both individual and collective.\textsuperscript{211}

That the classic narratives no longer functioned in the same way as they used to gave rise to a call for ‘new mythology’ around the time of the French Revolution.\textsuperscript{212} And that is the time where mythology becomes conscious of itself and subject of rationally constructed myth. Machiavelli did not aim at the creation of a new mythology, he only wished to tame and discipline the passions. But by the end of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century purposefully a new mythology is willed into being as to fill the void, and become an absolute and immanent point of origin. ‘The people’, ‘the nation state’, they are all sadly aware of the fact that they are products of the human imagination and we have not yet found a way of dealing with the fact that we need to experience them as real for our reassurance, and this awareness.\textsuperscript{213} Only stubborn moderns can break their heads over the ironic idea that foundation is imagined, and that imagination founds. And only the illusion that myth can

\textsuperscript{209} Why do we have such difficulty understanding this? Why do we think there must be more to it, that mythology must either have some hidden meaning or no meaning at all? How come we cannot accept that through mythology, and through mythology alone, the world makes itself known to us and therefore has no other meaning than itself!? In the beginning was the word! And the word is not the accumulated stories of a culture, it is infinitely more than that, it transcends the things we think we study and the aspects of the objects we admire. Poetry!
\textsuperscript{213} As Bataille noted, no wilfully and newly invented myth can be experienced in common anymore. We all have too different and individual a view on reality. Bataille, G. (1947). L’absence du mythe. L Surréalisme en 1947. Paris, Maeght.
be immanent, that the world exists of space alone – measurable and totalising – could rid us from our original imagination.

Now what we are left with is the will to go back to a mythic state, the nostalgia for an imagined origin, and the desire to live through a shared experience of the world again. There is no myth but there is the passion for myth. Just as there will be no new mythology, there will be no new community either. The paradise of communion is undeniably lost, if it ever existed, but like the Fall, this is as much a tragedy as it is a bliss. It is a real and horrific tragedy, the anguish and hysteria of which have driven us to genocide, loneliness and a sense of alienation.

Although speech and theatre still provide some form of credibility at times, they do not actually found anything but short lived sensations. A ruler, or his institution, appears on the scene, but all he can share is the mere activity of sharing – there is nothing else that speaks through him. The ruler can no longer create the scene, have a certain attitude, or be creative because the way we designated his role. He may be a cipher through whom interest groups communicate their interests, a manager who maintains the quality of services, an executive of immanence, but never ever will he found something because that task is ideologically reserved for modern citizens. He has lost the gift, or the right to speak with authority. This does not mean that there is no rulership any longer, or that leaders do not speak. Quite the contrary, but the are ever more claims that can speak for an ever smaller common experience. The modern executive is no hero, no author, no authentic creator of an order, no versifier of a shared society but he is a solitary voice.

But what should be done then? God is dead, but can we create new life from the dead matter of a self-referential rationality? Can there be beauty and bliss when the sacred is disclosed? Can there be authority in the open, spread over space and time? What inspires awe and reassurance even in the absence of faith? Who am I to say what can be done in the face of such gargantuan atrociousness as the loss of authority? To be optimistic we can repeat what has been said since the beginning of time, that new ways come from not knowing, that creation follows destruction, and that evolution necessarily entails the loss of something. The caterpillar wakes up as a butterfly only after a troublesome and chaotic metamorphosis. Where he might find his wings I can only discuss briefly at the end of the

thesis however. First I want to become a little more specific as to how authority lost its authority.
4.1 METAMORPHOSIS OF A MYTH

By placing the modern ruler’s problem in history, I hope to come to grips with what authority might have meant even before the Roman Empire and what it could mean tomorrow. About 2000 years before the Common Era, in Mesopotamia, the human King no longer presented himself as an actual god like Egyptian pharaohs had done. Instead he became the ‘tenant farmer’ who cultivated the god’s estate - still holding divine authority, but no longer actually being a god. Oversimplifying we could say that only from then on do we have records of men being described as the creation of gods in order to serve the gods. This is where the god became the ultimate authority and where man lost a sense of himself as incarnation of the divine life. He became mortal now, material, and separated from the divine mystery of the universe. Before this time, humans, gods, plants, animals, and demons lived together in a universe that none of them controlled or had the final judgement on. Everyone shared in the same mystery that nature and life is, trying to cope with its chaos, pain, love and fear. Absolute authority was not a notion that existed because on the experience of people everything simply followed the order of nature.

So the Mesopotamian farmer of the god’s estate is the first sign of mythological disenchantment, but also, and more importantly, of an immanent world. With him the gods left the earth and started living in the hereafter - externalising authority. The later religions of the Levant; Judaism, Christianity and Islam, all are offspring of this original disenchantment. This disenchantment may be compared to the expulsion from paradise, where no all of a sudden in the consciousness of people the possibility of a proper will, independent from this order of nature became possible. And as a consequence, also the gods (a different word for the forces behind nature, emotion, and everything else) had a proper will, like we know from Greek and Roman mythology. With monotheism of the Levant one God was attributed the power to judge. God now was the universe and was not subject to its workings. For the religions of the Levant God gives the laws and humans must obey. That is the way authority has been imagined since the Middle Ages. As

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216 The difficulty begins when under this one God, there is also but one people that has received the Word. This is a recipe for disaster, and this kind of authority holds the germ for its proper dissolution, because no one can maintain to be the one Chosen people among a multitude of Chosen people. This does not mean that no attempts are being made, but they signify the fear for not being Chosen after all.
something external with the sole power to judge. This would become the source of authority's crisis when no single religion, God, or mythology could hold its own claim to truth over that of others.

So authority only really became a problem during the Middle Ages, before that time, and of course I oversimplify, it had been integrated well into the world order. In ‘primitive’ societies there is no question about what authority is. The leader of the tribe may be challenged, but authority itself is always clear because the order of the world is clear. But this changes slowly in the years that Christianity took solid form in the Western world. I spoke about Roman authority, and I will depart from there to venture into the history of its undoing.

What law and Augustus were for Rome, religion and God where for the Middle Ages. Enlightenment has a defensible scepticism towards religious authority as the Word of God had been abused and misconstrued for centuries by then, and all the wicked images of heaven and hell did no longer stroke with how the early modern person experienced the material world. The Christian Church adopted the Roman concepts of auctoritas and bent them to a new context. This both changed and reinforced the patterns of belief around authority, but all came to revolve around the institutional and spiritual revelation of God’s truth. Instead of recognising authority’s contingency and its changing nature as in the life cycle of a human being, authority was externalised to transcendental and ultimate depository trust in a God with everlasting power over human affairs and political temporalities. This way civilisations of the Levant ignored the fact that on the social as well as the individual level, a relationship of authority or a human being is ‘never’ finished, and always in a state of becoming.

In order to understand our culture of exposure it is necessary to look at the primal object of exposure: divine authority. I tried to clarify the unity between the spiritual trinity and worldly workings of authority in part II. St. Augustine describes authority in a similar manner in De ordine. This ultimate authority united the Roman attitudes towards authority putting side by side the idea of origination, the idea of judgement and reassurance, and the idea of a metaphysical hierarchy. Although the Father is the ultimate source, it was the Christ who authored the Gospel, which brings us to the

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217 This is the view that emerges from Tomas of Aquinas's City of God and the Confessions of Augustine
218 In this thesis the terms I use are authorship for origination, authorisation for judgement, and the augmentation for the hierarchy or ecology that is the order formed by all elements together.
authorisation of the Bible as representative of the ultimate authority (auctoritas divinae scripturae) whose truth is guaranteed by the witness of apostles. Furthermore the ‘Father’ as source of authorisation is ubiquitous in the Church doctrine and symbolizes the warranty of tradition and accumulated experience and expertise with its capacity to invoke respect without rational persuasion. What Augustine calls (auctoritas ecclesiae), the authority of the Church, links the divine to this world and like the Senate it is the body of elders that speaks from tradition and expertise. It is the power and competence of the Church which makes the Bible compelling. This paradoxical statement may seem threatening to many believers, and it even provoked new movements, such as the Reformation, which seek the unmediated truth, but for St. Augustine it was as natural as for us our governments make democracy compelling. When he pleads for the Catholic Gospel rather than the scripture of the Manichean sect he writes that he would not believe the Gospel if it was not for the authority of the Church which compelled him to it.\textsuperscript{219} So in the Christian tradition of Augustine authority is not of this world but it has immanent agents who carry the aura of the divine while exerting real power in the world.

A transformation took place with respect to the authority of tradition and the authority of reason. Naturally the proved and attested past has an authority of its own, but tradition came to mean something different over the years after Augustine. In the twelfth century the papal authority took possession of tradition by laying it down in canonical law and doctrine.\textsuperscript{220} It would be this form of doctrine to provoke most violence against authority from the early modern period onwards.

Whereas in the early Christian traditions the spiritual source of authority was leading in the order of things, authority was also something less abstract and more personal, embodied in the priest. So rather than allowing everyone his own view of the world and his own divine experience, the dominant practice was to use faith in an external and transcendental God as a way to exercise power and authority in this world.

At first this dualism of transcendental and worldly authority did not exclude science or reason from faith in a transcendental God. Reason was just another faculty with which the divine order of the world was revealed to man.\textsuperscript{221} But when Christianity separated natural

\textsuperscript{219} St. Augustine Contra epistolam quam vocant fundamenti
\textsuperscript{221} That was also the view in the many philosophical schools such as the famous school of Alexandria of the late Egyptian period, which brought forth the Corpus Hermeticum. Its influence on Islamic culture is a perfect example of how Arabic science and Greek reason lived in harmony with a spiritual understanding of nature.
sciences form salvation it gave birth to the development of Modernism as a way of experiencing the world through reason rather than faith. It is because medieval Christianity did not develop a constructive unsuspicious attitude towards nature and its driving force of sexuality that the development of science provoked a revolution against spirituality and that religion defended an outdated and unsustainable cosmology.\textsuperscript{222}

Before mythology had the capacity to shape order without coercion and to nurture without necessarily repressing. Doctrine on the other hand, defined authority against either reason or tradition and made coercion a necessary part of authority because someone had to see to it that either tradition or reason were followed. Tradition in the form of rituals, beliefs, and practices had been well established since the conception of the Church and had become at least as authoritative as the Holy Scripture, but it had to compete with other claimants of authority in the administration of the now firmly institutionalised church. Mainly due to internal conflict over the hierarchy within the Church tradition it became a justificatory weapon in the hands of the various parties who all legitimised themselves with the attempt to co-opt tradition as source of authority for themselves. This conception of traditional authority bares closest resemblance to the Roman Senate, whose voice was always only an advice from those who had experience and wisdom.

Reason on the other hand played an equally important part in the doctrinal conflicts of the middle ages and changed the cultural relationship towards authority. It became a tool for justification - for creating ontological systems in which the domination of some men over others could be justified. This is the world of Tomas of Aquinas (who produced the sum of Medieval scholastic thinking built on adapted ideas of Aristotle) in which obedience is the tie of human societies. Relationships of obedience are not simply a result of ‘the Fall’ due to which society needs order and is not self ordering, as Augustine would have it.\textsuperscript{223} Instead these relationships have to be justified and are justified as indispensable in the realisation of man’s \textit{telos}, namely to become a citizen in the city of God. This is how justificatory reason is used to legitimate worldly power relations. For Aquinas what the Fall did was to eliminate spontaneous, or voluntary obedience and make it important that the


\textsuperscript{223} The idea of the Fall should not in the first place be understood as a historical event (although the birth of the Mesopotamian farmer of the God’s estate comes close perhaps), it is much closer to the point where a child discovers his own will and reason. Before that time there was no question for the child as to how he should relate to the world or other people.
ruler possessed the power to coerce compliance. Otherwise society would regress to chaos which, as opposed to the order of God, represents hell on earth.

It is a subtle but significant shift in the way authority is perceived because it made divine right into the justification for dominion rather than the affirmation of the existence of a higher order. Divine law mutated into doctrine but was still seen as eternal and unchanging. Moreover, natural law, e.g. reason, and coercion are used to make human laws which derive their legitimacy from the preservation of order and stability. What Aquinas therefore also does is to separate the means by which a ruler comes to power from his capacity to maintain order. A usurper is no longer a tyrant, whose illegitimacy justifies civil disobedience. Rather, his legitimacy – now subject to reasoning and argumentation – should be judged on the basis of whether he rules justly. Justice still is determined by God's law, but that implied that temporal rulers are subject to the spiritual sovereign, i.e. the Pope.

So auctoritas and potestas (authority and power) were confused even though the Church professed a strict distinction in accordance with the fifth-century principle of a twofold command of the world. Pope Gelasius I called this twofold command the auctoritas sacrata pontificum and potestas regalis: authority over spiritual matters and authority over worldly matters. The first for the pope, and the second for the King or Emperor. And as we know, the power of the pope only grew and the doctrine justifying it became an austere substitute for authority in which his unlimited and exclusive sovereignty over both spiritual and temporal affairs was derived directly from the Christ through Saint Peter. In the middle of the thirteenth century the papacy with the help of the French monarchies had defeated the German emperors for good and had now established absolute hegemony. But the church would soon humiliate itself and lose the battle for universal authority with the upcoming national state.

In 1324 the rector of the University of Paris was called to assist Emperor Louis IV in his conflict with Pope John XXII who claimed Louis could not become Emperor without the holy confirmation of the See - for which Louis was excommunicated. The Emperor sought new grounds for his authority in order not to serve ecclesial power so he hired a theorist, Marsilius de Padua who wrote a treatise which would change the world: Defensor Pacis (The Defender of Peace). Marsiglio, as he was satirically called, used the pen to create a new reality in which all power is derived from the people and in which their ruler is but a delegate of those people. Louis had gone to Rome to have himself crowned Emperor, but
not by the Pope (who at that time lived in Avignon) but by the representatives of the Roman people to cultivate his ‘legitimacy’. So, human representation was set up against divine delegation - something which divine delegation was bound to lose because it was up to the system that would become the main political paradigm over the next six centuries.

We can see now why authority is still such a loaded concept. During the Middle Ages authority has become mixed up with power. On the one hand the authority of tradition has become the rule of doctrine and the authority of the princeps transformed into reasons for coercion. For the classical Greeks humanity’s uniqueness was found in its divine capacity to participate in the transcendental through reason, understood not merely as logic or justification, but as all that is encompassed by the psyche and its tension with the passionate participation in the bodily world. There was no opposition between rationality and divinity, but neither was there opposition between passion and reason, they were both expressions of the divine. The respect and awe for the Senate and Augustus were based on this very notion of transcending opposites. But after the middle ages, and throughout the modern period, this form of transcending opposites is replaced by a new pair of opposites: a transcendent conception of authority with an external judging God against an immanent conception of authority consisting of power in need of justification.
I want to briefly point to the fact that Machiavelli’s world view implies the possibility of representation. It is immediately clear how Machiavelli based his views on Roman history and how he sought to reinvest his times with the classic bases of Empire and Republic. But although the renaissance is seen as a return to the origin of Greek and Roman culture where authority was still a living reality, an essential aspect of authority was not recovered. The Greeks were applauded for their Apollonian profundity, but the irrationality and sublime acceptance of timeless temporality was left under exposed by the European humanist. Humanist scientism – by which authority became a craft – stealthily remodelled classic Roman concepts to fit a modern outlook. At the same time the Reformation had not changed much from the Catholic concept of authority because Luther and his successors only presented themselves and their beliefs as just another opposing source of truth. An individualisation, if you like, which just further challenged the already shattered claim to universal authority of the papacy.

What Machiavelli inherits then, is the possibility to see authority as something secular. The trinity of authority is defiled and detached from divine, ancestral, and moral sources, and its unity is sprinkled over whoever utters a claim. Now religion could no longer nurture an unquestioned social order and so politics was welded to the necessity of nature rather than the origin of the word.

Necessity not only serves credibility - what is undeniable is true – but it also became a dominant rationality for replacing authority. Whereas before authority was judged by its origin, now its power was in how well the source fits its ends. The phrase that made Machiavelli famous reads: the objective justifies the means. In other words, the credibility of authority is no longer in the origin but in the ends it serves. And the end it served was the social unity and security of the state. Authority is in whatever is necessary to reach

\[^{224}\text{As also for Hobbes the ‘transference’ of power to a sovereign served the ends of peace and common defense. For him as soon as people ‘confer’ their natural power in exchange for peace, they also bind themselves to a moral obligation of obedience as the sovereign now represents the will of the people.}\]
this security. We will see that this places the burden of proving what is necessary on the shoulders of the Prince, or of other authority figures.

In political theory this is reflected by Thomas Hobbes, who is usually recognised as one of the pillars upon which our ideas of representation are built. It is because now authority was seen as a matter of power in need of justification and a trade-off between freedom and security. Hobbes called for a ‘Leviathan’ who we ‘authorise’ to rule in our names and to whom we owe obedience. He ‘represents’ us because in this view we, the people, are slaves of our passions and would kill each other without an external ruler, so we recognise the necessity for a Leviathan. The practical problem which would later haunt modern democracy is that with ‘authorisation’ this as only point of departure, ‘the people’ are required to consent, and so they need to share one voice, one identity. But we do not because we no longer live in an ordered universe under a shared mythology. This necessity for ‘one voice’ in the absence of a shared world experience inspired Nationalism in modern democracy and its excesses in Communist and Fascism.

The possibility of talking about authority as something manufactured has everything to do with the renaissance view of human nature. In the midst of wars and the breakdown of spiritual traditions Machiavelli yields to an understanding of human nature which sees man as ruled through his passions.225 In Discourses he writes:

‘For nature has so ordered it that while they [the people] desire everything, it is impossible for them to have everything, and thus their desires being always in excess of their capacity to gratify them, they remain constantly dissatisfied and discontented. And hence the vicissitudes in human affairs.’226

Humans are seen only in their capacity of subjects to King Minos, without recognising their capacity for evolving into beings capable of taking responsibility for our passions. That is why his notion of social authority comes from his attempt to explain the human quest for order and meaning merely by their urges - in an almost Freudian sense. But Machiavelli was not ignorant of the tragedy in his story. That I take his influence to indicate the end of authority - and the origin of representation - does not preclude him from a deep awareness of authority’s tragic crisis. That authority was doomed to hide itself ever since it became a human affair. In chapter 18 of The Prince he deals with how the many

225 It is perhaps not the Machiavelli as person, but the way his work is received that I refer to ‘his’ view of human nature.
226 Discourses Book I Chapter XXXVII
judge by appearance, while the few who climb out of the cave ‘have no place to stand’ in a world in which the many call the tune.227 Neither was Machiavelli himself exclusively of a secular temperament. Especially his later writings show a developed sensitivity for the divine.228 But the fact that he could write about politics in terms of the naked ‘humours’ of subjects, citizens and princes marks a change of era.

It was the same ability to think of authority in terms of self-authority (self-created) which prompted the democratic ethos of the moderns. But Machiavelli did not constrain his rulers to become disillusioned manufacturers of consent as Hobbes and Locke later would. He did not impose a surrogate transcendental moral order on republics, saddling up his citizens and Princes who had to become human gods and acquire a surrogate for divine justification from a people. The Prince needs to make himself undeniable through necessity: being completely secular, and with no pretension of being divinely authorised, not by a contract with God, nor by a social contract. He advises techniques for government which show that the Prince is necessary and which over time will yield people’s allegiance based on the value he provides for the community, on the way he avoids having to justify himself or his command, and if necessary on the fear he inspires.

Authority is something that can be fashioned, even has to be, and it has to be made by man. The vertical hierarchy in society is therefore lost because all men are equal in this respect. No one is predestined to ‘have’ authority. So now man no longer participates in the divine, nor is he made in its image, but man tries to make God in his own image out of the mortal clay of human will. And that is the reason why now authority has become a matter of justification, rather than of revelation.

Machiavelli is one of the first to have recognised that politics is the management of a constitutive and irresolvable opposition, an irreconcilable antithesis of interests. There is no perspective, he argues, from which power by its own force can coerce society in a durable unity. Every power needs authority to survive, and for every power the image in which authority is presented needs to reflect and embody the society that it constitutes. This is why Machiavelli pays so much attention to the image that the ruler has to put

forward of himself. This image always hinges between recognition and misrecognition because authority is essentially an interpretation of the conditions of power which in human relationships is never entirely clear. And this uncleanness would be the target of exposure over the next centuries.

An important part of what changed since Machiavelli is described by Mansfield as the taming of the Prince. Modern political history can be read as a gradually normalising of the exceptional, powerful, and amoral executive of the Prince. With Locke the executive is separated from parliament, losing his self-justificatory character. With Montesquieu the desire not to be commanded, which Machiavelli deemed so characteristic for ‘the people’, became the first principle upon which the constitution was build. The constitution is of then seen as a protection against the three powers (executive, legal, judicial) and the executive becomes now a neutral instrument of the ‘will of the people’ without proper autonomy or task in forming the community of people. Still today the autonomy of the executive has no place in political theory. He has been substituted by ‘the people’. He is denied legitimacy per definition, as we are trying to realise an ideal of self-government through final effacement of the executive power; an effacement which the executive itself has been keen to set in motion already quite some time ago, precisely to escape the public gaze. Modernity has a paradoxical relationship to Machiavelli therefore. One the one hand we have incorporated his executive into our institutions and embraced his secular worldview, but on the other, his teachings have been brought into disrepute last century by the traumatic experience of totalitarianism. Our fear for the executive who rules both in and outside the law according to necessity is strengthened and to protect ourselves against him we have tried to reinforce liberal democracy with human rights and more democracy. But the executive who rules by necessity is still part of the modern makeup.

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CHAPTER FIVE

5 THE FORCES OF EXPOSURE

‘The unobserved state is a fog of probabilities, a window of and for error. The watcher observes, the fog collapses, an event resolves, a theory becomes a fact. What is the truth, tell me if you know, and I will not believe you. Things are never what they seem. Clean gloves hide dirty hands. And mine are dirtier than most. Without truth there can be no justice. (…) There can be no more secrets, that is what I am trying to tell you. (…) Only an open society can be a just society. (…) See it, my friends, and embrace it. Embrace the new openness. Nothing is sacred! Nothing is secret!’

Since Machiavelli Western history may be marked and defined by an ‘obsession with evidence, visuality, and visibility’. What we now call modernity is in a way this positive desire to have certain knowledge through rational inquiry, and a fear of being dominated by what we cannot directly see. The notions of intimacy, emancipation and mastery characterise the side of modernity that is ruled by fear. The first is based on fear of solitude, the second on fear of dependency, and the third takes the fear of powerlessness a step further to the desire for active control. All express a desire for freedom and connection, but

230 These are the words of Trevor Goodchild, a character from the anime Aeon Flux, of the episode Utopia or Deuteranopia?. Trevor, ruler of the state of Bregna, is the idealist who longs for significance and community, for true authority and the mythic state, but his search only affirms the absence of such rapture. Aeon Flux, an MTV production by Peter Chung. I chose this quote because like literature, art, or philosophy, film or cartoons can be a powerful expression of contemporary culture. In Trevor we recognise our desire for a perfect world in which all is clear, and we have nothing to hide or fear. But on hearing his words we also feel that to eliminate all secrets, all privacy, all mystery, must be driven by fear rather than for instance love.

none is yet mature, as they spring from distrust rather than autonomy, from fear rather than love. The freedom aspired to becomes an illusion as the fear of un-freedom holds one captivated on a search for ever deeper levels of transparency where no mysterious powers can hide.

Prominent in the recent history of exposure was Freud. Myths, according to Freud, are of the same order as dreams. A myth is a public dream, whereas a dream is a private myth. But for Freud both are indications of early childhood repressions of our incest wishes. In his 1907 essay “Zwangshandlungen und Religionsübungen” (“Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices,” later translated as “Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices”) Freud had already contended that obsessional neuroses are private religious systems and religions themselves no more than the obsessional neuroses of mankind. Twenty years later, in Die Zukunft einer Illusion (1927; The Future of an Illusion), he elaborated this argument, adding that belief in God is a mythic reproduction of the universal state of infantile helplessness. Civilisation itself, in fact, is a pathological substitute for unconscious puerile disappointment. Like an idealised father, God is the projection of childish wishes for an omnipotent protector. If children can outgrow their dependence, he concluded with cautious optimism, then humanity may also hope to leave behind its immature heteronomy.232

Freud’s words on (mythological) authority are characteristically modern and typify the desire to drive out the ghost of authority from within: to expose him as an artefact of superstition, irrationality and an infantile regression. The fear of authority which the moderns have internalised is fought with the telescope of scrutiny and the passionate excitement of intimate disclosure. We know how religion has been abused by its institutions, just as the role of the father in the family has been abused, or most other roles of authority for that matter, and they have elicited dependency and indeed childlike behaviours from their followers. But that makes no moral point with respect to the bond of authority as such.

232 This was exactly what broke up his relationship with his most talented student Carl G. Jung, who also recognised in dream and myth the imageries of our psyche, but not necessarily to do with repression or delusion. The danger though is that society is drawn away from the present time and into a fixed ideal of archaic emotion and belief. A danger that seems to come from the innate desire for security, or the habit of finding expedient patterns in chaos so as to be able to see quickly without having to examine every situation anew. Jung proposes a dialogue between the conscious and unconscious, between the cognisant present and the mythological past. What happens if we do not engage in this dialogue is what Galileo Galilei experienced when he told a new truth about Christian authority.
The history of authority is imbued with the spirit of disbelief. The use of the word myth illustrates this. James Feibleman called myth a religion in which no one any longer believes. And so it is with the stories and metaphors of authority that we still have – like God, the father, or the King. They remain relics of an alien and exotic place which we believe to have been foolish, docile, and irrational. Modern man is abandoned by mythology, and has now difficulty imagining and projecting metaphors of authority which he can experience as self created yet not in need of justification. He therefore had to take refuge in his own subjectivity, obsessed with his own judgement, his own emotions, and his self-awareness. He took the role of an independent interpreter of God with the Reformation, a rebelling virtuoso with Romanticism, a rational doubting self with the Enlightenment, a sovereign consumer in capitalist society, an autonomously choosing citizen in liberal democracy, or a shape shifting self-fashioning simulacrum of ‘postmodern’ society. The thread that connects them all is the responsibility, that the absence of a predetermined natural order demands of him, to decide on good and evil by himself, to be his own authority, to give value by being the author (auctor) in the absence of a belief in an outside source. What once only the seers of mythological society could (simply because it was their role), namely to see what were the intentions of the Gods, is now for everyone to see. Everyone is a seer, as citizen with a proper voice and a sceptical eye.

Exposure starts with the modern desire for mastery over the world and emancipation from authority. The enlightenment is accompanied by a series of revolutions which reveal a rebellion from the bourgeois and later ‘workers’ towards God and the symbols of authority (such as the feudal lords). To explain this rejection of authority and religion it is tempting to look for suffering that both have caused for their subjects, or we could think that perhaps a better education led people to see the truth and how they were subjected. But there have been times in history where subjects have been treated badly by their lords, or where the gods have not given them what they desired, but this didn’t lead to actual disbelief. Neither is secularisation a consequence of education or of science and industrial society (even though they certainly must have had a fuelling effect) because neither of these are incompatible with a belief in God or with authority.

Instead I argue that the origin of doubt must be in the multiplication of credible sources of judgement. The fragmentation and multiplication of roles and sources of
authority continues to this day and has not even come to a halt.\textsuperscript{233} Also in the past have we known different sources of authority which have been most visible when two cultures clashed, or when Protestantism posed an alternative to Catholicism. What changed, however, is that with only few alternatives, it is possible to deny one of them, or assume your own is the only true one. When different sources become ubiquitous, none holds primary authority. Today, globalisation also entails a confrontation with many different world views and models of authority which every so often force a reconsideration of our own experience of reality.

So the seed of secularism was planted at the conception of modernity, and although it has been lingering in the background for most of the time, it always provided a sense of vertigo as if walking across an abyss without daring to look down, but knowing it was there if we would look. After Nietzsche’s Zarathustra declared the death of God, his phrase ‘God is dead’ became ever more pervasive. But at the same time the search for God intensified. Society expresses its search in art, like Eugene O’Neill or Peter Shaffer in their plays. They experience ‘the death of the old God and the failure of science and materialism to give any satisfactory new one for the surviving of religious instincts to find a meaning for life in.’\textsuperscript{234} Shaffer’s struggle exemplifies that of many moderns when he says that he is torn ‘between the secular side of me, the fact that I have never actually been able to buy anything of the official religion – and the inescapable fact that to me a life without the sense of the divine is perfectly meaningless.’\textsuperscript{235}

In a secular society a culture of transparency paradoxically tries to fill the void. What was conceived by Machiavelli grew through the revolutions of enlightenment and has come to blossom some time after the Second World War. But the greatest impact on the ruler’s confusion about authority has come through the fragmentation of roles and identities of the ‘post-modern’ era.


5.1 MODERNITY IS EMANCIPATION AND MASTERY

The culture of transparency is what came in the place of modernity's grand narratives. Through the proliferation and diversity of communication, different roles and identities have been able to emancipate and form a multitude of competing narratives. This was true for the renaissance, but over time the same forces have come to accelerate up until the post-modern era. This has consequences for social identities, but also for those of the ruler. First I would like to say something more about transparency and its cultural history.

The shadow playing on the wall of Plato’s cave and the light that penetrates the mind when one finds the courage to climb out of the darkness have always been at the heart of our reflections on truth, beauty, goodness, and of course power. History and psychological salvation have been misconstrued through a battle between good and bad, Satan and the Christ, but nonetheless these images have shaped our consciousness. The light of the renaissance is opposed to the darkness of the Middle Ages, enlightened despots overthrew the obscure tyrants, and Glasnost opens up the secrecy of Communism.236

What might make sense on an individual level, where the veils of Isis could perhaps be gradually removed so that a person could come to see the world for what it is without his own judgments and illusions standing in the way, has not yet resulted fruitful for the collective modern project. Enlightenment thinkers thought that authority and its institutions could be entirely visible and bear the uprooting of power by a continuous revolution because they believed in the rational capacity of man. And perhaps illumination for all is possible indeed, but so far the use of transparency, Trans-parere (to appear through), has lapsed into a mere aesthetic ideology with the modern desire for immanent value, representing the fruitless attempts to translate an aesthetic construct into an observable reality or political programme.237 It left us with the illusion of openness and a disillusion with authority.

There is something inherent to transparency that makes it a determining force in the way modern rulers try to cultivate their authority. Transparency has an elementary function in democratic debate which stems from the Greek notion of *logos*. Logos provides the valid, or seemingly valid, arguments for which the speaker takes responsibility. But because no normal human being can give an absolute assurance, the words for which the speaker claims responsibility are looked upon with scepticism. And more importantly, as soon as the audience realises that it needs to rely on its own judgement it becomes afraid, at least, if the fear for uncertainty has not been surpassed. In that situation the undesirable in the eyes of the audience needs to be hidden behind an image. In order to convey the message in a credible way the attention has to be diverted from the speaker's responsibility. This is why the politics of visibility provokes rhetorical speech, whether in language, law, or ideology. Or, as was clear for the Greek speaker, his words had to resonate through *mythos*, the dramatic quality by which words hold authority of their own because they have been handed down from an outside or transcendent reality.

The first time in western history that society was confronted with this logic was when between 510 and 400 B.C. the Athenians moved their centre of popular governance from the *Agora* to the *Pnyx*. I find this illustration particularly useful in showing the forces of emancipation and mastery. The Agora, where Athenian democracy first took root after the age of tyranny, was the town square accommodating next to democratic decision-making, activities of economic, judicial or artistic nature too. People would clot together in small groups where a particular discussion was pursued, they would move through the crowd and now and then listen to someone who addressed the crowd. Voting was a particularly chaotic procedure and never very precise. What was most disturbing, however, was that the deciding group could not be held accountable for its voting behaviour for people were hidden in the moving crowd. There was not a government outside the citizenry that could be held responsible as is now the case, for decisions where of the people. And with a quorum of 6000 it would take a theatre to render the multitude visible and at least to some extend accountable. This inconvenience, and the fact that Athenians had little possibility to expose themselves to their fellow citizens, made the citizenry decide to move

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239 This illustration is used by Richard Sennett in his book *Flesh and Stone: the body and the city in Western civilization*. London, Faber & Faber.
An attempt to structure the chaotic and irresponsible conduct of an anonymous crowd led therefore to the Bouleuterion (Council House) and Pnyx to take over as centres of democratic government. What had been used as a theatre (Pnyx, which was the theatron, or ‘place for seeing’) now provided the necessary visibility to hold accountable those who voted. Transparency thus came to have its first use in democratic politics as a disciplining and controlling feature. It mediated between the conflicting values of freedom and responsibility. Paradoxically then truth, openness and clarity are conditions for emancipation, liberty and autonomy, as well as for mastery, discipline and governance.

The disciplining feature of transparency is later rediscovered with the writings of Bentham, which gained appeal in the course of the French Revolution. The idea is known, it was simply to control prisoners, the ill, the abnormal etc. not by putting them away in the darkness, or displaying a few to the many in a spectacle, but by rendering the many visible to the few in an architectural structure. The centre of the circular building is given a commanding and unobstructed view over the prisoners, who are separated in cells along the wall where the backlight from the windows shows the guard in the central watchtower the prisoner’s silhouette. The observed is made conscious of his visibility and will consequently adjust his behaviour and eventually, so it was believed, his soul. ‘He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power, he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.’

Power as coercion would become superfluous this way. Michel Foucault has done most in recovering the influence of the panopticon as an organising principle for society since the French Revolution. He showed how the principle could form a technology that responded to the problems of governance in a society where there was no sovereign power to rule the people. It found immediate resonance with the revolutionary
movement and soon it became a general principle in the political anatomy of society, spreading to schools, hospitals economy, science, police etc. I will not go into detail now, suffice to say that visibility has a natural function in the mastery of things and that this function has been discovered in modern times to serve political purposes. 243

But the scrutinising gaze had also its effect on the speaker. His words were distrusted because they came from a simple soul. This is when the art of rhetoric was invented. It served not only to reach truth, but also to persuade under the circumstances of exposure.

Mythos, which in Roman rhetoric would include ethos - as willingness of the audience to accept the speaker’s argument - and pathos - as the emotional and irrational relationship towards the speaker, 244 holds the mysterious origin of the words. Sennett explains the paradox that arises in a democracy regarding the distinction between mythos and logos because ‘the words for which people claim responsibility create mutual distrust (…) that need(s) to be manipulated.’ A necessary consequence is that ‘democracy deals in the politics of mutual mistrust. The words for which the speaker seems not responsible create a bond of trust: trust is forged by people only under the sway of myth.’ 245

But what if the myth is transparency itself? What if the mode by which to escape the distrustful gaze of the public is a refuge in the metaphor of transparency? If the pressure to be transparent increases under the increasing complexity of society and the fear to be deceived by power, ‘(p)ower can stage its own murder to rediscover a glimmer of existence and legitimacy.’ 246 In this situation it becomes imperative to simulate the absence of power in order to be credible. In other words, when transparency becomes a language or code by which leaders feel they need to legitimate themselves the tension between belief and illusion is driven to an extreme. Transparency attempts to become both logos and mythos, both a requirement for scrutiny and a source of authority in and of itself. In this situation the goal is to appear transparent (because actual transparency of power or authority is indefinable). Transparency then paradoxically encourages the evasion of accountability whereas accountability was the objective, it challenges what is visible, whereas credibility was the objective, and it inspires the distrust (of opacity) which

243 It is easy to see how the Panopticon was a model for the Reichstag, though intended to be the inverse where the public can see and visually control from all sides. This connection between transparency in architecture and control was first made by Meyer’s building for the League of Nations and then bij Schwippert’s Bundeshaus in Germany.

244 Cicero (1948). De Oratore. S.l., Heinemann. Book 2


it was to cure, because once trust and transparency are on the agenda, distrust and opacity are as well.

The central stage that transparency takes today is not the merit of moral theory. Nor could its hegemonic hold be revealed by the simple fact of a felt crisis. Why would politicians and their staff, as well as society at large, academics and activists in front, speak of a see-through government? How could the lack of something find such power in a metaphor of glass?

It is precisely the quality of metaphor that made transparency live, and it was its resonance with pre-existing projects from which it drew its strength. Transparency unites what is paradoxically separated, forging a marriage between freedom and rule, autonomy and control. It enables the imagination of social relations different from the present by the appeal it has to the force of emancipation and that of governability. Open and controllable power is tied to transparency of societal organisation. It is no coincidence, therefore, that both projects of liberation and of mastery were in crisis at the moment transparency emerged: two crises mutually reinforcing their need for resolution, building both on need for mastery.

Next to the force of mastery, of discipline, or governance, visibility and openness are also inextricably intertwined with beliefs of liberation and emancipation. One way of looking at the development of transparency into its present dominance over our culture is to see it as a reference to the French or American Revolution. For instance, many of those who are involved in the political or academic debate about the European Union’s political destiny can be observed to speak in the very terms by which the struggles at the end of the 18th century took place. The Council of Ministers and the Commission are portrayed as the new aristocrats, set up according to the conservative tradition which is characterised by centralisation of authority, low mass participation, fearing the ‘tyranny of the masses’, and restricted possibilities for public discussion, though an institutional structure of ‘checks and balances’. From a progressive historical point of view, the European Union cannot other than develop into the popular system of ever more direct accountability as proposed by an ever more mainstream part of the political spectrum. For English as well as American radicals political institutions were to ‘reduce the distance’

between the representatives and their constituents as representatives were not trusted with the mandate provided by their being elected.\textsuperscript{248} Proper representation and accountability have therefore been supplemented by other values that are to secure the general will. Transparency today has the same function as at times it did in the late 18\textsuperscript{th}C when understood as ‘simplicity’ and ‘accessibility’ of the political system.\textsuperscript{249} But now it is partly taking over the role that representation once had as the paradigm for constructing relationships of authority. Besides the disciplining force it begot with the enlightenment it now became an instrument for unity and liberation.

The French Revolution, according to Furet, was the incarnation of an illusion of politics, the core of which ‘was the idea of a virtuous state, patterned on a school-book model of Antiquity.’\textsuperscript{250} And all beliefs about transparency and democracy that we entertain today have their roots in 18thC ideals. It was Rousseau who provided the language that revolutionary practices would refer to later in the attempts to realise this illusion. Transparency would get a different meaning from discipline with Rousseau. Rather than a tool for discipline and a method to enforce responsibility, it was to allow for the citizens’ liberation and self-determination. Like the Athenian speaker would be exposed to the crowd, so would every citizen have to be exposed to himself and every other citizen in order to unify the many selves into a general will. This will could only come about through the immediacy of people, intelligibility of society, and direct participation of citizens. And as soon as the people had a proper will and power they would destroy the privileges of nobility which would emancipate the people from arbitrary rule. The modern frame within which the contemporary search for transparency takes place would thereby get its contours through the writings of Rousseau.\textsuperscript{251}

The Revolution included an attempt to replace the mystery and corruption of Catholic religion with the clarity and virtue of a state of reason. The calendar was changed to make the year 1792 its starting point, in 1794 the revolutionary Cult of the Supreme Being replaced the Christian God with a goddess of reason who manifests herself through the laws of nature as discovered by Descartes and Newton, and Churches where transformed in Temples of Reason. Architect Étienne-Louis Boullée had expressed the modern awe for

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{248} Ibid. p.193
\item \textsuperscript{249} See for instance Thomas Paine (1776) ‘Common Sense’ Philadelphia
\item \textsuperscript{251} Although it would probably be appropriate to say that it was the Revolution that made Rousseau, rather than the other way around, most of his ideas were undoubtedly shared by the revolutionary movement. Thomas, P. (1997). “The Revolutionary Festival and Rousseau’s Quest for Transparency.” \textit{History of Political Thought} 18(4).
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nature in 1784 when he designed the Newton Cenotaph, a temple to Nature and Reason in the shape of a giant dome providing absolute visibility throughout the open space, alluding to the universe and the principles of unity and birth by which he gave momentum to the modern spirit of the French Revolution.

During the French Revolution the function of transparency became theorised as not simply the condition for accountability, but as a constitutive force of a collective self upon which popular sovereignty could be justified. Instead of holding the actor responsible for his reckless voting, transparency became a requirement for the philosophical justification of freedom under popular sovereignty. If, as our tradition believes since Locke, individual freedom should not be infringed upon, a theoretical device is needed to justify obedience to collective decisions. And because freedom was believed to result only from obeying oneself the question for Rousseau and contemporaries was how to devise a self out of a plurality.

The essence that Rousseau called the self was concealed however, and this prevented a unity of hearts, a general will from coming about. He sought therefore first for inner transparency, looking for his own cultured, and consequently inauthentic, self to be stripped from the layers of falsehood. If only the selves of society became transparent, society could become transparent to itself. ‘How sweet it would be to live among us if the outward countenance were always the image of the heart’s dispositions.’

His puzzle was the sheer number of people in society and their differences not only from one another, but indeed also from themselves - their ‘self-forgetfulness’. The only escape he had from otherness was either to see one’s essence as univocal and absolute, to eliminate all obstructions to sameness by ‘making the world a transparent extension of the self,’ or else to avoid any encounter with the other which threatens the unity and accepting the impossibility of communication across difference. He chooses the first, thereby affirming that autonomy and sovereignty would only be possible if language and society were transparent. If all the hearts of individual selves would open up to one another in order to form a general will, if the language that connected them was truthful and unmediated, only then authentic and undistorted will-formation could take place.

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254 Ibid.
Habermas would later refer to such conditions with the term *herrschaftsfreie Kommunikation*, though for Rousseau the Revolution seemed to make this dream reality. Public opinion was no longer to control the sovereign, but it was the sovereign, unmediated and unrepresented.

In the years preceding the French Revolution the concepts of publicity, public sphere, or public opinion are being used to convey the critical counterforce to monarchies. Mercier maintained that such publicity illuminates a government’s obligations, its faults, and its true interests. But for Rousseau the sovereign would become, as in his hometown of Geneva, the people that gathered in the marketplace in order to collectively express their public opinion.

Rousseau was not alone in his dream. It inspired and motivated many of the revolutionaries. It was the dream of a transparent society, visible and legible in each of its parts, the dream of there no longer existing any zones of darkness, zones established by privileges of royal power or the prerogatives of some corporation, zones of disorder. It was the dream that each individual, whatever position he occupied, might be able to see the whole society, that men’s hearts should communicate, their vision be unobstructed by obstacles, and that opinion of all reign over each.

Although Rousseau himself had never attempted to give indication of how an imperfect social order could become the one he envisioned, his tone came to resonate in society, followed by many who tried to eradicate opacity.

Foucault captured this by a passage that captures the relation between fear for authority and desire for transparency: ‘[a] fear hunted the latter half of the eighteen century: the fear for darkened spaces, of the pall of gloom which prevents the full visibility of things, men and truths. It sought to break up the patches of darkness that blocked the light, eliminate the shadowy areas of society, demolish the unlit chambers where arbitrary political acts, monarchical caprice, religious superstition, tyrannical and priestly plots, epidemics and the illusions of ignorance were formed.’

The fear for authority and its subsequent rejection form part of a modern social imaginary or episteme of popular sovereignty - of the creation of the people and its self-

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257 Ibid. p.153
made community. They inform the belief in the power of vision and the desire for transparency which would dominate the modern period. It is a vehicle by which the modern desires for governance and emancipation are mediated. On the one hand it allows for discipline through visibility, for efficiency through knowledge and purposeful manipulation of reality; it makes society governable. In this sense transparency is also an organisational principle or management tool. But consequently it also creates the conditions for self-determination. Not only by controlling the government, but also through disclosure of the self, enabling the self to rule itself. How else can we know the will of the people? The tension between revealing and being revealed, to master and being mastered is inherent to the fear for authority and the desire to render it transparent.

Although the French Revolution may have had little effect on the every day life at the time, in the world of ideas it can be said to have caused a true rupture of consciousness. And what that consciousness consists of can by now be guessed. Peter Wagner traces back the ideas of autonomy and mastery, or liberty and discipline, as two defining, and contradictory imaginaries that inform our political perception since the French Revolution. The desire to master our surroundings, by knowledge and governance, is profoundly entrenched in the modern mind. But this stands in tension with the autonomous self which cannot exist when confronted with a community. The family and the workplace have been discussed in terms of emancipation, but the state takes a central place in that discussion due to its omnipresence in the modern age. In dealing with the problem of governing autonomous selves communitarians sought the bridging element in culture, liberals in procedure, republicans in concerted action, and post-modern thinkers have assumed the contingency of all, making every one his own self-determining judge. But all remain within the frame of self-determination and consequently continue to see the state as a meddler, an intruder in private affairs or possible threat to individual

liberties, as a manipulating tool of the ruling class, and is probably the most obvious and visible target of rejection.264

As much as Rousseau and the Jacobins wanted it, unmediated democracy was never realised, and instead practices of representation were developed at the same time that Rousseau expressed his desire for immediacy. Moreover it was not common to use public opinion in the way Rousseau did, his idea was against the much more common concept of ‘opinion publique’, mainly used to describe the discussions in the salons at that moment.265 An ‘opinion publique’ was a purified opinion, an ‘opinion éclairé’, disinfected through critical debate in the public sphere, and not a unity of ‘feeling’ or the transparency of hearts.

A paradox of modern political culture is indeed that practices of representation were developed at the same time that the possibility of representation was fiercely denied. ‘Sovereignty cannot be represented’ Rousseau proclaimed, ‘for the same reason that it cannot be alienated. It consists generally in the general will, and cannot be represented: it is either itself or something other, there is no middle ground.’266 He was convinced that a people, once giving itself representatives, would no longer be free (as he thought the English were only free during elections). Rousseau had to make concessions though, in the name of expediency, as he did when providing for a representative legislative body in the Polish constitution.267 But even here he stressed the most precise and stringent scrutiny of deputies on the mandate they were given, despite the fact that this would endanger the national unity.

Redemption brought to man by transparency would lose out against the problem of expediency brought upon it by multiple interests and the sheer number of people to be governed. What occupied the revolutionaries was how to transform the Estates General into the National Assembly, based on a general will. To save the idea from being a mere practical solution or necessary evil, Sieyès provided the revolutionary movement with a justification for representation based on the natural division of labour in society, which he

264 The need for liberty may be modern, but should not be exoticised; in every society people seem to feel the need not merely to be ruled by force, but to render subjection acceptable in accordance with some myth. What makes the modern rejection of authority different is that it tends to reject subjection per se, that it is geared towards independence or emancipation rather than towards autonomy and therefore keeps up the illusion of freedom rather than that it strives for a recognition of interdependence.
267 Ibid.
borrowed from Adam Smith, and the capacity of the Assembly to act as an expression of
the enlightened will, rather than the mere aggregation of wills. Note that representation
needed justification, and that it was not a self-evident ritual for constructing authority.

In the Constitution of 1791 both Rousseau’s popular sovereignty and the idea of a
‘public sphere’ could be included in the form of a deliberating parliament, combining the
general will with the public reason of a representative assembly. Parliament, in this way,
became the expression of public reason at the same time as it represented the sovereign
people. ‘Rule’ (by the people) became the control (by the people) of the legislator. Retaining some of Rousseau’s ideals, in 1797 the Declaration of Rights of Men and Citizens
expressed the tension between the desire for immediacy and the need for representation.
Article 6 states that:

‘The law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to
participate personally, or through their representatives, in its formation.’

Here transparency as immediacy has been partly substituted by ‘public illumination’,
something we find in what Habermas describes as the bourgeois public sphere and which
would develop into Kant’s public use of reason. Habermas describes it as the critical
process by which private people engage in rational and critical public debate applied to
monarchical power. It must be clear though that the makers of the constitution did not
see this parliamentary debate as a political process, and rather a rational one.

The public sphere was for Kant the determinant of the legal order, but more
importantly it was the medium through which enlightenment could be reached - the
liberation from self-incurred tutelage. This function was now reserved for parliament
which would then merely be the representation of reason arrived at through purifying
deliberation as the catharsis of logic. Parliament would, as expression of publique éclairé,
remain the privileged institution authorised to speak; to make reason public.

268 Sieyès was not the only one who was influential in the conceptualisation of representation, but I do not have the
space to elaborate on the precise intellectual and social history of representation here. See for instance d’Arcy, F. (1985).
Press.
269 The publicness of parliament was still not an inherent democratic matter however, especially after the revolution
failed to sustain its movement and despotism took over.
270 Habermas, J. (1989). The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois
271 It wouldn’t be until the twentieth century that public opinion would come to involve scrutiny by a wider public over
governmental proceedings.
Even though an Assembly had been installed, the idea of representation continued to be contested in the name of a general will during the revolutionary period.272 Also in America representation had become the preferred form of government, which for Madison was to ensure ‘the total exclusion of the people, in their collective form, from any share’ in the work of government.273 But especially during the nineteenth century the form of representative government that survived became known as democracy.

Further in history the philosophical idea had now slowly been translated into social institutions that suited industrial and mass society.274 Rather than abstract foundations or justifications it would be the ‘imagined communities’ and clientalistic structures of political parties to hold up the notion of representation.275 And as political parties emerged, charged with the double task of representing the people and competing for their support, a political class developed with it that allowed Mosca, Pareto and Michels to conceive of representation as elite bargaining rather than enabling collective agency.276 This would form the basis upon which the corporatist and pluralist theory of Lijphart, Lipset and others could later organise society. In liberal democracy representation came to be seen as the most effective device in a territorial state for reconciling the requirements of popular control under conditions of political equality and constraints of time and resources.277

But even the liberal pluralist view of representation assumes that in representative democracy something is actually represented. And that the weight of significance is on this something, whereas the representation is merely its reflection. Democratic theory and the assumptions underlying pluralist political science are thereby concerned with the institutions that most accurately represent the represented, or how that representation is distorted. This understanding reveals an inclination to take an abstract concept or metaphor to possess actual material properties. Such oddity yields from the very paradoxical notion of representation itself. The paradox is clear in Pitkin’s famous

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definition of representation: ‘representation, taken generally, means the making present in some sense of something which is nevertheless not present literally or in fact’.278

But this definition does not clear the tensions that it displays when we try to make it work in real life. At least four different ways of seeing representation have provided fuel for discussion. It can simply be the intuitions which we use to authorise political leaders and hold them accountable for their deeds in accordance with the wish of the people. But representation can also be purely symbolic in the way that someone can ‘stand for’ someone or something else. In this sense a King represents a certain meaning. At the same time, whether someone represents someone else or not depends on whether the represented feels represented, or accepts the meaning conveyed. Representation can further refer to government by ‘people like us’. Here it is not enough that someone acts in the interest - or for the good - of the represented, but he needs to actually resemble him or her. And finally one can represent by acting on behalf of others, as a substitute or delegate.279

The history of representation takes us through all these questions, from how the King or church symbolically represent divine authority on earth, to the question of how to represent the authority of the people. Representation became a problem only with the French Revolution, when it had to fulfil the non-symbolical promise of self-governance. The divine King is a symbol, experienced as real, but recognised as symbol. Parliament may symbolise the people, but is still expected to actually represent the people. What it means to represent the people is an irresolvable puzzle because it is a metaphor and does not refer to an actual situation in the world. This is the first problem of representation.

The second problem of representation is that it is not only a tool to make the people present, symbolically or actually, but that we have to recognise that in effect, elections are an aristocratic institution, as Aristotle already noted, by which we try to select the best people for the job of ruling. The ‘best’ are those who are judged superior on the basis of contemporary values and beliefs. And here we are back with the ambiguity of authority. How do we know? What is superior? Is that being more representative? Being a good statesman? A good communicator? On what is the trust based? How does the interpretation come about of the relationship of differences in strength?

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279 Ibid.
So representation should be understood as a mixed system of government where democratic means are used to identify the superior, or authoritative, leaders. A belief in authority, or warrantee for superiority can be found in democratic and aristocratic sources. It has worked for such a long time because elites and citizen have ample possibility to find in it what he is looking for.  

But when we attempt to mould the institutions of democracy such as to make both representation and the superiority (or authority) of representatives concrete and tangible, we find that they are metaphors that resist immanence. The people turn out not to rule themselves, and the representatives turn out not to re-present.

Next to representation, the other substitute for divine authority brought about by the French Revolution were human rights. They show modern man striving for immanence with one leg in a man made world and the other in the sacred realm of transcendental reality. The paradox is the same: these are natural rights that humanity ascribes to itself. They are both inviolably transcendental and created by man, and hence open to human contestation. They remain open, and their authority contestable because human made. They do not inspire fear nor awe, as God once did, but are safe and unsatisfying fabrications of the human mind.

The appeal of human rights, then and now, is in their supposedly special non-political status. Incontestable and impartial. But the illusion is soon broken because we have lost the capacity to believe in a natural order of things. Instead we see that the universal rights conceal particular interests.

When King Louis XVI lost his head to the revolutionaries under the guillotine, he was neither the first to die that way, nor did his beheading signify the end of kingship. But what made the act significant was that with the physical body also the mystical body was separated from the head. And the mystical decapitation was the work of the simultaneous declaration of human rights. With the declaration of 1791 every individual is granted his own perception of social reality. In other words, authority loses its function of integrating conflicts into an acceptable and sacred reality. All knowledge, all truth, all claims to authority are subjected to discussion. And we can be grateful for that, because it allows us to think for ourselves. But born out of resentment the rejection of authority will remain in denial of the authority’s creative function. Not only is knowledge separated from

power, the possibility of a shared social mythology that bridges the inherent inequalities in society also becomes significantly more difficult, if not impossible.

With human rights western society has started to institutionalise the conflict between rulers and ruled, owing to which no society can see itself as an organic whole. Society has become uncontrollable and indefinable. What Machiavelli could experience due to the violent disruption of authority in his community, the whole of Western Europe and America experienced with the death of the sacred king. There is no conceivable perspective from which truth and authority can be determined in a society that has lost its capacity to recognise its own collective imagination as the source of order.

From this point onwards authority has been split up over tiny spheres and disciplines, each with their own claims to truth, independent from the organic body politic. But did popular sovereignty take the place of divine monarchical authority? After all, the ‘will of the people’ has become the ultimate decree according to which society has to be shaped. That is true, and in a sense modern democracy rests on the people’s authority. Not because that is the place we want authority to be, afraid it rests with the elite, but because in the end it is society, however enigmatic, which decides what is authority. But it is precisely the ‘will of the people’ that makes its authority indeterminable. ‘The people’ remain essentially undefined. Its will cannot be known, even with the best of modern technology, and has no body through which it can be symbolically expressed. ‘The will of the people’ remains essentially contestable and always insubstantial.

Although ‘the will of the people’ fulfils the symbolic function of ultimate authority just as the king’s ‘Body of grace’ forms the symbolic structure of the Ancient Regime, ‘the people’ remain indeterminate and no one is inherently ‘chosen’ to formulate its will. Representatives in parliament claim that role, except they are but contingent translators, and victims of a flawed device we call elections. Every time the throne of authority must be temporarily filled by possible impostors, impostors whom our duty it is to distrust because we never know to what extent or in what way they will or can really represent ‘the people’. At times we are willing to lend our ears to the Machiavel who flatters our sense of sovereignty, but we secretly we suspect that behind the theatre there is but a common man with his own interests and proper will to power.

So the birth of modern democracy also created the soil for modern totalitarianism, which at heart seems an attempt to recover the meaning lost with rational democracy and
to give the King a body again. The social imaginary dimension of authority died when social reality became a reality *sui generis*, with its own immanent logic. Because all attempts to refer to a divine symbolic order necessarily appear as an anachronism when we don’t think individual transcending meaning is possible. Popular sovereignty is such an order, whether invoked by Stalin, Mussolini, a more recent populist leader, the president of the United States, or any modern parliament.

In totalitarian regimes the appeal to unity of people and state is central because that way the King’s mystic body can speak once again with authority. But because we have a tendency to read symbols literally, unity is attempted also by social purification of the community. What Rousseau realised has been executed by modern totalitarianism, namely that the will of the people needs a self not different from itself. It needs to be transparent to itself so that the people can become the state and vice versa.

Now the relation to the disappearance of authority becomes clear. Every appeal to transcendental authority is suspected when the whole community believes itself to be one and undividable. For such authority rises above, and casts a shadow on the complacency and inviolability of the community. Totalitarianism is therefore a response to Rousseau’s problem of how to devise a will out of different selves. The difference with divine monarchy was that his authority came from God, and what the king said was in his name. Would the king go against the divine laws of the universe, he would soon be overthrown. And the will of God was determined by whomever had the authority to determine that will, leaving a social space to mediate between the actual and symbolical world, as the Roman Senate would. In totalitarian regimes the party *is* the people, whatever they say, and hence anyone objecting becomes an outlaw. Totalitarianism does not remedy the lack of meaning by unifying leader and the led, it denies a sacred authority.

Back to what Lefort called the ‘empty space of power’. It is the desire for immediate control, immediate insight, and immediate democracy which does not allow us to see meaning in political authority. Immediate authority of ‘the people’ is indefinably placed within ourselves and so dismisses power from acting in accordance with the order of the universe, the common good, etc. Instead we can see but strife between conflicting interests, as political science teaches us. This is basically the acceptance of the fact that

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283 Ibid. p167
democracy cannot manufacture a popular will while its primary aim is precisely to do so. When power was separated from truth and from authority by the declaration of human rights, the definition of a general will became, paradoxically, impossible. It is a tragic tale of a community that wishes to be led by incontestable authority, but the premise upon which it searches for the law is that of fundamental doubt and contestability. When we vote, and try to create a unified will, we are only a numerical quantity of individuals. The reason that representation worked for so long is because it provided us with a practical system to select leaders, a ritual by which citizens can identify and authorise themselves, and a way to make a complex world simple by means of parties or politicians who translate reality into policy issues. But if we try to make it ‘real’ we’ll find that there is nothing there.
5.2 OPENNESS AND OPACITY

We have seen how Machiavelli could give expression to a new idea of self-authority which cleared the way for representation and transparent immediacy of the external world to become organising models for society over the enlightenment period. With industrialisation the moral force of these principles informed ever new techniques and impulses to rendering society translucent, or to appear more open and transparent. I want to see now how the appeal of transparency in both Rousseau’s transparent general will and the revolutionary ideas of purging reason and openness reappear in the 20thC. But most of all we need to see how transparency is but an aesthetic ideology, which is neither democratic nor totalitarian, but a metaphor which changes significance with its context.

The ‘glass house’ as a metaphor for society and government is one expression that symbolises the modern forces of exposure and as such provides a good surface from which to read our culture. I will look into the concrete manifestations which the ideal of transparency took over the last century, most clearly translated through the movement of ‘Das Neues Bauen’ in the Weimar Republic (1910-1920’s) and through Fascism in Italy. Whereas in the Weimar Republic transparency had been discovered as a transformative force in society, based on the cultivation of a civic identity, Fascism, Communism and Nazism have found force of transparency in its unifying and will creating populism as a direct challenge to representative democracy.

Whereas in the 18thC glass was used only by the aristocracy, given a paradisiacal quality in greenhouses for instance, in the 19thC it was improved and became a more common building material with the industrial revolution. Exemplary is of course Paxton’s crystal palace of the world exhibition in 1851, which gave an enormous impulse to glass building. After that, stations - symbol of modernisation - and shopping malls became the transparent signs of progress. By the 20thC, however, glass transcended its mere functional connotation of industrial society and was recognised as an agent in the technical realisation of social progress and civic utopia. Through glass and light, the modern man would be liberated from his traditionally determined identity and rigid roots, and bodily ease, lightness, mobility and individuality would make up the reflexive autonomous
subject of the 20thC. The dematerializing quality of transparency was associated with ‘effortless mastery’ not only over the material world, but also over psychological boundaries, demanding clarity, openness and truth.286 Most prominent we find Paul Scheerbart and architects as Bruno Taut to endorse the utopian quality of glass that could illuminate the narrow minded bourgeois of the time. After the example of the then powerful councils of workers and soldiers Bruno Taut founded the Arbeitsrat für Kunst, collecting a group of artists, amongst whom the Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius, with the objective to exercise direct political pressure on the new German government. Their message was that brick walls impede the freedom and equality of man; we need to break away the walls in society, they claimed, and thereby help bring about, the necessary democratic and civic structures. ‘If we want to bring our culture to a higher level, we are forced, for better or worse, to transform our architecture.’287

By physically making society transparent the people were believed to be transformed into civic beings. The influence of these ideas reached far beyond Germany and deep into the 20thC. It was the guiding thought for instance behind the civic housing projects of the 1950’s and 1960’s that we find in Australia and elsewhere. Glass building was used to reflect a modern personalization of social responsibilities through the rendering of the private domain visible and under public scrutiny.288

Taut build the Glass Pavilion as imagined by Scheerbart for the exposition ‘Glashaus’ of the Deutscher Werkbund in Cologne 1914. Unlike the Bauhaus movement, he was less concerned with its technological and functional connotations. Walter Gropius instead directed Bauhaus design towards mass production, providing functional and aesthetic objects for mass society rather than individual items for a wealthy elite, glass representing at first merely geometrical functionality, but later also the symbolic quality. Mies van der Rohe’s Barcelona Pavilion for instance, exemplified how Germany saw its open democracy. As would the Reichstag later with Norman Foster.

The term transparency still resonates with the enlightenment ideals, and understandably so. Let us not be deceived however, by transparency's unquestioned association with the good and the democratic. If we want to understand the power that the metaphor could acquire, the flexibility of the concepts should be taken to heart. The most powerful and illuminating example of a radically different meaning we find in Fascism, where transparency thrives surprisingly well with unreason and totalitarianism. Another example would be the Communist Palace of the Republic in East Berlin. Representative democracy is challenged by the use of transparency as unifying metaphor merging state and citizen. Total immediacy and inclusion replace the distant practice of representation.

Mussolini used the metaphor of transparency already in the 1930's when he referred to fascism as a 'house made of glass'. Architecture had been an important means of materialising ideology in fascism.\textsuperscript{289} There is no coincidence therefore that the fascist headquarters, designed by Terragni as the Casa del Fascio (now Casa del Popolo) in Como\textsuperscript{1932}, was literally a house of glass.\textsuperscript{290} It embodied what Mussolini meant in his speech, delivered on October 28 1925, where he conveys the fascist ideology as: ‘Tutto nello Stato, niente al di fuori dello Stato, nulla contro lo Stato.’ ('Everything in the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State').\textsuperscript{291} Not only is the power centre completely exposed, it also invites people to take part and to be come one with the state. Its glass doors would open electronically towards the square in front of it to let the crowd, rallying for the fascist revolution, flow into the heart of the political centre. Democratic political representation was rejected by fascism on the grounds that it was based on the myth of individual equality and the idea that popular sovereignty was something realised through periodic election

\textsuperscript{291} Hitler used the phrase ‘Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Fuhrer’ to express a similar idea. One that can also be found in Nazi architecture which is, unlike the image that exists in collective memory, was often explicitly transparent.
and representation. True sovereignty is not to be found in a mechanical election of governors, but lies in other, more irresponsible and hidden forces. Transparency is therefore not just a means to hold power accountable, but to take part in its exercise through the formation of a collective identity – something close to the general will of Rousseau. 

292 The only way representation was recognized was through the kind of corporatism promoted by Sorel and Pope Leo XIII’s 1892 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, merging corporate interests with state interests and thereby counteracting the ‘subversive nature’ of Marxist ideology.

5.3 INTIMATE AUTHENTICITY & IMMANENT AUTHORITY

He advanced to the council-table:
And, ‘Please your honours,’ said he, ‘I’m able,
‘By means of a secret charm, to draw
‘All creatures living beneath the sun,
‘That creep or swim or fly or run,
‘After me so as you never saw!
‘And I chiefly use my charm
‘On creatures that do people harm,
‘The mole and toad and newt and viper;
‘And people call me the Pied Piper.’

The transparent society lives by the search for immanent authenticity and as such behaves like the enemy of representation and the even more distant and mystical quality of transcendence. Not only in politics are people looking for authentic closeness and openness, but society at large is obsessed with it. That authenticity is inherently part of authority I described in part I, but in the age of transparency, authenticity is both the search for authentic, original, real, and incontestable self, and it is the emotional turn which makes the individual’s sentiments a sign for his credibility. Like authority however, authenticity was lost as a consequence of secularisation and secular mass reproduction. This means that the search for originality has turned into an obsession with authenticity and what is ‘real’ and therefore undeniable precisely because we do not believe in anything undeniable anymore. Hence the many commercials selling authenticity using for instance the image of grandmother’s authentic recipe.

Both authenticity and authority command a similar sense of awe. In The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction of 1936 Walter Benjamin used the word ‘aura’ to refer...
to this sense of reverence that an audience in the presence of a unique work of art supposedly feels. As authority does not reside in the author (alone), so the aura does not reside in the work of art itself, but it rather inheres in the external attributes such as the cultural value, known line of ownership, its proven authenticity, restricted exhibition, or its particular history. The aura signifies the relations of authority therefore of past and present ritual from which its magic springs, whether secular or profane, feudal or bourgeois. With mechanical reproduction art is liberated from ritual and history, as the original is lost. In chapter II he writes:

‘In the case of the art object, a most sensitive nucleus – namely, its authenticity – is interfered with whereas no natural object is vulnerable on that score. The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object.’ 294

Instead, the art is exposed - its aura shattered by the gaze of the general public. Art’s very emancipation from ritual and tradition destroyed the experience of its aura.

‘We define the aura of the latter as the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be.’ The social basis of the decay of art’s authority ‘rests on two circumstances, both of which are related to the increasing significance of the masses in contemporary life. Namely, the desire of contemporary masses to bring things “closer” spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction.’ 295

This is the drive behind the call for touchable leaders with whom we can have an intimate bond. Such a bond is only possible with an authentic leader who expresses his true feelings though. In the Fall of Public Man Sennett describes the unfolding of modernity as a drive towards a narcissistic kind of intimacy. In the 18th century public life was still very much characterise by the kind of theatre in which people encounter one another without the need to expose oneself or one’s background, but where professional or other chosen masks were taken at face value and were treated with respect. Both

295 Ibid.
parties accepted the identity presented by the other as true, and acted accordingly playing along with the game. This civilised distance and respect between strangers disappeared over the 19th C when industrial pressures pushed the private forward as a sanctuary and intimate relationships seemed now to provide the principles for public life. Sennett describes how relationships of civility now had become emotional bonds of false intimacy. For actual intimacy is impossible to extend to society at large or people on a screen. The result has been a cult of personality politics under the sway of secular Charisma and a pathological narcissism which now defines our relationships both to ourselves and with others. Even in the study of rulers the interest in authenticity has grown exponentially over the past decades. In business as well as religion, education, or in the military the question is ubiquitous, and current political leaders are continuously scrutinised for it.

Something seems to have changed over the past half a century or so. Although all the modern elements of individual consciousness are still here, we now have to talk about them, search for them and express them to a wider audience. Of course Beethoven already tried to give expression to his inner world, but now everyone publishes his private life on the World Wide Web and where the leading classes have been occupied with how to be authentic over the entire 19thC they now display a certain urge to demonstrate that they are searching. I will come back to this in more detail in the next part of the thesis and first look into the kind of consciousness behind this searching for authenticity. The Romantic virtuoso at the end of the 19thC probably best embodies the desire to express one’s unique humanity. This expressivist, close to exhibitionist ‘liberation’ of the ‘true self’ stands seemingly in direct opposition to the other modern aspiration of the disciplined self that


we know from Foucault, or the inexpressive cog in the machine of modern times. But what does this liberation entail?

The ideal of self-expression has many risks. The first being that rather than mutual respect, the expression of the self is most valued.\textsuperscript{299} Because ‘finding out about oneself, expressing oneself, discovering one’s own way of becoming all that one can… be’ is opposed to ‘denying or sacrificing oneself for the sake of a super-self order of things, or even… living by reference to such an order’.\textsuperscript{300} For relationships of authority this simply means even less inclination to allow one’s dependence on a public figure or shared ethic.

The other risk is that a search for the true self, when by that we mean some objective truth to be found, can lead to be concerned with truth rather than value. Western history revolves around an ascetic search for the ‘truth’ and this search reveals a sceptic attitude towards life rather than an affirming one. What happens when the search for authenticity does not serve the affirmation of life, but is rather a quest for exposing it, is that the meaning of life gets lost as it was never created and only sought after. So it is with authority.\textsuperscript{301}

Instead of life value Western philosophy has tried to provide scientific ‘truth’, which is how we killed our God. The ascetic ideal survived even the death of God, however, which is why Nietzsche sought an even stronger subject who could overcome not only the death of God, but also that of Man.\textsuperscript{302} So the 19\textsuperscript{th}C lost faith in God, the 20\textsuperscript{th} lost faith in Man when it decisively annihilated all self-evident autonomy in the concentration camp. This means we will be searching ways to cross the threshold of humanity.\textsuperscript{303} ‘We, however, want to become who we are – human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves!’\textsuperscript{304}

\textsuperscript{302} ‘Apart from the ascetic ideal, man, the human animal, had no meaning so far. His existence on earth contained no goal; “why man at all?” — was a question without an answer; the will for man and earth was lacking; behind every great human destiny there sounded as a refrain a yet greater “in vain!” This is precisely what the ascetic ideal means: that something was lacking, that man was surrounded by a fearful void—he did not know how to justify, to account for, to affirm himself; he suffered from the problem of his meaning.’ Nietzsche, F. (1994). On the Genealogy of Morals. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. P.598
\textsuperscript{303} The opposite is also true in the Western obsession with equating man with our biological ancestors; the apes. ‘It is an optical machine constituted of a series of mirrors in which man, looking at himself, sees his own image always already deformed in the features of an ape. ‘Homo is a constitutively “anthropomorphous” animal (that is, resembling man, according to the term that Linnaeus constantly uses until the tenth edition of the Systema), who must recognize himself in a non-man in order to be human.’ Agamben, G. (2004). The Open: Man and Animal. Stanford, CA, Stanford UP. P.26
Here we have two kinds of authenticity which dissolve in one another. The autonomously self-expressive Man who loses his singularity in the plurality of ‘bare life’, which characterises an almost vegetative existence of pure biology in the concentration camps, or the animal life we watch on reality soaps. We overcame man, but rather than going beyond good and evil we were left with the erasure of ethics as such.

The cultural revolt that took place over the course of the 1960’s and 1970’s recognised the need for a language ‘transparent to transcendence’. But because a common language concerning transcendence was no longer possible (all Grand Narratives were collapsing) no common metaphor, symbol, or mythology could be found.

The discovery of Eastern philosophy with the New Age was just to open up the Western eyes to other languages, but soon people started shopping worldviews and traditions in the hope that the next peeping hole would provide coherence. But the inner voice that resists conformity is bound to become restless and unsatisfied and seeks a better way to personally feel the feeling of spiritual unity. The quest for authority is therefore a quest for meaning and coherence.

The yearning for authenticity has also consequences for the political institutions of representation. Rather than challenging representation by allusion to a general will, the movement of the 60’s and its political offspring in the New Left has been challenging representation mostly inadvertently by placing the individual will on the foreground. Inadvertently because the real challenge is against authority while representation was challenged only because some democrats found that it legitimated a vertical authority relationship between political leaders and the citizenry and because it encouraged passivity in citizens. The theorists of participatory democracy which followed the spirit of the 1960’s found that ‘representation is incompatible with freedom because it delegates and thus alienates political will at the cost of genuine self-government and autonomy.’

The sixties may not have brought the ‘imagination to power’, nor did the established power structures shift significantly while the passions of self expression were absorbed by consumerism, but the revolt does mark a genuine change of consciousness. This generation layed the fundament upon which transparency could become the symbol for citizen participation, the rejection of authority and paternalism, but also gave a set up for

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305 A term used by Karlfried Graf Durkheim and Joseph Cambell to describe what narratives and symbols need to be in order to function effectively as myth
the touchable leader. Changed authority patterns in society not only affected the family, but also the relationship between rulers and the ruled.\textsuperscript{308} For the anti-authoritarianism that characterized these years ‘demanded that those in power subjected themselves to scrutiny, earn their legitimization – indeed, develop newer sorts of relations to those in whose name they ostensibly governed.’\textsuperscript{309} In 1969 Adams noted that:

‘[a] crisis of authority exists. It is felt in the home, the school, the city, and the nation. Society is believed by many, especially the young, to be unjust and repressive. There is a revolutionary spirit abroad. This is not only true for America, but to some extent, throughout the Western world. No doubt, society is more complex and therefore more demanding as well as more difficult to comprehend, but one may well wonder whether it is by any objective measures less just of more morally repressive than in earlier days. … Why, then, the crisis of authority? Some attribute it to increased moral sensitivity and earnestness of the young against the background of cynicism and hypocrisy of the older generation. …. [t]he structure of authority is crumbling in our society not so much because of injustice and repression as because of the erosion of its intellectual foundations.’\textsuperscript{310}

Adams means that the normative rational theory of ethical knowledge, by which freedom is not compromised when one has rational reasons to obey, has been challenged on its assumptions. That moral knowledge exists is no longer self-evident in the 1960’s, and that if it would exist it could be known through reason, has become questionable. Whereas the 18\textsuperscript{th}C ideals of liberty had instilled the desire for autonomy in man, the act of choosing as such was not a virtue by itself, for vicious choice could not be justified. But when Sartre and Camus became widely read amongst the young, the mode of choice became something more than merely a means to justified ends. Existentialist concerns were about the question whether choice was really free – independent from pressure to conform – and whether it could be said to be ‘authentic’ and ‘sincere’. The way one chooses determines one’s being, Sartre maintained. By the end of the sixties people were infused with existentialism, be it through the acting of Lee Strasberg, movies like The Graduate, college discussion, novels or the mood in the air.

\textsuperscript{308} Eckstein, H. (1969). "Authority Relations and Governmental Performance." \textit{Comparative Political Studies} 2: 269-325.; Congruent authority patterns, Eckstein and Gurr noted, foster allegiance to governments whereas inconsistencies in authority patterns have the potential to undermine public satisfaction with governments and threaten that allegiance. See Eckstein, H. and T. Gurr (1975). \textit{Patterns of Authority: A Structural Basis for Political Inquiry}. New York, John Wiley and Sons. P.450 ’a government will tend to be stable, if its authority pattern is congruent with the other authority patterns of the society of which it is a part’ P. 234


Most of the sixties movement was characterised by desire for genuineness, for direct authentic, emotional expression, but also a demand for direct political participation. The Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society can be seen as exemplifying the desire for independence and participation:

‘We oppose, too, the doctrine of human incompetence because it rests essentially on the modern fact that men have been “competently” manipulated into incompetence - we see little reason why men cannot meet with increasing skill the complexities and responsibilities of their situation, if society is organized not for minority, but for majority participation in decision-making. Men have unrealized potential for self-cultivation, self-direction, self-understanding, and creativity. It is this potential that we regard as crucial and to which we appeal, not to the human potentiality for violence, unreason, and submission to authority.’

It was therefore not simply the government that was thought inapt, nor even was it the system as such, though many turned against both of them, but the very meaning of authority - its very existence - was challenged.

Few had seen it coming. After the Second World War, stability and consensus were the words most often used to describe the situation. In their famous study, The Civic Culture, Almond and Verba reported a sense of loyalty and respect for political authority, and attitudes of trust and confidence. And it seemed that politics was confined to some minor matters of management.

The interpretations of both the remarkable harmony before the end of the sixties and of its actual breakdown were inspired by broadly two currents of thinking. The dominant view, shared by the political class, labour movements and the media, was that of liberal pluralism, which found its political translation in many New Right movements, and the counter-voice was spoken by a neo-Marxist renaissance of democratic theory, finding resonance with some academics and students and later the socialist parties and social movements.

Daniel Bell and Lipset believed the stable social situation was due to shared values of liberal democracy. Now that Marxist-Leninist ideas had lost credibility it seemed that ideational differences were no ground for conflict any longer, the ‘end of ideology’ was faithfully proclaimed, and the political order seemed to enjoy full ‘legitimacy’ in the eyes of

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its subjects. Society was managed by interest groups and parties that marginally differed from one another on some minor economical management issues and every one enjoyed full citizenship rights. And people were content under conditions of social security, schooling, and full employment.

Marcuse was one of the people surprised to see a society so harmonious where in fact there should be revolt against a repressive capitalist system. He tried to explain the harmony in terms of a fundamental ‘depoliticization’ of a one-dimensional society. An obsession with technique, productivity and efficiency eradicated political and moral questions from public life. Democracy was threatened by expanding bureaucracies, supported by increasing state intervention, a penetration of society of what he called instrumental reason, and the threat of nuclear war. Due to these developments the political class was limited by its necessary support for the private production forces, and consumerism, sustained by a false consciousness of the masses, maintained a passive population. Rather than content, people were driven to apathy under a repressive system.

By the end of the sixties all of this had changed. Paris was in a carnivalesque state of revolution, and all over Europe and the US conventions and authorities where disposed of their legitimate aura. The predominantly New Right political class and media adhered to what is often called a pluralist view. They feared the uprisings would damage liberal democracy and pursued a politics of containment and control. On the other side there were the academics, students and some intellectuals who saw the whole as indicating a ‘legitimation crisis’ with either the promise of progression or the danger of an authoritarian backlash.

But the dominant view was that affluence had increased expectation, that higher income, education and welfare had stirred up the demands to an extent of governmental overload. And demands were reinforced by a decline in respect for authority, by welfare, undermining people’s private initiative, and egalitarian ideologies in general. In competing for the public’s favour, politicians promised what they could not realise, and

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314 In a later stage of the thesis I will back up the thesis that it was the ruling class who held this view at the moment with documentation and newspaper articles of the time.


thereby only reinforced an image of untrustworthiness and insincerity, a sensitive issue since existentialist thought. Finally, where everyone was competing for the best promise of higher standards of living, bureaucracies silently grew into new areas of public conduct without the guidance of capable public management. That is a dreadful vision for the New Right because of its threat to individual negative liberties, and the hazard of an ungovernable state.

For the left the problem was one of conflict between capital interest and political representation. The academic discourse on democracy and the welfare state was dominated by a book published in 1973 by Jürgen Habermas called *Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus* (translated in English two years later as *Legitimation Crisis*). He argues that the traditional Marxist analysis of crisis tendencies in the capitalist system was no longer valid, given the relative success of the welfare-state compromise. Instead, by state intervention the crisis tendencies generated in the economic sphere would be displaced into the cultural sphere. Private capital is the source of economic enterprise, but doesn’t confer political power. At the same time capital generated through private accumulation is also the material basis upon which state finance is based. The state is therefore dependent on the finance which it doesn’t organize itself, and has therefore an interest in facilitating the process of accumulation.

However, political power is acquired through mass electoral support, and it does so on the assumption that the state is a neutral instrument of the public will, and an arbiter between the various interests in society. But because the state drives on private capital and not on support, it has to keep up appearances of a neutral channel of public will and arbitration. In the meantime state complexity increases while an increasingly instable economy asks for more intervention. This requires higher public spending, to be derived from taxation, but this irrevocably affects the free market. The result is inflation or social unrest.

So socialists cannot be socialist due to a state interest in private capital, and the Right cannot be right because of an impending social crisis. Now that the economy is no longer guided by an invisible hand, but by a very visible one, it would require continuous justification. The Marxist democrat cannot but see an increasing demand for political

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participation and control as a result of this trend.\textsuperscript{318} When state-intervention is less effective than hoped, and if the state is unable to satisfy these demands, the possibility would arise of a large-scale loss of confidence in government institutions, or a ‘legitimacy crisis’.\textsuperscript{319} The grounds upon which people deny the state ‘legitimacy’ can be objectively and rationally discerned,\textsuperscript{320} so what Habermas therefore means by a crisis of legitimacy is the situation in which people can no longer objectively and rationally justify the theory which explains why they ought to obey. If a crisis was \textit{not} taking place that was not due to the persuasion of the state or the desire for people to believe, but because the state prevented the people from seeing that in fact it was not neutral.

Habermas and others feared that as a consequence of such a crisis, democratic discourse would be undermined by the imperatives of the political economy. An authoritarian state might have arisen from the people’s discontentment. As a reaction, political theory developed towards a more normative ideology of democracy, making ‘legitimacy’ dependent on the universal criteria of undistorted and consensus directed discourse. Connolly claims this democratic turn was never intended for full realisation. It was an intellectual retreat which protected the ideals of democracy by placing it beyond the reach of practical imperatives.\textsuperscript{321}

Habermas shows how it is no longer possible to aspire to unreflective civic virtue, or to privatised citizenry, for this would end up in fascist control. A more reflective civic culture is necessary. But instead of proposing reforms, he provides us with a meta-theory of the study of discourse. What is often called the ‘\textit{discursive turn}’ in social and political theory refers to the shift of mindset by it is accepted that understandings are shaped discursively. Authors of democratic theory wish to put forward a conception of legitimacy based on participation and discursive action in a completely transparent and undistorted public sphere, free of power relations. Not surprisingly is was Habermas who developed this conception of legitimacy most authoritatively in \textit{The Theory of Communicative Action}, which is the meta-theory that followed the socio-theoretical works of the Frankfurt School, Arendt, and himself on the transformation of the public sphere (to which he returned in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{318} A more down-to earth approach sees an open society through participation and state criticism to be fundamental to social democracy where citizen’s involvement and critique guides governmental policy. Popper, K. (1945). \textit{The Open Society and Its Enemies}. London, George Routledge & Sons.
\item \textsuperscript{319} Again I must emphasis that this is not the crisis of the belief system I am writing about. For a discussion on legitimacy crisis as understood by Habermas see Vidich, A. and R. Glassman (1979). \textit{Conflict and Control: Challenges to Legitimacy of Modern Governments}. London, Sage.
\item \textsuperscript{320} Habermas, J. (1975). \textit{Legitimation crisis}. Boston, Beacon Press.
\end{itemize}
the 1990’s with *Between Facts and Norms*). Legitimacy as a normative justification is thereby ever more determined by the requirement of active popular consent which can only be genuine if it is authentic and so rulers and society should transparently communicate who they are and what they intend.

Though the pluralist and Habermas’ accounts seem to differ fundamentally, they share a vision of the state as a neutral and representative entity that merely emerges from society, be it through the unrestricted competition of interests, or the unobstructed flow of public will through the state’s procedures and institutions. And both are conditioned by the persisting idea that a government is voluntarily obeyed, normatively and in fact, when it corresponds to the reasonable expectations of citizens. Most theories of legitimacy still draw on this conception. Legitimation is thereby understood as the process whereby citizens consent to government, or authorise its rule because of its fairness, efficiency, honesty, or representativeness. Pluralists do so, for they cannot see the state as having an authority and power of its own as it is just one of the means through which groups pursue their interests and achieve equilibrium. Democrats, because it is not enough for the state or a leader to embody the nation or the interest of the people as decisions need to actively flow from the sovereign people giving their reasoned consent.

More sophisticated accounts have been developed recently in which legitimacy is seen as the value correspondence between rulers and ruled, but such congruence must have come about through democratic means and still involves the giving of popular consent to government. In either case, government is not recognised as an autonomous agent in society, is not seen as a player which legitimates and sustains itself and who actually

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Habermas described the decay of the public sphere as a consequence of bureaucratisation of political life, growing state intervention in private life and of private organisation in public, the decay of well informed and reasoned public discussion into a plebiscitary mobilisation by populist anti-politics, and a transformation from a literate culture to mass entertainment.


326 Even more down to earth conceptions of social democratic legitimacy were found on the

governs citizens. Democratic theory has thereby reserved legitimacy for hypothetical situations in which people, when complying, are merely obeying their own will when they reached consensus through perfect communicative action.328

The pursuance of this myth would eventually culminate in a further normative effacement of authority from politics, but the reader may wonder why, if the challenge to authority was that persuasive, governments didn’t fall and political systems didn’t collapse at the time, and why representation could still survive? A very important reason is that all events could be perfectly explained through the frame of governmental overload. The understanding of the ruling class may be summarised with a comment by Thatcher in her conviction that ‘We are reaping what was sown in the Sixties. The fashionable theories and permissive claptrap set the scene for a society in which the old virtues of discipline and self-restraint were denigrated’.329 What informed the ruling class were pluralist and realist ideas about politics and society for which the institutions of society retained their practical value, even in the face of radical democratic scrutiny.330 There was, in other words, no need to lose self-confidence because identities where not challenged, which is why the opposition could be easily defeated.

329 Margret Thatcher quoted in The Observer, 28 March 1982
CHAPTE R SIX

6 THE CULTURE OF TRANSPARENCY

When the emancipatory and controlling forces of exposure meet with a fundamental resistance to complete and unambiguous revelation, they transform. They become an illusionary search for safety, or they need to stop wishing for control and emancipation. It is no longer tenable to see history as this linear process towards rationality and emancipation. The first reaction to instability and uncertainty is a search for stability and certainty. The problem is that life does not know immanent forms that last. Everything that is created sooner or later dissolves. The only certainty is that cycles of creation and destruction follow one another.331

In his book *The Transparent Society* the Italian thinker Giacomo Vattimo describes how the modernist view of transparency, the liberating and controlling origins we find in Rousseau and Bentham, no longer provides the security it promised.332 The explosion of difference, be it in world view, experience, or alternative reality, which comes to us through many channels of confrontation and ‘generalized communication’, seems to prevent a shared truth to appear through (trans-pare). Because at the proliferation of postmodern perspectives, Vattimo argues, the modern ideal of a transparent society – the society of ‘unrestricted communication’ – among free and equal speakers is an illusion. As a consequence there is no way of solving disputes by decreasing the societal opacity that

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myth, religion, class divisions, or various forms of inequality were believed to produce. It was never possible to know the Other though, because we do not, by definition, see from his or her perspective. But now this just becomes so undeniable, and that hurts the modern spirit of emancipation and control. It initiates in a truth that is too painful to process at once. Just like Hegel’s unhappy consciousness, our psyche needs to deal with the absence of a given and secure external truth.

The other modern transparency which Vattimo now recognizes as impossible is that of ostensibly objective and verifiable knowledge. All becomes relative to the standpoint from which we look. In physics this idea is represented by the theory of relativity. What it means for Vattimo though is that not only did we lose a method of inquiry, departing from an objective point of view, but we also lost the factual content, as now the observer can only describe what he sees. The knowledge behind his narrative remains obscure to us because we cannot truly know his perspective. So now all that remain are stories.

Stories can speak of transparency though. As long as the western mind is unused to the intrinsic ambiguity of knowledge - or authority – the search for transparency will intensify with the increasing experience of obscurity that follows from our intensifying contact with different perspectives. And this contact is intensifying due to, for instance, migration and the use of communication technology.

The culture of transparency as I use it then is on the one hand the desire to make things intelligible, and on the other, to make them controllable in a time that knowability and controllability are scares. It is a reaction to diffusion and a denial of the fundamental nature of this diffusion.

333 Ibid. p.18
Where late capitalist societies imagine themselves immersed in global networks of power, totalising systems of disciplining control, diffused technologies of influence, and the unpredictability and insecurity for which no traditional political actor can provide reassurance, political action seems a matter of persuasion in the margins and at most the management of goods and services. That is quite different from Machiavelli’s art of founding. But the crisis that both leaders and citizens perceive is much more to do with a crisis of identity, quite literally the way Erik Erikson’s developmental psychology describes it: the crisis that occurs between two life phases where a person grows from one identity to the next and in which old roles and bonds lose legitimacy and new ones are sought. One way of describing the crisis is the lacking sense of legitimacy and society’s resistance to being governed. Whether or not it is true that people in western society think and feel this way, the ruling elite and the media often act as if this were so. It seems postmodern times have slowly forced people into puberty. Concluding this section on the exposure of authority I will shortly deal with the debate in political science that attempts to grasp the crisis of authority in politics.

Authority that authorises is a form of trust, aroused and believed in for many motives at a time. My point has been that not only do we see distrust in leaders and ruling institutions, there is a general distrust of authority as such. In other words, when the very idea of authority loses its meaning, this may be a sign or symptom of a society in change. It may indicate that the old bases of trust no longer meet the demand and that what was credible before no longer holds the truth. Or it may be because we don’t know how to live with things we cannot change, or because do not take responsibility for things that can. Maybe we grew less dependent on authority because our tolerance for insecurity has strengthened. But although there is a core of truth to all these propositions, there is an integrating issue with both the leader’s inability to establish authority to himself, as well as with the difficulty individuals have devising a personal mythology in which cyclical relationships of authority have a meaningful place.
When society tries to redefine itself, like the Bondsman does on the journey of the spirit, and every abandoned individual attempts to gather his personal narrative from a fragmented lifestyle, when his reliance on his autonomy is more needed than ever and his suspect of authority is rampant, both rulers and ruled experience an identity crisis.

A few decades ago politicians and social scientists started to show the first signs of worry about a growing lack of confidence among the citizenry in the central institutions of representative democracy. A disillusionment and distrust have been diagnosed many times since, starting in the United States, but gradually also in Europe. Support for parliaments suffered definite erosion during the 1990’s and confidence in traditional and hierarchical institutions such as the church, family and military have declined.

Even if there would not be an actual long term erosion of trust, which some students argue, the perception of distrust is enough to provoke a response in leaders and academics who act as if there were a lack of trust. Since the 1960’s and 1970’s surveys tell us a story of declining public trust, and this information has led leaders to lose sleep over a possible ‘legitimacy’ crisis. Even though we live in an era of personality politics, it is not the leaders personally who are the target, albeit corruption and other scandals can make it seem that way. There is a far more general sense of powerlessness among the workers and citizens in all layers of society.

Political leaders come and go with the mood of the populace, or the performance of the leader, but institutions that embody their authority ought to secure a continuous trust. This trust is important because it underpins the legitimacy of the state and its institutions.

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respect for the order of society. It is, in other words, not politicians that are in crisis, but the entire order. Commentators have given many explanations, most of them restricted to the discipline from which the observer studied the phenomenon, but in most general terms I believe it is safe to assume that if such large scale loss of confidence concerns the major institutions upon which late modern society is built, it suggests a disaffection with - or perhaps characteristic of - the modern world.

Discussions of crisis of before 1989 are of a somewhat different nature than those that follow after though. Studies using data of after 1989 suggest that society has changed. A shift in values is the most abstract and underdeveloped explanation that political science has given, but it is the one explanation that fits both the timing and rationality of a decline of confidence in hierarchical and traditional institutions. Why values changed remains unclear for social science. But timing suggests that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the symbolic and structural transformation that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall are more important than witnesses at the time could have seen.

A threatening ‘other’ fell away which allowed the West to turn its critical eye inwards. The Cold War ended with a high note on the superiority of democracy, and immediately after the Wall fell, a gigantic political and academic effort was put in studying and bringing about democracy in the world. The ideal of popular sovereignty revived not only as an imposed value on eastern societies, it also shaped the way events were interpreted in Western democracies. The revolutions in former communist countries have therefore had an impact far beyond their borders as regarding how authority is interpreted.

But either way, the most important reason for people to interpret the situation since the beginning of the 1990’s as a crisis was the fact that people on the one hand are not interested in politics and mistrust its institutions. Despite arguments for a special case, it is more likely that the indifference towards political institutions, of which the European Union is perhaps the most striking example, is but a part of a general disaffection.

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Inglehart observes a transformation of western political culture characterized by the gradual erosion of respect for authority and increased demands for participation in political decisions.\(^{342}\) The claim is that, raised under conditions of material and physical security, people have shifted away from a preoccupation with basic material needs towards post-materialist concerns. These values embrace a variety of “higher order” concerns including a preference for more open government. Additionally, more people enjoy higher education, offering people the capability and interest to engage with and be critical of politics.\(^{343}\) Robert Putnam argues that it is the technological transformation of leisure that explains declining levels of civic engagement and social trust. These transformations have made governing a difficult job as rulers need to affront a distrusting and critical public.

Out of these trends emerged a growing body of literature on the disenchantment of citizens from politics and their distrust of political institutions.\(^{344}\) And though most authors don’t believe democracy is in crisis, there is definitely a sense of malaise.\(^{345}\) Changed authority patterns in society not only affected the family, but also the relationship between rulers and the ruled.\(^{346}\) Citizens in a number of states have become more inclined to publicly express their dissatisfaction with governments.\(^{347}\) Recently this is said to have led people to be more susceptible to populism and extremist parties, who fuelled this distrust for politics.\(^{348}\) This is not a particular phenomenon though, symptoms of weakness of the political system, such as an overall disapproval of the performance of the political


\(^{346}\) Eckstein, H. (1969). “Authority Relations and Governmental Performance.” *Comparative Political Studies* 2: 269-325.; Congruent authority patterns, Eckstein and Gurr noted, foster allegiance to governments whereas inconsistencies in authority patterns have the potential to undermine public satisfaction with governments and threaten that allegiance. See Eckstein, H. and T. Gurr (1975). *Patterns of Authority: A Structural Basis for Political Inquiry*. New York, John Wiley and Sons. P.450 ‘a government will tend to be stable, if its authority pattern is congruent with the other authority patterns of the society of which it is a part’ P. 234


institutions, low voter turnout in elections and falling party membership, high rates of litigation against state authorities, and numbers of allegation of official corruption have grown around the entire modern world.349

A paradox in this is that on the one hand citizens seem more critical and demand participation,350 whereas on the other hand they seem indifferent and uninvolved. Studies sometimes seem to contradict each other on whether there is more or less political involvement. The key however is that both are forms of rejection. They are different phases in Hegel’s journey of the spirit towards autonomy from authority, similar again to the different phases of emancipation, or maturing, in developmental psychology.

Since the 1990’s liberal democracy has been perceived victorious throughout this world, but at the same time its instruments of power have been contested. Corruption and scandal dominate the media coverage of politics, in part precisely because society has become more ‘transparent’, partly because political parties have become part of government and can therefore dispose over state resources making corruption possible, and in part it is a result of sensationalisation and news commodification, the consequences of which are felt by most European party systems (notably Italy, Spain, Belgium, France and Britain).351 The resignation of the Santer Commission in 1999 over a corruption scandal in the European Commission confirmed and increased suspicion, making calls for more transparency easier to adopt.

But corruption was not the cause of the contestation of modern democracy’s institutions, even though this development has been well exploited by populist politics. Most explicit in Europe has been whistle blower Van Buitenen, who brought corruption of the European Commission to the light. He started the European political party ‘Europe Transparent’ and won two seats at the European elections of 2004.

Not only have democracies become more difficult to govern and have party politics become more contested, the alleged sovereign people has also become impossible to

represent. This is what Anderweg argues when he point to the erosion of stable collective identities which makes political representation obsolete. And since our political systems are still based on representative democracy politicians are confronted with a problem.

All these trends come with consequences. Most important for the study of leader’s cultivation of their authority is well described by Peter Mair when he writes that:

‘for a party, and for an elected politician, it is not enough to be just a good governor, for without some degree of representative legitimacy, neither the parties themselves, nor their leaders, nor even the electoral process that allows them to be chosen, will be seen to carry sufficient weight or authority, and this will also help force a retreat from government by the people.’

Another catalysing factor is that a group of what is called populist leaders and parties emerged who seem to take advantage of the anti-political environment in Europe, its post-communist neighbours, the U.S, and Latin America. Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell define populism in their volume *Twenty-First Century Populism*, as pitting ‘a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous ‘others’ who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice.’ Their rhetoric is anti-political in that the political class is depicted as aloof and removed from the citizen’s problems, and are consequently blamed for all hardships.

I will not go further into the topic of populism but conclude this section by pointing at the sense of crisis both populist and non-populist leaders show. The sense of crisis itself forms the basis for the kind of responses that leaders have found to remedy the tension.

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PART III

PART III. ALL TOO HUMAN: FEAR & DESIRE

But I that sit a throne,
And take my measure from the needs of the State,
Call his wild thought that overruns the measure,
Making words more than deeds, and his proud will
That would unsettle all, most mischievous,
And he himself a most mischievous man.

(W.B. Yeats, Variorum 261-62)
When weaving together the stories about Hamlet and the New Prince with the disenchantment of authority we see how both these archetypes come forth from an attempt to create new myth and with is a new authority. This is the myth of the virtuous leader which in Machiavelli’s case means that he who best plays the game of founding is the legitimate leader, and for Shakespeare entails the idea of authority-less leadership. In a way Hamlet is a tamed version of the Prince who we recognise in the words of Nietzsche when he describes his contemporary European rulers as people who:

‘do not know how to protect themselves for their bad consciences except by acting like executors of older or higher commands (from their ancestors, constitution, justice system, laws, or God himself) or even by borrowing herd maxims from the herd mentality, such as the “first servants of the people”, or the “instruments of the common weal.” For this part, the herd man of today’s Europe gives himself the appearance of being the only permissible type of man and glorifies those characteristics that make him tame, easy-going and useful to the herd as the true human virtues, namely: public spirit, goodwill, consideration, industry, modernisation, modesty, clemency, and pity.’356

Now, Nietzsche has a way with words when he laments the slave morality of his contemporaries, and he surely hits a nerve when casting the long fought for European liberal democracy as weak and spineless. Like Machiavelli, his writing inspires fear because it challenges us to face our weaknesses; the fear that we would yield to a charlatan, or else that others would, and that we lack the strength to stand up to a tyrant. That we rather have less dangerous leaders, even though the occasional outburst of support for a charismatic leader shows a craving for the latter as well. This is understandable because after all, Hitler knew how to make proper use of the above. But if we suspend for a second our prejudice, and contain our tendency to kill the messenger, there is much insight to be gained from facing the dark side of our souls. It takes courage to face our own hypocrisy, and admit that the way we have developed democracy has not often yielded first-class stewardship. In fact, we find ourselves in wars of which the goal and origin remain unclear, our feeble attempts to build a ‘Europe of the people’ result in humiliating spectacles for the ruling class. Behind these spectacles is the character of the modern ruler - of the modern self - and his relationship to the forces of exposure.

The political language of transparency is a code for the condition by which authority has to authorise itself. It needs to think of itself as authority and admit a performance of that authority without being able to refer to a higher order. It has become reflexive. The questions authority is forced to ask itself are how it thinks about itself, what it thinks authority is, and how it will dramatically perform its role. Because there is no belief in a higher order that could give the answer, the responsibility for deciding on ‘who to be’ rests on the shoulders of every authority figure itself. The disorder that comes with this can psychologically be met in two ways; maturely or immaturity as with the attitudes we saw in Mrs Colagan on the one hand, and in Jane Tomkins before she established authority to herself.

This means that the absence of authority can bring leaders to believe in their own ethical incompleteness, but it can also force them to develop toward a more autonomous and ‘response-able’ (or creative) authority. On the social level, following the modern archetypes of authority that I described, we mainly see the immature form and a struggle towards a new conception and experience of this social bond. I describe this struggle through the lens of two responses. This struggle takes place on the axis of awe and reassurance, inspired by love or fear.

In this part I chose to split the world in two: figures of authority who build their credibility through nearness and revealing transparency, and figures of authority who rely on an awe inspiring mystery of distance and the necessity of their action. These are archetypes, the sublimated mix of which resembles a wholesome, dynamic, and mature authority that is not depending on either the desire for nearness and fear for distance, or vice-versa. In the previous part I argued how intimacy, authenticity, and exposure have become dominantly determining values of modern society. They condition the attitudes and consciousness of both what I would call distant and near authorities. Leaders of the latter kind use exposure more as a genuine practice however, and try actually to reveal their inner worlds in order to seem more like ordinary citizens as part of their self-legitimation. He tries to reassure by presenting no threat.

The exposure of the former distant authority comes in the form of transgressive power which shows how different the ruler is from the ordinary. He makes the world black and white, and reducing the complexity of reality to a seemingly transparent division between us and them, or good and bad. The reassurance he gives comes with the distance to citizens that his extraordinary position of saviour suggests.
Both near and distant authority are relics of modernity that unsuccessfully claim undeniable authenticity in a post-structural environment.\footnote{By post-structural I mean a world that increasingly rejects definitions that claim to have discovered absolute ‘truths’ or facts about the world. It is a world where the audience replaces the author as the primary subject of observation. This displacement of the author destabilises meaning. Most importantly the meaning of what the author created, and so also his authority. None of the sources remaining to interpret the meaning are authoritative, and promise no consistency. See for instance Lévinas, E. (2003). Humanism of the Other. Chicago, University of Illinois Press.} And both are products of an essential worry: how to be an authority in a world that longs for, but disbelieves and fears authority itself? But they also represent the double essence of authority’s workings, which are its capacity to inspire awe and to reassure. In my view, there is an immature way to deal with an identity crisis and a mature way. But contemporary society has not yet found a way of establishing shared new and upright authority under the pressures of exposure and their attempts to use fear and reassurance remain predominantly immature.

The imperative of transparency means that figures of authority must persuade us that they have been as democratic as is humanly possible by performing their transparency. ‘Real’ transparency is impossible because it is a metaphor, so every executive needs to find his way of acting out his role of the transparent ruler. But the shift from ‘authority’ to ‘authenticity’ in relationships of persuasion always seems to involve the demonstration of suffering, agony, or indignation. And because the actual demonstration of transparency is so intangible, the performance of emotion may function as a surrogate, because when someone is in pain we tend to take for granted that he is not faking it. It is as if the authority figure says: look, I am in pain and do what is humanly possible, what more do you want me to do? That is why crying presidents and premiers are a regular feature on the televised news. Transparency is therefore not a mere instance of democratisation, but it brings with it a new kind of citizen and a new kind of ruler.

Transparency is an imperative for both faces, although it comes more naturally to the ruler who sees himself as near to the public. For him it is a genuine practice in the sense that he actually reveals his inner troubles, but is free to do so with manipulative intention, whereas for the distant leader it is generally a rhetorical claim and elective form of impression management, even though his power is often in the genuine and public exposure of his emotions of indignation.

Structurally, both faces occupy the same position as modern archetypes and in their political form they fight their own pre-emption. Like Machiavelli’s New Prince, the executive inhabits a world of opposition and ambivalent demands on his personae. As a
usurper he has to cultivate an independent identity while he hides from the public gaze or leaps into the spotlight to sustain the image of his fortitude and servitude. The tension between transparent and opaque or close and distant is present in all authority, but when roles become unstable and rulers cannot rely on their authority, the confusion becomes pertinent. What Machiavelli recommended was swiftness of action and manipulation such that his actions and decisions seem necessary rather than the product of human choice, and if the Prince is not to be challenged he needs to deny responsibility.

The face of nearness plays for sympathy and self-reflective exposure, like Hamlet. His transparency and suffering are an apology for his inability to deliver the security and comfort that are lacking. Whereas the face of distant opacity identifies with the informal power of the executive, the face of nearness and transparency is the ruler who identifies with the formal authority that modern democracies assigned to him.

The ruler has two worries. He is concerned with his legitimacy - the normative acceptability of his reign - and with his authority - the symbolic capital which gives him credibility. Naturally both are intertwined, as changing norms condition credibility of claims to rightful rule. These two worries have a private and a public aspect to them, both of which need validation for a proper bond of authority to come about. These refer to the private dimension of authenticity, or the need to establish authority to oneself, and to public dimension of authorisation which is a collective game. In reality these concerns cannot always be separated and so for analytic purposes they often remain merged. This shouldn’t prevent us though, from asking about both the public and private motivations behind a particular form of self-legitimation.

In what went before I hope that I was able to convey that the larger social distance towards a figure of authority, the more he will inspire awe, and the closer the authority comes, the less omnipotent the authority can appear. To move closer or further away is not only something that subjects can do, but is also part of the way authorities present themselves. There is little attention to this fact since it is usually the rulers against which we try to protect ourselves. And so particularly in the emancipatory movements of the social sciences this self-revealing and self-undermining side of power remains underexposed.

People burdened with the cultivation of authority experience the lack of roles and contradictory beliefs about authority as cognitively dissonant. At the basis of this
confusion there is a tension created by a paradoxical demand on rulers in modern democracies. They are, as Sennett writes, ‘asked to be the protectors of others, but forbidden to become their lords’. 358 Paradoxically, leaders are saddled with the task of crafting an authentic, public persona, at a time where the crafting itself - the formation of public myths - is distrusted. 359 And to make sure they do not become our lords, modern society has demanded of them that they be transparent, authentic, and intimate. The French Revolution was to make sure that not only the king lost his head, but that no one could ever again call himself a ruler. The violent attack on monarchical power was an attempt to drive out the fear for its authority, just as the attack on the World Trade Centre on 9-11 2001 was a challenge of western authority by showing that the west was neither omnipotent nor morally right. The revolution ended, but enlightenment thought persisted, and it continued to harbour the desire to free the individual from authority. To that purpose authority is asked to be visible and touchable, to be clear and simple so that it is controllable and unthreatening. But now that authority has been exposed by its own transparency, not only have rulers lost the people’s respect, the people have lost their reassurance also.

Crises of authority are moments in which authority becomes transparent. We suddenly see that we are not much different from our masters and the fear for their hidden power falls away, as does the assurance they could give. So a dissonance exists in the ruler as well as in the follower. To make authority transparent therefore, although often a noble cause, doesn’t come without its dangers. To expose authority, to try to look what is behind, will diminish or annihilate it.

The modern ruler doesn’t know whether to be a prince or servant, whether to be visible or invisible, whether to differentiate himself from the people, or to become one of them, to be a father or a teacher, to be discrete or transparent, to exercise influence through impersonal structures or attempt an intimate relationship with ‘the people’. 360 Ideal typically the modern leader either follows the language of rejection and distrust of his authority and will try unwittingly to efface his authority, or he will speak directly to the human need for authority and evoke the necessity of his protection.

359 Social authority, that which we ascribe to roles and offices, is a public myth, a shared social reality with a personal psychological function.
360 These questions are based on the double demands on leaders, who are asked to be transparent, but whose authority is challenged as soon as they do.
The forces of exposure cannot explain the specific behaviour of any particular leader or his organisation, but they help us to understand their behaviour. They form the background against which the two faces of authority appear in the stage. For instance, there is the reformer who got his spirit from the sixties, who endeavoured to open up the closed hierarchical structures of society in order to give power to the people. The other face we see in populism, also kicking against the (elite) establishment and also afraid of authority. These two faces may exist in the same person, and usually do, but in the following chapters I will focus on the distinction rather than the connection for analytical purposes.

It is tempting to see the current struggles of exposure, image making, and the politics of fear as products of our ruler’s deviant personalities, and naturally they have an effect, but this thesis wants to open up the possibility of seeing the attempts to cultivate a long gone quality as a response to the death of truth and shared immanent, incontestable organising principles of society. Even representation and human rights are now exposed for what they are; instruments to cover the lack of certainty. The visible expression of this is that rulers now depend on one another for approval and are held together by virtue of being members of the same elite, rather than by a shared belief. It is the very lack of direction displayed by the new dynasties of power which has made the fantasy of legitimacy become apparent. Ideology cannot solve the problem, as the collapse of Grand Narratives over the past century have shown, and neither can any pragmatic answer as the lack of trust in mere rational institutions suggest.

In what follows I will describe many of the distancing or closing strategies that the Machiavellian or Shakespearean modern leader uses to cultivate a credible self and maintain the authority to rule. They are not exhaustive, and more could be invented every day, though they cover the most widely used including; the use of threat which creates a feeling of necessity; give an illusion of simplicity; make people’s wounds seem self-inflicted by use of referenda; the free public demonstration of emotion; a public display of the search for legitimacy by the ruling class; an attempt at becoming intimate with the people by sharing private life; the transparent display of a ruler’s personal suffering; acting like a common man; the executive’s denial of its own authority by acting like an instrument for expression of the popular will without a proper agency; avoiding public scrutiny by indirectly exercising influence through bureaucracy, use of the language of transparency; trying to become more transparent and realise the aesthetic ideology of transparency in
the physical world; trading status for sympathy and approval; comply with expectations out of fear of resistance by following the outcome of surveys, or performing an image of authenticity.
CHAPTER SEVEN

7 INCREASING SOCIAL DISTANCE

The state left by king Minos is the state of nature, which we came to think of through the words of Thomas Hobbes. Without a common imagination, and the ritual which establishes the distance between ruler and his ruled, fear is the natural state from which men enter into a social contract. Fear is political in this state, because it is fear for one another in everyone’s pursuit of his or her desired objectives which leads people to give up their independence in return for security under the protective rule of a Leviathan. Social distance is then the result of something unknown, and the unknown inspires fear.

I want to illustrate the distant face over two sections, one deals with the sense of necessity that the war on terror arouses, the other with the distance that the false claim to transparency maintains when reality is in fact complex and opaque. For the first archetypical response to the disappearance of authority I proposed to look at Machiavelli’s prince. His strategy is to increase social distance like the stern and severe father. He maintains order and belief by inspiring awe and the illusion of his necessity because in a secular world only undeniability remains as a true substitute for authority. As such he needs to pretend to be transparent in order to survive since ‘power is relieved of its complexity only by lies about what it is.’ \(^{361}\) The distant ruler then mystifies himself, be it by pretending with great aplomb that he has nothing to hide and that he is an immanent and undeniable source of value. The art of Machiavelli’s prince was precisely to seem as if the

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ruler had come to power by hereditary means, which means his rule would seem legitimate because unquestioned and undeniable.

With respect to distance, it was Freud who observed that people are drawn to and willing to follow a leader who can appear as people’s ego-ideal, distant and almost unreachable for his subjects.\textsuperscript{362} This is the father figure of distant authority which Freud refers to. ‘It is precisely the sight of the chieftain that is dangerous and unbearable for primitive people, just as later that of the Godhead is for mortals.’\textsuperscript{363} Only when rulers can be ‘of a masterful nature, absolutely narcissistic, self-confident and independent’ they inspire awe.\textsuperscript{364} To an extent this is the case, but narcissism is not the only way that authority can be inspired. An extreme example would be the Dalai Lama whose non-cynical concern with a responsible selflessness commands respect. It is true that he is masterful, independent and self-confident. Every one who has met him can tell that his confidence comes from a deep self-acceptance and autonomy (which is still different from independence in that it does not refer to a dependence from anything outside, but rather makes a statement about whence he takes direction. He takes \textit{nomos} – order - from himself - \textit{auto}.\textsuperscript{364} All rulers, whether close or distant, need this kind of distance in order for people to trust them. They need in some way or another to be able to inspire the belief (which again comes as much from the kind of need their audiences cherish) in their autonomy, and so in their separateness. But when distance is distrusted it needs to be brought to the people by an illusion of necessity, which is what the Prince does, or otherwise by an exceptional kind of transparency, which is what the Tragic Hero tries. Both claim authenticity.

The first claim to undeniable authenticity is that of the protector in times of necessity. Machiavelli suggests that the only time power is really transparent – that it shows its real nature - is when it shows its necessity by extraordinary means. The ruler shows himself a saviour or a punisher in an attempt to bring necessity to the people, to expose the bare life threat which simulates a continuous state of exception. ‘I am, of all politicians who play a part at this time, the only one who could do something like this,’\textsuperscript{365} the later assassinated Dutch Prime Ministerial candidate Pim Fortuyn claimed when he spoke about a necessary change in Dutch politics and society. Authority is cultivated by claiming superiority based

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{362} See also for instance Borch-Jacobsen, M. (1993). \textit{The Emotional Tie; Psychoanalysis, Mimesis, and Affect}. Stanford, Stanford University Press.
  \item \textsuperscript{363} Freud, S. (1975). \textit{Group psychology and the analysis of the ego}. New York, Norton.
  \item \textsuperscript{364} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{365} From Interview met Pim Fortuyn ‘Ik Kom Eraan’ by Hugo van Rhijn (2003) Production: Speakers Academy Multimedia
\end{itemize}
on an outsider position and necessary change. The established order is said to be in crisis and other authorities are challenged. The dynamic of usurpation in contemporary liberal democracy is hereby amplified and made explicit. But the need to rely on necessity as justification is a sign of social poverty in the sense that there is no bond of trust and respect upon which the leader can rely; he has to use the brute force of peoples’ nakedness and vulnerability. In the midst of contested social ritual rulers tap into the deep abdominal waters of fear and discontent by projecting themselves or their decisions as ultimately undeniable. The free market is undeniable, the ‘war on terror’ is, human rights are, and international governing institutions can be portrayed as such for instance.

In his immature form the distant authority is associated with an immanent rule from a constant state of exception. Not the weight of the Roman Senate, but the cold steeled lightness (absence of higher order authority) of Guantanamo Bay. For me, the state of exception extends beyond the legal form that gives emergency powers to a dictator, or suspends the law, and more generally also includes that state in which the normal routines of authority relationships are suspended, the law being but one such routine. In this state there are no rights, there is no law, only pure authority, real life and real power. It is a space where the difference between citizen and non-citizen blurs, and where the direction of society depends on the informal respect that the ‘true sovereign’ can summon. ‘Sovereign is he,’ the first sentence of Schmitt’s book *Politische Theologie* reads, ‘who decides on the state of exception.’

The ruler needs to bring necessity to the people, Machiavelli showed, by ‘exceptional measures’ - measures that show the necessity of the state. Ironically the only time the state is actually transparent, when power shows its true workings, is with the execution of these extraordinary measures. A dominant expression today of Machiavelli’s insight lies in what Agamben called a ‘legislative turn’. This is the continuing tendency in all of the Western democracies to rely increasingly on exceptional means in order to secure respect, even though in the long run it has the opposite effect. ‘The declaration of the state of exception,’ Agamben writes, ‘has gradually been replaced by an unprecedented generalization of the paradigm of security as the normal technique of government’.

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367 In Machiavelli’s Discourses republics become corrupt and its authority goes stale if ordinary means are not revives in ‘extraordinary means’. Ruining republics (D I 7, II 34), need extraordinary means (D I 18, II 16), meaning ‘notable and excessive executions’ (D III 1). This requires a extraordinary authority (D III 3) ‘without depending on law that stimulates you to any execution’ (D III 1)

Machiavelli shows that necessity yields obedience, and at the time he was right in proposing the measures he did. Renaissance rulers found themselves usurping power after which authority had to be created anew. In order to survive the absence of established authority he needed an approach that spoke a little more directly to our instincts than we think we would accept today. But that our leaders use these techniques suggests that our democracies may resemble the usurpation of early modern Florence in more ways than we would like to recognise.

Not only are our political systems based on a tamed logic of the Prince, but Machiavelli has also been the attributed Godfather of modern management.\textsuperscript{369} It is in the realm of economy that the shrewd ruler has had more freedom to acquire acceptance because this realm is ruled by money rather than the acquisition of opinion. But especially in the last few decades the cultures of politics and economy have grown closer and so have their styles of leadership.\textsuperscript{370} One only has to observe the language of public management or the corporate accountability to see how this is so.

As mentioned before, transparency is successfully used as a means of control, not just by the audience but by the ruler as well. His exposure is his means of having a larger impact, and his open exhibition of emotion and closeness are in fact a demonstration of his exceptionality and distance. The distant ruler is not controllable, he even tends to live outside the law by exerting more informal power than formal. This is illustrated in chapter 7.2 by a ruler’s charismatic reduction of complexity which seduces his audience by claiming a transparent, clear cut and visible state of affairs that reassures.


Or more specifically one could have a look at the following literature which is happy to gain on Machiavelli’s name; Rudolf Berner, Machiavelli 2000; Phil Harris (Ed.), Machiavelli, marketing and management; Stanley Bing, What would Machiavelli do; Richard Biskirk, Modern management and Machiavelli; L.F. Gunlicks, The Machiavellian manager’s handbook for success; Michael Arthur Ledeen, Machiavelli on modern leadership: Why Machiavelli’s iron rules are as timely and important today as five centuries ago; Antony Jay, Management and Machiavelli: Discovering a new science of management in the timeless principles of state craft; Gerald Griffin, Machiavelli on Management; W.T. Bramhstedt, Memo to the boss from Mack: A contemporary rendering of The Prince by Niccolò Machiavelli; Alistair McAlpine, The new Machiavelli: The art of politics in business; Dick Morris, The new prince: Machiavelli updated for the twenty-first century; Harriet Rubin, The principessa: Machiavelli for women; Richard Hill, The Boss: Machiavelli on managerial leadership; Fritz Lawrence Mervil, The political philosophy of Niccolo Machiavelli as it applies to politics, the management of the firm, and the science of living
7.1 AWE AND NECESSITY

O, had thy grandsire with a prophet's eye

Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,

From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,

Deposing thee before thou wert possess'd

Which art possess'd now to depose thyself.

—RICHARD II Act II, scene 1

In a culture of transparency, where ruler's roles have lost their socially accepted authority (authorisation), and the leader needs to reinvent his own authority (authenticity) and its performance (authorship) such that it unifies individuals and systems in a fragmented world (augmentation), he may be tempted to have recourse to a short cut strategy to a pastiche of authority. The surrogate simulation of authority is cultivated with an appeal to the most basic human instincts: that of survival.

Machiavelli’s New Prince of modern authority recognises a need to ‘bring necessity to the people’ at times in order to make it clear to them that they need a sovereign. By extraordinary means of execution that go beyond the thin varnish of civilisation called law he makes himself transparent for what he really is: sovereign. I would like to illustrate this by the currently most obvious example of this; the legitimating function of the War of Terror as waged by the United States President George W. Bush and his administration.

The works of Giorgio Agamben and Carl Schmitt on the state of exception find another expression in the so called Copenhagen School, which has noticed a trend in international relations which Waever called ‘securitization’. This is a social-constructivist perspective that considers how problems are transformed into security issues with an existential threat. Through this threat it becomes a tool for cultivating authority. Or as Huysmans puts it, ‘securitization constitutes political unity by means of placing it in an existentially hostile environment and asserting an obligation to free it from threat.’ Posing an existential threat creates a political unity and the obligation to free that unity from the threat.

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necessity of the executive is thereby connected to the necessity of salvation. ‘The language game of security is’, as Waever said it, ‘a *jus necessitate* for threatened elites.’³⁷³

This transformation process is governed by a rationale which is spread over almost every area of modern life, and in particular what Ulrich Beck called the ‘risk society’. Modern western society can be described as a society organised in response to risk. What distinguishes these risks from the dangers that have always been around is that they are produced by modernisation itself – they are manufactured.³⁷⁴ Because humans create these risks, we can also assess and control the level of risk, which provokes a demand for control. But it also corrodes the trust in modern institutions and industry for instance, as they are part of the problem.³⁷⁵ This is why it takes a lot of effort to maintain an issue securitised. The very fact that I can write about the phenomenon in this detached manner means that people can and do – albeit not all together - reflect on both the risks and the way society responds to risks. Giddens calls this the reflexivity of modernity, which refers to the influence that our continuous study and observation of our own actions has on those actions. The increasing awareness and effort with respect to the need for a more sustainable way of life is an example of reflexivity aimed at reducing risk.

This very reflexivity prevents the strategy of securitization from remaining effective on the long run. But because securitization specifies a given area of interest as one of national survival and has a strong focus on fear it creates a willingness to accept commands in that area for a period of time.

A ‘securitised’ issue is a successful discourse, whether or not the issue is an objective life threat. Issues as different as illegal immigration, bird flu, environmental, military, social, political, or economic threats can all be subject to this securitization. With the right kind of credibility and within the context of related shared beliefs around a certain threat, a ruler can ‘securitize’ an issue such that even extraordinary means (which may include breaking otherwise binding rules or governing by decree rather than by democratic decisions) are accepted as legitimate to solve the threat. So the way executives can deal with these issues changes after their securitisation into a kind of metaphoric war. The by now well known ‘War on Terrorism’ as it is waged by the Bush administration, created the occasion for Bush to declare a state of emergency and even mobilize the military for actual war.

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In order for any issue to become related to emergency measures it needs first to be declared as an existential threat, then it needs the acceptance of this ‘constructed reality’ by the public, and finally the act of acceptance should allow for extraordinary measures without public control. It is the audience allowing extraordinary means by its approval in the end, it decides, not the securitizing actor itself. But what happens behind the scenes is that a particular ruler or group of rulers are cultivating an identity by means of this process of securitisation.

What the Copenhagen School does not write about is that it is not necessary that it ever comes to the use exceptional means. The securitisation strategy can equally be used as a way of calling for preventive measures and risk management so that it never has to come to extraordinary means. Security is used both to evoke exceptional measures and to eschew them. This means that securitisation is not purely about exceptional measures. Following what we have seen in chapter one, legitimation strategies are not just about being able to exercise power. Constructivist theory usually assumes that an appeal to necessity serves to legitimate certain actions, but, more than that, it functions as a way of becoming someone: legitimating an identity.

The necessity of state action in the face of a threat lends authority to its leaders. It is not theirs at first, because it does not arise from their authentically authored character. It is borrowed from an outside threat and is therefore temporary. The effect of ‘securitization’ is that issues are taken out of the political sphere, and become unquestionable. And that is precisely what authority is in its immature form: lasting and unquestionable.

In the service of becoming someone the use of exceptional means also work to legitimate an appeal to necessity, very much like Augustus, whose informal authority and actual power mutually reinforced each other. Without extremely deliberate consideration on the part of the audience, the use of exceptional means by the executive creates an instant feeling fear, as it breaks the predictable order, which is then retrospectively justified with their necessity. The use of exceptional means is therefore a way of cultivating at least a temporary derivative of authorising authority.

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376 Ibid. 31
377 Whether or not this is a deliberate strategy or not, and with what intention for a given situation is difficult to say as meaning cannot be deduced from observed actions. But since it has become a widespread phenomenon it indicates that something is changing in the social order. What I want to show is that these strategies of securitisation still work as means of inspiring awe and therefore are available to the modern leader, whether or not this is what he uses them for.
The discursive strategy of using necessity as leverage for personal authority is not just a game of public manipulation. From chapter 2.2 we may recall that becoming someone in the eyes of the public is different from, and usually secondary to, becoming someone in one’s own eyes. First and foremost leaders try to establish authority to themselves. Some of the dynamics behind the War on Terror can illustrate this very well.

Like any President, the 43rd president of the US, George W. Bush, has been analysed often during his period in office. What has become common ground among the many Bush observers is that ‘George W. Bush has been driven since childhood by a need to differentiate himself from his father, to challenge, surpass, and overcome him. Accompanying those motives have been their precise opposites, expressed through a lifelong effort to follow, copy, and honor his father.’³⁷⁸ It would be simply wrong to argue that an Oedipus complex led the Western world to war. Instead, it is a starting point for the self-legitimation of the later President. The struggle Bush encounters to reach an authentic authority starts with this relationship because parents are often simply an important influence on whose mistakes we want to correct and from whom we seek admiration; by what means, in other words, and in whose eyes, we want to gain legitimacy.

The near and dear who stood close to him, and who have played a major role in the securitization of terrorism, are Vice President and father-substitute Dick Cheney, and political advisor Karl Rove. In his book ‘The Bush Tragedy’ Weisberg describes how the latter persuaded Bush to steer away from becoming the president he initially intended, namely the centre-right consensus builder he was as governor of Texas.³⁷⁹ Cheney is portrayed as the man who recognized the need for Bush to set himself apart from his father, and knew how to play into Bush’s overconfidence that concealed a lingering intellectual insecurity. He helped him to become his father’s anti-thesis. But this private struggle for becoming one’s own authority has a public component in the intention of restoring the authority and belief in the role of the executive. In this respect Cheney is as much the executive as Bush of course, and this analysis is not about what Bush did, but about the workings of authority cultivation by the modern executive. What makes the Bush administration such a useful illustration is, amongst others, that Cheney is a convinced Conservative who firmly believes that the constitutional role of executive

³⁷⁹ Ibid.
authority is what Machiavelli had designed it for. Allowing us to see the powerful force of the modern model of authority, but also to witness its ultimate bankruptcy.

The leader’s personal quest for establishing authority to himself blends with the social quest for public authority. The first plays out in the - ever shrinking - private sphere, the other in the mediated environment of the global stage. This stage as occupied first by the attacks of 9/11 which have given way to a constitutional moment in which the president had the chance to make his world anew. The new insecurity and feeling of threat have changed our consciousness, but these have also enabled a change in the constitutional equilibrium between the President and the Congress, and between the ruler and the ruled. But what happened is that Congress has acquiesced in its own marginalisation while President George W. Bush has been able to gather authority through one of the most powerful strategies left to modern rulers, namely the promise of security in times of anxiety.

The War on Terror instigated by the Bush administration embodies this strategy as it is a carefully designed brand, the purpose of which was to sustain an atmosphere of fear and to assure a belief in the necessity of the leader and his measures. According to President Bush it is ‘a new kind of war’, one that has never been fought before. And it is waged on many fronts, in the first place the home front of law enforcement, legislation, secret intelligence, and finance. Military conflict was part of it in Afghanistan and Iraq, but the actual confrontation is somewhere else. During the period that preceded the Iraq war we see a struggle for the “hearts and minds” of the American people and a war rather to win the moral high ground of global politics.

Leaders’ claims to authority are generally accepted when they define a threat to the state, but only if the threat is accepted. The attacks provided a receptive context for President Bush’s declaration of a war on terrorism. In the weeks after 9/11 the existential threat was defined and gradually a change of the authority game was introduced. In Bush’s speech of September 12 2001 a restriction of freedom would mean a victory of the enemy. The US would ‘not allow the enemy to win the war by changing our life or


381 A phrase from the Strategic communications report, written autumn 2004 by the Defence Science Board for Pentagon supreme Donald Rumsfeld. In the report the Defence Science Board admits that propagandic efforts have failed and even had opposite effect.
restricting our freedoms.’ But the discourse shifted towards which restrictions on civil rights could be made as tradeoffs for security.

With the 2003 invasion into Iraq distance and awe were carefully cultivated through a series of rituals and devises which heightened the sense of fear and changing the rules of the game. Most prominent are the suspension of habeas corpus, the creation of Guantanamo Bay camp, and the new forms of government surveillance of the Department of Homeland Security under the Patriot Act. One could say much more about the restrictions made and the reasons given for it, but others have done so better and more extensively than I would be able to here. The point remains that the authority to restrict liberties, the highest of goods according to western ideology, was a created sense of necessity.

Bush had entered the White House with a minority of votes, a stark national divide and exigent questions about the legitimacy of his appointment. But after the attacks and Bush’s rebirth as a war president, questions of legitimacy did not even appear on the opinion polls anymore.

In most Western countries the executive had lost in power with respect to the national political system. That is, if by executive we understand the cabinet or President. If all executive agencies are the executive, then it has gained enormously in power over the past decades. The way executives have gained power has been by privatising it, using more managerial and unilateral powers. Executives have become ever more autonomous of their subject and increased the social distance not only emotionally but also structurally. Political parties no longer need their members to survive for instance. Authorities are outsourced to experts, judges and other authentic redeemers outside the political or executive field and this keeps the workings of authority mystical. It also means that at the same time the legislative has lost oversight and lawmaking capacity since WW II

382 There is a growing body of conceptual studies on the micro-dynamics of threat constructions like Waever’s ‘securitisations’ and Weldes ‘discourses of danger’, or Huysmans’ ‘politics of insecurity’. But also on the macro level we see more studies defining international security discourses like Adler and Bennett with ‘security communities’, or Buzan’s ‘security complexes.’ As part of the reflexive social sciences they indicate a change in the way authority is constructed.
however. Decisions are made more by private organisations, deregulated specialised regulatory bodies, by international financial and trade organisations, and by networks of different governing bodies. Most importantly perhaps is the increased burden on the judiciary for both public scrutiny and lawmaking.

Both as a short term remedy to Bush’s unpopularity and as a strategy for regaining executive impact the ‘war on terror’ is an exceptional measure for establishing authority. It is common for executives to gain power in times of war, sometimes aggressively so and most of the times necessarily so due to the need for swift and determined action.387 Left aside the fact that is debatable whether the attack was an act of war, they nonetheless fixed the public, media and representative’s attention on the president as the sole national leader who could give direction. And as was the case after the December 1941 attacks on Pearl Harbor, though with a few days of delay for Bush, the president and his advisors were able to read the mood and provide the symbolic leadership that the situation asked for. In a moving speech in the National Cathedral in Washington, Bush asserted his moral authority as the president of the United States. “We have just seen the first war of the 21st century,” he declared, and vowed to “lead the world to victory” in the battle against terrorism. ‘There is universal approval of the statements I have made.’ He says, ‘and I am confident there will be universal approval of the actions this government takes.’ He had transformed from a marginal President who didn’t master his syntax to a beacon of hope and trust with whom America could defy its enemy. And in the opinion polls he received the highest support in history for a President’s agenda.388

As Franklin Roosevelt had done after Pearl Harbor, he came before the Congress to have his resolution confirmed by the representative and was supported for his ‘war on global terrorism.’389 From that moment he rapidly and skillfully strengthened his office with new legislation and the approval for a joint resolution authorizing the President to use ‘all necessary and appropriate force’ against not only the people responsible for the September 11 outrage but also against anyone preparing future acts of terrorism.390 The
measures were bold, aggressive, but nevertheless framed such that they would garner strong emotional support. But what was being formed was a new and permanent order for a permanent war.

Bush’s chief of staff, Andrew Card, explained the rationale, which predates 9/11.

‘There was a recognition (…) that the previous administration allowed for the erosion of some executive power. [President George W. Bush] knows how important it is that the president (…) is in a position where he can have unfettered, candid counsel that will allow him (…) to be able to make the most important decisions on behalf of the country, and to be able to keep the oath that is also written in Article II (…) He wanted to restore the executive authority the president had traditionally been able to exercise.’391

We see that all presidents have expanded their privilege, but not with such force and bold assertion.392 “First of all a president has got to be the calcium in the backbone. If I weaken, the whole team weakens (…) If my confidence level in our ability declines, it will send ripples throughout the whole organization. I mean, it’s essential that we can be confident and determined and united.”393

The distant father does not weaken or show his desire to be liked by acting smaller. About his responsiveness to the cabinet Bush was able to say ‘I am the commander, see? I do not need to explain why I say things. That’s the interesting thing about being the President. Maybe somebody needs to explain to me why they say something, but I don’t

of domestic and national security: to enhance intelligence gathering, law enforcement, and asset seizure capacity, to strengthen the Immigration and Naturalization Service’s monitoring and detainment powers, and to transform the Justice Department’s primary mission from catching criminals to protecting the country against terrorism (U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary 2001a; 2001b).

A few days later his loose worded resolution was approved in which he was authorised to use: ‘all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons. (P.L. 107-40)


In the present circumstances, the [1973 the War Powers Resolution] signifies Congress’s recognition that the President’s constitutional authority alone would enable him to take military measures to combat the organizations or groups responsible for the September 11 incidents, together with any governments that may have harbored or supported them… Further, Congress’s support for the President’s power suggests no limits on the Executive’s judgment whether to use military force in response to the national emergency created by those incidents. (U.S. Department of Justice 2001)


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feel like I owe anybody an explanation." 394 This illustration shows an attempt to remain at a social distance in order to command respect.395

Necessity is not an objective thing, people may feel the necessity of something and leaders can claim his measures are necessary. The only thing that has authority above the law is a higher form of authority. It may be necessary to break the law for survival, and in the tragedy of Antigone the laws of men are weighed against the laws of the gods. But it does not say much still about how claims to necessity work. Disproving the objective nature of necessity says nothing about how they are situated and operate within legal, political, bureaucratic and social fields, and about the kind of culturally-determined sentiments they act upon.

Bush could swiftly push for a ‘state of exception’ and adopt exceptional powers with the ‘Patriot Act’ when a terrorist threat seemed to necessitate curtailing basic liberal democratic citizen protections. The Patriot Act, though legally embedded, is the suspension of law which essentially gives the president carte blanche for totalitarian practices. In itself these powers have characterised the modern executive throughout its history. After Pearl Harbour, Roosevelt acquired similar powers and sometimes even in ways that bypassed regular procedure and which directly challenged the Congress.396 But the question is not one of uniqueness. What is interesting is that rather than exceptional, the Security legislation adopted in many countries after the destruction of the World Trade Centre, not only the US, turns out to be disturbingly ordinary.

The exceptional state is where the real sovereign becomes visible.397 But if there was no sense of threat there would not have been such strong, though temporary, authority. Enemies are never objective entities in the world, they are constructed and interpreted as enemies. And as soon as one starts seeing this or that threat as an enemy opposition arises. The enemy then creates the ‘us’ and allows ‘us’ to join against a common threat together. This shared experience allows leaders in these situations, especially strife for independence or war and to borrow the force of necessity from the cause at hand.

395 Not that I do not use the word respect in the sense of accepting the other person for that part which I do not or cannot understand. Here it only means the recognition of dominance, which is authority in a non-holistic sense.
397 The transparency paradox here is that whereas the rationale of securitisation is dominated by the presumption that it suspends ordinary norms in order to transparently exercise sovereignty, the image presented by the authority figures and the mass media underplay this aspect and try to make the measures seem even normal as not to trigger resistance.

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Whether necessary or not, as long as the measures and actions are phrased well enough within the common experience and against the threat, they become very persuasive. This is no ‘real’ authority therefore as they have little to do with the figure who utters the claim. But the aura of necessity can stick to the leader all the same, who then by means of a self-fulfilling prophesy becomes authoritative. But this kind of charisma does not stay. It is bound to implode when necessity is exposed as a human choice for a personal interest.

Ultimately this distant archetype of authority is unsuccessful as it will implode with the borrowed awe inspiring charisma that came with it. To understand this better we need to dive into the nature of charisma a little more.

Terror and charisma have a lot in common; they can both show a tip of the sublime. In the same way that the image of two collapsing towers can leave a powerful impression that influences our otherwise reasonable judgement, obscuring a more or less clear sight, so can the image of a violently intimate personality divert attention away from his nakedness. Feelings and ostensible frankness do not necessarily bring one closer however. The immanent charisma of a ruler directs the soul towards his human emotions and leaves his commands or decisions relatively unobserved. He is exceptional, even if he is exceptionally like a common man. But once his exceptionality is exposed he no longer manages to inspire the awe upon which his charisma thrives. Weber famously describes the tragedy of charismatic leaders. ‘Charismatic authority is naturally unstable’, he writes, not only because he has to prove his exceptionality continuously, but above all because the revolution upon which the belief in its founding and redeeming power is based, will not stand the pressure of normality.398 Charismatic authority will be ‘routinised’, Jesus of necessity becomes the Church, and the King turns into bureaucracy. Machiavelli’s prince who comes to power by ‘making everything anew’, has to turn his revolutionary energy into ‘ordini’ and ‘istituzioni’ upon which authority is materialised in law and exercised through the chain of command so that the burden of proof is relieved from the charismatic leader. Paradoxically it is his exceptionality which inspires awe and belief, but which also makes him vulnerable.399 His special qualities are seen as a ‘gift’, divine or profane, with the specific purpose of resolving the distress and crisis from which the leader emerged. His ‘mission’ is to redeem the people, to right the wrongs in society or its lost morality, to revolt against the establishment.

399 Ibid. pp.1112
The ‘gift’ and his ‘mission’ exist in a precarious tension to one another because if he fails to do what people believe he ought to do, the credibility of his gift is undermined. So the ruler is burdened with proving himself. ‘If proof and success elude the leader for long, if he appears deserted by his god or his magical or heroic powers, above all, if his leadership fails to benefit his followers, it is likely that his charismatic authority will disappear.’\textsuperscript{400} For Weber failure of the mission affect the ruler’s credibility, but he doesn’t define failure. Failure is not objective and even if the leader doesn’t deliver what he promised, there may be a million reasons why his followers might still believe he is the great redeemer. In political science there is much talk about input and output legitimacy, and it also assumes that government results determine credibility, but this completely misses out the fact that authority is based on perception rather than measurable results.\textsuperscript{401} But even if the leader fulfils his mission, ‘every charisma is on the road from a turbulently emotional life that knows no economic rationality to a slow death by suffocation under the weight of material interests: every hour of its existence brings it nearer to this end.’\textsuperscript{402} The charismatic leader and his staff or government will not be able to sustain an ongoing revolution. Robespierre in waging the French Revolution soon turned to terror and eventually desired a normal life after his successful revolution which would realise his material interests. Their rule becomes traditionalised so that it seems they have been ruling for ever, or rationalised and absorbed in the chain of bureaucratic command. Aspects of charisma may still live on, but are always retraceable to the roots of grace.\textsuperscript{403}

So from this we can understand the routinisation of exceptionality. It is an attempt at materialising the charismatic, or awe impairing authority effect of necessity. But we can also see that authority acquired by a routinised discourse of necessity will eventually implode, or otherwise simply wane with the exhaustion of the people. It is like a rubber band kept in tension for too long and losing its elasticity.

Concluding, the strategy of necessity is one of the few remaining ways of transforming usurpation into authoritative rule, be it ultimately instable. The two components of authority, awe and reassurance, come to an extreme in this example. A situation of

\textsuperscript{400} Ibid. pp.242
\textsuperscript{403} Weber discusses many of these forms in his chapters on ‘Charisma and its Transformation’ and ‘Political and Hierocratic Domination.’ These include charismatic acclamation, democratic suffrage, lineage charisma, ‘clan states,’ primogeniture, office charisma, as well as various forms of hierocratic domination
insecurity is used to create a situation of seeming security. In that respect Bush’s war and the jihad as its counterpart fulfil exactly the same function. To provide an illusion of security in a world of disintegrating authority structures. The word ‘state of exception’ makes it clear that it concerns a situation different from the normal routine. But when no other means produce a sense of legitimacy it can become tempting to make exceptions into a routine. The attempt to create unquestionable authority may be temporarily useful, but history is full of examples in which this was easily followed into a permanent state of dictatorship. Ultimately the strategy of inspiring awe by a discourse of necessity undermines authority, and proves the need for new embodiments of the two faces of authority.
7.2 TRANSPARENCY AS SEDUCTION BY SIMPLICITY

Whereas 18thC revolutionary allegations were against the nobility, our own charges contest the bureaucracy of the modern state and its secretive politicians. We hear the same call for visibility in Woodrow Wilson’s aim to ‘take politics out of the smoke filled rooms’. But however reasonable these intentions, there is a danger in the desire for transparency and simplicity. Today it is the populist slogan of nearly every anti-establishment leader.404 A growing body of literature on populism gives evidence of the rise in populist strategies used and the receptiveness to them.405 In this section I want to look at how transparency can be a means of increasing the social distance between ruler and ruled and how it can divert attention from the ruler’s deeds and intentions. It becomes clear that distant and close or transparent and opaque are not always easily distinguishable. The rhetoric of closeness, in other words, can serve the objective of distance.

The metaphor of transparent authority is so powerful because it suggests the reconciliation of clarity and control in times where both are scarce. But in fact it only obscures the reality of both control and clarity. The power relation between ruler and ruled is obfuscated by the illusion of controllability, and the reality of modern social complexity is ignored, just like Mussolini could suggest complete transparency to and controllability by the people. The main result however, when believed, is that it allows rulers to rule by personality alone.406 By that I mean that on the one hand the illusion of a transparent and simple world suggests that leaders can single handily act and decide in an unambiguous way on the good and bad of society, and that he has the power to do so. On the other hand, it means that representative rulers claim to personify a single will of the

404 Populism is a discourse which places ‘the people’ against ‘the elites.’ It can involve a philosophy of change or rhetorical style.
406 Richard Sennett discusses also how these images of authority are related to time in private life, where fathers grow old and sons become authorities, but in public life this complexity does not exist as bureaucracies do not grow old and the people do not take over after a government has fallen. Sennett, R. (1980). Authority. New York, Knopf : distributed by Random House.
people while ‘the people’ are always internally diverse. Representation became ever less satisfying with the increasing recognition of social complexity, but by reassuringly displaying simplicity a ruler may create the illusion that he reconciles or transcends difference and, as such, also transcends the mandate of a specific group – be it at the expense of an enemy or the establishment. 407

In the real world both the intimate and distant face of authority sustain this simplicity. The ruler is distant because he is not intimately identified with one group and rather a chameleon who claims to represent all. But he also has a false closeness to him by means of the secular immanent charisma that can rouse an intimate bond with the people’s passions. He needs a celebrity status – the immanent charisma of the visible saviour - and thrives on his exposure to his people. 408 This status of transcendence allows for his opportunism, as he does not claim to represent one particular group. 409

Many rulers all through modern history have used the illusion of clarity to seduce their subjects into believing that they are hiding nothing; often a necessary lie because if people knew the workings of power while adhering to enlightenment ideology in any simple way they would have difficulty trusting any ruler. Mussolini is a great example of a strong leader whose authority was increased by his spectacle of transparency. Although he himself remained at almost god-like distance from the people, with the personal authority that was only rivalled by Augustus, his public persona put up a rhetoric of transparency, intimacy, and openness. He was the outsider who, against the established order of secretive elites and opaque bureaucracies, could rise as the spotless morning star. He uses the same distance to the ‘ordinary’ workings of government that contemporary ‘populists’ use in order to rule by personality rather than by government. This ‘strategy’ is provoked by the kind of democracy we have, which is why you will find it in the speech of most western leaders, but some have it more than others, such as Berlusconi, Bush, Pim

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407 Populist leaders can often be characterised by their anti-establishment attitudes which have their roots in the ability to express indignation. Indignation is perhaps the most seductive emotion that sustain a ruler’s personal credibility and the belief in his authenticity. Ibid. Canovan, M. (1999). “Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy.” Political Studies 47: 2-16.


409 For a mature ruler - someone internally developed to the extent that he has gained an autonomy from external expectations and no longer sees a distinction between his personal interest and that of the community – transcendence has another meaning. He would not represent the passions of the people, or claim to personify their will, but he would perhaps just enable people to see their commonality and respect their difference by virtue of who he is. Although perhaps the most important argument I can make, I reserve it to the discussion in my conclusion as the thesis deals primarily with the response of rulers as it is.
Fortuyn, and Hyder. They all claim an unambiguous and transparent order which only they, as neutral, non-political men of action, can bring about.

The face of distant authority uses the language of transparency, but never actually becomes transparent. Only in times of actual executions where the naked power that backs up authority is used. The distant ruler doesn’t need to be transparent, and he doesn’t need to discover the will of the people through a referendum because he embodies that will. He personifies, translates and represents the will of the people, which is a creative act more than a matter of asking what the people want. This makes for a stylised transparency: people are seduced by an illusion of simplicity. But it is a necessary illusion because there is no way that the government of complex societies can become simple and people’s irrational and unconscious fears play a more important role in their judgment of their rulers than enlightenment thinkers hoped they would.

The populist ruler surrenders to his passion to be seen and becomes an exhibitionist in public life: a dancer. ‘Any one who dislikes dancers and wants to denigrate them,’ says a character from Kundera’s novel *Slowness*, ‘is always going to come up against an insuperable obstacle, the dancer condemns himself to being irreproachable; he hasn’t made a pact with the Devil like Faust, he’s made one with the Angel.’ Dancers practice ‘moral judo’. Strategies like trying to get themselves photographed with starving children, are symptoms of a narcissistic attitude, centred around their emotions rather than their deeds. They live through the eyes of others, looking for love and approval in which they believe their legitimacy lies - obsessed with the sign of themselves, for others to be consumed. Rather than transparent to be invisible, the dancer is transparent to be seen, but to be seen close rather than erect, yielding rather than authoritative.

The populist embodies the reversed panopticon. The entire Western system moved from a disciplining gaze to a more entertaining gaze. The fact that Big Brother until recently referred to a terrifying regime of authoritarian visibility and today produces celebrities whose private lives are consumed by curious spectators is telling. But what is disclosed in this reversed panopticon however is a staged reality. In American politics the art of transparency has always been on the vanguard, with Roosevelt’s fireplace conversations, to Reagan’s prefabricated news stories, to Clinton’s concern with popular opinion - at times that he didn’t have the power to push though legislation or reform - by elevating insignificant measures to signs of his energetic decisiveness. Or perhaps the most far-reaching form of staging transparency has been the staging of war. Politics or
business act out a scene designed to be covered by the media where they are seen to be engaged in the business of governing, ‘talking to the citizen’, in pain about a catastrophe or difficult decision, or otherwise he is pictured in his natural habitat at an unguarded moment of his private life. The serious governor and spontaneous husband are designed to look authentic.

Where all this visibility suggests a public surveillance over government behaviour, but the ruling class itself encourages the watching as a last resort to exercise some form of control. We cannot neutrally observe the operations of government because our viewing affects the very thing we watch – an effect not only known to quantum physics. Our viewing becomes part of politics and together with what is on show we create a new reality. Rulers need to adapt to this new reality, and so do we as spectators and the media.

I cannot escape a note on the role of the media here because practically all relationships between ruler and ruled, and often even between rulers, are televised and exist by virtue of their being mediated. The media who allow for society wide relationships of authority are no distant observers of events, but active players in the field. They compete for viewers with the rest of the entertainment industry and thereby force each image to conform with what seizes the viewers’ attention. News is a commodity and therefore to a large extent what absorbs the desires of the consumer dictates what is broadcast.

Already leaders have become intimate with their audience in order to give it the sense of warmth in the absence of the sacred, but mass media have elevated personal celebrity to super human proportions.410 Like the charismatic ruler of the secular age, commercial television diverts attention from the content to the moving image. It is concerned with questions of the ‘who’ and ‘how’ of power and scandal, playing on sentiments of indignation and resentment.411 The very strategies of political manipulation have become a form of entertainment now when we get a glimpse of the workings of power behind the scenes. Rather than actual openness this occupation with the struggles and intrigues of the elite just eats the time we could have spent on content and construction. A 21st century ruler knows this and will use whatever means to use this environment to his

advantage, thereby conforming government to the image the media have of it. It seems to bring politics closer to the citizen, but what the watch box spouts into the living room is a different product: namely mediated politics, which by now has collapsed with what used to be ‘real politics’. Visibility is something different from closeness, and actual self-revelation such as we find in the other face of authority is not the same as exposure.

The visibility of leaders is designed such that it can be readily broadcasted so that news agencies save themselves the trouble of gathering the news themselves. This means that the political scene has become obscene, and so political authority has as well, and that it went beyond the mere seduction of a crowd and rather is obsessed with holding up a fascination. Other than the good old demagogue, who played to the passions, a transparent ruler induces ecstasy before his omnipresent visibility. There is no power to hide, so he hides the absence of it with pastiche.

An increased interest in the private lives of public figures does not leave authority unaffected either. The new apex of intrusion was marked by the impeachment of President Clinton. The new openness by which the sex lives of our leaders become public property was unthinkable until recently. But in the culture of transparency the media, scholars, rulers themselves try to make the leading figure of society as transparent to the common citizen as possible. The publicity of private lives of politicians and CEO’s suggests that there is something of importance to be learned from them. There is something to be said for judging leaders on their character, but there would be no need to dive into the sexual promiscuities of rulers in order to find out. There must be something more to it therefore. Journalists however find that also here it is the public to decide whether this information is relevant or not for the making of such judgement, but in reality the relevance has already been decided by the fact that it is published, or more specific, whether relevant or not, the entertainment value makes it part of public discourse. The affair of Clinton with Lewinsky wasn’t thought of as relevant for his capacity to be a president, still it took him down!

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414 The mediated images we consume about politics, but which we identify with politics, do not hide the truth however. They are that truth which hides the fact that there is no ‘real’ politics underneath it.
The transparent ruler uses all of these developments however. He attempts to relate to his audiences by presenting himself as a human being with the same emotions as his spectators. What Sennett described as the tyranny of intimacy in the *Fall of Public Man* has taken unprecedented proportions. A ruler is only credible, or thought authentic when his responses seem to reflect an intimate personality. Not his commands or his actions, but his talent for convincingly revealing his emotions in public – his transparency – is what figures of authority are judged upon. Warm approachability is then rewarded for the leader who knows nevertheless how to remain distant. The 1990’s were the years in which the mythology of ruler’s emotional availability was given a further impulse. It has become the dominant mode of communication to confess your weaknesses, discuss the family situation, talk frankly about your past, and cry when the audience asks for it. Most of it is planned in advance, but even if a president spontaneously becomes emotional this is because he can. Who embodies the closeness paradigm for me is Bill Clinton, who won both elections by making every single citizen feel cared for. In the now famous novel *Primary Colors* by Anonymous, Clinton is shown the masterful emotional exhibitionist who concord the hearts of the American people. It made the characterising remark ‘I feel your pain’, which he delivered during his campaign of 1992, world famous. But the same sympathy would also be his downfall because it supported the very culture of scandal which would bring him down in December of 1998. In the next chapter I will go deeper into Clinton’s closeness.

Weber notes in *Economy and Society* that ‘the fact that the chief and his administrative staff often appear formally as servants or agents of those they rule, naturally does nothing whatever to disprove the quality of dominance.’ That is, governing institutions still need to govern, and the pressure to deliver has even heightened. The issue is particularly complex because parliaments and administrations actually have lost power to other governing levels and societal complexities. This creates the situation of a mutually reinforcing trend that may in part account for transparency’s success. For the rhetoric of transparency and servitude not only serves the evasion of scrutiny, but is also the condition for the exercise of power. It makes governance possible by knowing on what to exercise power. This is so both in practical and ideological terms. Opaque organisations or

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417 Primary Colors: A Novel of Politics, a 1996 novel by “Anonymous” (later revealed to be journalist Joe Klein), is a roman à clef inspired by U.S. President Bill Clinton’s first presidential campaign in 1992.

societies are ungovernable, and one’s openness has become a convention in political culture, it serves to make dominance ‘acceptable by making it intelligible’. 419

It is understandable that transparency speaks to the imagination, or better, that it tends to leave little space for imagining dangers, because none of the forms of authority that modernity invented can deliver what they promise. Every crisis of authority, meaning every transition to a new relationship of authority, starts with the attempt to see the ‘source’ or substance of the power behind the authority. That is what children do when entering puberty. And when the power is revealed there is no way back. There can still be respect on the basis of love, but if there never was love the relationship is reversed. Once Mussolini was seen for what he was, a sick megalomaniac and a bad father, the Italians strung him up on a lamppost.

Hegel tells us that time teaches the ambiguity and fallibility of authority. No human being, or anything made by human hands can endure the test of time and evolution. When the bondsman realises this the lord loses his omnipotent authority over him. And only the bondsman can do the job because the master, he claims, is too involved with the pleasures of power. But although no one can ‘empower’ someone else, no one can give the gift of autonomy, there is a vast tendency among contemporary authorities to try just that. Hegel could not have imagined that leaders would demonstrate themselves weak and spineless servants, too anxious to defy the voice of the people or the press. Instead their public performances are a testimony to their craving for love and recognition. Unable to exercise authority they show themselves in agonising vulnerability and indecision, which they confuse with the mature capacity to live with ambiguity and the democratic spirit of responsiveness to citizens. This is where the other face of authority turns immature.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8 REDUCING SOCIAL DISTANCE

When reducing social distance rulers run the risk of losing their capacity to reassure, even if what they intended was appearing unthreatening. We are used to hear about power as the authoritarian oppressor of our liberties. Very few people write about the vulnerability of rulers, or the deeper struggles in the psyche of a ruler who is denied authority. This is why Hamlet can teach us so much. Usually the leaders are the one’s least in need of protection, but if they cannot lead well the lesser endowed and vulnerable of society suffer the consequences. It is increasingly difficult for rulers to cultivate a credible self as suitable roles that traditionally communicated trust no longer serve that function. The election of a minister is not the process by which trust and responsibility are conferred upon him for a specific period of time, notwithstanding the belief that that is what legitimacy entails. Elections are the overthrowing of the former government at least as much as the selection of the next one. And trust needs to be cultivated for each decision. New executives are usurpers in that respect, and therefore trusted little and often respected even less. If he does not scare his subjects into submission, or seduce their passions with an image of simplicity, how does a ruler try to establish authority to himself and others?

He tries to be true to himself and communicate that that is what he does because there is no other role to which he can fashion himself in order to be credible. Consider these words: ‘I ask you to accept one thing. Hand on heart, I did what I thought was right. I may have been wrong. That is your call. But believe one thing if nothing else. I did what I thought was right for our country.’ These are British Prime Minister Blair’s at his resignation
speech on May 10th 2007, insinuating he was wrong taking Britain into a war against Iraq. What they communicate is that his belief and intentions, and his promised honesty, should be enough to make for a believable ruler in whom we can lay our trust. Blair is but a vehicle however, and his words should be read as representative of the archetype that I wish to explore. This archetype is a cipher of the public realm who tries to trade trust for power. He is the tragic modern anti hero who hopes to gain the citizen’s trust by giving away his authority out of good will.

Something of this figure transpires through the words of Nietzsche when he scorns authority’s face of nearness, because the same spirit that propelled the summer of 1968 – the spirit of imagination and choice – killed the metaphorical father of society when rulers were set against the ruled.

‘Against this kind of “good−will”—a will to the veritable, actual negation of life—there is, as is generally acknowledged nowadays, no better soporific and sedative than scepticism, the mild, pleasing, lulling poppy of scepticism; and Hamlet himself is now prescribed by the doctors of the day as an antidote to the “spirit,” and its underground noises. (…) Yea! and Nay!—they seem to him opposed to morality; he loves, on the contrary, to make a festival to his virtue by a noble aloofness, while perhaps he says with Montaigne: “What do I know?” Or with Socrates: “I know that I know nothing.” Or: “Here I do not trust myself, no door is open to me.”

The rage and rebellion in Nietzsche is infectious, but betrays a disillusion and tends towards a destructive force when we do not recognise that even figures of authority can develop and mature. From what can be observed in the display of rulers and the transformation of our ruling institutions I argue that power tends to behave immaturely on a social level. But the same sceptic would cast away all fragile power as malicious cowardice and self-pity. Self-exposure may require tremendous courage however, and when sophisticated and not naïve it commands great respect and authority.

This brings me to the three kinds of self-exposure of which the face of intimate authority avails itself. Self-exposure has a double meaning here. Rulers’ self-revelations are both attempts to narcissistically display themselves, and are candid admissions of their own fragility, making their very modesty a claim to credible and unthreatening authority. Authority so exists within the mind of leading figures as something externally elusive – something out there like an immanent Grail which we can discover. Otherwise authority is understood as internally elusive, which would be the deep and humble truth of the inner

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420 Nietzsche ‘Beyond Good and Evil’ Chapter VI We Scholars
world of Hamlet who deserves a title due to his suffering, his amiability and modesty. Or authority is without personality all together and elusive to any one as in an unaccountable and depersonalised bureaucracy in which the irrationality of authority is outsourced to rules – and in which thereby the risk of defeating exposure is eluded. For the last I look into the European Union where authority was not thought to require a face as long as it would provide services for the states and protection for the citizen.\textsuperscript{421}

What is common to all three versions as I will be dealing with them is that they reflect an understanding of authority which sees it as a mirror of the people’s wants. For this very reason the immature face of intimate authority remains a non-authority, since a mirror cannot reassure, it can only show our own image which demands our self-reassurance. And in the end a mysteriously distant authority, based on necessity, cannot reassure either because it may inspire fear, but not the loving comfort that power will not be abused.

In response to a perceived rejection of authority both Hamlet and the Prince simulate the absence of their own power in order to escape the pressure for accountability and the citizen’s distrust. Again, this is not because they or their present day incarnations are evil and false-hearted, it is because modernity demands of them to account for something that is not in their power; to provide divine reassurance and trust to a citizenry that cannot trust human authority as such.

Our archetypes respond in different ways however. The near face of authority explicitly undoes himself from his authority, whereas the Prince hides behind the necessity of the situation, the seduction of his emotions, or the inevitability of the market. As Baudrillard would have it, ‘Power can stage its own murder to rediscover a glimmer of existence and legitimacy.’\textsuperscript{422} This leads to the paradoxical situation in which it is both expected of governments that they deliver, and at the same time do so without overtly exercising power.\textsuperscript{423}

\textsuperscript{421} But even impersonal governance like that of the EU provokes a longing for founding fathers as the constitutional process of the convention has shown. Also here the crisis of authority becomes clear by the unsustainable forms it produces. Bureaucracy alone cannot capture the hearts of the people and so the longing for an emotional or charismatic authority will grow. See for instance P. Norman (2003) \textit{The Accidental Constitution: The Story of the European Convention}. Brussels, Gazelle


\textsuperscript{423} Power stages its own murder also by delimitating the giving of commands in management, it involves the obsessive deference to opinion polls, and a sharing and institutionalising of mistrust towards authority. This helps explain why politics move from government to governance. Constraints of space leave me to only state this link here, but the combination of factors discussed below made that self-doubt and practicality lead politicians to use ever more indirect modes of government, often referred to as governance. Transparency as an instrument of governance has a transformative character, designed to transform people’s perceptions (James G. March, Johan P. Olsen
More than distrust it is indifference that signifies the lack of authority. And rulers contribute heavily to the promotion of such indifference when they, like Jane Tompkins criticizing school authorities, distance themselves from the political elite. This is a common feature of populist politicians and a strategy used by most political leaders in western democracies. For instance, former PM Tony Blair during his first term said on a BBC2 interview: ‘I was never really in politics. I never grew up as a politician. I don’t feel myself a politician even now.’424 By this statement he dissociates himself for the elite in power. In order to close the gap between citizen and ruling class authority figures of the near face attempt to appear as a common man. The cultural gap that exists between ‘the people’ who watch game shows on television, and the elite, who read the London Review of Books, is bridged by identifying with celebrities or acting as a ‘common man’.

When done skilfully the ruler remains exceptional in his art of remaining a common man while being a leader at the same time. However, when the rule reveals more than a celebrity, and actually becomes a common man he logically loses his respect. The dissociation from politics by Third Way political rulers is different from, for instance the way Mussolini, Berlusconi, or Bush portray themselves as outsiders. Blair somewhere wants to see himself as merely facilitating the people to find the best solutions and to make the most out of themselves.425 Government is not about top down direction but about bringing together civil society and markets.426 Ideally government would be superfluous, and merely be the catalyst of societal forces and self-organising networks.

The Third Way joined in on the New Governance trend that had been pondering the question of authority for a while already.427 This current is basically concerned with reducing resistance to authority, even to the point where resistance is taken away before it can arise with devices such as expectation management and surveys. Apart from the fact that it is undesirable to eliminate resistance as conflict and resistance are a necessary part of learning, or any evolution for that matter, this attitude makes government authority less important and less acceptable. In the New Governance thought the government is no longer seen as a privileged actor with a responsibility to protect, stimulate, and reassure, but is advised to take an unassuming role. As Clinton put it in his State of the Union

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424 30 January, 2000. BBC 2
address of 1996 ‘the era of big government is over’, and should keep on the background in order to regain the citizen’s trust.

Authority is a dirty word in the New Governance school, and most of public administration has taken over the New Governance agenda. So not only does the relevance of government decrease to marginal regulation and coaching, there is no will to wield power, to direct society, to educate for mature and ethical human beings, to unify conflicting groups and put them to work for collective wellbeing. So the executive becomes a cipher of the public realm.428

The very same language that before was seen as undermining the public order is now happily adopted by the political elite itself, both outsider and anti-politicians as ‘regular’ rulers speak of themselves in terms of having no authority. That is the premise of democracy: the workings of power need to be hidden from the public in order for authority to survive. Continuing the search for trust and immanent authority the instruments we have for controlling authority are perfected. Representative democracy becomes direct democracy. This has the advantage that the public can be flattered with a referendum.

Figures of authority do not simply choose to portray themselves as lacking authority, they are caught up in a web of self-defeating mechanisms which they would have difficulty to defy if they tried. When leaders discuss serious issues, or demand that real issues are seriously discussed while participating in a televised infotainment show which thrives not on the debate of such issues but on a sensational intimacy with the celebrity leader, then two things happen; first, a ruler consents to the game of staging authenticity, and second, the very reality that he tries to create with the help of the media makes the issues he might want to discuss unimportant.

In what follows I describe how rulers deny their own authority in an attempt to be closer to their followers. Like Tompkins, they try to divest themselves of authority to win their followers’ love or willingness. I describe how the metaphor of transparency can relate

428 ‘Cyphers are empirical realities thrown into relief which make it evident within the whole that this is how it is; or they are world images in which the whole is apprehended; or they are ideals which hover, as it were, over empirical realities (like the civitas del over the cwitas terrena, or like the ideal of the saint, the hero, or the wise man over the ordinary man); or they are the structures of Being brought into relief in consciousness through the categories. Whenever the symbolcharacter becomes manifest, a circle is closed: out of mere presentness speaks the hidden essence; the hidden essence makes the presentness comprehensible.’ Jaspers, K. (1959). Truth and Symbol. New York, Twayne Publishers. p.63
the moral value of emancipation that we have given transparency, to modes of governance that embody that value.

 Attempts at getting ‘closer to the citizen’ can be a sign of immaturity or of maturity. If it comes from an impulse powered by fear it is a strategy for manipulation and a sign of lacking self-respect (a slave morality in the master). But when it involves the courage, not naively, to be open about ones motives with the risk of being resisted by other expectations, it is a sign of mature strength. I describe how the reluctance to defy the follower’s expectations and the ‘quest for legitimacy’ signify a fear for authority itself expressed through a fear for rejection.

 Self-exposure is an attempt to cultivate an authentic image of one self in the eyes of others. Authenticity has authority, but its empty double is the simulation or illusion of authenticity. If what is revealed is that the ruler is but another human being, and his skills and powers cannot relieve the pain in an unequal, hard and globalising world, he loses his respect. As soon as it shows that he harbours no respect for himself, that he is no authority to himself, he soon also loses respect from others.

The myth of the Quest for the Holy Grail permeates Western art and attitude. The Grail was said to be the cup that received the blood of Christ at his Crucifixion and possessed magical power. The cup was guarded by the Fisher King who had a wound that would not heal, and his castle was surrounded by a vast wasteland. The knights of King Arthur made it their principal objective to find the Grail because a successful completion of the quest was said to renew the lands, heal society, and assure the self-realisation of the questing knight.

When on his quest Perceval asks the Fisher King for the Holy Grail, so concerned with tracking down the desirable object, he disregards the King himself who is so obviously suffering. It took him five years of dishonour and ordeals to get back to the castle and to ask “What ails thou, Uncle?” which healed the King and healed society. He had been asking the wrong question. To find the Grail it was not fruitful to follow instrumental reason and ask for its location, it required the question whom it served and what the cause of suffering was.

It is just so with authority as the solution to all our problems of community, social meaning, and self-respect. A ‘where’ question yields destructive practices and no answers. The Grail of legitimate authority is an eagerly sought after recourse, without which rulers and institutions have difficulty surviving. The mistake is that it was never a recourse to begin with, and rather an activity of cultivation, collectively and personally, with subjective causes and intersubjective consequences. The question should be for the condition of the King and the concern should be with the provenance of the waste land.

Where the leaders of the West come together, whether in the European Union, the Third Way, or at the World Economic Forum, the challenge or loss of clear and authoritative roles provokes a lot of self-legitimation, but rather than sharpening his axe by reevaluating authority and himself, the modern tragic hero hastens the hashing of logs of legitimacy, splitting them up in ever more categories without foundation. Not mindlessly however, on the contrary. Like Hamlet he reflects upon his legitimacy in the

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430 Chrétien de Troyes Perceval li Gallois, ed. Potvin II. 6056-60
hope that this will make him worthier. He reveals his inner insecurity by openly doubting his own legitimacy. But being seen struggling with his circumstances in itself is justifying his position, so he thinks. ‘Look at me, I have to deal with limited power to change a complex and fragmented world, no one trusts me, and even without a mandate everybody expects me to be a saviour’. How does one justify one’s power when the backdrop against which this power had been meaningful suddenly lacks? There may be many reasons why leaders come together and discuss their justification, but the very fact that it is happening teaches us that something is going on; namely, that the leader has to resort to an apologetic form of searching in the hope to gain (self)-respect.

Not only scholars but also authority figures themselves have recognised that rulers are involved in a quest for their own legitimacy. Never in history have rulers publicly engaged in such a search. Rather than the expression of a society’s self-interpretation, much of the ruling class acts as if they believe that the language of ‘searching for legitimacy’ is legitimating in and of itself. In other words, rulers say they are looking for ways of regaining trust, credibility, legitimacy and authority by publicly showing that they are looking for it. So there is a double rationale, on the one hand it shows that leaders have no clue about how to lead within the current social context, and on the other they believe that revealing their insecurity will win them the public’s trust.

Every year 2000 political and economic leaders worldwide gather in Switzerland to discuss the state of the art and the way ahead. The World Economic Forum (Davos) of 2007 recently released its survey about citizens’ confidence in world leaders and their views of safety and economic prosperity.\textsuperscript{431} That rulers need a survey to tell them what people think about them is telling, if not disturbing, but surveys have become an indispensable part of politics and governance. The fact that there is such
a survey says enough about the concerns of our rulers, but the fact that they also openly
discuss their own authority and lack of trustworthiness is peculiar to our times. It is good to
give a short summary of the results. The study, conducted by the Gallup Voice of the
People on 55,000 people in 60 countries, is worrisome. About trust in leaders the survey
says that globally 43% of citizens say that their political leaders are dishonest, 37% say
they have too much power; 33% say they are unethical; and 27% say they are not
competent. In the U.S. 52% of the citizens say their politicians are dishonest. In Western
Europe, the survey says, citizens are generally more positive about their politicians but not
these: 76% of Austrians, 69% of Germans, even 50% of the Swiss say their leaders are
dishonest. With business leaders it was somewhat better, though not overwhelmingly.
34% believe business leaders are dishonest, 34% say business leaders have too much
power; 30% say they are unethical. There is always the question whether such surveys
would have yielded different answers were they conducted hundred years ago, but fact is
that they create a sense of urgency.

When asked how to restore trust, the one solution that was
given most often by a plurality of world citizens — 32% — was
more transparency. This is not surprising because it reflects
very well the culture of transparency I talk about that
structures rulers’ claims to rightful rule. The answer to why
people ask for more transparency is not so easily answered by saying that rulers and their institutions are
simply not transparent. I will deal with this question in this part.

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432 Africans “were the most critical of their politicians” with 81% calling political leaders dishonest vs 60% of East Europeans (81% in Serbia). More than half in the Americas, 56%, call their politicians dishonest: 90% in Bolivia, 89% in Peru and Ecuador, 80% in Venezuela (note that well, Hugo).
433 Add to that 13% pushing dialogue with consumers and 7% reconnecting with stakeholders (30% argue for punishment of fraudulent behaviour)
If the role of the ruler is to provide economic prosperity (a western view of what caring means) the survey outcome is disappointing as in Western Europe 53% think the world will be less prosperous in the next generation, versus 37 % for the U.S. While the Chinese have increasing faith in the day after tomorrow with 86% (53% for all Asia). And then the other function of authority, protection, is brutally undermined by the belief that “the next generation will live in a less-safe world.” (68% of Western Europe). That’s 59% in the Americas (64% for the U.S.) and 46% in the Middle East.

With all these problems leaders ask what citizens want them to do to make them happy. But here the poll shows even less enthusiasm. Globally about 15% wants leaders to reduce the wars, but 12% wants leaders to concern themselves with the ‘war of terror’ (that is 25% in the Middle East, 52% in Iraq, and 23% in the U.S.). Eliminating poverty, 13%; economic growth, 12%, closing the gap between rich and poor, 11%; protecting the environment, 10%, restoring trust 9%; human rights 4%; overcoming drugs, 4%; integrating social issues, 4%; reducing organized crime, 2%; and equality for women, 1% remain as other priorities the peoples of the world apparently want their leaders to be working on.

Davos is not the only place where rulers gather in order to worry and worry publicly. There are many such places and they reveal the nostalgic nature of modern authority. When the experience of the real world is no longer what it used to be, and talking to trees becomes as truthful as a politician’s televised kiss of a baby – by which I mean that our society has to deal with an overload of different truth claims and simulations of truth claims - a feeling of nostalgia leads us to make ever more references to ‘real things’. The authenticity that rulers claim with their media staged summits - the purpose of which is to be seen ‘doing something’, taking decisions, existing - has no substance though. It is concealing the fact that authority is no more or less real whether staged or not. These claims to authenticity are to regenerate a moral and political belief by projecting an image over and on top of the absence of such belief.

When leaders publicly question their own legitimacy and share their insecurity about the possibility of government, they are not only concerned with democracy, but also with their proper identity as rulers. We are used to leaders and kings who magnify their position by an imagery of grandeur, but we see something of the opposite today, which nevertheless in nature is the same activity.
Necessity takes another form with the face of nearness. Where the new Prince relies on the necessity of his deeds by demonstrating that people cannot live without a protector, showing them their vulnerability, and inspiring awe in the face of inevitability, Hamlet wants himself and others to see that he is trying. If eventually he decides it is only after periods demonstrating his responsiveness and suffering under the weight of conflicting interests and different views of the good. He wants to be sure that killing the King is truly rightful and hopes his deeds will be understood when he exposes his suffering. He acts like a victim of fate and performs this role well.

Popular judgement and transparency (a ‘let me see and I’ll judge for myself’ attitude) are replacing experts and representatives as sources of trust. But transparency can only expose, it cannot create. It is contestable because just like freedom, it could mean almost anything, so it needs to be performed convincingly and authoritatively in order for it to be credible itself. How does one convincingly convey one’s transparency? For instance by performing one’s authenticity through the display of emotional suffering and agony over difficult situations. The performance of authenticity can then substitute the demonstration of transparency. It is a way of dealing with the conflicting and complex realities of power, which are not easily made visible to the public without causing great distress. In such performance the ruler has taken up as much agony and contradiction as he possibly could and this can serve as an excuse for not having to account for himself. If he is in pain, he must be authentic! We recognise this psychological strategy in the trembling lips of Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, and other of our political leaders. What the mechanisms of transparency and immanent authority cannot do objectively, authenticity tries to do subjectively.434

Their situation is impossible because the new economy has left them with very few possibilities for action, but at the same time the expectations have grown. Symbolically politics and business have increasingly organised themselves around the figure of the executive, even though his power is dispersed over autonomous governance bodies, the market, and other global actors. Suffering is one of the last remaining strategies – be it an ultimately failing strategy of victimhood – for asking acceptance of the claim that decisions could not have been otherwise and that the ruler is a likeable figure who tries his best. He tried, and went to great lengths, it causes him great pain, but he couldn’t help it. There are forces bigger than him.

During WW II great leaders like De Gaulle, Churchill and Roosevelt had to be strong and were appreciated for it. And even during the Cold War, military service and preferably heroic performance during the war was demanded of the people who stood for president. But after the Cold War no one asked for these traits, which is how Bill Clinton, who had none of them, could take the presidency.\textsuperscript{435} Still he had to reinvent himself and people’s enthusiasm in the absence of a rival and had to find new ways to govern in the new age. Set against the masculine war leaders of the last generation Clinton projected the precise opposite with a rather ‘feminine’ style of leadership which gives in to a demand for greater intimacy with the audience and a more sensitive persona.\textsuperscript{436}

It is both a natural consequence of crisis and an expression of post-modern instability that authorities try to reinvent themselves. Bill Clinton and most of the Third Way executives were exemplar in their response to new circumstances. But adaptability of identity is difficult to reconcile with the role of the executive. Authorities by definition create new orders, and the executive embodies this authority as an order creating institution, they try to ‘construct some new political arrangement that can stand the test of legitimacy with other institutions of government as well as the nation at large’\textsuperscript{437} But when the ruler is robbed of his power, trust and authority, and when other institutions force him into opposition to a resilient governmental regime of representatives and bureaucracy,\textsuperscript{438} when he is under constant attack by scandal seeking journalists, he becomes defensive and anticipatory. In the era of ‘revelation, investigation and prosecution’, which for Clinton reached its apogee with the Starr investigation and impeachment battles of 1997-1998, survival depends on a sentimental and personalised relationship with the public.

If I say that the standard for glory has become high approval ratings in opinion polls it sounds almost normal. To our ears it sounds familiar and agreeable that the highest obtainable accomplishment of a president is a positive public opinion. But this was not always so. With President Clinton however this had become a day to day reality, where day to day successes determined the course of his career.

Especially in his preparation for the election campaign in 1995 and 1996 Clinton surveyed swing voters on small domestic issues and based on the outcome he publicly emphasized the preferred policies.\textsuperscript{439} This technique is very creative, but also very much in harmony with a new style of governance. On the one hand he can claim to act in accord with the will of the people, on the other he also discovers new policies that he might otherwise not have and so appear a directive and creative president, but also, he avoids resistance to self-proposed policies. He appears weak and strong at the same time. It shows a struggle where the ruler tries not to become a slave and use the public’s desire for self-expression for his government, while subjecting himself to the passions of the lowest common denominator.

One way of reading this is: the job of a leader is to lead people in a direction they want to go in any way – to choose the line of least resistance -, this way the political costs are minimal and effect is maximized. On the other hand however, this is simply the easy way out. If a president does not have the authority to propose unpopular policies there is another problem that needs to be solved.

This style of governance is only possible when one has no strong ideological convictions and when one is flexible to adopt whatever appears popular. To discover these popular policy opportunities became the core of governance most notably for the Third Way leaders.

The rulers of the world have not found the answer, but instead are looking for it all the time. As a response to waning trust and uncertainty about the kind of leadership required in a globalised world, rulers gathered to discuss their problems. At the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) in the late 1980’s Bill Clinton took up a new politics which was to give new life to Social Democracy and to reorient government after the end of the Cold War. It came to be known as the Third Way and since the 1980’s it has become an ideological stream –be it without ideology - that strappingly determined politics not only in the US, but also in Europe and far beyond.\textsuperscript{440}

\textsuperscript{439} Mark Penn, DLC surveys
\textsuperscript{440} Among others there are also self-declared Third Way parties in New Zealand, Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, Argentina and Chile

According to the DLC the Third Way wants an economic approach which is aimed at technological innovation, competitive enterprise, and education rather than top-down redistribution or laissez faire. Because it recognises the decline of tradition as a problem it embraces ‘tolerant traditionalism,’ honouring traditional moral and family values.
In many of the leading industrial countries, such as the UK, France, and Germany, social democratic parties had been out of power for a long time, and before Clinton came to power in 1993 there had not been a Democratic president in 12 years. But this was about to change fast. Inspired by the example of Clinton and the New Democrats, Tony Blair in Britain led a revitalized New Labour party back to power in 1997. The victory of Gerhard Shroeder and the Social Democrats in Germany the next year and the Dutch ‘purple coalition’ confirmed the revival of centre-left parties which either control or are part of the governing coalition forming much of the European Union. The 1990’s would be the decade of ‘the middle way’, dominated by politics left of the centre, as soon as the new left had formulated its intention to meet the challenges of a changing society.

Maybe even more appropriate would be to characterise the period after 1989 as one in which the search for new forms tended to take the place of the forms themselves. Rulers all over the western world can be observed to search for ways to legitimate themselves, and find a new role in a new world. The Third Way is merely a powerful example.

The new condition is characterised by globalising markets and cultures, the rise of a complex ‘knowledge society’ with its devastating impact on predictability and continuity of the lives of workers and organizations, and a culture of institutionalised and personally experienced individualism which is both stimulated by the new economy and a left over of the lack of traditional authorities. These changes go hand-in-hand with a general distrust for government and orthodox politics. But also the entire organisation of the executive changed. Political parties have steadily declined which pushed prime ministers and presidents into the televised and surveyed arena of public opinion.

This analysis forms the backdrop against which rulers sought to redefine themselves and establish trust in them and their politics. It has led to many gatherings at which the leaders of the western world came together in order to discuss their ‘crisis of legitimacy’. Because even though they made a comeback to power, there remained the feeling that it was mainly because of the de-legitimisation of the former government that they had taken up their seats and rather than regain the trust of the citizen they only lost in confidence.

while resisting attempts to impose them on others. It favours an enabling rather than a bureaucratic government, expanding choices for citizens, using market means to achieve public ends and encouraging civic and community institutions to play a larger role in public life. Ideally it works to build inclusive, multiethnic societies based on common allegiance to democratic values.
In 1997 a dialogue started between American President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair on the Third Way until on Sunday, April 25, 1999, the President Clinton and the DLC hosted a historic roundtable discussion, *The Third Way: Progressive Governance for the 21st Century*, with five world leaders including British Prime Minister Tony Blair, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok, Italian Prime Minister Massimo D’Alema, the First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, and DLC President Al From. And a few months later on 20 and 21st of November 1999 Clinton would meet Blair, President Fernando Cardoso, D’Alema, Schroeder, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, and Secretary General of the Council of the European Union Javier Solana in Florence at the European University Institute for the conference ‘Progressive Governance for the XXI Century.’

At both meetings, a few ideas formed the basis, which in most general terms are the idea of government promoting equal opportunity, an ethic of mutual responsibility that rejects the politics of entitlement and social abandonment, and a new approach to governing that empowers citizens to act for themselves and take responsibility. But essentially what the world was witnessing was rulers worrying about what to do, and where to find the authority to do it? ‘We are here’ Clinton said ‘because we affirm the importance of the nation State as necessary to provide the conditions of community and humanity in this very different world. The question is what Tony Blair always says – we have to do what works. We have to do something that enables us to fulfil our traditional mission in a very different world.’ The fact that the ‘something’ was an issue on the agenda alone is telling enough, but many other meetings would follow at which the ruling elite publicly discussed the question of how to be a government.

This is a novelty as such, but more surprising still is that these problems concern the very authority of these leaders and their publicly acknowledged ignorance as to what way to take. The Third Way is no definite project with precise contours, but works rather like an intention to go and figure oneself out together while inviting the public to see and believe that their rulers have the best intentions, even though they understand about as much of the ‘unknown society’ as the ordinary man, and doubt as much as the ordinary man.

This self-reflexivity, as Giddens would term it, is not likely to evolve into a Habermassian state of ‘dialogic democracy’ in which new orders are created and conflicts

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441 (1999), *Progressive Governance for the 21th Century*. European University Institute & New York University School of Law, Florence. p51
are settled through dialogue and reflection. The hope, or at least the projection, is that the reflexive project could once replace violence and commanding authority. In ‘The Third Way’ Giddens gives the frame within which the enterprise is justified, but also proposes some of its objectives which I cannot but agree with. Third Way politics would have to create the condition in which people can plot their way through the major revolutions of our time, with which he meant globalisation, the transformation in personal life, and our relationship to nature. There is a need for all of these, but whether they are reconcilable with a hyper-real executive which attempts its own effacement is the question.


443 Hyper-reality is a term used to describe the inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from illusion. In post-modern culture it refers to the way reality is ‘represented’. The peculiar thing about post-modern representation is that it no longer represents, but actually becomes reality. It becomes a staged authenticity. The map, so to speak, that represents reality, has become so detailed and large that it is difficult to distinguish the map from the reality. This new copied reality can be said to be realer than real, or hyper real.
In 1992 Bill Clinton appeared on the talk show *Donahue* during his campaign. The host asked Clinton to talk about the allegations of his extramarital sexual relations. Now Clinton was asked about his intimate life, and the audience wants to see a real and authentic man, but Clinton also needs to appear a president. ‘I am not going to answer anymore of these questions.’ He says. ‘You are responsible for the cynicism in this country. You don’t want to talk about the real issues.’ This moment is telling for the modern ruler in the age of transparency. Paradoxically he tries to seem a worthy ruler by pressing for real issues, but does so relying at the same time on a show of self-exposure in the context of sensationalist and scandal seeking television.

The president ‘widely regarded by his critics as an evasive man, . . . was far more often an exceptionally transparent figure.’ Of course, the intimacy sought through this transparency is never ‘real’, but always part of a larger endeavour of image making, whether the televised leader is conscious of it or not. This does not mean that a complex leader like Clinton cannot be both truthful and deceptive at the same time, as most people are. And being of the baby boom generation that fought for transparency, intimacy, and democracy it is not unthinkable that as a product of his time he truly seeks transparency. But whether the image is constructed in *bona fide*, unintended as result of other action, or with malicious intent, the result damages authority. At the end of the movie *The Truman Show* in which Truman is raised on the set to make for good reality television, he finds out that all his life has been staged and asks the director whether it was all fake, upon which the director answers that he, Truman, was real and that that made him so enjoyable to watch. It is the same thing we look for in our rulers, but even if it is but an image of the president’s intimate self that we see, whether consciously constructed or not, it still surrenders the necessary distance that we seek in a heroic leader.

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Campaign films are a central medium through which presidents since Reagan try to cultivate their public image for election. They are to show a president’s character and qualification for the office and in them contending presidents search for and present the kind of office the presidency is and show themselves to act out an ideal version of that role. They attempt what all ritual of authority does, which is to create and cultivate a mythical image of strength, but the difference with the story-telling of the shaman or the tribe’s chief is that the myth needs to be sustained by means of breaking it down. In The Man from Hope, the film which debuted during the campaign in July 1992, directors Harry Thomason and Linda Bloodworth attempted an image of Clinton as ‘a human persona that was vulnerable, humble, and accessible to the ordinary people.’

The film did not discuss any office that Clinton held in the past and did not even mention his achievements, but was only focused on the character of the candidate as it emerged from his family life. The marital problems, the birth of Chelsea, Clinton’s abusive father and his own heroic defence of his mother, are events intimately discussed by the Clintons and portrayed in image.

Whereas the archetypical tribe’s chief and his audience participate in a game of which they both understand and endorse the rules, where metaphor is the reality created and lived by both, the intimate ruler cannot be a metaphor but must real and intimate while at the same time fulfil the role of the mythic ruler. Or better, the vehicle for communicating a mythic character is intimate exposure.

But if the projected image is the actual inner world of the ruler, when, in other words, he lies the truth about himself, his intimate psychology becomes part of public ideology. It is no longer necessary to enter the smoke-filled rooms and look behind the curtain to see what rulers think about themselves because these thoughts and emotions have become part of the social myth. With the intimate ruler we do not just deal with a manipulator who wants to make his audience believe he is authentic while he is not. The distinction between reality and fantasy dissolves. He believes he is and ought to be authentic and

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intimate, so he will act out a role of what he actually believes he is or ought to be. What this means for the theatre of authority is that theatre itself becomes increasingly difficulty.

What television has contributed is the kind of anonymous voyeurism that allows spectators to be a silent witness of the lives of others. The knowing is what gives us pleasure. But a desire for knowing acts against the desire for a strong, remote heroic leader. Visual means of cultivating authority have become more important therefore, but will turn out paradoxically to be the means for authority’s destruction.

For the campaign documentary The War Room Clinton allowed journalists to document four months of the campaign running up to the 1992 election even from within campaign headquarters Little Rock, the campaign plane, or hotel rooms. The process of how the image of leaders is constructed has always been hidden from the public, and with good reason. A backstage look would undermine the authority of the images constructed. The desire to uncover what is secret or discover what remains hidden has driven journalists and academics as private parties to try and uncover these processes from an acclaimed position of objectivity. Rulers themselves and their staff have traditionally played along with this game by continuing to hide or strategically expose their activities. But The War Room dealt explicitly with the image-making and status cultivating process itself. It shows a self-awareness of the power of image construction, and participates in the cultivation of a new one on top of it. What this means is that in order to cultivate authority, the contemporary ruler attempts to look authentic by showing how he constructs his image of strength. This image of strength, however, has the appearance of vulnerability and intimate human fallibility. No wonder that rulers have difficulty grasping the basis of their authority, leave alone acting upon it.

It is tempting to see presidents and their staff as cunning dancers of the public stage, but that would be too easy. The idea that rulers are simply liars, caught up in a spectacle of imitating and pretending, has to do with what we believe authenticity is. Paradoxically authenticity is as ambiguous as anything else and does not let itself be trapped in a single understanding. It is a mistake to think that there cannot be authentic bastards or authentic liars. To lie the truth (meaning to perform it) or be honest about your lies are both forms of authenticity. In the West there has always been a subtle emphasis on recovering a true self, from Plato to Rousseau into our current search for a genuine personality. The Buddhist sees the self much more like an union, every next layer of which is as real as the former with finally no core at all when all the layers have been peeled off. The authentic truth...
which the philosopher would see if he finally crawls out of the cave in which Plato envisioned the unenlightened human being to reside, is the same as the truth which the Hindu seeks behind the veils of Maya. Neither of these metaphors represents a fundamental reality, but they are tools to help us understand and envision a way out of some of our sufferings and self inflicted illusions. But over the course of modernity the ideas of an authentic self and authentic knowledge have become associated with something immanent and real, rather than with metaphor. This means that it has become possible to think that since authenticity no longer seems to exist in the age of media and simulation, illusion no longer exists either. Authenticity in social justice or religion take fundamentalist forms, and the exhibitionism of private and public individuals remains astoundingly narcissistic.

Clinton embodies a culture that accepts and consumes the constructed nature of images, while at the same time longs for a real and authentic leader. As a shape shifter he represents the epitome of the authentic leader who can ‘feel the pain’ of his people, and who with real heartfelt concern for his country worked his way up with hard work and intelligence, overcoming the hardships of past and family, while at the same time he represents the magician of public theatre, the manufacturer of popularity, and the pathological liar of the public realm. As the protagonist of many scandals the image of Clinton has been shaped and reshaped many times. With Clinton it became increasingly impossible to tell, or to designate, who the real president was, or what the role of the presidency is.

How thoroughly truth and artifice around the offices of authority are intertwined becomes clear again with the novel Primary Colors by Anonymous. Stories and satires of all ages have portrayed the characters of contemporary society in the guise of fiction, but as a product of self-conscious character construction the novel Primary Colors implicitly avers to portray the real Bill Clinton and his politics disguised by a thin protective layer of fiction which ironically serves to authenticate the content. That the author remains anonymous gives the impression that what is revealed is too secret, and too dangerously true to be uttered openly. Myths take much of their influence from the fact that they have


452 The scandals which attacked Clinton’s character and authority have been studies widely. See for instance; Conason, J. and G. Lyons (2000). The Hunting of the President: The Ten-Year Campaign to Destroy Bill and Hillary Clinton. New York, St. Martin’s Press.

no author. They have been handed over from generation upon generation since the
beginning of time, and there is no one who can be held accountable for the words. By
remaining nameless then, the mystery of the source gives an aural value of incontestability
to the content. In reality however, the novel was another expression of the culture of
transparency, with its obsession with the authentic. The identity of the author was
revealed to be Joe Klein, a columnist from Newsweek, but only after an extensive nation
wide search and discussion, penetrating all media and involving even questions to the
president and computerised writing analyses. The attempt to make the source known is an
attempt to make the novel real, and it is of the same order as the attempts to make politics
legitimate by making them transparent. The exercise of revealing is also here both
strengthening and lessening the influence of the book. But what the novel has left behind
has become the reality by which we still recognise Clinton. In Primary Colors Clinton goes
by the name of Jack Stanton. Towards the end of the book the narrator Henry, who
worked for the Stanton Campaign, has become so dispirited by the process of image
making and electoral strategy that he wishes to resign and seek a more fulfilling
occupation. But as Stanton tries to persuade him not to quit the character of Clinton is
portrayed as follows:

‘Henry, come on, Stanton said, stretching his arms out across the desk toward me. His voice
caught slightly. His eye narrowed, burrowing deep, searching my consciousness, desperate to
make a stronger connection. His brow is nostrils, the veins on his neck, his arms, his fingers –
everything was reaching out, everything was focussed on me. I knew this moment so well; I had
seen him do it so many times. He could talk all he wanted about an eternity of ‘false smiles’; his
power came from the exact opposite direction, from the authenticity of his appeal, from the start
ferocity of his hunger. There was very little artifice to him. He was truly needy. And now he needed
me.’

Through the novel the process by which Clinton became president lost in credibility,
but the character of Clinton, however morally contested, has become more real and
attributed with authenticity, and therefore also more powerful. As I mentioned, the search
for real authority, for authenticity, is not new, but has become ubiquitous with the
mediation of our relationships to ruler figures.

What is personal to Clinton are his talents and urges, but what he shares with the archetypical ruler of the intimate immature type is the neediness and the appeal of his authenticity which draws people in, if only out of voyeuristic curiosity. Whereas voyeurism helped Clinton with his popularity, it destroyed the trust in the next figure of authority that I use to illustrate the archetype of Hamlet.
'November, 2005. Strangely enough, I realise that I am hesitating about what naturally seemed inevitable. Namely, for myself, to cut the knot. In a way that I cannot go back. That I am actually prepared to become Prime Minister. (...) And I must say it feels different from the months before. (...) How on earth do you say you want to become prime minister?'

This is a fragment from a televised diary of Dutch politician Wouter Bos who in the 2006 election was candidate for Prime Minister. He had decided to record his diary in the run up to the elections and show the public everything he did and said. It was a few years after the assassination of populist leader Pim Fortuyn. Fortuyn awoke the Dutch from the illusion that populism is something for other countries. Unaware of the fact that the entire world of advanced democracies experiences an anti-political and populist tendency, the Dutch were unprepared for a mass mobilisation of discontented citizens against the established political class. The elite was indeed considered out of touch with the public, not because it didn’t govern in its interest, but because it was unaccustomed to recognise the sometimes irrational fears, passions and desires of the people. Immigration, economic insecurity, the attacks of 9-11 and their aftermath, and many other changes of the global economy had stirred up a considerable amount of anxious and aggressive energy which the incumbent elite had no idea about how to use, divert or transform. Fortuyn was determined to address the issues that caused the pain, amongst others immigration but also the very sense of distance that the people felt towards their leaders.

Fortuyn marked a shift in Dutch politics in many respects, but one of them was the openness about his private life - from the relationship with his parents to his sexual activities. Like in many western democracies a personality leader had won the hearts of the people with emotional outbursts of indignation and a fearless naming of the wrongs in society. He was a voice of ‘the people’ against the smoke filled-rooms of a corrupt and pathetic elite who were preoccupied with boring economics, but did not seem to have eye for the quality of life. He had been the only one to rouse such a sense of common involvement and to give hope to the people who felt threatened by the changes of society that immigration and economic uncertainty had brought forth. Like Clinton’s, his entire
personal life was public property and the popularity which this yielded him made the gap between ruler and ruled an undeniable reality. When he died he left a troubled landscape in which leaders had to redefine their role most urgently. Lingering questions of how to rouse trust and how to close the distance between politics and the people became ubiquitous.

Inspired by his democratic ideals and the belief that his nearness would make him trusted, Wouter Bos decided to have himself followed over a year by a camera team so that the people of the Netherlands could see and hear him in the process of becoming. But of becoming what? The Bos Tapes, as his spoken diary came to be known, take us into the deepest thoughts and emotional turmoil of a future leader. The opinion polls tell him he is destined to become prime minister, and in his diary he shows the world in real time how he cultivates and searches for his personal and public profile as a leader. The documentary shows his brainstorming sessions, moments of anguish and euphoria, his slips of the tongue and hesitant self-doubt. In a brainstorm group called Mercurius, counting about ten people, among whom friends and colleagues, he shared and discussed for the past few years the questions on his mind; what is my deepest motivation, my mission, my vision? What is the essence of my leadership? How do I wish to be remembered as Prime Minister? What is the story that will make me Prime Minister? In Hamlet-like soliloquies he muses on the way to go about. Who to be, what to do?

Ironically the very act of exposing himself to the eye of the camera with the self-proclaimed intension of showing his authentic self makes the question ‘what kind of leader should I be’ sound rather awkward. He doesn’t want to play role and hopes to convey his real self. But this exhibitionistic openness didn’t produce for him the outcomes that he expected. Instead his struggle with himself becomes painfully clear in front of the merciless eye of the camera.

In the discussion after the press-viewing of the documentary he was called a ‘searching leader’. This searching shows how Bos is looking for something new. Not only is he searching for a new way of being leader, but the very act of searching becomes a new way of cultivating a democratic image. What the Third Way already carried in its conception has come to startling maturity with Bos: a startling immaturity.

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455 Rudi Boon and Kees Brouwer had access to all meetings and activities of Wouter Bos for a year.
His openness and vulnerability are praiseworthy and courageous, and according to the polls he sure has won the people’s sympathy. But citizens have not been able to respect him for it, or admire his strength, and therefore never dared to trust their country to him. Although in a way Wouter Bos has been courageous, to risk his political career by showing how power really works, I believe we are witnessing something quite different as well. He obviously thought it would win him sympathy, and therefore votes, or otherwise he would not have thought of doing this. But more painful still is the significance of this transaction - a transaction by which his status is traded for approval. Nietzsche might have called it slave morality, but it is more than that. The exhibitionistic display of insecurity and indecision of the ruler asks his audience for pity. The message is double: ‘do not fear me, I am just a human being just like you.’ And ‘please give me some love and approval for my demonstration of inner neediness.’ These strategies work well for children who ask the love and care of their parents, but they are fatal for a leader, who is expected to do just the opposite; namely, judge and reassure.

What the tapes show as well is that the personal attacks that so characterise our politics affected him more than he or we suspected. He loathes Machiavelli and cannot understand how others could be so mean. Touching is the scene in which Bos sits in his new office and asks himself whether he would perhaps not be happier as vice-premier, or minister of finance. He asks himself whether he is the kind of power politician that it takes for the premiership, with the cunning of a fox and the ruthlessness of a lion.

In 2007 indeed he loses the election. When everyone was positive about his future victory he started doubting. ‘Sometimes I get a little scared of the optimism around me; I don’t understand that all these journalists continue to write that I am tipped to become premier.’ And so indeed he doesn’t.

He is not a man without a vision, just like Blair he has plenty of ideas and good ones too. His problem is that of the tragic hero in Shakespeare: leaders need to be men of action, not of hesitation – as perhaps philosophers could be. The impending financial crisis would force him into action as minister of finance, and give him the opportunity to mature as a leader, but during the election period of 2007 he was more concerned with reflection. Especially in a complex world, and the world is always complex, there is never a straight answer to a question, leave alone to a question of authority. A leader needs to deal with that ambiguity, take responsibility for it, but should not burden others with it (too much).
And second, if he decides to reveal the workings of power, that it better be real power rather than the discussions of one’s image formation.

Bos is a beautiful example of how a ruler in a world without ideology is searching. He is Hamlet who is flawed like the classical hero, and his inner demons will ultimately bring him down. He has always remained popular though, and people sympathise and identify with him like a proper tragic hero, for ‘there, but for the grace of God, go I.’ But what makes Bos more than a particular case without wider implication is the character of his flaw. He may or may not have purged the audience, and his good intentions rouse our pity and compassion, but unlike the classical tragic hero he is apologetic towards his audience and it is the rejection of the audience that causes the fall.

His apology is significant, because it is through his apology that he tries to win the favour of the people, mistakenly taking empathetic support for authority. It is also the nature of his apology which makes his experience symbolic of modern rulers. For the first such evocative apology we know from Rousseau. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is often called the first representative of the modern sense of self; middle class, self-made, and self-aware. His first French bestseller, Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloise, a story of passion across the lines of class that drew heavily on his own biography, was banned for it shamelessly discussed the sexual preferences of his characters. What was different about Rousseau was not that he engaged in particular sexual encounters which today we would categorise as a dominatrix kind of fantasy, but that he talked about it. Rousseau’s private life and sex life became public. In his Confessions he wrote it all down and in 1771 he began public readings of his Confessions which made Rousseau’s private life a literary and personal creation, but part of a public culture.

The searching for himself and exposure of his inner life is different from all earlier self-exploration. Rousseau’s Confessions purposefully referred to St Augustine’s book of the same name, in which Augustine leaves no ambiguity about his worldly life before he turned to his spiritual devotion. But Whereas Augustine praises God for showing him his sinfulness and shortcomings, and prays for forgiveness, Rousseau confidently expects forgiveness for the sheer fact of his transparency – for having told the truth about himself. He demands the heavens to respect his sincerity because he does not have to repent his deeds, but rather can suffice with his openness.

The first words of The Confessions are:
‘Whenever the last trumpet shall sound, I will present myself before the sovereign judge with this book in my hand, and loudly proclaim, thus have I acted; these were my thoughts; such was I. With equal freedom and veracity have I related what was laudable or wicked, I have concealed no crimes, added no virtues; and if I have sometimes introduced superfluous ornament, it was merely to occupy a void occasioned by defect of memory:

I may have supposed that certain, which I only knew to be probable, but have never asserted as truth, a conscious falsehood. Such as I was, I have declared myself; sometimes vile and despicable, at others, virtuous, generous and sublime; even as thou hast read my inmost soul: Power eternal! assemble round thy throne an innumerable throng of my fellow-mortals, let them listen to my confessions, let them blush at my depravity, let them tremble at my sufferings; let each in his turn expose with equal sincerity the failings, the wanderings of his heart, and, if he dare, aver, I was better than that man.”

His innocence is proven by the social circumstances of his particular biography. It was not sin that made him who he is, but it was the social forces that corrupted him. Wouter Bos attempted to prove his innocence on similar terms. His self-exposure is an apology for his failures and the sharing of his doubts are the proof of his closeness to the people, and of his humanity. The charismatic leader shares his emotions with the public and is recognised as authentic and therefore authoritative. But Bos shares a particular kind of emotion, and a particular kind of weakness with which citizens and subjects rather do no wish to be encumbered. How can they trust someone who does not seem to trust himself?

In the tapes we get to see how Bos laments the difficulty of being a politician. How difficult it is to endure the attacks made on one’s person, how the press is always there to accuse. No political leader had ever allowed such intimacy. Clinton had staged his campaign and brought in a camera for the film ‘The War Room’ for instance as to give the impression of intimacy, but Bos went even further. The difference was that Clinton’s intimacy showed a powerful character, while Bos’ intimacy shows an insecure leader with intelligent reflections but without character. Goethe said that talent can develop in the lee, but character forms only in the full storm of life. Bos’ storm would come with the financial crisis, before that we recognise the Hamlet of authority, lamenting the fact that one cannot be hesitant any more without being critiqued.

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In modern organisations the power that resides behind either face of authority is usually veiled because bare power draws attention to itself whereas influence does not. Max Weber and Herbert Spencer recognised bureaucracy for this ability because it is the embodiment of impersonal influence through the rationalised rules and experts are hidden behind a faceless chain of command. It comes as no surprise however, that this system provokes a call for its opposite in the form of intimately transparent and charismatic rulers, the attempts at which I described in the chapters above. In the development of modern bureaucracy we can see the bankruptcy of modern authority. I therefore want to pick out one instance of crisis around a new institutional development which makes the consequences of the culture of transparency particularly clear, and that is the process that led up to the referendum on the European Constitution and its aftermath.

In a way it is a major tangible response of the entire European political elite to the disappearance of authority. At first I thought it was a little awkward to imagine the spirit of Hamlet at work in a bureaucratic and institutional structure like that of the European community, but it is really there, posing similar questions after the discovery of its lack of legitimacy. Of course the Union and its predecessors have taken considerable action since the 1950s, and most of it in what many would now call a rather autocratic fashion. Democracy was not a factor, and the Commission acted largely on its own initiative. But when the question arose of how to establish its authority beyond a mere managerial and legalistic exercise of influence European institutions - seemingly without exception - started to hesitate, reflect, and eventually pre-empt much of their authority.

This discussion is about the making of a polity without authority. We see how Europe struggles with the question ‘how to celebrate a constitution that you did not make?’ The entire process of the legitimation of post-authoritative authority is a vindication of something which was not created but which evolved. The founder is lacking, the author who authorises is absent. Instead of creating an order, in this case the referenda were an attempt at deriving authority from the void of a non-existent and uninvolved citizenry.
I’d like to have a close look at how the sense of ‘crisis’ with its language of transparency and ‘closeness to the citizen’ which evolved in the run up to the referendum so that it becomes clear how more or less contingent decisions turn out to be perfectly in keeping with the forces of exposure. My question here is not concerned with the cause of the current crisis, but with making the responses to a lack of confidence understandable.

The fall of the Berlin Wall inspired a new drive for European unification, but this time the people of Europe would have to be involved in order to comply with a new drive for democracy that characterised the collapse of communism. What is true for the Third Way leaders, namely that they worry both about their identity and about how to govern an ungovernable globalising world, is also true for European and other governing institutions. They all started worrying about a ‘crisis of legitimacy’ and a crisis of governance. Because the idea of representation has lost the capacity to mediate between mastery and liberation the gap had to be filled with something else much closer to the experience and desire of both rulers and the ruled.

There are three things I want to call to mind about the response of the European elite by which transparency and a self-defeating drive for ‘closeness’ were developed as an alternative to representation. The first is what I mentioned in the chapter on how rulers establish authority to themselves, that the cultivation of an authoritative identity by European leaders is something that takes place mainly, though not exclusively, within and for a small group of people. In this group you will find of course the elite of member states and governing institutions, but since the reforms of the Single European Act also a group of ‘co-producers of taste’ were socialised into the community.

What makes it such an interesting case to look at is that the evolution of the European community shows so many points of resemblance with that of the entire western system since the French and American Revolutions, with the important difference that time and culture have moved to a highly reflexive capitalist structure.

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457 See chapter 2
The European Union lends itself pre-eminently to the projection of such struggles, resembling the division between the monarchs and the citizen: a silent consensus behind the back of society, secretly maintained by an elitist agreement. And the logic of its development holds a key to understanding how transparency could become such a potent adversary for representation.

The slowly emerging polemic about the Union’s deficit of rightful rule has been structurally conflated with its lack of democracy. The ‘democratic-deficit’, a metaphor in itself and an imaginary that speaks of moral lack, advocating its opposite, capitalised upon a mobilising potential for citizen *emancipation*. The ‘crisis of legitimacy’ becomes a problem of despotism. How could an independent elite, unaccountable and veiled behind its bureaucratic technology and diplomatic discretion be allowed to play a political role that is increasingly pervasive? An elite governing without the consent or influence of the people has consequently been portrayed as a form of oppression. This way the idea of a legitimacy crisis was easily linked to an already hegemonic project of participatory democracy that exists in both theory and activism.\(^{461}\) Alternative political ideologies such as communism and extreme liberalism had been exhausted after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the left turned to the emancipatory struggles against capitalist globalisation, the populist right managed to tap into the discontent with meddling of the state and its bureaucratic intrusiveness.

During the 1960s and 1970s states debated about the constitutional order that would determine the relationship between the community and the states. And because it was a legal debate the European Court of Justice was the main target of criticism, after all it was a new ‘ruler’ who immediately started to determine the boundaries of the validity of European Law.\(^{462}\) But the states, who were the citizens of Europe, respected the order even though it had no actual means of enforcement.\(^{463}\) Machiavelli would not have thought this

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\(^{461}\) Which saw its latest expression in the emergence of theories of deliberative democracy, active citizenship, civil society, and republicanism.

It was also this potential that could be exploited by Paul van Buitenen, whistle-blower on Commission corruption, who founded the European political party ‘Europe Transparent’. It got 3 seats in the last elections. From here it was an easy step for political parties of the left and right that opposed Europe to incorporate the critique of transparency in their campaigns.


\(^{463}\) David Huma, in a treatise of Human Nature writes that ‘there is naturally no inclination to observe promises, distinct from a sense of their obligation; it follows, that fidelity is no natural virtue, and that promises have no force, antecedent to human conventions.’ And that leaves any starting order in the hands of pure and unenforced authority.
possible, but it simply means that the partners in crime think or feel it suits their self-understanding (their honour, or beliefs, or simply their objectives).464

The debate about a ‘democratic deficit’ in the European Community has its origins in the 1960s, when De Gaulle launched his ‘empty chair policy’ which lead to the first major crisis of the Community. In June of 1965 De Gaulle withdrew France’s representatives from the European Community. His reason was that he did not want to hand over state power if the Community would start to vote by qualified majority because he famously thought of the Council and Parliament as ‘an assembly of foreigners’. Slowly the European Community gained more power from the member states in order to deal with issues too big for individual states. But if more powers were transferred to the Community, national parliaments would lose their power to rally for and implement certain measures.465 And because the development of the European Community could still only be conceived in terms of representation and the ‘parliamentary model’, parliamentary control would have to be strengthened through the position of the European Parliament, leading to incremental increase of budgetary control and a direct election in 1979.

Up to the Treaty of Maastricht of 1992 there were debates about democracy, but no one seriously challenged the Community as such because the instruments of bureaucracy, diplomacy, and democracy seemed to still work quite well together. In democratic theory the parliamentary model had been fundamentally related with the idea of a hierarchical and neutral bureaucracy. This was the ideological ground on which governments were believed to be legitimate. The assumption is that the general will is expressed by parliament and subsequently executed by a neutral bureaucracy.466

But the Commission was created not as a bureaucracy, but as a body with a mission; to formulate and safeguard the general interest of the Communities. And the parliament was but an advisory body like the councils of feudal kings had been. So it was neither a government, nor a bureaucracy.467 It could claim authority, though never very strong, on the basis of its independence and its technocratic nature.468 But its mission has given it other drives as well; to defend the normative value of European Integration and guard the

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integrity of Community treaties; to reconciling national interests and mediating between different institutions as a diplomatic authority; it has a role in mobilizing support from other institutions and interest groups as policy initiator; and maybe most importantly, it is representing the general European interest. This strange creation had a lot to do, and could meddle in almost everything, but therefore it had also a lot to account for and would be a continuous target. But it was good at what it did and was indeed recognised as the best instrument for European integration and the delivery of what states no longer could. The democratic means of judicial control, indirect presentation and indirect representation were thought sufficient for its account. Of course the authority of the European community has always been contested, and its development has always been one of negotiating its competence with the member states and regions. But these contestations never presented a severe threat to the identities of the European elite. They form part of every-day politics. But something changed when the intimacy and closeness which had already taken hold on national politics stared to complement and replace the representational model.

The desire for intimacy and authenticity found an elective affinity with the language of democratisation that took shape in the 1980’s. Up until 1979 complaints that the Community was not democratic enough were always concerned with the secrecy and unaccountability of the Council. But now that the Parliament looked more like a traditional parliament, it stared to behave like one by asserting its role as scrutiniser and even legislator. Parliamentarians now aimed at the Commission whose structure they thought was Byzantine, its language impenetrable, and its remote seclusion was a threat to democracy. But not only national governments contributed to this image, the Parliament, though usually seen as a partner of the Commission, has a particular interest in creating a political culture around the concept of transparency.

In 1990 the European Parliament approved a resolution with an overwhelming majority proposing an extension of the community’s competences, to improve the efficiency of decision-making, and to enhance the democratic character of the Community, including a right of initiative for the Parliament. The latter implied that

legislative decisions, until then taken by the Council ‘behind closed doors’, now had to be approved in public by the Parliament. The argument was that not only would decisions become more accountable by the Parliament’s involvement, but legislative Council meetings were also asked to be public, national parliaments should have access to information on Council proceedings, a consultative Committee of the Regions would have to bring decision-making closer to those affected, and the Treaty would have to contain a reference to the European Convention on Human Rights.

The resolution followed a series of reports, published between 1985 and 1989, on the inadequacy of the Single European Act. In 1988, the European Parliament issued a report identifying a ‘democratic deficit’ in the European Community. The deficit was defined in terms of a ‘loss of democracy in the transfer of powers from member states to the Community,’ as democratically elected national parliaments relinquished powers to non-elected bodies at the European level such as the Council and the Commission.

The reason that the Parliament took this stance should not come as a surprise, it saw voter turnouts decrease right after its first election and thereby saw its identity challenged as representative authority. It was convinced that ‘its [the EP’s] significance could only become apparent to the general public if it and the whole policy-making process grew closer to the people it served.’ This would require greater transparency and a stronger position of the Parliament. It knew itself supported by many member states, especially Belgium and Spain.

Ever since the Single European Act the parliament had often debated public support for the European Union and it became convinced that the people of Europe would support further integration. By pressing for more open procedures, involvement of national parliaments and supporting ratification by referendum, the parliament sought to bypass state governments with an appeal to public opinion. So the parliament had recognised very well how its own exposure was its primary source of influence. Their

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477 Ibid. p8

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confidence was expressed by the idea of holding public consultation in 1987 on the feasibility of strengthening European Democracy through the reinforcement of the European Parliament. The confidence was confirmed by the Italian referendum in 1989 in which 89.1% turned out to support constitutional reform as the Parliament proposed. And member states started to adopt resolutions in similar lines.\textsuperscript{478}

The Parliament has therefore been a driving force behind the promotion of transparency; it even used its right of consent to block the accession of the Nordic countries until the Council would agree to have another IGC in Amsterdam by which institutional change towards more democracy and transparency would have to be settled.

However few foresaw the problems that would arise with ratification after the Treaty of Maastricht had been signed on February 7\textsuperscript{th} in 1992, and adopted by the Parliament with 235 to 64. Though the Danish parliament supported ratification 130 to 35, the outcome of the referendum didn’t reflect this support and rejected the Treaty with 50.7% on June 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1992 to eventually vote “yes” a year later on 18 May 1993 with 56.8%\textsuperscript{479}. Though in all other countries the Treaty on the European Union passed smoothly it had caused great distress.

Already on the 15\textsuperscript{th} of December 1991, before the Treaty was signed, the Council declared in Maastricht:

‘the Conference considers that transparency of the decision-making process strengthens the democratic nature of the institutions and the public’s confidence in the administration’\textsuperscript{480}

This reflected the conclusions of many studies on citizen alienation, and the concerns of national political parties and administrations. As described above, these were the background against which the referendum was interpreted. The outcome of the referendum, so it was believed, must therefore have been due to a lack of confidence in the Community as such.\textsuperscript{481}

\textsuperscript{478} Dublin Council 26 June 1990
\textsuperscript{479} Since 1971 all political parties in Denmark parties agreed to joining the European Union and agreed that the decision to join the EU be submitted to a referendum, even though article 20 of the Danish constitution provides that a 5/6th majority of parliament would be sufficient for a decision that exceeds national sovereignty. All subsequent ratifications have been submitted to referenda despite a sufficient support in the parliament.
\textsuperscript{480} Maastricht Council 15\textsuperscript{th} of December 1991
\textsuperscript{481} This seemed to confirm what Woodcock had noted before the Treaty, namely that ‘The shortcomings of the Community lie in the feelings of remoteness and lack of influence and involvement on the part of many of its citizens’ Bogdanor, V. and G. Woodcock (1991). “The European Community and Sovereignty.” \textit{Parliamentary Affairs} \textbf{44}(4). p492

Besselink, Thieu (2009), Two Faces of Authority: The leader’s tragic quest
European University Institute
DOI: 10.2870/44263

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The Council met in Lisbon on June 26/27 1992 and adopted a resolution to ‘help’ Denmark ratify.\textsuperscript{482} It included a section entitled ‘A Union closer to citizens’, emphasising the need for 1) greater transparency in decision-making, 2) dialogue with citizens and 3) the importance of subsidiary, understood as decision-making as close to the citizen as possible.\textsuperscript{483} Subsidiarity came to entail a burden of proof for the Commission to show that legislation would best be issued at the European level.

Denmark was eager to press for this closeness to the people, accessibility and understandability, but doubted that subsidiarity would ensure a more ‘participatory democracy’. Though essentially a different matter, the idea of ‘closeness to the people’ resonated well with the idea of remoteness of the Commission and its unaccountable and invisible image. Those states that wished to preserve their national sovereignty, or regions that argued for their competences, like Denmark, could now easily sustain an interpretation of the ratification troubles by which the lack of transparency and democratic-deficit were the causes, and the Commission was the main author of these troubles.

On October 16\textsuperscript{th} 1992 the Council united in Birmingham and resolved to make the European Union more open in response to the request of the foreign ministers to come with proposals for reform thereto.\textsuperscript{484} The proposal summoned the Commission to show the benefits of the Commission and the Treaty on the European Union to the citizen and asked for a report by 1993 on how it would ‘enhance its transparency’. The Council itself couldn’t remain out entirely though and introduced open orientation debates and agreed to improve on the information given to the press.

The Commission reacted swiftly and adopted two communications on December 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1992, one on transparency and another on the involvement of interest groups.\textsuperscript{485} The idea that by improving access to documents and having informed debate about its policies, the Commission would bring the public closer to the EC and increase the public’s confidence was by now firmly installed.


\textsuperscript{484} Transparency was understood as openness of the decision-making procedures, but interpreted as dealing almost entirely with access to information by members of the public and a Code of Conduct adopted by Council and Commission in 1993. It was implemented in the internal Rules of procedure.

The Commission thought or claimed it was addressing thereby the alleged crisis of confidence. After the Treaty of Maastricht was ratified Jaques Delors articulated the Commission's feeling that 'Europe began as an elitist project [in which it was believed] that all that was required was to convince the decision-makers. That phase of benign despotism is now over.' Now the European elite thought they had found the reason for their failure, they had lost the people's confidence. But this was an illusion because Europe had no citizens who identified themselves as such, and so the valiant avowal to stop their own despotism turned out to be the start of a gradual self-demeaning and an ultimate loss of self-confidence. Delors did not speak to the public however, but to the national governments and other European Institutions, as that was the audience upon which his authority rested. Though the Danish citizen's vote was necessary for ratification, Danish citizens would never hear Delors' words. Instead Delors was convincing both the Parliament as the Council, as well as himself, of the idea that the Commission was legitimate because it worked on its transparency and opened up possibilities for public participation. The entire game for authority took place first and foremost amongst the political elite!

That there was a mismatch between the ideas that existed among the European elite and those of 'the people' is clear. This does not only count for governing elites, but I'd argue that the mismatch should also include that it was not about the people and that the very articulation of a crisis made it so. And to this sense of crisis academics, media and interest groups were happy to contribute. The idea of an ethical incompleteness, a lack

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486 Jaques Delors in Independent, 26 July 1993
487 This reasoning assumes that dissatisfaction is with the way decisions are taken rather than with their content. This is typical for challenges to the 'legitimacy' of a regime for they are about the authority to rule. However, the European Union has no citizens, apart from the bureaucrats, lobbyists and academics in Brussels, by whom it can be challenged.
488 Drake argued in similar lines that 'Building images, or worlds, in part through discourse, can of course have both positive and negative effects, and any gap between leaders and the led in the EU can be seen to stem in part from a mismatch between the image's of European union built by and believed in by elites, and specifically the Commission, and the difficulty for most people of feeling part of (or interested in) that image, or to identify with the European 'project' or ideal that motivates the policy-makers and which they promote.' Drake, H. (2000). Jacques Delors: Perspectives on a European Leader. London, Routledge. P.15-16
of 'legitimacy' grew strong. Even though legitimacy was understood as citizen’s support, either as a democratic prerequisite of authorisation or a requirement for (effective) government, as people’s identification as European citizens, or finally as the normative acceptability of the EU according to some external criterion. And this lack could only become known now that ‘the people’ could make its opinion known with a referendum.

Because the actual events were seen through the lens of moral theory, rather than actual and empirical reality, the solutions of transparency and openness seemed only natural. An increase of competences and direct impact upon people’s lives should cause people, as a direct consequence, to demand for democratic accountability and transparency. Schimmelfennig at the time remarked that ‘the more power over issues of core state sovereignty and redistribution was transferred to the European level, the more the Community was in need of its own sources of direct popular support’.

Confusing normative expectations with empirical needs or vice versa has become part of a collective consciousness of the ruling class in Western democracies and especially at the European level. Rodney Barker has tried to summarise this consciousness as follows:

‘The EU is a form of Government; the governed are the individual citizens of the nations which make up the EU; government both does and should rest on the active consent of the governed; when it does, it can be described, both normatively and actually, as legitimate; and that when it does not it must be suffering, again both normatively and actually, from a deficit; this deficit is both normatively unacceptable and practically disabling or at least encumbering’

The ‘legitimacy crisis’ has been attributed to declining voter turn outs in the EU; to lack of parliamentary control over the executive; or to a lack or possibilities for accountability, amongst which the lack of transparency and possibilities for participation. Furthermore and Scharpf saw a crisis in national government being unable to provide popular demands Scharpf, F. (1997). ‘Economic Integration, Democracy and the Welfare State.’ Journal of European Public Policy 4(1): 18-36.


There is of course no causal relationship between an increase of European competences, the lack of (imagined) support, and a call for transparency per se Debbasch, C. (1989). La Transparence Administrative en Europe: Actes du Colloque Tenu à Aix en Octobre. Paris, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

495 It takes an anthropologist like Shore to pick this up: ‘Conflicting the normative with the empirical- how things ought to be with how they are- is typical both of the way the EU represents itself and of the way it is represented in many textbooks in the burgeoning field of European integrations studies’ Shore, C. (2000). Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration. London, Routledge. P.126

And to the list I would add the belief in the idea that people don't support the EU because it is not transparent and lacks democratic accountability.\footnote{But all these assumptions are far from self-evident. Moravcsik contents that if we would adopt reasonable criteria 'then the widespread criticism of the EU as democratically illegitimate is unsupported by the existing empirical evidence. At the very least, this critique must be heavily qualified. Constitutional checks and balances, indirect democratic control via national governments, and the increasing powers of the European Parliament are sufficient to ensure that EU policy-making is, in nearly all cases, clean, transparent, effective and politically responsive to the demands of European citizens.' Moravcsik, A. (2002). "In Defence of the 'Democratic Deficit': Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union." \textit{Journal of Common Market Studies} \textbf{40}(4): 603-24. P.605}

On December 12\textsuperscript{th} 1992 the Council met in Edinburgh and transparency was on the agenda again because the Commission already presented a package of improvements. Clearer legislation and quality standards for proceedings were called for as it was reiterated that the Commission had to be seen closer to the people.\footnote{Ibid.} All of these elements were consciously \textit{designed} to appeal to Denmark who would have a second referendum in 1993, and to a lesser extent to the UK.\footnote{Such is the conviction not of many academics too, see for instance Warleigh, A. (1998). "Frozen: Citizenship and European Unification." \textit{Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy} \textbf{4}(1): 113-51.} It included an amendment on the Treaty of Maastricht (Art. 1 (2)):

> The Treaty marks a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer Union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as openly as possible and as closely possible to the citizens.

The Council had hitherto been extremely reluctant to 'open up', and understandably so, but it was the first to put the transparency theme on the agenda now that the Commission was the object of criticism. Member states projected an interpretation of the events that would enable them to assert the pre-eminence of national states, opposing Community power. Instead of advocating the institutional reform, as was proposed and rejected in 1991, it was argued that if only the European Community would become more transparent, allowed more participation and 'real citizenship' and was subjected to public scrutiny, it would 'regain' its 'legitimacy'.\footnote{Lodge, J. (1994). "Transparency and Democratic Legitimacy." \textit{Journal of Common Market Studies} \textbf{32}: 343-68.} It has been argued that the persistence of member states on the lack of transparency with the Commission was a strategy of governments in the Council to divert attention away from their own problems of sovereignty that would arise with a wider reform.\footnote{Eriksen, E. and J. Fossum (2000). \textit{Democracy in the European Union: Integration through Deliberation?}. London, Routledge.} So member states took the opportunity to switch burdens and blame European governance for its own problems, a practice that would only increase in the run up to the Constitutional Convention.\footnote{Eriksen, E. and J. Fossum (2000). \textit{Democracy in the European Union: Integration through Deliberation?}. London, Routledge.} Rather
than affirming one’s own authority other authorities such as the EU are discredited, as a sign of the elite’s own self-doubt.

Despite the fact that the Commission, in reality is more rather than less accessible and transparent than any national administration, the logic of the transparency discourse was stronger in the words of the Council because the Commission had hardly any voice in the political arena of international relations, leave alone in the national public spheres. Its best strategy was therefore to go along with requests for transparency.

In June 1993 the Commission adopted a communication on openness by which media relations would be improved, and legislative transparency increased. By now the concepts of transparency, democracy and subsidiarity have become intrinsically bound up with one another; they knit together with a mythical ‘nearness to the people’.

In the same year it launched a legislative programme which contained two main objectives: transparency and efficiency. This time transparency was not a means to increase the democratic character of the Commission, but a way of making the legislative process more efficient. This was done by providing clear information about pending legislation as to improve the possibilities for efficient consultation or business assessment. That is, it was a tool for the Commission to increase its capacity for governance so that it would be able to specify the ‘rational objectives’ and ‘appropriate resources’, by using the feedback from partners in the policy network. Although the programme was presented again as a measure to get closer to the citizen, its content was entirely internal and procedural, aimed at Member states, the Parliament, business elites and the Commission itself. This is not strange because the ‘closeness to the people’ is not only a language that actually refers to the people, but is also a way to establish credibility between elites.

The very activity of presenting measures for improving transparency is a justification and cultivation of the Commission’s identity, and not only, or even primarily a means to achieve closeness. Though achieving closeness has of course become a means of justification as interests, idea’s and action are not clearly separable. This doesn’t mean therefore that there is no genuine intention to ‘get closer to the people’, after all, if a paradigm shift has really taken place, both informing European Institutions and reinforced by them, it is only natural, even imperative, to pursue this objective. The Commission,

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being part of the same system of thought, likes to see itself as just and rightful, and will be recognised as such in the first place by those who accused it of opacity: the Member States and European Parliament, but not the citizen.505 This is not a cynical account because I don’t evaluate the Commission’s efforts against the measuring rod of democracy, and I rather see how it makes a genuine effort to improve transparency, whatever that is taken to mean.

Apart from a way to regain trust, or establish some form of authority, the call for openness is also a response to the failure of representative democracy and the practical problem of ungovernable societies and organisations. The responsibility of a representative democratic government is to govern, and do so according to the ‘will of the people’. But if they cannot govern an uncontrollable system of networks, interests and global developments, while those agents that do exercise control such as experts, media, bureaucracies, and autonomous bodies are detached from the representative system and the instruments of public accountability, representation becomes obsolete as well. 506

This is how the idea of ‘governance’ could become recognised, for all parties involved, the functional part of ‘legitimacy’ whereas ‘legitimacy’ was the normative part of governance, hence the invention of ‘good governance’; good being the normative, and governance the functional.

The problem of legitimacy when seen in this context can then be rephrased as a problem of the citizen’s character (there is something wrong with the citizen otherwise he would trust these good institutions), society’s complexity (if only we knew how it worked and what people where thinking we could respond to it adequately and thereby gain legitimacy), and the ruler’s powerlessness (without the power to change the economy his value is questioned). In other words, by making themselves seem simple and understandable, and open to the public the modern ruler expects to deal with the apathetic and distrustful character of the ‘citizen’, 507 make complex bureaucracies

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administrable, and govern the policy networks of a multilayered and decentralised political system in which the state or the Union have no monopoly.

Whereas initially governance was seen as a purely analytical term to describe the act of governing, governance without government,508 the fields of international development and business gave governance a normative tone.509 (Good) governance was associated with a set of values, ‘good governance principles’. This conception became a dominant part of international political culture following the World Bank study in Sub Saharan Africa in 1989. Keywords of good governance were: ‘participation’, ‘transparency’, and ‘accountability’.510 The United Nations quickly came to use the term good governance as ‘a subset of governance, wherein public resources and problems are managed effectively, efficiently and in response to critical needs of society. Effective democratic forms of governance rely on participation, accountability and transparency.’511

Efficiency and effectiveness are complemented by new forms of the value-laden ‘accountability’. Much has been written on the genesis and spread of this culture of accountability.512 Summarising what the culture of accountability entails is

‘The histography of this new accountability suggests that the developing, corporate and national accounting practices of the eighteen and nineteenth centuries co-existed with and were informed by pedagogical practices of examination, writing and quantifications and that these eventually facilitated the construction of not only visible, calculable, governable spaces but also, 

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509 Governance is: ‘a system of rule that is as dependent on intersubjective meanings as on formally sanctioned constitutions and charters. Put more emphatically, governance is a system of rule that works only if it is accepted by the majority (or, at least, by the most powerful of those it affects), whereas governments can function even in the face of widespread opposition to their policies.’Rosenau, J. (1992). Governance, Order and Change in World Politics. Governance Without Government: Order and Change in World Politics. J. Rosenau and E. Czempiel. p.4


within modern management theory, governable persons who were ideally reflexive, calculating selves. Discipline and accountability, financial and human accountability, were merged.⁵¹³

Whereas there is a large literature in the tradition of Foucault, criticizing the subjectifying practices of state bureaucracies, it is in fact these bureaucracies that are subject to the same mechanisms as well.⁵¹⁴

On the one hand material conditions under which governments had to govern changed during the 1980s, and were begging for a practical solution of governability. First, bureaucracies had grown under the weight of the welfare state, and second, governments had exchanged direct for indirect controls as they had privatized, decentralized and contracted out services and agencies. This has been characterized as the emergence of function based networks.⁵¹⁵ The result was simply that it became ever more difficult to govern. In the mid 1980s for instance even cities changed their governance structure for it felt that their bureaucracies had become too opaque, complex, and hierarchical for any steering to be possible. The organization was rendered more transparent by introducing corporate management techniques in order to make it governable again.⁵¹⁶

On the other hand, large opaque bureaucracies had become symbols of evil, both as normatively obscuring and oppressive, and practically undesirable for efficient governance. The Commission went through the same development and whilst its officials were concerned with finding new forms of justifying their authority and finding their role beyond the traditional nation state the model of ideal government remained that of a Weberian state. Ironically the new techniques of accountability, public management, and general managerialism which was to make bureaucracies more efficient, transparent and

accountable are precisely the instruments and values of good bureaucrats, and it would be in the pursuance of these values that they would find their ‘illegitimacy’. 517

Inevitably perhaps, a new ‘culture of accountability’ was transposed to the European level, mainly pushed by Nordic countries (notably Denmark) and the UK where the ‘new right’, a retreat of the state and increased expectations of delivery have developed most. The reforms started initially as external audits, but increasingly as efficient internal auditing and managerial reform. Auditing practices grew exponentially between 1980’s and 1990’s as a means by which member states of the EU ensured that public money was rightly spent (at least for those states that were net contributors), culminating in large scale public management reform programs.518

To illustrate the double symbolism of these reforms I refer to the atmosphere amongst Commission officials, complaining that ‘(t)hose who oppose the reforms are in the “Dark Ages”’, as Mc Donald notes from her interviews.519 It would come as no surprise therefore that ‘many sensed that the Danish had got it right’, after the referendum on the Treaty of Maastricht, despite their unpopularity before 1992.520

At the 1996 revision conference the change seemed complete. It was to pose solutions to the Maastricht crisis. Virtually every contribution made, irrespective of the ideological background, the most important principles underlying the entire revision process were transparency and democracy.521 In its normative capacity transparency now contributes to what is believed the norm of democratic legitimacy. In this case that refers to the role transparency plays in furthering the structures of accountability, participation and information (legitimacy, democracy, subsidiarity, and openness and transparency). 522 In its functional role it is seen to enhance efficient proceedings and cultivate a sense of actual trust and loyalty, thereby making governance possible. Transparency openness are not

518 The MAP 2000 was the Commission’s public management reform program
520 Ibid. p. 121
only seen as the *sine qua non* for any amendment to Maastricht, but their lack is also consequently seen as explanation for the following institutional reform. That is, academic as well as institutional literature keeps referring to these terms as the *reason* for reform.

The IGC of 1996 had to pose solutions to preparing for the Amsterdam Treaty. They had the mandate a) to ensure a Union closer to its citizens, b) make for institutional reform so as to obtain a more democratic and effective Union, and c) to increase the Union’s ability and capacity to operate abroad.523 States felt the need to refer to the Union’s democratic shortcomings in the more than 100 papers they submitted for the preparation. They spoke of the Union’s remoteness as a Byzantine technocracy, ruled by elites and an unaccountable bureaucracy. ‘Proximity’ and ‘closeness’ were the counter-terms used to indicate the desirable state. Most significantly, the language changed from ‘peoples of Europe’ - until then common language to refer to the people of the member states - to citizens, distinguishing citizens explicitly from subjects or denizens. Transparency referred to the lack of clarity, the excess of complexity, and the closed nature of procedures and processes.

The European institutions and the member states assumed that greater transparency and public access will increase people’s confidence, reduce their scepticism and impel them to participation. This reasoning is derived from the many studies done on citizens’ alienation from politics, sustaining that positive attitudes correlate with higher educational levels, awareness and knowledge about the Commission.524 However, now that transparency has been put on the political agenda, and, perhaps even more important, trust has been put on the political agenda, also distrust and opacity become central to the political struggle. The more European institutions were exposed the less confidence they inspired.

Especially after the financial scandals which brought down the Santer Commission in 1999 a general mood of distrust hovered over Europe. The European elite was now publicly worrying about a ‘legitimacy crisis’, its inability to gain the European citizen’s trust, and its difficulty with communicating what they were doing.525

524 Eurobarometer (1993). **39**.
Whatever the answer for particular authors, a sense of crisis speaks from the news, academic publications, and debates among the European elite. But this ‘crisis’ is treated like any other problem which, with the right kind of policies, communications, and institutional arrangements can be solved. But ironically, or perhaps tragically, every reform sucked the Union ever deeper into the swamp of discontent. The rejection of the constitution for the European citizens made definitive recognition of this change of disposition.

Building up to the constitution one could observe a growing sense of necessity with respect to citizen involvement and the closing of distance between citizens and state, or European Institutions, as a means to ‘legitimate’ supranational decisions. From a normative point of view the aim has been to give the citizen ownership, to treat him as an active subject, rather than a passive object. Since the ratification process of the Treaty of Maastricht, European institutions have been looking for alternatives to the system in which representatives are democratically elected and formulate policies, imposing a particular understanding of the problem and means to resolve it. In its place, self-regulation by social actors and citizens is proposed, reducing the European authority to a mediating arbitrator and putting forward the idea that public authorities are the mere cipher making public discussion possible. The resulting image reverberates a strong desire

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for public power to be the transparent platform through which the general will merely finds its way.

This lead to an increasing amount of representative and interest groups from civil society to be involved in the preparation and implementation of decisions. Even in the preparation of the Convention on the Charter of Fundamental Rights (December 1999 - October 2000) and the Convention on the Future of Europe (February 2002 - June 2003) the public was invited in many ways to participate directly. The reasoning has always been to make what seems an opaque and distant governmental process more accessible, accountable and democratic. A burning desire to come closer to the citizen in order to remedy the sense that there was something wrong with the ‘legitimacy’ of the European institutions propelled a reform of the aims of European governance. In the White Paper on European Governance these reforms were aimed at the ‘rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which powers are exercised at European level, particularly as regards accountability, clarity, transparency, coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness.’

But at the same time the hope was that in this way a European demos would form, after which the European Union could call itself a true democracy. From this deep sense of inadequacy, the idea emerged of a European constitution which could at the same time make the necessary changes to the governing structure to accommodate the new Member States, and create a demos by having the people of Europe vote for it so that they make symbol under which to unite and by which they can identify as citizens. NGO’s, social partners, the academia, and ordinary citizens had to be explicitly involved in the Convention. But despite the bottom-up approach of the Convention, by which the drivers wished to foster a Europe of the people, we know that a Constitution was never adopted.

The Convention itself was led by people of great skill and personal authority however, not a team of confused and fragile yes-men. At the core was a very effective squad, headed by the charismatic founder of the European Council, Giscard d’Estaing, who had

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530 Many informal consultations with ‘civil society’ groups and a structural dialogue with experts and European regions were the consequence Armstrong, K. (2002). "Rediscovering Civil Society: The European Union and the White Paper on Governance." European Law Journal 8(1).
been appointed President by the European Council, with the legal expert prof. Giuliano Amato and Dehaene as experienced negotiator on a shared vice-presidency. Giscard d’Estaing was a man of experience, stemming from a generation of leaders that fought WW II. He made sure that the Convention commanded respect in the international community. He kept the inner work on a constitutional text secret and decisions on the Convention were made by broad consensus, the presence of which was decided by Giscard, and his authority was not questioned even when his methods seemed somewhat autocratic.

They managed to reach the objectives set out earlier by the states in Laeken. The new structure would make the EU more democratic and transparent, but perhaps even more efficient. Every author who contributed to the constitution suggests that Convention had significantly strengthened the political legitimacy of the European Union. And if authority had been a matter of democracy or transparency it probably would have.

It wasn’t the first time that a European treaty was rejected. But the sudden interruption of affairs by what has been interpreted as mass discontent with the European Union is unprecedented. The French and Dutch referenda on the European constitutional treaty were decided with a firm ‘no’ from what seemed to have been the lower income workers and the new generation. The reactions of European leaders have been telling. They have tried to sell the idea of Europe for some years now and discover they do not have the authority to make a believable case. Even though a great case could be made for Europe.

Besides the Neo-liberal landscape that Europe has become, the notorious gap between the electorate and elites has become painfully apparent. The media and political elites were strong on the backing of the treaty. It was not a perfect constitution, but a good compromise which would make the Union more efficient, democratic, more transparent and more decisive. The European parliament would be empowered, single state vetoes were reduced, and a common foreign policy became a realistic possibility.

The irony was that on February 28th 2005 the French Senators and Deputies gather at Versailles to demonstrate their splendid unanimity at a Congress session to ratify the

536 This was the message communicated by Le Monde, Libération, NRC Handelsblad, Volkskrant, the Guardian, Independent and Financial Times, El País, Corriere della Sera, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, the New York Times, and Washington Post.
treaty. The media were lofty about the *union sucrée*, and together with the entire elite of press and celebrity leaders the President of the Republic sang the praise of the constitutional treaty. In the Netherlands 85% of the Parliament, which had asked for a referendum, called for a ‘yes’, and so did the church, the trade unions, and of course the government itself. But when the polls started to show the possibility of a negative, the ruling class grew frightened and started to intimidate. Opposing the treaty was irresponsible, xenophobic, and anti European. A series of intellectuals tried to turn the tide by reminding the public of the holocaust. In the Netherlands the Prime Minister, Jan Peter Balkenende and his ministers, who had also called for the referendum, turned apocalyptic in their prophesies. Auschwitz was used as a spectre, the minister of justice warned for war and balkanization of the European Union, and Brinkhorst, the minister of economics, simply said the lights would go out if the public voted ‘no’. Despite the distress France rejected the treaty on May 29th by 55% to 45%, and the Dutch voted ‘no’ with 62 over 38%.

What is interesting is not why people voted ‘no’. With a better marketing technique, or different external circumstances the public would have voted ‘yes’. What is interesting is the way the leaders were affected by the vote, how they interpreted it and what they did with it, and the reason why they though they needed one in the first place. There where two reactions which are telling. In the Netherlands, the political elite seemed delighted with the result. Now you would expect the outcome to be devastating to the ruler who so fervently appeared to support the cause, even threatened citizens, afraid they would vote ‘no’. But the party leaders even seemed enthusiastic about the fact that citizens where involved and politically outspoken about Europe. The defeat was cheerfully accepted and the referendum was celebrated in the Parliament as instrument to close the ‘gap between citizen and politicians’. The entire political class sees the referendum not as an affront to its own authority, but as ‘modern leadership’, as labour MP (PvdA) Dubbelboer called it during the after debate. This ‘modern leadership’ includes that ministers have to listen harder and go to the citizen, said the Minister of Justice.

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538 There were the leaders of the ump and Socialist Party. From the press the Figaro, L'Express, Le Monde, Libération and Le Nouvel Observateur, new ans talk show hosts, football players and other celebrities were present. Even the Prime Minister of Spain, the President of Poland and the German Chancellor flew in to give Chirac their support.
The constitutional treaty was itself a last resort to legitimate the EU and its leaders; to create a credible entity which could arouse the trust of the people living its decisions. But if the leaders themselves have not the authority to propose a constitution, there is really very little that a referendum will do for them. When academics or journalists write about the legitimacy crisis of the European Union, when national leaders talk about its ‘democratic deficit’ or lack of support, the EU is treated as a state-like entity which could be ‘legitimated’ as though it were a procedure one could follow so that everyone feels happy and secure - as though faith could be created by democracy, transparency, or participation. The EU can no longer rely on the ideological and charismatic capital or Jaque Delore, and consummation, marketing, or apathy do not suffice to produce the necessary acquiescence needed.

This seems finally to have become clear to some. According to Blair the rejection of the Treaty

‘showed the need for a ‘political leadership that’s got to address the issues that concern them [the people]. (…) The political leadership of Europe has got to offer a clear perspective to people in Europe that connects with the priorities they have and they want to hear us talking about jobs and the economy and globalisation and the impact of the competition from abroad. (…) They want to hear us talking about organised crime, illegal people trafficking, the problems of immigration.’

At least the elite recognises that something else is needed next to accountability and openness. The kind of leadership Blair proposes is less interesting than the fact that he believes the remedy is leadership. The same quest for leadership that we saw at the World Economic Forum and the Third Way is now a sign of a general rudderless European politics as well. And the solution is again sought in the same ‘closeness’. The ‘failure’ of the constitution must have meant that we were not ‘close’ enough, Blair and his peers maintain. In February 2006 at Oxford Blair in his speech called ‘Europe Emerging From a Darkened Room’ declared:

‘We spent two or three years in an intense institutional debate. Giscard, with characteristic brilliance, negotiated a solution. There was only one drawback. Apart from better rules of internal governance, no one in Europe knew what it was meant to solve. As the problems of the citizen grew ever more pressing, instead of bold policy reform and decisive change, we locked ourselves in a room at the top of the tower and debated things no ordinary citizen could understand. And yet I remind you the Constitution was launched under the title of “Bringing Europe closer to its

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citizens”. (...) This finally took grip when France and Holland voted no. The evening of the French result, I remember being in Italy with friends, and someone saying, in despair at the vote: “what’s wrong with them?” meaning those who voted “no”. I said “I’m afraid the question is: "what’s wrong with us?” meaning “us” the collective political leadership of Europe.”542

The difficulty is not that no one has ideas, or that leaders are not close enough, but that rulers do not know their role within the situation in which they find themselves and that they continue to one-dimensionally explain the world in the language of intimacy and transparency.

The consequence, this time very visible, has been that the rule and the role of the European elite remained unworldly. Instead of authentically founding a new order with a constitutional treaty, the convention consolidated an already existing order. Rather than a new beginning, the ‘collective leadership of Europe’ could have recognised that the constitution marked the end of an era of fundamental constitutional innovation.

By not recognising, or creating their proper role, the governing elite lost its already feeble credibility. A lack of leadership perhaps, but not directly in the sense that there was no vision, or not enough attention for the citizen, but properly in the sense that there was no idea of what leadership really is, who the ruler has to be, and how to interpret these new circumstances in which the old mechanisms of representation, governing, gaining confidence, and resolving no longer seem to work. Like Richard III, the elite lost its self-confidence when they started seeing themselves in crisis, which would inevitably and tragically lead to their decline.

542 Blair, T (February 2006) Speech ‘Europe Emerging From a Darkened Room’ Oxford University
CHAPTER NINE

9 AUTHORITY THAT DEFIES WITH CONSIDERATION

On Sunday September 17th 2006 a tape leaked out from Hungary’s Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany, on which he addresses his Socialist-Liberal coalition in a closed party meeting, held on May 26th that year just after they had won a second term in office. The tape was broadcasted on national state radio after which almost immediately people took to the streets. They were peaceful at first until it came to a violent clash with the police in the following days, when the protesters stormed the state television building. History loves the irony of an anniversary, the Guardian wrote on September 20th. These events conjured up memories of the famous Hungarian resistance against the Soviet tanks in 1956, exactly 50 years ago, during which students besieged the main radio station in Budapest and had demanded their grievance be broadcasted. It was the same year in which Khrushchev’s ‘secret speech’ about Stalin leaked out.

These moments are extremely valuable for a student of authority as they give us a chance to be a fly on the wall and observe rulers in their natural habitat, unaware of the public eye. This is where we see the cultivation of a credible self in its purest form, where the ruler’s self-legitimation reflects his inner most beliefs about himself, about his authority, and about his relationship to both his near and dear and outside audience.

Gyurcsany is not a Hamlet however, nor is he a Prince, but he embodies Mrs. Colgan, the stern, but balanced colleague of Jane Tompkins. In the instance that I describe he
shows himself a mature embodiment of a distant father with a heart for the public cause and ‘his’ state. But the mediation of his tapes made him a fallen brother, forcing him to expose himself and become intimate. In the culture of exposure he became a liar, while his honesty became his vulnerability. Let me now try to tie some of the strands together and make these events intelligible.

What was so shocking that it could incite over 3,000 citizens to demonstrate that same evening and 10,000 the next day to demand the premier’s immediate resignation? What shocked the citizens was in many ways what had shocked the American people when they came to hear their president curse and lie in the Watergate affair, or when Bill Clinton was found to have lied about his sex life with Lewinski. Of course, drastic economic reforms and the person of Prime Minister Gyurcsany were at issue, and underneath it all the painful transition to liberal democracy with a lingering communist legacy. But what took the people to the streets and what dominated the media was that the Prime Minister lied.

There is a big difference though with Watergate, and the difference is the character of Gyurcsany and the content of the tape. Gyurcsany didn’t lie on the tape, on the contrary, he was probably more sincere than any politician, and he didn’t deny any of its contents, as Nixon did. The problem arose because he said his government had been lying. Listening to the tape we witness how the Prime Minister talks about the last elections: “I almost perished because I had to pretend for 18 months that we were governing. Instead, we lied morning, night and evening.” Gyurcsany then argued for economic reforms because Hungary was in a serious economic crisis and had Europe’s biggest budget deficits.

“There is not much choice. There is not, because we screwed up (élkürtük),” he said. “Not a little: a lot. No European country has done something as bone-headed as we have.” Concerning this lack of actual reform he continues that “evidently, we lied throughout the last year and a half, two years. It was totally clear that what we are saying is not true.” What they lied about was the performance of the government. “You cannot name any significant government measures that we can be proud of except pulling our administration out of the shit at the end. Nothing! If we have to give account to the country about what we did for four years, then what do we say?” After the leaked tape was broadcasted Gyurcsany published the entire transcript on his blog where he added that “The real issue in Hungarian politics is not who lied and when, but who is able to put an end to this, who can face up to the lies and half truths of the past 16 years.”

But the people were not impressed by his admitting to have lied. How convincing could he be? ‘Trust me, I’m a liar’?

Gyurcsány, a communist youth leader turned wealthy capitalist, is often seen as an opportunist who got his wealth by using his government contacts in order to inform himself about what business to buy during the period of privatization after 1989. He never broke the law in this, as there was none. But when you read his address he reveals telling sincerity. To admit lying, to accuse the entire political elite of doing so, and laying blame on himself and his fellow post communist capitalists saying that “If there is a scandal in the society, then it’s the fact that the top ten thousand reproduce themselves using public money”, he surely knew he was not making himself very popular amongst his peers or with the public. “What would happen if we didn’t lose our popularity because we are fucking each other, but because we created great social controversies? And it doesn’t matter if we temporary lose the support of the public, after all we will regain it.”544

Here is a man who dared to defy the public and the ruling elite. He recognised his own ability to respond to a deeply unsatisfying situation, and thereby took response-ability for the way things were. A hero in the classical sense of the word, but the tragedy is that we don’t want heroes. Gyurcsány is rather sure of himself, and he has, with his personal authority convinced the very elite he was accusing. Monday, the next day, all socialist MP’s supported him in his decision to stay in office. Even though the people outside who had voted him in office demanded he resign. Gyurcsány felt compelled to be transparent, and indeed, towards his coalition he could be. But the public expected something else. Their leader had lost his infallibility in their eyes. They were shocked to hear he used such vulgar language, even though Gyurcsány responded that “these words were the words of objurgation, passion and love.” (Ezek a korholás, a szenvedély és a szeretet szavai voltak). They were shocked to see that their president lied, not only because it recalled communist memories, but above all because they took his disclosure as an insult for democracy. He is personally blamed for the country’s crisis. Encouraging peaceful demonstration President Laszlo Solyom said that same Monday that the Prime Minister had taken Hungary into a ‘moral crisis’ which damaged people’s trust in democracy.

And indeed it did, but why it did remained a mystery for many observers. There are many reasons why it ought not have caused a furore, for one because the Prime Minister

544 Uncensored Hungarian version of Gyurcsány’s speech http://index.hu/politika/belfold/szoveg3928/
shows himself committed, even above his personal reputation, to rebuilt the country. It baffled also Gyurcsany, and he set up a commission to find out why what happened had happened. He chose a commission made up mainly of professors from universities with no loyalty relation to him or his party in order to have an objective analysis done. What where they to analyse? Although there was a general outcry to find a responsible for the crisis, and the opposition has been looking for a way to nail the PM, constitutional lawyer Istvan Szikinger said that “the prime minister emphasised that it is necessary to investigate the social-psychological background of what happened.” A sensible initiative, but also a sign of the deep unawareness of the workings of authority among the ruling class. How can there be mature and sensible ruling without knowing how the game is played?

Gyurcsany is a leader confronted with a culture of disbelief which stirs his diffidence about the proper role he ought to take - about the way he ought to be a leader. Even the leader with a spine is compelled to search for his legitimacy and find ways credibly to cultivate his role. How hard this is we see when he decides to reduce the social distance, to become transparent to the public, and is rejected and mistrusted as a consequence by at least a significant part of his audience. That next to his own belief the belief of the elite itself which Max Weber emphasised remains the most important aspect of Gyurcsany’s authority is still true. Only because he inspired his own coalition with conviction he could stay in power to see his mission through.

The tapes were not constructed as with the insights we got into Clinton’s life. This is where he cultivated his authority to himself and to his peers, not to the public. They showed the Prime Minister as a human being, fallible and indignant. But unlike the charismatic leader who manages to create an image of authenticity by focusing attention on his emotions and intentions, while maintaining the mystery of his strength, the truly transparent ruler becomes too familiar. Gyurcsany became too recognisable, too human almost. Only under special circumstances and with the right character can a leader say the following: “I am honest with you, I can say that we are full of doubts. That torment and anguish are behind my seeming self-assurance. I can tell you exactly that all that we are doing will not be perfect. (...) Guys, we are not perfect. Not at all. We will not be either. I cannot say to you that everything will be fine.” He could say it to his party, which is why he is still in power, but he could not say it in front of the public. Had he had the people’s trust, his position would have been interpreted as of authority, there would have been no

545 Translated from http://index.hu/politika/belfold/szoveg3928

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problem. He was not charismatic, so could not divert the sceptical gaze away from his painful and always contestable message.

To conclude, crises of authority are moments in which authority becomes transparent. We suddenly see that we are not much different from our masters and the fear for their hidden power falls away, as does the assurance they could give. So a dissonance exists in the ruler as well as in the follower. To make authority transparent therefore, although often a noble cause, doesn’t come without its dangers. To expose authority, to try and look what is behind, will diminish or annihilate it.

Gyurcsany survived however, and with a vote of confidence in Parliament of 207-165 he stayed in office because he refused to give in to the temptation of pleasing his audience. His circumstances were right, and his character allowed for his defiance of populist calls. What he exposed in the end was a stronger core which allowed him to gain the necessary trust.
EPILOGUE

Coming at the end of this thesis authority remains an ambiguous concept. It does not only control, rule, or manage, but perhaps its most human aspect is that it creates a reality. We have seen signs of breakdown, and because society has become less governable and more fragmented or chaotic, the creative force of authority is increasingly needed. The answer is not in a single leader, but touches our entire social system of understanding.

The undercurrents of this story reveals a tragic paradox of love and resentment. The modernising man wants to be free, and so resents authority, but he fears his freedom, and so resents his own fragility. At the same time he wants to love the leader, like an adolescent secretly loves the parents against which he rebels.

We have seen that those aspects of the modern authority archetype that dwell on the duality of immanent truth and mysterious illusion that promise to end the paradox remain self-defeating. The Prince who presents his audience with a fait accompli and necessary protection needs tremendous energy to maintain the illusion of an immanent threat, universal truth, or lasting value because what characterises life is change and the ambiguity of experience. Our Shakespearean hero needs an equal amount of effort to uphold the illusion of his absence. He also fails because he is victim of his own illusions. So the modern archetypes of authority have lost their capacity to (re)assure on a social scale (authorisation); their separation from a transcendent world experience which originally made that they could create their own reality as prince or actor has now become their isolation and forms an obstacle to authoring a shared social reality (authorship); as the outer world becomes more difficult to manufacture in terms of meaning, the inner world becomes more important as the locus of control, hence the near obsession with authenticity. The double reflexivity typical of late modernity546 – where society and its

546 The leader's attempt to express an authentic self not only reflects reality, it contributes to it. When consciousness aims itself at itself, it not only studies it, it changes it. See Giddens, A. (1991). Modernity and
leaders become conscious of their own formation of consciousness – has opened up new possibilities for legitimation. It allows leaders to use their search for an authentic personal character as a means to cultivate a credible public personae (authenticity). Clinton’s character, rather than his policies, intentions, or convictions, becomes a means of authorisation as it is one of the few ‘truth bases’ left upon which to build a legitimate authority claim.

For modern leaders and institutions to regain trust and respect they need to overcome both Hamlet and the Prince in their immature form. Both these archetypes are forceful and excel in virtù, but they are one-sided. That is what is so typical, and characteristically wrong about them. Because they exist by way of opposites they also produce their opposites; personality is set against bureaucracy, fear against contempt, distance against intimacy, or self-display against secrecy, and emancipation against control.

What is it that makes it possible for a leader to transcend the dichotomy of closeness and distance? What makes Hamlet rise above himself and take over the authority his father had? When does the Prince realise that he is a slave of the same fear, control and illusion that he inspires? Hamlet grows up when he faces his imminent death and kills and is killed by the poisoned sword. He finally finds the courage. The Prince learns humility when he rules a republic in which he recognises his dependence on the people and responsibility for their wellbeing. In the real world these solutions are not solutions, but the result of journey. They cannot be politically decided upon at will, but have to be experienced.

If it is true that the divine natural order has not been successfully replaced with an equally fruitful rational mythology of the world, society will need new forms of authority that allow society and individuals to walk that journey which relates individual experiences to a shared social mythology in which authority can have a dynamic, though durable significance again (augmentation). This mythology would transcend culture-bound images as they cannot maintain their truth value (authority) in the face of difference, and it would reconcile the dynamic nature of social bonds with the structural needs of social institutions. Children grow up and become authorities themselves, but citizens never outgrow their governments. They can, however, share a responsibility with their governments and adapt their roles such that they suit their new sense of authority. So what could be the new role of authority, and in what would we find its basis?

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Besselink, Thieu (2009), Two Faces of Authority: The leader’s tragic quest. European University Institute. In quantum physics we discovered the same phenomenon, that by observing reality, we change it.
I have tried to tell a story about different moments in history where authority was given new significance. Augustus invents classical western authority by taking its name and giving it a body in the physical world; Machiavelli invents modern authority by recognising the Prince as the human author of order; Shakespeare defines more subtly the times in which the natural order is disturbed, and authority is up for grasps, the French Revolution invents modern representative authority by suggesting the possibility of an immanent and perfectly self-authorised authority with representation. Representation cannot reconcile the desire for control and emancipation however because it is no longer the means by which citizens exercise their will, or cultivate their identity. Representation cannot, therefore address the need for autonomy and shared responsibility. Today authority is exposed as a falsehood or a cynical spectacle of leaders who crave attention and citizens who fear subjection. The social problem of authority in the paradoxical fact that we lost a shared basis for recognition. The consequence is that we have no external measurement for meaning and value, and so neither for community, or authority.

Is there no way out of the abyss? The abyss is that we live in a nomadic age which does not accept its nomadic character. If we would, we would stop searching for the locus of authority. We travel from one truth to the next, one tradition to the next, or one image of authority to the next because we do not want to be bound. But a nomadic existence means you take your roots with you, rather than having them in a fixed place. If everyone is his own authority, it means we need to bind ourselves. This insight was present at the conception of democracy, but its actualisation is still troublesome.

Post-modern critics of modernity will try to find solace in recovering regional situations, or genealogies of particulars, in order to escape the stereotype, intolerance or totalising politics of exclusion. But collective social ontologies are already replaced by individual ontologies. It is the force that underlies the evolution of society. The great question of this time is not just how to value every single voice, but even more how to get them back in touch with one another. How to cultivate a functional social bond? In a sense this linking up private ontologies with one another is a re-enchantment of the world because it is treating a constructed bond as sacred.547 For figures of authority this means that they have a task of facilitating unity in diversity on a profound level. Minos’ shattered

547 The word sacred means made inviolable or set apart, but is related to holy which has its roots in the Holly Tree and in health, or wholeness. The Holly Tree is an almost universal symbol of divine authority. It bares fruit in winter, and is thereby set apart (sanctum in Latin).
kingdom of elementary particles asks for a Theseus who brings new order by being true to the nature of authority.

Rulers have difficulty figuring out how to relate to individuals with individual authoritative stories, or even how to relate to themselves. There have been more periods of ‘migration’ in history. The renaissance was one of them for instance, where people migrated from the feudal world order. Now, not only our flows of migrants are uprooted, that is only a metaphor, but we have all become migrants of the past as well. As individuals we learned to think against the grain, a distinguishing modern value, thereby uprooting the past and creating a space for new imagination. We are force to be free, without an external God or ideology.

The new sacrality that he brings is a new profanity, exposing all the workings of power and authority like children do when they mature to relate to their parents as equals. It takes a particular politics and leadership to do that, or a particular citizenry to allow for it.

Whereas in personal life the ethical question of value and significance can be endured, after all, we use our life to form our character and ethical understanding of the world, in politics this is not so easy because a collective exists by the grace of a shared reality. Rather than a collective, our globalising society is becoming more that of an ecosystem, in which many realities are interdependently co-existing with each other and their environment. This is where the task of authority is no longer to determine the one share social reality, but creating the conditions for a dynamic balance between the many different ones. Politics becomes neither aggregating nor simply negotiating of different ‘authorities’, but takes a meta position from which it is able to maintain a healthy ecosystem (augmentation). Politics asks: ‘who are we?’, ‘what does it mean’, and ‘what shall we do?’ When there is no obvious answer to these questions we call it a crisis, both in personal life and in political life.

A crisis is always a phase of evolution, however. Machiavelli would call it an occasione, a moment of disorder that gives scope to the formative activity of a new beginning. This occasione places every one in exile, but it is in exile we are most confronted with the existential conditions of life – as it did with Machiavelli -, and so every such confrontation with the unknown offers a choice, or perhaps demands a response by which the chaos is

548 This sense of dislocation from our past is embodied beautifully by Vladimir Nabokov in his remarkable autobiography Speak, memory. It is a book about the sense of a perfect youth, followed by loss and exile. But the loss is a gain as it takes him to a new land.
transformed into new dynamic order, or otherwise covered again behind illusionary safety. In politics this means a choice to evolve into a platform that creates conditions for other’s authority rather than its own, or to remain fixed in fundamentalism.

What the authority figure can do is to become transparent, indeed. Not just to himself though, as Rousseau and Hamlet do, but rather – to speak with Durkheim - to transcendence. Transcending closeness and distance (as fear or desire based strategies) he becomes an integrator. Who is the mature ruler then, the Theseus of the next era? This can only be someone or something symbolising the way to a higher purpose and unity beyond a personal, material, or ideological reality; something that does not hold the eyes of its audience fixed at its own surface, making its people devotees, but which encourages looking beyond to a common evolution.549

This is what a ‘mature’ authority would entail. Maturity and authority are so intimately related because they are names we give to the same basic human capacity, and need: the capacity to (re) assure, and the fine balance between autonomy and responsiveness of the authority-figure required for that. This entails the courage to act autonomously and pass through the first stages of Hegel’s journey which develops self-respect. It takes courage to defy expectations, to be autonomous, and authentically author a new reality. It takes love and consideration to authorise, and relate the creation to the whole. Love, in a basic way is the recognition of the self in the other. It is the recognition of the particular in the whole. That is a definition of the mythological hero who has gone the road to maturity, integrating his passions and capacities to become himself the medicine of his society and ‘heal’ the community by being authority, not by looking for it.

The archetype of the hero or the authority figure should not be thought of as a person, but as a mental and emotional imagery that forms our disposition with respect to authority as society (in people, beliefs, and institutions). As society we can evolve then, like the adolescent learns about his autonomy and his relation to others through the confrontation with his parents, the world, and himself.

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549 Whether or not rulers should reveal themselves, even if this means their exposure by the judging criticism, ignorance, and immaturity of pretenders, remains an ethical question. In personal life and a safe environment such revelation can be a first step to renewal and a precondition for fulfilment, politically this may be a very bad move. Because honesty to oneself is something else than honesty towards others as deliberate pretending is an acting skill and shouldn’t be confused with the compulsive pretending which arises from fear and confusion. This acting is a specific form of dishonesty which simply masks one’s intentions. But it is up to the person pretending to decide and justify his performance, as rulership involves making decisions on ambiguous situations.
During a life-cycle humans have the possibility to develop from immaturity to maturity. To become autonomous yet related. It is a leader’s task to cultivate his character such that it can overcome the reliance on distance, that it can stand the exposure, but also to acquire the courage and strength to defy expectations of his persona. Social institutions seem less capable of such evolution, but I do not believe they are incapable.

The European Union would evolve similarly if it had infinite chances to come to terms with its purpose and individualising ‘following’. But it is not said that it will ever come that far. The constitutional process and its referenda are an opportunity to progress towards mutual recognition and self-respect. The slogan ‘unity in diversity’ that the European Union (following India) has rightfully adopted is a socio-ecological philosophy that describes a sense of oneness despite physical, social, or psychological barriers. It has the basis for a sacred image of authority. But living it comes only after a journey of trials. We know this from every hero’s biography.

While concluding this thesis there is a sense of the world order being in change. Power shifts, crisis of the virtual economy, new kinds of war, a heightened sense of the planet’s vulnerability, unseen migration movement, the emergence of cross religious spirituality set against fundamentalism, and the failure of the representational model of politics. They make our tragic nature very clear and put the hyper-modernist perspective of progress into due perspective. Besides inviting us to face the factor time – read evolution – in relationships of authority, crises also provide a commonality upon which new roles and metaphors can emerge. The question is whether we can create a series of open ended images of authority which recognise its tragic and ambiguous nature.

ANNEX

When plotting the differences between the New Prince and the modern Tragic Hero in their immature forms the following list could be a guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The New Prince</th>
<th>The New Tragic Hero</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What informs the two faces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performing Social Distance</td>
<td>Performing Social Closeness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Brother</td>
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<td>Stage the presence of authority</td>
<td>Stage the absence of authority</td>
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<td>Awe inspiring</td>
<td>Reassuring</td>
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<td>Fear</td>
<td>Desire</td>
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<td>Inspire Fear</td>
<td>Inspire Liking/Disire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional and Cunning</td>
<td>Self-reflective, Self-conscious</td>
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<tr>
<td>Usurpation</td>
<td>Rebellion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Idealism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haughty</td>
<td>Self-doubt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mysterious</td>
<td>Transparent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Show Necessity</td>
<td>Show Suffering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illusion of simplicity and clarity</td>
<td>Reflective and self-revealing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asks for Respect</td>
<td>Asks for Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing authenticity by performing indignation</td>
<td>Performing authenticity through suffering and revelation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harbours secret inferiority</td>
<td>Harbours secret superiority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Inaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual development</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Founding</td>
<td>Justifying</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rules by necessity and <em>fait accompli</em></td>
<td>Rules by beauty and illusion</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Things need to be this way because they have become this way</th>
<th>Things can be anything imagined</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lives in instrumental reality</td>
<td>Lives in illusionary reality</td>
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<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
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<td>Independence</td>
<td>Dependence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homunculus</td>
<td>Icarus</td>
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