London School of Economics and Political Science

Tyrants of Truth

A genealogy of hyper-real politics

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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Abstract

This thesis challenges the widely accepted discourse of post-truth politics, which finds support in what is in this thesis referred to as 'antinomy hypothesis' – the belief that politics and truth are opposites and external to one another, where one exists the other disappear; truth is abstract and absolute, while politics is a theatre of appearances with no room for truth. In contrast, this thesis explores the conditions of possibility for thinking that we inhabit a world of post-truth politics, by proposing the concept of the 'politics of truth' – the struggle at the most general level of society where the true is separated from the false and where what gets to count as truth and reality is decided. If truth only has value in so far as it serves life then the central problem in the politics of truth, the thesis argues, is to establishes the socio-political limits of thought: how and by what practices is it possible for thought to test its own truth in politics? It is by erecting the epistemological space that sets out possible answers to this question that thought became the *tyrant of truth,* which today has taken form of hyper-real politics of truth. This thesis thus asks the genealogical question: what will or wills have shaped the politics of truth, so that it today has become hyper-real? To answer this question the thesis develops a theory of 'traditions of thought' based on the French school of Historical Epistemology. The rest of the thesis explores, in a series of chronological chapters spanning from Archaic Greece until today, how the politics of truth has been problematized in thought through the concepts of *parrhēsia*, exhortation, public critique, and hyper-real politics. In hyper-real politics of truth where the real is in the process of being replaced by its copy, there is no space for the difference of thought, only the positive mode of thought that affirms and produces more truth.

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Introduction: The Antinomy Hypothesis and the Politics of Truth

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[1] This is a thesis about the *politics of truth* – that struggle, at the most general level of any society, where the true is separated from the false, where what gets to count as truth and reality is decided; or rather in the light of the present, it is about the emerging *hyper-real politics of truth* and what this means for the practice of truth-telling (relative to the relationship between truth and politics). What follows is (I) a clarification of how this study is situated in the present in opposition to what I term the 'antinomy hypothesis'. Then follows (II) an outline of the concept of the politics of truth, drawing extensively on Nietzsche, determining it as the problem of placing a socio-political limit on thought. Lastly (III), after uncovering how the antinomy hypothesis is implicated in what it purports to critique, a sketch of the argument made in the thesis is presented – specifically how the thesis traces the formation of historical social forces that, through their determination of epistemological spaces, have constituted the different socio-political limitations of thought.

I

[2] In certain parts of the world, contemporary political discourse is plagued by a complete disregard for truth and truth-telling. We are told the post-factual society is upon us: post-truth politics that emphasise emotions over evidence have hijacked the institution of democracy; the public sphere is said to be swamped with alternative facts instigated by 'bullshit artists' who display a complete cynicism towards truth and reality; and we are also told that thanks to the relentless critiques of rigorous scientific facts by post-modernists in our universities, conspiracy theories have become mainstream in the realm of politics.

[3] An imagined Golden Age legitimizes the current discourse of a time before and after the crisis of post-truth politics. It is a discourse that is easily defended, because it is anchored in series of value commitments that find support in three related instances of western civilization, which crucially provide strategies for confronting post-factual society. Principally, this genuine sense of something being lost, or at least denied its rightful place, emanates from a sense of the hard fought struggle of the scientific worldview against ignorance and superstition. All adherences to a post-factual society are regarded as dangerous because they eclipse the scientific worldview, which we are told emancipated us from millennia of mysticism and barbarism. We are only offered simple choices; the truths discerned by science are good because they rest on impartiality, on the collection of and respect for evidence and the value of critical scholarship and clear thinking. The scientific worldview firmly links the progress of man to the progress of science – it civilizes, enlightens, and after having accumulated knowledge in a steadfast stream, it provides us with the tools for addressing our common challenges. Truth is discovered by science, common sense and scientific realism hold it in place and guarantee it. And by now, science has rightfully established itself as the only way to truly know reality, legitimated by scientific method and standards of evidence, it has been the function of the scientific expert to delineate a worldview that overrules all others. Post-factual politics is a catastrophe for the scientific community; in our darkest imagination, it is only a question of time before scientists will be rounded up and disposed of in the most gruesome fashion.

Likewise, after the fall of the Berlin Wall it became clear for all to see that liberal democracy had triumphed. History had shown us that it was the only form of politics where truth and truthfulness had at least a chance to flourish, which is why we commonly hold that democracy is the least worst form of government; all other forms of government, having no concern for truth and truthfulness, rule through the use of force and lies which it effectively deploys before its citizens. That at least has been the historical rule. Truthfulness and truth-telling are the central democratic values. Democracy implies respect for truth; one must adopt a stance of *accuracy* and *sincerity* – to do the best you can to acquire true beliefs and to always reveal what you believe. It is these virtues of truthfulness that are in jeopardy with the advent of post-factual society and the increasing belief in conspiracy theories. The association of liberal democracy and truthfulness is an easy one to make, as the arrival of post-truth politics coincides with a new rise of populism – a political movement that has only ever appealed to the

emotions. Hence, with the reappearance of the ancient figure of the demagogue (who now thrives in the technological infrastructure that connects our political reality), truthfulness becomes the highest duty: the spread of mis-information and untruthfulness should be answered with empowerment and emancipation of the individual who needs to be provided with correct information, as true democracy consists in everyone having an *informed* vote.

This story would, however, not be complete unless we touch on its last component: the existence of factual reality. There is an inherent order to the world, we are told, which is perceivable as states of facts. Even so, the discourse of post-truth politics owes in large part its legitimacy to centuries of struggle against the oppressive forces of politics. The relationship between truth and politics has always been in favour of the latter – the tyrant would execute the one who dares speak against him; public opinion would always silence discourse, which was not in its favour. The space for true-discourse in politics has always been minimal, yet it has never been possible for the powers that be to annihilate it completely. This is because of the fabric of truth itself. In the last instance we could always count on the certainty that everything answers to the stubbornness of *factual reality*. As the last refuge for the lovers of truth, factual reality has always been resilient to the exercise of power; even the most recent political movement of post-modernism and cultural relativism, fortunately exposed as the sophistry that it was, failed to dismantle it completely. It is therefore of little surprise that, once again, it is from here that the great offensive against the post-factual society is launched, with the last weapon left in our arsenal: facts. With them, 'alternatives' can be rejected as the fabrications that they are, incorrect and deceitful statements exposed. All we need, a miracle cure if there ever was one, is *more facts*, more fact-checking of political pundits, and more dissemination of factual information to the larger public. Education *about*, *in*, and *for* factual reality is what is needed to overcome the post-factual society.

[4] This post-factual depiction of the present state of politics is not complete without historical support. In fact, it has been such a common theme that the history of political thought contains an ancient story about the relationship between truth and power that supports this description. This story, which is no doubt associable with Platonism and has found a manifestation in every age of the Western tradition of thought ever since, I shall here refer to as the antinomy hypothesis: thesis (a), truth is abstract and absolute; antithesis (b), there is no such thing as truth in politics, the proper realm of men. Written in parallel they look like this:

a. Truth has an abstract and absolute value. Since Plato we have known that truth shines bright; detached from the fluctuating affairs of politics, it persists in another world (of ideas) – where only in rare moments in time, men of great intellect that are gazing from their ivory towers are able to reach out and grasp it; bring it back down and confront the rest with what they have found (that is, if they do not keep it for themselves in silence; what compels them?). This is what could be called an ontologic conception or ascetic idea of truth: first, when we deal with truth we are dealing with identity and form, truth is *what is* (it is *being*, it is natural); second, the philosophical tradition holds that thought has an unbreakable bond with truth - a thought or belief is true if it corresponds to an external reality (only through logic is thought in agreement with the world, and truth then becomes a question of applying the correct method); and third, because truth is a *common good*, it could never hurt anyone (more than they deserve) and can therefore be pursued without interest.[1] From Plato, over Kant, to Heidegger, there has been a settled relationship between truth and freedom: *granting truth freedom will make it*

b. There is no truth in politics, the proper realm of men. The political is that unavoidable domain of existence, which all others must submit to as a law of nature. It is a theatre of appearances. If the history of humankind has taught us one thing, it is that in politics there is no room for truth and truthfulness; at best the man who dares speak the truth can hope for laughter, at worst for slaughter. As a martyr of truth, his sacrifice will testify to his truthfulness. All the more likely in the relativism that governs the relations between men; he will be met with apathy. This is because politics is about power, and power has no use for truth. From the point of view of *politics*, our hopes for truth in the political realm are hopeless, as convention has it that "truth is the first casualty of war." And by the implication of the inversion of Clausewitz's famous dictum – war is the continuation of politics by other means – we could just as well say that *truth is the first casualty of politics*. Rather than truth, the realm of politics is one of dishonesty and flattery. In the struggle of politics, truth is powerless; it has no sting and can be written of as just another opinion. Indeed, truthfulness is not counted among the political virtues by

[1] Barry, Allan. *Truth in Philosophy* (Harvard University Press, 1995)

appear. From this point of view, the prime directive in politics is to speak truth to power: "who ever knew truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?"[2] The dictum corresponds with the Baconian motto, also expressed in the Enlightenment, that 'knowledge is power' – with truth and knowledge in our hands, we can confront power and hope to prevail. The pen is mightier than the sword, we insist; and by the means of the pen, truth will triumph over power. But we also know that in that act, truth has a despotic character in the realm of politics – in a realm where everything could be different, it will always remain the same. Carrying an element of coercion, all men of power are afraid of it – there is no way, no matter how powerful, they would be able to change its stubborn nature, which is why it takes courage to speak the truth. 'The truth will out' we persistently uphold, believing that one day justice and freedom will prevail over injustice and tyranny. The truth is out there, not up for interpretation or trickery, it robs men of their freedom, staring them blatantly in the face – there is no way they can resist. No one has insisted more on this than the Marxists; yet in their historical teleology, there comes a day where the need to 'speak truth to anyone. Power politics and *realpolitik* have never been concerned with truth, but rather with deception, ploys, and lies that all have proven more effective in making things happen. Power *is* about making things happen, "*Ultima ratio*" as it was written across the cannons of the French kings; balls of fire and brute force is the currency of politics, not fragile notions of truth. Thus, a great many theories of politics, either explicitly or implicitly, justify and regard lying as a necessary tool. Politics in its very nature has only disregard for truth. In the realm of international politics, the highest ethics law is the survival of the community; the statesman cannot say, "Let *truth* be done, even if the world would perish." Survival of the state and the security of its people always come before any concern for truth.

[2] Milton, John. *Areopagitica and Other Writings* (Penguin Books, 2014), p. 35

power' suspiciously ends.

No doubt the picture that has just been drawn is a caricature, but being a common place, we could say a *doxa*, this does not necessarily constitute a problem. It is no contradiction in our everyday lives that power at one moment can squander truth and at the next, truth can triumph over power. It is nevertheless at this juncture that our inquiry of truth-telling starts with this antinomy hypothesis as the epistemological obstacle because, taken together, these two common sensual propositions amount to a paradox: *how can truth both be completely powerless and at the same time all-powerful?* How is there no truth to the exercise of power – does not every act of power contribute to that *which is*? What is characteristic about both statements is that they appear to be adhering to the view that truth and power stand in opposition to one another: truth is a casualty of war, there is no room for it in politics; at the same time, truth is spoken to power from a place where it carries an authority that power will never be able to bend or destroy – it shatters the very hold over man that power had established.

[5] Three instances of *doubt* follow from such a paradox: is the post-factual society really an established historical fact, is it really true that facts no longer play any role in our society? Is the relation between truth and politics really one of antinomy, or is the relation between them more complex? And finally, is there a historical rupture between on the one hand a 'factual' society and on the other a post-factual society, or is the critical discourse of post-truth politics not entirely engulfed in what it criticises? Yet for all this it has not been considered how the ascetic ideal of truth and the political rancour against untruthfulness, the increase in lying and popularity of conspiracy theories, the annunciation of a state of crisis and urgency, the mistrust of politicians and the deficiencies of liberal democracy, and the faith in and denunciation of the scientific worldview and the factual reality which it discovers, all refer back to a complex of problems that has remained out of sight for the greater part of the debate: namely that of the *problem of the politics of truth* as it is and has been constituted within the epistemological spaces of our thought. The question of the relationship between truth and politics is in the last instance a question of the politics of truth. Understood as such, the discourse on post-truth politics is an engagement in the politics of truth: what are the social forces that call forth such thoughts about and judgements of the present?

Thus, in contrast to these predominant conceptualizations, I would like to consider, through a social analysis, how such a proclamation of a 'crisis' of post-truth

politics is rather a manifestation of a crisis in thought emerging from the realization of the paradoxical synthesis inherent in the antinomy hypothesis. Is there rather not something erroneous in our understating of our collective social practices concerning the relationship between truth and politics? We should therefore admit that the emergence of post-factual society is not just a question of the denial of scientific facts. Neither is it merely a general increase of lying in politics; nor should we think of it as the rejection of factual reality, but as a *crisis in thought* – there are forces, none the least social forces, which have taken hold of thought and accordingly we should ask: How did it become possible to think that we live in a post-factual society? How did it become possible to think of the politics as a realm of human thought and action where the very possibility of truth has become unthinkable? The question is therefore not, why is there no longer room for truth in politics? But rather, why do we think, with the utmost surety and conviction, let alone condemnation against anyone who would dare state something otherwise, that there no longer is any truth in politics?

II

[6] Any thesis on truth quickly runs into the sterile choice between ascribing an absolute value to truth (believing that it guarantees its own value) on the one hand and rejecting the value of truth (it is all just an 'illusion') on the other, neither of which seems an adequate choice if we are to successfully pose the problem of the politics of truth.[3] Rather, according to Nietzsche it is a question of having an unpretentious attitude towards the natural world and towards truth – a warning against the demand and arrogance of thinking that human beings have access to some truth that stands behind all things "[as] if there were a 'truth' which could be approached somehow–."[4] To pose the problem of the politics of truth is therefore not to propose a (metaphysical) theory of truth, but to admit that it is necessary to suspend the question of truth in order to get

[3] This is the common trope that we find for example in Bernard Williams' unhelpful division between the adherents of "common sense" (analytical philosophers) and "deniers" (postmodern philosophers) that was established in order to rephrase the question of the value of truth as a shorthand for what he calls the "virtues of truth" (sincerity and accuracy). He can thus maintain that truth really does exist (be it so even if it only has a moral value), but it also means that the question of a politics of truth remains unasked. Williams, Bernard. *Truth and Truthfulness: an essay in genealogy* (Princeton University Press, 2002), especially pp. 206-232.

[4] Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*, translated by R. Kevin Hill and Michael A. Scarpitti (Penguin Books, 2017) §451, p. 268

behind it.[5] To ask the question of the politics of truth is to start with the question of the value of truth: Who is seeking truth? Who wills truth? What is the value of the will to truth Nietzsche asks: "Granted we want truth, *why not rather* untruth? And uncertainty? Even ignorance? – The problem of the value of truth steeped before us – or was it we who stepped before this problem? Which of us is the Oedipus here? Which of us sphinx?"[6] By posing these questions of the value of truth, according to Nietzsche, we move to conceive of truth in an extra-moral sense that is beyond good and evil.[7]

That is the point of Nietzsche's famous deflationary remark about *knowledge* in *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*: "In some remote corner of the universe poured out into the countless flickering solar systems there was once a star on which some clear animals invented knowledge. It was the most arrogant and most untruthful minute of 'world history'; but still only a minute. When nature had drawn a few breaths the star solidified and the clever animals died."[8] He is astonished by the arrogance of knowledge and its ability, through deceiving the eyes and senses, to convince men that it alone is the ultimate judge of life and its value. Knowledge is opposed to life; it attempts to fix its more violent and unwanted tendencies. According to Nietzsche, knowledge is an illusion that the weak happily buy into because of their lack of "horns and sharp predator teeth" to fight back with. It has been by the powers of dissimulation, by "deception, flattery, lying and cheating, backbiting, posturing, living in borrowed splendour, wearing a mask, hiding behind convention, play-acting in front of other and oneself" that they have survived, which makes it a mystery how they ever acquired a

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[5] It is for this reason that I should like to leave aside Hannah Arendt or Ellis Sandoz, who both in one way or the other subscribe to parts, if not all, of the antinomy hypothesis. Arendt, Hannah. 'Truth and Politics' in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (Penguin Books, 2006) pp. 223-259; and Sandoz, Ellis. *The Politics of Truth and Other Untimely Essays: The Crisis of Civic Consciousness* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1999). See also: Detmer, David. *Challenging Postmodern Philosophy and the Politics of Truth* (Humanity Books, 2003); and Man Ling Lee, Theresa. *Politics and Truth: Political Theory and the Postmodernist Challenge* (Suny Press, 1997). A more promising possibility would be C. Wight Mills, whose advantage is that he provides the politics of truth with no explicit contents other than it being about maintaining an adequate definition of reality – but "adequacy" in terms of what? Mills, C. Wright. *The Politics of Truth: Selected Writings of C. Wright Mills*, edited by John Summers (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 611

[6] Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (Penguin Books, 2003), I §1, p. 33; but see also: Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, translated by and edited by Keith ansell-Pearson (Cambridge University Press, 2007) III §24, p. 113

[7] In his book on Nietzsche, Deleuze notes how this is the main difference between him and Kant; he was willing to pose the problem of critique in terms of values, that is: "The problem of critique is that of the value of values, of the evaluation from which their value arises, thus the problem of their *creation*." It is from this extra-moral stance that Nietzsche achieves a "total critique." Deleuze, Gilles. *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), p. 1

[8] Nietzsche, Friedrich. 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense', in *Writings from the Early Notebooks*, edited by Raymond Geuss and Alexander Nehamas (Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 253

desire for truth.[9] If truth is to have any value, Nietzsche maintains, it is in relation to life; truth is therefore in the service of life, not the other way around.[10]

[7] Where then, does the *drive for truth* come from? According to Nietzsche, it stems from the hostility and uncertainty of human life in the real world: "Since man, out of necessity as well as boredom," he tells us, "wants to live in a society or herd, he needs a peace settlement and he tries to make at last the most brutal *bellum omnium contra omnes* vanish from his world. This peace settlement entails something that looks like the first step towards attaining that mysterious drive for truth. At this point what is henceforth to be called 'truth' is fixed, i.e. a universally valid and biding designation of things is invented and the legislation of language supplies the first laws of truth."[11] With truth, we stand on moral ground and the means of production are linguistic (it is sounds, words, metaphors, and concepts; in short, it is discourse that orders things). An idea that is echoed by Foucault when he states that "[each] society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true."[12] The politics of truth constitutes a meta-political problem: by being the problem of which discourses are legitimate, the practices necessary to obtain the truth, and identifying those individuals who are its judges, truth becomes the political master concept that determines the high and the low, the base and the noble. To engage in this general politics of truth is to do something with what one is made into within the order of discourse by questioning these prevailing truths; as such truth does not come from some innate freedom, but is closely related to on the one hand a set of rules (provided by the structures of power) and on the other the stylization of acts (which are an extension of this prior set of rules).[13]

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[9] Ibid., p. 254

[10] By equating truth and life Nietzsche avoids relativism, Strong points out: "noting a formal and ultimate co-terminism of life and truth. A form of life *is* a truth. Thus change in form of life will be change in truth and vice versa. There is not in Nietzsche the facile relativism which assumes that one can change one's notion of truth at will, 'because' it is all 'illusion'." Strong, Tracy B. *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration* (California University Press, 1988), p. 45

[11] Nietzsche, 'Truth and Lie', p. 254-5

[12] Foucault, Michel. 'Truth and Power' in in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, edited by Paul Rabinow (Penguin Books, 1991), p. 73

[13] Foucault, Michel. *The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. Lisa Hochroth and Catherine Porter (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1978/2007), p. 32

Thus, the first step towards a clearer understanding of our present predicament would be to admit that truth always has been the political battle-concept *par excellence*; it has always been a politically loaded concept, always at the very centre of the problems of politics. This is not to say that politics is antithetical to truth, but rather that truth is what is ultimately at stake in politics. In other words, politics is saturated with convictions of truth. Without the concept of truth other concepts such as justice, liberty, equality, authority, or sovereignty would have little value: how is justice to be justice without access to truth, how would we define liberty or equality without truth, how fast would both authority and sovereignty vanish by a single utterance of truth. Only then can we see that questions of epistemology and the nature of truth are political question. It is this same moral conviction behind the will to truth, which is at play throughout politics: *to state the truth is about putting the other in the wrong so as to claim the truth for oneself*. Rightfully then, we should note with suspicion how the evocation of post-truth politics is always done as an accusation against another party, never as a general state of affairs in which all are equally implicated: with what conviction does one side claim truth for itself, how do they access such a truth, and what are their motives for doing so? It is not at all surprising that both the extreme right and the extreme left have claimed the moral high ground in the discourse of post-truth politics. What are we to do in the face of such certainty on both sides, when partisanship seems a wholly unreflexive and prejudicial position? The only reasonable way forward is to approach the present in terms of a politics of truth that is shared by all.

[8] Meanwhile, two inherent dangers present themselves in the question of the value of truth: *relativism* and *conviction*. There is on the one hand the danger of 'excessive distrust' in the notion of truth and on the other that of 'excessive trust' in our capacity for truth. Relativism is commonly invoked by the discourse of post-truth politics as the prime evil of our time, but at the same time this condemnation unwillingly displays a certain prejudice towards truth itself – a kind of blind and immature belief in the permanence of reality entertained by a realist conviction that is very dominant in our present. [14] Yet, it is neither *lie* nor *error* that brings truth in danger; both owe their existence to it. While a *lie* is an outward expression of falsehood one inwardly knows to be false, a

[14] The existence of an 'academic war on truth' and the spread of 'fanciful nonsense', we are told by critics, have now taken hold and possessed –like some ritualistically summoned spectre of postmodernism that for decades plagued the academy– the whole of society, stirring up old enmities from the culture wars questioning once again hard fought for science facts. There is no appreciation of the irony with which the conditions of a society can be excavated; and the surety with which the 'sceptic' claims to know the truth is preposterous (as if there existed such a grand conspiracy of the post-moderns!).

conviction on the other hand is an inward certainty one has attained the truth. Accordingly, it gives way to an arrogance that entangles one in a web of delusion and falsehood and in the illusion that one is already in the true. Nietzsche explicitly warns that the conviction that one possesses the "'Truth' is […] more disastrous than error and ignorance, because it stifles the energies with which we strive for enlightenment and knowledge. The tendency to idleness now sides with 'truth' ('thinking is hardship and misery!'), likewise a sense of order and regularity, the joy of possession, the pride of wisdom – in a word, vanity; it is easier to obey than *to examine*…"[15] The proclamation of truth is therefore more dangerous than lie and error – within this conviction exists a blatant refusal to think. What, then, about relativism? Relativism is a conviction that no epoch in human history ever had: 'we do not have the truth,' … even the sceptics thought themselves to be in the possession of the truth. The danger of relativism is therefore largely inflated. Only too often has a particular will-to-truth invoked the spectre of relativism to scare people away from others ways of thinking. There is a certain provincialism against the positions of relativism in that it is always assumed that it represents the devil to ones saviour – its mirror image: there is truth, there is no truth.[16] Relativism seems all the more dangerous for the one who possesses the conviction of truth – it is presented as an ultimate choice between order and chaos. It is thus not worth talking about proclamations of a nihilistic and self-contradictory relativism (does anyone really hold them?), but only about different kinds of *conditional* relativism (how do we deal with the necessary relativism of the world?). Whichever side one comes down on, conditional relativism is an unavoidable fact; conviction is not. The danger of conviction is that the concept of truth is frozen: truth ceases to be *between things*, and instead becomes *a thing* – an object, predetermined and immobile by a resilient will to truth.

[9] In contrast to the philosophical tradition and the antinomy hypothesis, which holds that truth is the property of thought by right*, qua* its love for truth and application correct method, Nietzsche sees thought as allied with life and in opposition to knowledge and truth.[17] On the basis of the will to power, thought should be understood as a particu-

[15] Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, §452, p. 269

[16] Geertz, Clifford. 'Distinguished Lecture: Anti Anti-Relativism', *American Anthropologist* 86 (2) (1985) pp. 263-278

[17] Deleuze explains, "Life goes beyond the limits that knowledge fixes for it, but thought goes beyond the limits that life fixes for it. Thought ceases to be *ratio*, life ceases to be a reaction. The thinker thus ex-

lar kind of force-field, one which we all participate in shaping. Given the social demand for truth, this field splits in two: *thought,* the affirmative forces of creation, discovery, and invention, and the *un-thought*, the more reactive forces of what we silently think (for Nietzsche, knowledge) setting *truth* apart from *un-truth*. It is here, in the tension between thought and truth that the politics of truth forms a matrix of: (1) truth, (2) un-thought, (3) thought, and (4) un-truth.

1. *Truth*. "What then is truth?" asks Nietzsche, "A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, decorated and which, after lengthy use, seem firm, canonical and binding to people: truths are illusions that are no longer remembered as being illusions, metaphors that have become worn and stripped of their sensuous force, coins that have lost their design and are now considered only as metal and no longer as coins."[18] Truth is a topological concept, which means at least two things: truth is not something discovered, but is created; and its topology is drawn up by thought within an epistemological space. Truth, says Nietzsche in the *Will to Power*, "is not something which exists and which has to be found and discovered – it is something which *has to be created* and which gives its name to a *process* or, better still, to the will to subdue, which in itself has no purpose; to introduce truth is a *processus in infinitum*, an *active determining*, *not* a process of becoming conscious of something [that] would be 'in itself' fixed and determined. It is merely a word for the 'will to power'."[19] It is the constellation of social forces that determines what counts as true and what counts as false. Truth is a trick that thought plays on itself, similar to discovering again what it once hid behind a bush: truthfulness is to be in agreement with the *un-thought* (the epistemological space as established by the social pact).

2. *un-thought*. Because knowledge comes prior to truth, the production of truth takes place within an epistemological space, which constitutes its own verisimilitude. I shall develop this argument further in the first chapter *Traditions of Thought*, but for now it is necessary to point out that such epistemological spaces are logically constituted – that is, they follow a set of rules that display an inherent logic. Additionally, such spaces are more or less stable in relation to social practices because it is social forces that delineate them. In a Nietzschean sense there is *will* behind them. As such, any particular logic can either be laid out clearly in conscious thought (i.e. by philoso-

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presses the noble affinity of thought and life: life making thought active, thought making life affirmative." Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 95

[18] Nietzsche, 'On Truth and Lie', p. 257

[19] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §552, p. 320

phers, which Nietzsche talks about as lawgivers) or it can be discovered by social analysis.[20] Thus, an epistemological space has the status of a *social fact* and is wholly impartial to individual experience of it. Striking a more anthropological note, we can say that a society's epistemological space constitutes what Mauss called a "total social phenomena" – that is, the focal point of all ordinary social phenomena (religious, juridical, or moral) without which the fabric of a society would not cohere.[21] This would account for the relative stability of societies when it is functioning and the catastrophic outcomes when it does not. Understood as such, the politics of truth is about the renewal and maintenance of a society's epistemological space.

3. *Thought*. Thought is both subject and (forgotten) master of knowledge. As noted above, the relationship between truth and thought is not a one-to-one relationship; it is tied to life. It is therefore not static (with a monolithic truth that thought through hard work discovers), but dynamic: thought advances new truths that then later come into existence. Truth is the event where thought is realized, when that which once was denounced as *untruth* is accepted as truth – when fiction becomes reality. It is in thought's relation to truth that *truth is the genesis of something real*; acquiring its reality in *realisation*, which, if applied in a technical sense is the realisation of (a different) thought that counts. Here genesis as opposed to origin is thus supposed to convene something of a creative force: "thought is creation, not will to truth."[22] With Nietzsche we can therefore no longer talk about truth being constituted along the binary of truth-falsity. Rather, it is thought that opens up space, makes things appear, fixes the senses – and makes out of the chaos that is this world, an order that is just enough to make us think that there is a reason for it all (a truth). Because of this gap, thought has a history of adjustment: one in which it stands in opposition to problems. This is why, in its commitment to untruth, thought does not result in relativism: to interpret the world is to judge it and to attach values to it – in so far as we think of schemes of interpretations we can allow for interpretations to result in different experiences of being, but to prescribe to relativism as *the* master interpretation seems altogether impossible for the individual, and yet is a fundamental demand for thought. The individual nature of thought is ultimately a living paradox to his present; thought is allied with *untimeliness*.

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[20] "*Actual philosophers, however, are commanders and law-givers*: […] Their 'knowing' is *creating*, their creating is law-giving, their will to truth is – *will to power*." Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §211, p. 142-3

[21] Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, translated by W. D. Halls (London: W. W. Norton, 2000), p. 3

[22] Will to truth being the insistence on an onto-logic conception of truth. Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. *What is Philosophy?* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 54

4. *un-truth*. In this sense, thought is that which is not yet true, the un-true. It comes as no surprise when Nietzsche states: "There would be nothing that could be called knowledge, if thought did not first *reconstruct* the world as self-identical 'things'. Only through thought is *untruth possible*."[23] This last part is particularly important, because it firmly establishes that there is an opposition between on the one hand truth and the un-thought (knowledge) and thought and untruth on the other. Thought is for the "creative spirit" and the "liberated intellect" occupied with fictions and art. Thus, if truth only has value in relation to life and one of the highest activities of life is the expression of thought, then the duty to truth is really a struggle for the right to untruth, that which is not yet true. In the *Anti-Christ* he writes:

> Truth has had to be fought for every step of the way, almost everything else dear to our hearts, on which our love and our trust in life depends, has had to be sacrificed to it. Greatness of soul is needed for it: the service of truth is the hardest service. – For what does it mean to be *honest* in intellectual things? That one is stern towards one's heart, that one despises 'fine feelings', that one makes every Yes and No a question of conscience! – Belief makes blessed: *consequently* it lies …[24]

Nietzsche is here speaking of the "free spirits" – those who take it upon themselves, despite the fear and danger of a vengeful society, to reproach tradition and challenge the old and the settled.[25] In the politics of truth, it is first of all the free spirit that is in the firing line. To engage in the politics of truth implies the courage of truth because it is always a direct opposition of the established order: "the philosopher, being *necessarily* a man of tomorrow … *had* to find himself in contradiction to his today."[26] Likewise, in *On the Pathos of Truth* it was the "disregard for the present and the momentary [which was] inherent in the nature of philosophical contemplation."[27] Equally, when truthfulness is uncoupled from the will to truth, it becomes a form of transformation and overcoming of that which, at the present, is true.

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[23] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §574, p. 331 – and he continues, "The origin of thought, like that of *sensation*, *cannot be derived*; but that is *far* from proving that it is primordial or self-sufficient! It simply shows that we cannot get *behind it*, because thought and sensation are all we *have*."

[24] Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (Penguin Books, 2003) §50, p. 179

[25] Free-spirits have always been met by a challenge of bound spirits: "Free spirits, pleading their cause before the tribunal of bound spirits, have to prove that there have always been free spirits and that free-thinking therefore has permanence; then, that they do not want to be a burden; and finally, that on the whole they are beneficial to bound spirits. But because they cannot convince the bound spirits of this last point, it does not help them to have proved the first and second." Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Human, All Too Human*, translated by Marion Faber and Stephen Lehmann (Penguin Books, 2004) §229, p. 142

[26] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §212, p. 143

[27] '*On the Pathos of Truth*' in Nietzsche, *Writings from the Early Notebooks*, p. 250

[10] "Perhaps no one has ever been sufficiently truthful about what 'truthfulness' is."[28] Truthfulness demands understanding among equals (*inter pares*); it is a property of thought rather than in correspondence with a state of the world, which is why truthfulness emerges as both *sameness* and *difference*.[29] *Consequently the politics of truth involves two kinds of truth-telling*: on the one hand, there is the kind of truth-telling that enunciates the *same* – as that which is produced within a given regime of power. It is the kind of truth-telling that does not contribute anything new, but rather conforms to social expectations. Through discourse, it aims to secure truth as *being* through a self-referential loop of *correspondence* between propositions and the world.[30] This is truth-discourse as government: in the practice of confessing, one tells the truth about oneself so as to produce the effect of turning one-self into a subject. On the other hand, there is the truth-telling proper to the *politics of truth*. This is truth-telling as *difference*, a confrontation of that which already occupies the position of the true. Through its discourse, it aspires to establish truth as *becoming*. It has a sense of nobility and enunciates a vital truth, and it is this latter form of truth-telling which constitutes the possibility of testing the truth of thought in politics.

[11] Taken together, the politics of truth concerns the tension field that exists between on the one hand thought *and* un-truth, and on the other the un-thought *and* truth. Understood in this way, the politics of truth is the politics of transfiguration: from the possibility of *un-truth* that the will to truth introduces, (novel) *thought* can, in response to the constellation of social forces, aim to overturn the *un-thought* and by extension the concept of *truth*, creating a new and different truth. In doing so novel thought is confronted with the limits instituted by the epistemological space of the un-thought, which are maintained by the social forces. As such, the politics of truth is a confrontation between the ones who have the courage to say what they actively think and the social forces that opposes them; it is the space within which Nietzsche's free spirits display their joys life. The politics of truth is thus ultimately about the possibility of thought testing its own truth in politics. In other words, it is here with the problem of the politics of truth that we encounter the *socio-political limits of thought*.

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[28] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, IV §177 p. 106

[29] Nietzsche, *The Will To Power*, §378, p. 221. As Paul F. Gleen, we could interpret Nietzsche to propose two opposing epistemologies, one for the weak and one for the strong, but then we would be omitting what they have in common, namely the force-field of thought. See; 'The Politics of Truth: Power in Nietzsche's Epistemology', *Political Research Quarterly* Vol. 57, No. 4 (Dec., 2004) pp. 575-583

[30] "'Thou shalt not lie': we demand truthfulness. But praise for factual correctness (the refusal to countenance lies) has always been greatest precisely among liars." Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §378, p. 221

While acknowledging the value ascribed to the free spirit and the inevitable need any society has for it, it is at the same time necessary to take it serious as a problem complex. On the one hand, it is true that the most characteristic feature of novel thought is that it destroys and breaks with what is already there. Thus if novel thought is not situated in relation to what is already silently thought it will always face the possibility of either being rejected as an obscurity or persecuted for sacrilege (the triumph of reactive forces). On the other hand, it is equally true that, while there has always been a need for thought, there has also always been a need for the force of truth as thought to be *delimited*. If not, the epistemological space –and by extension social space– would be in constant disarray. In other words, there is a danger to thought *of* society and a danger of thought *to* society.[31] In the chapters to come, we shall see this dilemma play out time and again. It is thus clear that the problem of the politics of truth refuses to be understood simply as the problem of truth in politics, which would simply mean that thought is neglected in favour of social conformism, but rather as the problem of establishing the socio-political limits of thought. The ultimate aim, according to Foucault, is that of "ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth."[32] Accordingly, to question the politics of truth itself, to challenge the hegemony of truth and displace these limits, is the greatest duty of thought; it is the only activity that would secure our relative freedom to deal with problems.

[12] Our scientific theories of the mind and thought are heirs of the long-standing tradition of western philosophy: the problem of what it means to think goes at least back to the ancient Greeks. Since Heraclitus, thought has been regarded as a social phenomenon, one that is shared between individuals, but when Descartes started to doubt the foundations of his own thought, he reached a limit (the cogito). Soon other limits started to emerge: the limits that thought must place on itself to think correctly (Kant), the ones that are placed on it externally by language (Wittgenstein), those which are placed on it by the relations of power (Foucault), and lastly the image of thought taking the form of spectres of tradition that thought seems unable to get rid of (Deleuze). But in formulating the problem of the politics of truth as one of thought a new limit starts to emerge. The wider proposition of the thesis can therefore be formulated as follows: *the politics of truth constitutes the socio-political limits of thought*.

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[31] Consider the necessity and consequences of preserving the danger of *exception* at the expense of the *rule* as outlined in §55 and §76 in Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science: with a prelude in rhymes and an appendix of songs*, translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974) pp. 130-131

[32] Foucault, 'Truth and Power', p. 74

And I would further add that in so far as these socio-political limits are situated within an epistemological space they become visible through three interrelated problems, which act as their pillars of support. Firstly (a), *the problem of truth-telling in politics*, understood in terms of the practices of truth-telling within the political game of truth (which is not exactly to say the politics of truth, but rather the relationship between politics and truth more generally): who can speak the truth, with what authority do they claim to do so, what is required of their true-discourse, what is its mode of production, what are its external limits. It thus has to do with the person or figure who, at least for a time, can embody truth as dissidence; no doubt with some affinity to a particular stylization of *philosophical life*.[33] Secondly (b), *the problem of political order,* understood in terms of constitutional frameworks, spanning from how they are rooted in cosmological beliefs to more practical issues of authority – how, and by whom, can political order be attained, who are the bearers of rights, and how are decisions to be taken. But because order is also about knowledge it also provides the epistemic foundation of true-discourse: what kind of political order is able to guarantee a beneficial truth-telling in politics. And finally (c), *the problem of the political game*, understood as the concrete exercise of power (or games through which power is actually exercised) and the moral character and ethics of the political man who speaks the truth. It has to do with the practices and technologies in which politics are linked to truth. Taken together, the three can be in equilibrium or a coherent whole, which forms a kind of a *diagram* that makes visible the socio-political limit to thought. It has been by the pressure of different forces that such diagrams have been pushed towards hegemony and anarchy, forming a long history, but nevertheless one that has some key ruptures and breaks that can be delineated.

III

[13] By developing the concept of political of truth, it becomes clear that the foundations of the discourse of post-truth politics are shaky and problematic. Firstly, we could note how the story about the slow accumulation of facts, that science tells about itself, is too straight and good to be true to be taken at face value: “Look at the epochs in the life

[33] With such a figure also comes the various ritualized manifestation of truth always present in the relationship between truth and politics: models of behaviour, socially agreed upon practices (what are the conditions of the free spirit: do they fit into any established order, are they tolerated, how courageous do they need to be?).

of a people where scholars predominated; they are times of exhaustion, often of twilight, of decline, – gone are the overflowing energy, the certainty of life, the certainty as to the future."[34] Indeed, the much-priced scientific worldview is itself in danger of devolving into forms of *scientism* – the belief that science, *qua* its methodology, discloses a final and absolute reality and therefore can do without thought.[35] This danger does not consist of science legislating in all areas of life (as in religion or law), but of it being a danger to the freedom of thought, as Feyerabend argued in *How to defend society against science*?[36] This is not meant as a rebuttal of the science wars, but to treat these conflicts as a part of much broader social phenomena. The insistence of the discovery of a final reality should always be met with suspicion exactly because it is inherently problematic – science itself rests on a dialectic between thought and experiment, and by denying the possibility of thought the process of science is arrested. Which is not a denunciation of either science or the scientific expert; rather, their role has not only been to serve the workings of power in the relationship between truth and politics, but also been a means to challenge to prevailing structures of power, to maintain a sufficient politics of truth. Even if there is a tendency towards growing irrationalism today, it is still not clear how such irrationalism moves within science itself, which makes it all the more dangerous to grant science a space above critique.[37] We ought to contemplate the very real possibility that if continuing on its current course, the persistence of scientific realism will in time come to mirror the crisis of scholasticism in the fourteenth century, where the assertion that universals were real

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[34] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, III §25, p. 114

[35] I provide this definition to separate it from meaning the unscientific imitation of scientific language and method (in relation to justify faulty political or religious arguments). See for example: Hayek, F. A. *The Counter Revolution of Science: Studies in Abuse of Reason* (London: The Free Press, 1955), p. 15-16. To be very specific, this definition purposefully aims at the tension between *science* and *thought* (science cannot possibly work without freedom of thought). Feyerabend, Paul. *Against Method* (London: Verso, 1975). The problem of scientism has been widely discussed in the philosophy of science, but rarely surfaces in the wider public discourses on science despite the fact that it constitutes a widespread intellectual movement dating back to the *nuova scienzia* of the sixteenth century. Voegelin, Eric. "The Origins of Scientism", *Social Research*, vol. 15 (1) (1948), pp. 462-494.

[36] What Feyerabend meant by the "tyranny of Science" was exactly that it inhibits freedom of thought, a freedom that science itself is wholly dependent upon. Feyerabend, Paul. 'How to Defend Society against Science', *Radical philosophy* 11, vol. 1. (1975): pp. 3-9

[37] Latour, Bruno. 'Has Critique run out of Steam? From matters of fact to matters of concern', *Critical Inquiry* (Winter 2004), pp. 225-248

entities led to self-contradicting *doxa*.[38] Is it not then our duty to break thought out of the prison of scientism? [39]

Secondly, have all forms of politics, except liberal democracy, rejected the virtues of truthfulness? Is this merely an elaborate scam? How different is the present experience actually from the Christian experience of a loss of power that could be found at the advent of modernity: that modern life itself – through its liberalism, philosophical realism, vitalism, and destructive nihilism – is a denial of truth.[40] Have we not, at this present moment, made a virtue out of forgetting that which Jean Luc-Nancy reminds us, that "democracy is first of all a metaphysics and only afterwards a politics," making truthfulness in politics a matter between those of an equals disposition.[41] The presumed lack of truthfulness in politics would then seem to be the opposite case; there has hardly ever been more truth and truthfulness in politics. Thanks to the success of journalism, when politicians are caught in a lie, they will have to answer to the public. When they attempt to spin their policies, we have armies of experts ready to dissects and explain what is really being done, what is happening behind the stages of power. In the past, politics was a trade in secrets. Today it is the opposite – it is a competition of *who* can shout the truth: 'I speak the truth, listen to me'. The endless murmurs of discourse on TV and the Internet about politics savour every little truth that can be found about the workings of politics. We are not lacking in truth, we are rather witnessing the *overproduction of truth, a political reality saturated with truth-claims*.

Lastly, facts speak for themselves, don't they? It is not just that facts are powerless or a weak form of power in the political arena – *they are not* – as if all inconvenient facts have been effectively ignored whenever they needed, closing out eyes and ears to the problems of the world. The problem is rather the opposite: the overvaluation and unquestionability that facts are granted. When it comes to facts, there is a kind of "fetishism inherent in the commodity", to borrow a phrase from Marx. The absurdity in only seeing as truth what can be demonstrated as a fact, while at the same time completely forgetting about the *facticity* of facts, of which there are at least two: facts could always

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[38] The new movement of *speculative realism* in Philosophy, that safeguards the scientific worldview from thought, might be a candidate for such a fate. See for example: Meillassoux, Quentin. *After Finitude: an essay on the necessity of contingency*, translated by Ray Brassier (London, continuum, 2008).

[39] We must therefore not forget how the rise of the scientific worldview in the 19th and 20th centuries was paralleled by its critique in France, England, and Germany: as critiques of the "analytic of truth" they took the other way out of Kant.

[40] Rose, Eugene (Fr. Seraphin). *Nihilism: The Root of the Revolution of the Modern Age* (Saint Herman Pr., 1994)

[41] Luc-Nancy, Jean. *The Truth of Democracy*, translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Fordham University Press, 2010), p. 34

have been *otherwise* (that is, the contingency that comes with history being the totality of events); and more importantly, facts are always located at an *intersection* between models of thought (the unavoidability of having to interpret these facts).[42] The latter has to do with the anthropomorphic characteristic of all truths. By denying the facticity of facts, the belief in a total factual reality looks more like a part of the very same historical movement that it denounces. In its most extreme version, it is the belief that we have succeeded in stripping away interpretation and theory and now confront a brute factual reality as it really is. As if the Platonic gap between appearance and the reality of ideas has been closed and we are, each and all, capable of living in the light of the sun in a face-to-face confrontation with brute facts – which does not mean that the game of politics allows for this outright, but that it needs to bend to this will to truth.[43] Consequently, experience retains none of the former meaning. It is not an *experiment*, but a pure datum, and consequently truth comes to reside only in commonsensical and depoliticized speech. How then would we be able, under this total hegemony of a one-dimensional factual reality, to tell what is a fact and what is not?

The point of these objections against scientism, against politics saturated with truth-claims, and against a one-dimensional factual reality, is to say that the politics of truth is today dominated by *hyper-real politics* – that is, a kind of politics where the precession of simulacra makes it no longer possible to separate reality from the model of the real, the true from the false.[44] All we are left with is the simulation of the real. The discourse of post-truth politics is unhelpful because it attempts to conceal the verisimilitude of the hyper-real epistemological space, effectively hiding the reality, which it produces. Our disillusion and feeling of anguish that it incites with the thought of a politics without truth therefore, we might say, comes from the attempt of driving head-on into the future through the rear-view mirror, with the antinomy hypothesis as our road map. By being a part of the social forces that have shaped our concepts of truth and truthfulness, the scientific worldview, liberal democracy, and our insistence on an absolute factual reality are all equally complicit in creating this hyper-real politics of truth. It

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[42] Factual reality is not a historical constant of thought, but has to be brought into existence. For well-documented historical accounts, see: Poovey, Mary. *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (University of Chicago Press, 1999); Shapiro, Barabara J. *A Culture of Fact: England 1550-1720* (Cornell University Press, 2000)

[43] This is the key difference between science and scientism. Science distinguishes between scientific facts and brute facts, of which there can be divergent interpretations. In contrast, scientism conflates brute facts with scientific facts, leaving no room for interpretation and thus halts progress in the sciences.

[44] Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulations*, translated by Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman (Semiotext(e), 1983), p. 4

is, we could say, their unintended consequences, which is why it is too late to talk about an interregnum between the modern and the post-modern. The emergence of the hyper-real politics did not manifest itself as a brute fact upon the horizon – it snuck up on us in our production of reality as if both the dangers of relativism and conviction were realized at the same time without us ever noticing. Our detriment is that hyper-real politics by robbing thought of all its ingenuity and resources *–by making the exception the rule–* places an impenetrable limit on thought.

[14] In conclusion, I am not claiming that truth has no value, or that any truth is as good as any other, that it is not worth fighting for truth, or that pursuing truth in political matters is a futile endeavour, but I do think that such value commitments are only worth considering in relation to a given *problem* – and at this present time that problem, I believe, is the politics of truth as I have tried to outline it above. Are all the questions of the politics of truth really passé, solved by the scientific worldview and the factual reality it ideally lays bare in liberal democratic societies, as the discourse of post-truth politics would have us believe? Of course not. If as argued above, the politics of truth constitutes a meta-political paradox, it is a problem that we will always have to return to. It would therefore neither come as a surprise nor be a cause of embarrassment that the politics of truth has developed into crises of thought many times over, and starting our inquiry requires at last a degree of historical openness towards the politics of truth: how and why has the politics of truth been turned into a problem by thought? "What is strongest, what is constantly exercised in all stages of life, is thought. It is presented in every perception and even in what is apparently passive! [namely the un-thought] Obviously this makes it the *most powerful* and *exacting* of forces, and in time tyrannizes all the rest."[45] It is by passing judgement upon these crises that thought has become the tyrant of truth – a tyranny that works through epistemology rather than politics. In short, my aim is to place or reinsert the discourse of post-truth politics, along with the antinomy hypothesis in which it is rooted, into a general politics of truth where today the fluidity and dynamism have dried up and a tyrant has emerged, partially produced and sustained, I will argue, by the ascetic will to truth of scientism that demands a world of factual knowledge and nothing else. This tyrant is best understood as hyper-real politics. This thesis thus asks the genealogical question: *what will or wills have shaped the politics of truth, so that it today has become hyper-real*? This is what this thesis sets out

[45] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §611, p. 351

to accomplish: a history of how the politics of truth has been turned into a problem, or we might say, a history of the tyrants of truth.

The rest of the thesis will develop this argument as follows: the first chapter is concerned with the problem of how it becomes possible to think differently in relation to the history of the politics of truth, and responds by outlining a theoretical position that centres on the concept of a tradition of thought. The second chapter, which draws heavily on Foucault, explores the transition in the politics of truth between the wise king and the democratic practice of *parrhēsia*. The third chapter establishes the politics of truth as the set of problems associated with *exhortation* or council given to the king, by mainly focusing on the discourse of government called Mirrors for Princes that stretches from Xenophanes to Machiavelli. The fourth chapter concerns the elaboration of the politics of truth as *critique* as is found from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The fifth chapter examines the historical development, which finally produces the *hyper-real politics* of truth of the present. Finally, the conclusion contemplates the socio-political vectors of the politics of truth and the different limits that have been placed on thought and tentatively asks what our present predicament demands of thought.

[15] Before I begin, a note on method is warranted. As a method of inquiry, genealogy usually deals with a *singular* concept by relating it to the will to power, making it a symptom of that will without which it could neither be thought, experienced, or acted upon. By focusing my inquiry around the politics of truth, this has not been so straightforward, as there is no single coherent discourse that presented itself for the study of this particular problem. 'Truth-telling' as a concept is simply rooted in too many different problems to be the sole measure of the politics of truth. Methodologically I have therefore found it necessary to approach the question through the three interrelated problems of *truth-telling in politics*, *political order*, and the *political game*. This has made it possible to choose a broad range of texts from, but not limited to, what could be called the canon of western political thought. It is my belief that in so far as they are adequate for excavating and outlining the epistemological spaces in which I am interested, they should be sufficient for establishing an effective history of the politics of truth. Nevertheless, such a choice obviously challenges my language skills, which is why I have relied on translations. In most cases, however, I have consulted works in their original language and crosschecked with different available translations.

Chapter I: Traditions of Thought

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[1] The aim of this chapter is to develop the tripartite ontology of traditions of thought: *problems, problematisations, and practices*. The main source of inspiration is found within Phenomenology, in particular the school of French Historical Epistemology. As such the plan is as follows: first (I), I will spell out the background upon which traditions of thought emerge – in other words I shall attempt to spell out an ontology of problems. Then, I will (II) elaborate on the ideas and concepts of such an ontology and how they can be used to study a tradition of thought – they are: (a) problem, (b) realisation, (c) problematisation, (d) sedimentation, and (e) practices. Accordingly, our general problematic of the politics of truth has been realised in different points of history at events where the process of thought (as problematisation) has been sparked by a problem, which then has sedimented into practices that at some later point become problematic. Thus, I will suggest (III) a general model for the study of traditions of thought, one that collects these different concepts and put them in historical motion. Finally, I will (IV) briefly note some of the implications of multiplicity of traditions of thought – there among, the relationship between different traditions of thought on the basis of their catalyst, the problem.

I

[2] The subject of this chapter is the concept of traditions of thought and within them the possibility of *thinking differently* within the general force-field of thought. To that end I will argue that the problem, as a fundamental encounter of a sensation that cannot be thought, is the catalyst of new or novel thought, yet such problems are only realisable within already given structures of thought (thus forming an inherent contradiction between old and new); and the natural consequence that follow from this is that different

people having experienced different problems will form different traditions, which inevitably conflict over the interpretation of the world. We can put the central paradox like so: there is no such thing as a thought that came from nowhere – everything we can think of comes from somewhere, it is borrowed from our social relations, our culture, our very humanity– our thought are but the repetition of prior thought (we always think within a system of thought). Yet when we look closely and examine our history it becomes clear that it was not always possible to think like we do today, neither is it possible to think exactly like they did in the past – something, some thoughts must have come from nowhere, or rather from nothingness. There must have been a difference. In other words, thought must have a cause or a genesis; there must be a reason why we think, why we can think differently, and what it then actually means to think? That is the problem I want to pose in a political register: what is the relationship between the repetitiveness of the exercise of power (as politics) and the difference of thought (as constitution of news truths)? Or more precisely: how has the relationship between politics and truth been constituted as a problem throughout the history of the Western tradition? Thus, what is needed is a theory that can account for the changing relation between politics and truth, but within the structures of the un-thought.

By 'tradition of thought' must be understood, not the passing on of elements (thought) from one generation to the next, with thought being an act of computation directed against representational structures, but the progression of thought in opposition to previous thought. The generations in a tradition are distinguished by the breaks that they expose the tradition to – a tradition of thought thus has a genealogy of breaks and transformations. A tradition of thought then roughly amounts to the historicity of our life-world: it is important to emphasize, however, that in the world today there are multiple traditions with loose as well as strong webs of relations spun between them. Such is the insight of *multiplicity*: the scandalous notion of a 'conversation of mankind' does not take place on a background common to all. Such a proclamation is however deeply dissatisfying; it reveals nothing of what is at stake rather the ethical implications of a multiplicity of traditions of thought need to be worked out.

[3] All theorizing starts with a nominalist impulse – *a philosophy of no!* – rejecting all universals and existing categories of language and reason relevant to the problem. This leaves the world in disorder; no pure relations between no-determined objects (identities) remain. True nominalism however has no language, it is completely incapable of speech; it commits to a non-existence of sorts. Thus, the second impulse of theorizing is

to posit new concepts with which the world can be ordered. And thus, before we can start to define further what is meant by tradition of thought a ground or foundation needs to be cleared. To study thought as a result of a problem, the problem must be asserted – thought is the result of a problem. Only thereafter can we study thought as an engagement with a problem; that is, as a problematisation. Such a cosmology or metaphysical foundation needs to be asserted; therefore we need to outline a genuine ontology of problems.

[4] The world is an incomprehensible place of flux and particularities that spawns chaotic rumblings and quakes that shake everything within it; at which moment only ability fails the capacity to describe. Being in this world of freedom, human beings are confronted with a sense of vertigo originating from this groundless abyss, metaphysical anxieties, a depressing feeling from the lack of ontological security; threats, difficulties, and dangers are here not fabricated, rather they materialise in the form of things, creatures, and most of all other human beings. Facing this melancholic haphazardness, human beings have answered back with attempts of creating religious, moral, and social worlds of their own in which to feel secure – and in doing so, all dangers that are known to them are crystalized into problems; problems that require solutions. The problem made human beings think and remarkably, they have invented endless ways of reasoning and forms of rationality that have allowed them to manage and survive the looming dangers from external and internal environments. Most notable perhaps, is scientific reason with which they, since at least the Pre-Socratics, have fashioned to find explicit principles and definitions (theories) from which they could demonstrate objective truths about the world and themselves. It is as if human beings have insisted on looking for Parmenidean invariances (nothing changes) within a world of Heraclitian flux (everything changes): all throughout our existence we have demanded certainty (the will to truth). Thus, an enduring tension underlies our existence in the world: on one hand, the strong conviction that through the use of their intellect human beings are able to solve the problems that they face; while on the other, the hopelessness of having to reconcile their attitude with the complete impossibility of verifying a ideal theory, which undermines the prospects of discovering an ultimate explanation or justification for their existence. On top of this chasm between conjectural confidence and unending despair – on the surface of everyday existence – human cultures and societies have always coped with this tension and the problems that it creates through their practises. The failure to solve the tension is not enough to convince us not to try; if anything, we fanatically

stick to the claim that the root of failure is that we are not rational enough. Practices, the fact that human beings do something that they act and behave in certain ways with a degree of regularity, is the most fundamental characteristic of their existence.

Practices are *problematised*: That is, we cope with the material and social world in terms of problematisations that more or less strategically handle rather than negate or ameliorate problems. Things enter into a tension field between true and false and are constituted as objects of thought where they can be reflected upon in terms of problems that require solutions. In this way, practices embody a society's thought (the problems and they way in which they are managed; e.g. theory). The way in which a given society deals with a particular problem also generates certain human experiences to those involved. In a sense then, a problematisation is a triad of problems, solutions and the experiences of bring human to which they give birth. Taken together, all our problematisations amount to a set of background practices, which organises reality as an open field upon which human beings understand both themselves and the world. Here, the truth about Man and the world discloses itself – human beings and things show up and are presented in light of the background onto which they appear.

While these practices have incited a degree of regularity and stability as to what we do and how we behave, certain tendencies as to how problems will be solved; it remains that, in our shared reality the dividing line between true and false will always be contested. Primarily because the dangers emerging from the world and from other men are not perceived the same way all times and because some practices clash, overlap, and make use of other practices. In this, human beings are always caught up in the middle where they find themselves engaging in different games of truth (all the different problematisation of their practices), staking their claim as to what *is* and appears to them to be the truth. The struggle between different interpretations of the cultural paradigm (the non-articulated and *a priori* understandings of being hidden within the background practices) makes society historical, since the present constantly re-interprets the past to make way for the future. It is the process by which central practices in the paradigm are replaced by marginal practices that are taken as a form to which is given a new content and set up in a new game of truth.

Social reality is continuously changing because it is perpetually dangerous – and therefore the history of Humankind is the story of re-interpreting practices through shifting problematisations. It would be hard to argue that a particular danger – such as 'nihilism', 'rationalization' or 'liberal rationalism' – is the culmination of history, the

kind of great stories of decline that are so common to our culture.[1] Yet, they are but bolstering attempt of attention. Rather, there are many kinds of dangers that each can be diagnosed and confronted. We can never transcend the chasm that is the condition of human existence; where dangers are met with solutions that most likely will contain new dangers, which then will need to be diagnosed and confronted.

II

[5] The problem by itself as a metaphysical entity does not give or show itself to thought. It is beyond representation, the foundation of existences that resides in the vastness of the great nothingness upon which human beings exist. It can only be experienced as the *fundamental encounter* that forces the process of thought to begin.[2] If the human world is one of knowable and playable games of truth, the problem in its metaphysical state is a divine game without pre-existing rules and completely given over to the whole of chance.[3] It is as soon as we cross this border – when we enter the realm of human beings and their world that we can start to develop concepts, with which the world can be comprehended. To do so, we should start with the most fundamental: our practical existence.

[6] A practical problem is a problem in relation to our *practices*: that is, we encounter something in the world – either with ourselves, or with others – that does not act as we had expected or wished in relation to our practices.[4] The criterion for a practical problem is that the problem can be solved by mere coincidence or simply disappears; this is so even if the problem has been cognized or not. Practical problems are therefore independent of our thought; it is not required for them to be solved.

Practical problems are problems, in that they are anomalies, but always for someone that has the problem. It is quite possible to have a problem but without being

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[1] The three dangers of *nihilism*, *rationalization*, and *liberal rationalism* should be familiar to any reader of Martin Heidegger, Max Weber, and Hans J. Morgenthau.

[2] See Althusser's use of Lucretius' famous *swerve* and *clinamen* in Louis Althusser. *The Philosophy of the Encounter: later writings 1978-1987* (London: Verso, 2006). For Deleuze's criticism of the seventh book of the *Republic* see Deleuze, Gilles. *Difference and Repetition*, translated by Paul Patton (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 182-186

[3] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 369-372

[4] The subsequent distinction between "practical problems" and "problems of thought" (originally theoretical problems) can be found in Jes Adolphsen (1992) *Problem I Videnskab: En Erkendelsesteoretisk Begrundelse for Problemorientering* (Aalborg: Aalborg Univsersitetforlag).

aware of it. Practical problems have the same ontological status as acts and doings: they are as such, contradictions – between what is intended and what is possible – for somebody that has the problem. By themselves practical problems are extra-linguistic: a bird that is building a nest does not act, it moves because it does not posses the concept of 'building a nest'. We, on the other hand, have the concept 'building a nest' and it is therefore us that see the bird as building a nest. To act or do something is a categorisation; in the same way, a practical problem is a categorization with the purpose of showing that there is a conflict between intention and possibility. Thus, for something to be called a practical problem it is not a requirement that those that have them are aware that they have a problem; but rather that those who assert that someone has a practical problem ascribe to them will or desires and determine that there is an opposition between intention and the possibilities of realising them: problem do not pose themselves.

Practical problems are significant for all cultures and traditions of thought because they present in extreme cases dangers and unwanted hazards that are necessary to overcome. These range from natural phenomena such as famine to diseases, to self-created human phenomena such as economic crisis or the introduction of a new culture. As such, they have a certain materiality to them. Practical problems are of a dangerous kind; they force us to act, to organise. Some practical problems constitute important events in the history of thought because they have forced thought to change.[5] It is important to remember that these events lie before the act of cognition itself – prior to thought however, they rarely remain long! If we want to say something about how a tradition of thought has developed, it is therefore imperative to look at how practical problems have been turned into problems of thought.

[7] Why do we think? Because of a problem, the process of thought starts by this fundamental encounter; the problem is the genesis of thought. In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche tells us that human beings are only consciousness because of an external need for it: "[C]*onsciousness has developed only under the pressure of the need for commu-*

[5] In this sense the practical problem has to be a lasting one. In Althusser's words, "In order for swerve to give rise to an encounter from which a world is born, that encounter must last; it must be, not a 'brief encounter', but a lasting encounter, which then becomes the basis for all reality, all necessity, all Meaning and all reason. But the encounter can also not last; then there is no world." Louis Althusser, *The Philosophy of the Encounter,* p. 169. I do not here mean to suggest some extra-linguistic reality (like Kant's das-ding-am-sigh) towards which there is a absolute standard of knowledge as presupposed by science: problems, whether practical or theoretical, are always someone's problem, someone's 'fundamental and lasting encounter', and as such it is their world – *the world*.

nication; that from the start it was needed and useful only between human beings […]; and that it also developed only in proportion to the degree of this utility. That our actions, thoughts, feelings, and movements enter our own consciousness – at least a part of them – that is the result of a "must" that for a terrible long time lorded it over man."[6] The world in which Nietzsche sees human beings is overflowing with *practical problems*. Human beings are, to Nietzsche, nothing but endangered animals that are in need of help and protection; they need to be able to communicate to call for aid to make themselves understood: "for all of this he needed "consciousness" first of all, he needed to "know" himself what distressed him, he needed to "know" how he felt, he needed to "know" what he thought."[7]

Individual consciousness is over-valued, says Nietzsche: "consciousness does not really belong to man's individual existences, but rather to his social and herd nature; that, as follows from this, is has developed subtlety only insofar as this is required by social or herd utility."[8] We can thus say that thought is a social phenomenon that does not belong to the individual, and that the reason why it develops is that there have been practical problems that needed to be overcome. To Nietzsche there is something more latent within this consciousness: *adventavit asinus pulcher et fortissimus* – the conviction of philosophy "it always creates the world in its own image; it cannot do otherwise; philosophy is this tyrannical impulse itself, the most spiritual Will to Power, the will to 'creation of the world,' the will to the *causa prima*."[9] Through the question*ed* and the unquestion*able*, seemingly arbitrary borders are established which we, in our everyday experience, find impossible to transcend, but which nonetheless determines the character of our thought.[10] To Nietzsche:

> Our thoughts themselves are continually governed by the character of consciousness – by the 'genius of the species' that command it – and translated back into the perspective of the herd. Fundamentally, all our actions are altogether incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual; this is no doubt of that. But as soon as we translate them into consciousness *they no longer seem to be*.[11]

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[6] Nietzsche, Friedrich (1974) *The Gay Science: with a prelude in rhymes and an appendix of songs*, Translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books), §354, p. 298 [emphasis in original]

[7] Ibid, §354, p. 298

[8] Ibid, §354, p. 299

[9] Nietzsche, Friedrich (1997) *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, Translated by Helen Zimmeren (New York: Dover Publications Inc.), p. 6

[10] See Strong, Tracy B. *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration: Expanded Edition* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 24-25

[11] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, §354, p. 299 [emphasis in original]

This is therefore not about a Freudian idea of the *unconscious*, which lies beneath all human experience as a monolithic and unchangeable structure. Rather such a Nietzschian character of consciousness is what later to Edmund Husserl becomes the *Lebenswelt* –life-world– the horizon of all experience, which forms the background on which all things appears as themselves and meaningful.[12] Beneath all consciousness there is a life-world loaded with a heavy philosophical infrastructure. And later with Heidegger this idea of consciousness as nothing but social phenomena as a shared 'clearing' that is opened up by the discourse of 'the they' (the Nietzschean 'herd') who are capable of nothing but meagre chatter the purpose of which is to escape from nothingness.[13] It is a similar distinction that made by historical epistemologists: that between knowledge (*connaissance*) and forms of knowledge (*savoir*); where the latter is the property of man's individual existence, the former is a property of his social existence – thus, beyond our conscious thought, there is a realm of thought that constitutes 'internal' limitations that are socially imposed.[14]

[8] To thought, *nothing is given*. The question then is, how did it become possible for 'the given' to become presupposed? The answer is that by granting itself (thought) freedom from the eye (the senses), thought was able to imagine a world, which the eye then could see: with Bachelard, "Knowledge of reality is a light that always casts a shadow in some nook or cranny. It is never immediate, never complete. Revelations of reality are always recurrent. Reality is never 'what we might believe it to be': it is always what we ought to have thought."[15] Thus, we only know against previous knowledge. That is, empirical thought is always only clear in retrospect when the previous knowledge can be show to be an error by a sharpening or refocus of the apparatus of reason. With Alexandre Koyré we could talk of "*Die Gischichte der menchligen Dummheit*" – the history of human stupidity.[16] According to Bachelard, the problem is one with thought itself (not external factors such as the elusiveness of phenomena, our sensual apparatus, or the physiological human mind). The very act of cognition is de-

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[12] Husserl, Edmund. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* (Evanston: North Western University Press, 1970)
[13] Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962)
[14] Foucault, Michel. *Archaeology of Knowledge*, translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge Classics 2002), pp. 16-17
[15] Bachelard, Gaston. *The Formation of the Scientific Mind: A Contribution to a Psychoanalysis of Objective Knowledge*, translated and annotated by Mary McAllester Jones (Cinamen Press 2002), p. 24
[16] Koyré, Alexandre. *Études d'histoire de la pensée philosophique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), p. 254

spite our best intentions at its very heart marked by a kind of necessary sluggishness, disturbance, or lack of clarity – human beings are capable of reason, but in them it is not complete. The act of cognition by its nature constitutes a set of 'internal' obstacles, a positive web of beliefs or un-thought/unconscious structures on which explicit thought appears; Bachelard calls these 'epistemological obstacles' and argues that it is these that the scientific spirit must break with.[17] It is Nietzsche's 'character of consciousness' coming forth as the positive, that which is given *a priori* to the human mind – science now as a substitute for philosophy, but imbued with the same will to power.

La Problématique: To Bachelard thought, or rather the mode of thought that is science, is occupied with solving specific singular problems. Such problems are constituted as a *problématique* – a problematic:

> Immediately, the *word rational* is conscience of *rectification*. To describe all the span of rational realization [or realization of the rational], one must go from a disorganized given to an organized given in order to have a rational end. The universal doubt would pulverize irremediably the given in a pile of Heraclitian facts. It does not correspond to any real instance of the scientific research. The scientific research requires [calls for], instead of the parade of universal doubt, the constitution of a *problematic*. [Science] takes her real start in a *problem*, even if this problem is badly put [defined]. The scientific self is thus [then] a *program of experiments* [experience], whereas the scientific non-self is already a *laid out problematic*. In modern physics one never works on the total unknown. *A fortiori*, against all theses that claim a fundamental irrational [or "ism"], one does not work on an unknowable [my translation, emphasis in original].[18]

To establish a problematic is to demonstrate a problem – to go from rough (often contradictory) themes or a set of questions to a precise problem. A problematic therefore always develops within an already constituted web of *positives*, never from a void: an epistemological space is erected between problem and question where a solution can be constructed. A solution to a theoretical problem is a theory. In that sense, science functions by posing questions: why is the practical problem there? A problem of thought is an anomaly in relation to our previous experiences and world view: it constitutes a problem in relation to out previous knowledge, understanding, and explanations of the world regardless of this deriving from our mundane being in the words or active knowledge creation. The notion is singular, yes, but also anti-representational: problems are not constituted as an inquiry of the essence of things. Rather, a problem is singular in the sense that it simultaneously determines the subject to think and the object to be thought: "We must first posit the object as a subject of the problem, and the subject of

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[17] "Historians of science have to take ideas as facts. Epistemologists have to take facts as ideas and place them within a system of thought. A fact that a whole era has misunderstood remains a *fact* in the historians' eyes. For epistemologists however, it is an *obstacle*, a counter-thought." Bachelard, *The Formation of the Scientific Mind*, p. 27

[18] Bachelard, Gaston. *Le Rationalisme Appliqué* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), p. 51

the cogito as a consciousness of the problem."[19] In the ontology of problems there is no world and thinker division – subject nor objects, things nor minds exist in themselves – there is ever only the problem at hand that introduces the very possibility of the correlation, the epistemological space.

The *problematique* is a construction: "[I]n Scientific life, whatever people may say, problems do not pose themselves. It is indeed having this sense of the problem that marks out the true scientific mind. For a scientific mind, all knowledge is an answer to a question. If there has been no question, there can be no scientific knowledge. Nothing is self-evident. Nothing is given. Everything is constructed."[20] To think is to problematize, to criticise the questions themselves, and to refuse their basis: "In self-questioning rationalism [*le rationalisme questionnant*], the basis for knowledge are themselves put to the test, and brought into question by the question [my translation]."[21] This makes science an 'antilogy' – a refusal of previous webs of belief and usual concepts (especially those of everyday language). To progress scientifically there is need for a metaphysical foundation: "*On fonde en construisant"* Bachelard would say. That something that is constructed is *the given*. Hence, when Galileo Galilei wrote that the universe was written in the language of mathematics, he was constructing reality: he is not making an empirical statement, but rather asserts a metaphysical foundation so that he can apply mathematics to the celestial bodies.

To Nietzsche the philosophical doctrine of realism –the belief that some aspects of our reality are ontologically independent of our conceptual schemes– didn't make much sense. He charges against the realist intoxication with apparent and unveiled reality, that they should "[s]ubtract the phantasm and every human contribution from it, my sober friends! If you can! If you can forget your decent, your past, your training–all of your humanity and animality."[22] There simply is no way for human beings to transcend their *Lebenswelt*. Along similar lines, French historical epistemologists would much rather talk of *realisation* than of realism: Émile Meyerson posits that "science is not positive", it does not test the relationship between a theory and the empirical reality – rather science realises the world that it is attempting to know, there is identity between thought and reality, which is why thought asserts a new reality.[23] According to Anaxag-

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[19] Ibid, p. 56
[20] Bachelard, *The Formation of the Scientific Mind*, p. 25
[21] Bachelard, *Le Rationalisme Appliqué*, p. 57
[22] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, §57, p. 121
[23] Meyerson, Émile. *Identity and Reality*, translated by Kate Loewenberg (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 384

oras, the world is ordered as by a cosmic mind (*nous*), but human beings can only discover that order by constructing it themselves. The chaos of the world is transformed into order when the human mind is put to work: "science conjures up a world, by means not of magic immanent in reality but of rational impulses immanent in [the] mind."[24] It is through construction that reality really becomes real. Historical epistemology is not anti-realist however, there will always be a realization of the problem: thus the *real* is what emerges by advancing the problem.

There is more at stake than a simple loss of the heroism of science when the later generation takes over from Bachelard. When Foucault appropriates the concept of *problématique*, and renames it the problematisation, we also find the reconciliation of the subjectivist and conceptual versions of phenomenology – in one move there is phenomenological involvement as well as phenomenological detachment – a seemingly impossible position.[25] To Foucault, thought "is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and question it as to its meaning, its conditions, and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects it as a problem."[26] Thus, it is the freedom and detachment that thought grants itself from everything else and focuses on a object as a problem – *a problem* that is at the same time something that this 'thinking I' is involved with. For as Foucault turns around and asserts in the following paragraph it is exactly the (practical) problem that conditioned thought in the first place:

> To say that the study of thought is the analysis of freedom does not mean one is dealing with a formal system that has reference only to itself [i.e. Bachelard's science]. Actually, for a domain of action, a behavior, to enter the field of thought, it is necessary for a certain number of factors to have made it uncertain, to have made it lose its familiarity, or to have provoked a certain number of difficulties around it. These elements result from social, economic, or political processes. But here their only role is that of instigation. They can exist and perform their action for a very long time, before there is effective problematization by thought. And when *thought* intervenes, it doesn't assume a unique form that is the direct result or the necessary expression of these difficulties; *it is an original or specific response*—often taking many forms, sometimes even contradictory in its different aspects—*to these difficulties, which are defined for it by a situation or a context and which hold true as a possible question*.[27]

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[24] Bachelard, Gaston. *The New Scientific Spirit*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), p. 13

[25] Bachelard held that the two approaches could never be reconciled and he explored both in his writing. For his work with an emphasis on phenomenological involvement, see: Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*, translated by Maria Jolas (Orion Press, Inc. 1964)

[26] Foucault, Michel. 'Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations: an Interview', in Paul Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 388

[27] Ibid. pp. 388-389 [my emphasis]

We could say that the conditionality of freedom of thought is the (practical) problem, but with it nothing is determined, only "instigated". By insisting on the primacy of the problem, Foucault avoids the traps of involved (hermeneutics) and detached (structuralist) phenomenology. He neither reduces all meaning to mere structure –a view from nowhere, where the analyst is mistakenly displaced from the context within which he unavoidable will always be– nor does he locate the problem in relation to essences or deep meaning, or meaning behind the structures; the only meaning the problem can have is that which it is embowered with in the context where they appears. Hence, if we talk about any given problem we can describe it in two ways, neither of which is tangible. It is all there within the problem itself. Foucault's solution to this problem was what he called "*déchiffrement*" (akin to Heidegger's "thinking") – or we could call it the *decipherment* of a position in between them, where we can decipher, as it were, how the problem arises and is inscribed with meaning from within the context.[28] That is, the decipherment of the problem has the status of interpretation of the situation: an interpretation that amounts to an understanding that is radically different from that available to other actors. As such, problematisations are not polemical, nor are they a kind of deconstruction – meaning and the political only arises posteriori. In its philosophical variant, we are not far away from Heideggerian *fundamental ontology* as the inquiry into the *Dasein's* capacity to grasp Being – the work of thought is a ground-clearing exercise.

Foucault, contrary to Bachelard, uses problematisation as both *noun* and *verb*: that is, he takes problematisation as both a method for studying the history of thought as well as its object of study – if thought really only consist of those events that disrupts and redefines the character of consciousness, whether willingly or unwillingly, then there is no other choice than to take problematisations as the object of a problematisation. The problem just *is*... that much is clear from an ontology of problems: "What is the answer to the question? The problem. How is the problem resolved? By displacing the question. […] We must think problematically rather than question and answer dialectically."[29] In that regard, 'sexuality' is not a part of human nature; rather it is a part of culture and history. Foucault therefore asks, to which question is sexuality an answer? The answer, which has an implicit solution, is 'how should I conduct myself?' As an object of study a problematisation is the "ensemble of discursive and non-discursive practices that makes something enter into the play of the true and the false, and consti-

[28] Dreyfus, Hubert L. and Paul Rabinow. *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (University of Chicago Press, 1983)
[29] Foucault, Michel. 'Theatrum Philosophicum', *Critique*, 282 (1970): pp. 885-908

tutes it as an object of thought."[30] The point is to backtrack form the problem to the question. Accordingly, we can take the problem as the object of study because it is within the problem in the way that it is problematized that we find both the questions behind it, but also the possible ways of handling the problem – i.e. the different practices involved. Foucault explains it thus:

> [T]he work of a history of thought would be to rediscover at the root of these diverse solutions the general form of problematization that has been made them possible—even in their very opposition; or what has made possible the transformations of the difficulties and obstacles of a practice into a general problem for which one proposes diverse practical solutions. *It is problematization that responds to these difficulties*, but by doing something quite other than expressing them or manifesting them: in connection with them it develops the conditions in which possible response will be given; it defines the elements that will constitute what the different solutions attempt to respond to. This development of a given into a question, this transformation of a group of obstacles and difficulties into problems to which the diverse solutions will attempt to produce a response, *this is what constitutes the point of problematization and the specific work of thought*.[31]

[9] If conscious thought is based on a particular positive, and the thought at work in problematisation consists in constituting a new positive, it then counts as an *event*. With the concept of the 'epistemological obstacle' Bachelard introduced a caesural understanding of science – science is marked by its discontinuities; it does not progress in a linear fashion, it does so rhythmically between the constructed given and the realization of the problem. By doing so, differences are located: the goal is not hermeneutical – to derive meaning by appealing to common features in man, culture, or history – rather it is to show the difference in worldviews, to show how the old is in the new and how the new already was in the old. With historical epistemology, we can see that there are different layers of thought that are historically contingent. To August Comte these were the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive; to Bachelard, these became the pre-scientific, the scientific, and the new scientific spirit; and with Foucault they were the renaissance, the enlightenment, the modern, and structuralism.[32] It is the shifts in rules of interpretation between them that are characterized as events.

To Foucault, the problematisation is equal to a *realization* of the problem and it is only this that would count as an event; a somewhat anonymous process that breaks up

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[30] Foucault, Michel. 'Le souci de la vérité (entretien avec F. Ewald)', *Magazine littéraire*, no 207 (1984), pp. 18-23 [my translation]

[31] Foucault, "Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations', p. 389 [my emphasis]

[32] Comte, August. *The Positive Philosophy*, translated by Harriet Martineau (Batoche Books, 2000); Bachelard, Gaston. *The Formation of the Scientific Mind: a contribution to the psychoanalysis of objective knowledge*, translated by Mary McAllester Jones (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2002); and Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things An Archaeology of the Human Science*, translation Tavistock/Routledge (London: Routledge Classics, 2002)

and redraws the conventional lines of history. The problem never has only one father; rather problems are events – a reversal of interpretations that posits a new situation. What are the conditions for a given break to constitute an event? An event is an interpretation:

> If interpretation is the violent or surreptitious appropriation of a system of rules, which in itself has no essential meaning, in order to impose a direction, to bend it to a new will, to force its participation in a different game, and to subject it to secondary rules, then the development of huhumanity is a series of interpretations. The role of genealogy is to record its history: the history of morals, ideals, and metaphysical concepts, the history of the concept of liberty or of the ascetic life; as they stand for the emergence of different interpretations, they must be made to appear as events on the state of historical process.[33]

Thus we should only consider those events that have implications for the problem at hand, that put it through transformations and displacements. A transformation is here the real but unconscious shifts that the problem goes through in its constant interpretation; and a displacement is a spatial term (along with territory, field, and domain), not a temporal or conceptual one, that connotes the dispersion and dislocation of the problem.

A problematisation is then a kind of formatting of a field that suggests solutions and particular models for their implementation. Deleuze and Guattari talk about *de-territorialisation* and *re-territorialisation* as when a space (epistemological or physical) is cleansed of existing power structures only to be replaced by new ones.[34] It is a process of struggle. Read in this light, the history of thought is a history of how problems have been displaced at different points in time, how they have been duplicated into other fields, and how they have disappeared from others. With the idea of a formatted territory, a problematisation builds on already digested thought as though it simultaneously superimposes and embeds with an already occupied and problematic space. With emerging practical problems within one territory, a problematisation might present itself.

The realization of a problem is not an uncomplicated process, because problems always occur in an already formatted space, as when a new problem joins others in a given territory or when they clash over another. The problematisation of a new problem within an already existing framework of formatted space is like adding another instrument to an already beating rhythm; it has to follow the rhythm that all the others are playing – it can choose to embed within them rather anonymously, or it can superim-

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[33] Foucault, Michel. ”Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”, in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 86

[34] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (London: Bloomsbury, 1984); and *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism an Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi (University of Minnesota Press, 1987)

pose upon them and break into a violent solo One thing is for sure: *the music doesn't stop playing*.

[10] A problematisation is a *focal point of experience*. As human beings we have experiences: to Homer, "We men are wretched things."[35] To Augustine, "For thou hast created us for thyself, and our heart cannot be quieted till it may find repose in thee."[36] To Camus, "Man is the only creature who refuses to be what he is."[37] But what are all these experience of being human – how are these exact experiences possible and not others, why do we not experience the world in the same way? Because of the way in which we "think" about the world – because of the way in which thought structures our experiences. Everything is borrowed, everything comes from somewhere else – it is Nietzsche's character of consciousness at play again. In that regard we can say that thought is a kind of focal point of experience. The life-world – *Lebenswelt* – is the horizon of all experience: it forms the background on which all things appear as themselves and as meaningful. What is the structure of these background practices? To Foucault, it is thought (as a problematisation) that is the focal point of experience, and its underlying structure is suspended between three points: "a game of truth, relations of power, and forms of relations to oneself and to others."[38] Such conditions are not demonstrable, but are tied to the problematic that varies with history, not historically (they are the focal points upon which any particular historical formation takes shape).[39]

Truth is an event – the genesis of something real (the realization of the problem). Human beings play different games of truth (*les jeux de vérité*) that consists of truth-acts. A truth-act is the manifestation of truth, what Foucault calls "alethurgary forms" – that is, the more or less ritualized manifestations of truth.[40] These games of

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[35] Hom.*Il*.24

[36] Aug.Conf.1

[37] Camus, Albert. *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, Translated by Anthony Bower (Vintage International, 1991), p. 12

[38] Foucault, 'Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations', p. 387

[39] Deleuze, Gilles. *Foucault*, translated and edited by Seán Hand (London: Bloomsbury, 1988), p. 94

[40] "Alethurgary forms" can be contrasted with the 'performative utterance' (or *performatives*), or 'illocutionary acts' in speech-act theory. Searle explains: "To perform illocutionary acts is to engage in a rule-governed form of behaviour." This has three requirements: first, the performative utterance first of all requires a context that is somewhat *institutionalized*, in that the effects of the acts are known beforehand; second, the *status* of speaker is important; and third, the freedom actors enjoys is limited by these rules. In contrast, in the alethugary form the effects are unknown, they open the situation to undefined eventualities; there is no requirement of *status* of the individual; and relation between freedom and rules more or less open. See: Searle, John. 'What is a speech-act?', in *The Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 1972). For a further discussion see: Foucault, Michel. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject – Lectures at the Collège De France, 1981-82*, translated by Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

truth are arranged not according to strict rules, but rather according to what Foucault calls "regimes of truth" (against truth as its own criterion, *veritas est index sui et falsi*) – "the type of relations that link together manifestations of truth with their procedures and the subject who are their operators, witnesses, or possible objects."[41] It is all a question of style; there are different styles of playing games of truth, different ways of being a truth-teller.

Power is a strategic relation: it is to be understood in terms of its concrete application in strategies and tactics; that is, *power as a force relation*. To that end, power is about constructing "normative frameworks of behaviour" between human beings. Thought is implicated in the exercise of power. Foucault links the technical aspect *gouverner* (governing) with modes of thought – *mentalité* – and constructs the neologism *la gouvernementalité* (governmentality).[42] Governmentality is about *conduit* (conduct) in an ethical sense as the activity of conducting one self, and in a normative sense as conducting behavior.[43] In the ethical sense, government is the effort to shape, sculpt, and guide choices, needs, and lifestyles of groups and individuals. It is to govern through *freedom* in a suggestive way. In the normative sense, government is to establish a code of conduct to which behavior can be judged and regulated. Government is a kind of behaviour; it is the act of exercising power, to conduct the conduct of others. Governing is the "conduct of conduct," a behaviour that seeks to "structure the possible fields of action of others."[44]

And last the *Subject*, or rather "subjectification" because the subject is not a predisposed thing that one is automatically because of ones humanity. Rather, the subject is created or formed through the creation of knowledge, through the formation of power relations, as well as through what Foucault terms "technologies of the self." Such technologies take the shape of friendly conversations with friends, the confessions to a priest, or a therapeutic session with psychiatrist, and they aim to produce the truth of ones self, ones being: what am I, what can I be, how can I produce myself as a "good" subject? Subjectification is a process and additionally one that is not always the same historically. The modern subject is understood as something has a depth that must be analysed on its surfaces (behaviour), while the Christian self was one that had to earn

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[41] Foucault, Michel. *On the Government of the Living – Lectures at the Collège De France, 1979-1980*, Translated by Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 100

[42] Foucault, Michel. *Security, Territory, Population – Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-78*, Translated by Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 108

[43] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, pp. 192-193

[44] Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', p. 211.

eternal salvation and thus needed to work on the formation of the soul. Thus, in the *focal point of experience* we see three distinct conceptual items: (1) a *problem space*, which (2) has a number of possible *solutions*, by which we are predisposed to solving problems in a particular way, by particular technologies and rationalities (governmentality), and (3) how these solutions together are *experienced*. Just as there is thought involved in truth, there is thought in power, and there is thought in the way we become subjects. It is the history of *experience* (subjectification) in the history of normative frameworks of behaviour (governmentality) in the history of problems (forms of veridiction).

Foucault thus heuristically lodges the focal point of experience within the problem of truth, the problem of the exercise of power, and the problem of the self. All categories that seems hard to avoid when considering our present. Nevertheless, contrary to what many Foucauldians might hold, the structure of *positives* that act as focal points of experience can however have alternate structures, as they are always determined by their specific problem (there are no universal points of fixation in thought, only casts of the dice); although this might be most clear outside the Western tradition.

[11] There is an important distinction to be drawn between the concept of problematisation and what Foucault refers to as the "field of problematisation": that is, the creation of concepts that correspond to a given problem (the process of thought); and the field of already constituted *a priori* concepts and practices. But while fields of problematisation are non-subjective and anonymous, their function is to determine and ground the possibility and diversity of statements (*connaissance*) to a common theme, the act of problematizing (the process of thought) is supposed to be the constituting of such a field (as a kind of contribution or intervention). Hence, in so far as the field is what makes discourse possible, it also limits what can be thought and thus we must ask how the creation of concepts was possible in the first place?

We find a similar notion in Deleuze and Guattari's "plane of immanence" and "conceptual persona" in their book *What is Philosophy?*.[45] To them, "[t]he plane of immanence is not a concept that is or can be thought but rather the image of thought, the image thought gives itself of what it means to think, to make use of thought, to find one's bearings in thought."[46] In the movement of thought it is known only intuitively

[45] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *What is Philosophy?*, translated by Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 35-60 and pp. 62-83
[46] Ibid. p. 37

and gives it directionality. Plane or field – both are geographical notions that need to be laid out: concepts are inscribed, arranged and organized in a diagrammed fashion and always in relation to a given set of problems emanating from a chaotic world.[47] A tradition of thought is made up of many planes of immanence, potentially as many as there have been problems. The plane of immanence considered in this thesis, as I pointed out in the introduction, is the problematic relation between truth and politics (the problem of thought's test in politics) with a set of correlated sub-problems that have their own concept formation: a topology is spun out between the problem of truth, the problem of political order, and the problem of the political game.

"If philosophy begins with the creation of concepts, then the plane of immanence must be regarded as prephilosophical [as] something *that does not exists outside philosophy*" and thus thought requires an agent; the process of thought is always subjective in the sense that it is someone who thinks.[48] That someone is, to Deleuze and Guattari, the philosopher (a dubious title). The philosopher however cannot ground concepts (in himself) and he therefore creates conceptual persona who think in their stead, the true agent of their enunciation, the operator of the conceptual machinery: Plato's Socrates, Nietzsche's Zarathustra, or more abstractly Pascal's Gambler are all examples thereof. But this is not a *real* persona, rather in his works the philosopher is linked to his conceptual persona, it is his or her idiosyncrasy and "*the role of the conceptual persona is to show thought's territories*…."[49] The conceptual persona and the plane of immanence are therefore inseparable: the conceptual persona – the relational *parrhésiast*, the exhortative philosopher king, or the judgemental critic, (archetypes of their epochs) as we shall get to know them later – is situated between the plane or field (the web of positive beliefs) and the chaos of the world, where he performs the dual task of, on the one hand fabricating concepts that make up their topological features, he lays out the field in its "diagrammatic features" and arranges, organizes, aligns, and relates the concepts that populate it with their corresponding problems.[50] The conceptual persona accordingly mediates between the diagrammatic features of thought and the

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[47] Deleuze and Guattari argue that other creative modes of thought that enthusiastically plunges into the chaos of the world (as contrasted to *religion*) have their own planes: Art as the creation of affects has a *plane of composition* and science as the creation of functions has a *plane of reference*. These are irreducible but have a variety of interferences with the brain acting as the junction of the three planes of thought. See, *What is philosophy*, pp. 201-218. However, the question is whether this division stands the test of history: has one plane of thought ever had its topology changed due to changes in one of its neighbours? In political struggles all means are available.

[48] Ibid., pp. 40-41

[49] Ibid., p. 69 [emphasis in original]

[50] Ibid., p. 75

problematic features of concepts. There is nevertheless no one criterion for telling whether the persona created, the concepts invented, or the plane laid out is successful in dealing with the problem: "Philosophy thus lives in a permanent crisis. The plane takes effect through shocks; concepts proceed in bursts, and personae by spasms. The relationship among the three instances is problematic by nature."[51] In the concepts that I am trying to develop here, we can say that the process of thought thus has a fundamental circularity of problem, problematisation and practices.

[12] There is a distinction to be drawn between a traditional history of ideas and a history of thought whose focal point is the problem. Where the former is about the appearance and reappearance of concepts (Liberty, Justice, or Equality), their subsequent development, and the contextual setting of other concepts so as to ascertain and locate their exact meaning in their original ideological context.[52] While the latter is about how something becomes a problem for someone: how practices that were previously taken for granted have become problematic, either by circumstance, their own development, or by them being in conflict with other practices. With Foucault:

> The history of thought is the analysis of the way an unproblematic field of experience, or a set of practices, which were accepted without question, which were familiar and "silent," out of discussion, becomes a problem, raises discussion and debate, incites new reactions, and induces a crisis in the previously silent behaviour, habits, practices, and institutions.[53]

Again, there is a sense of the background of the philosophical infrastructure that bubbles up and becomes the object of thought as something that makes us anxious and something that we want to break free from. Thus, rather than looking for an immanent meaning of a concept that would be valid across history, or one that could be used for a correction to present day you (a task of clarification for correct use), a history of thought is about how a concept became an object of care, of contention, something that presented a problem. In sum, a history of ideas is about concepts while a history of thought is about what made it necessary to think: i.e. the problem. Which is not to say that a history of thought is disinterested in concepts: it is not a history of concepts, but a

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[51] Ibid., p. 82

[52] The most prominent examples would be Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck, yet there are also differences between them: where Skinner looks for what the author *intended* with his conceptualization, Koselleck locates the meaning of the concept solely by its opposition to other concepts, the author is in that regard arbitrary. See: Skinner, Quentin. *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: Volume One The Renaissance* (Cambridge University Press, 1978); and Koselleck, Reinhart. *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, translated by Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford University Press, 2002)

[53] See, Foucault, Michel. *Fearless Speech*, edited by Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), p. 74

history of problems where concepts are involved – concepts are not always deployed to do the same thing.

[13] *Concepts are deployed* in relation to a problem – a concept that does not address the problem at hand has little value, with Deleuze and Guattari, "concepts are connected to problems without which they would have no meaning and which can themselves only be isolated or understood as their solution emerges."[54] Thus concepts always correspond to a problem and it is from there that they receive their meaning and usage. But what is a concept? Or we could ask, with Deleuze and Guattari, what is the concept of concept? First, all concepts have a history, a *becoming* in which they relate to other concepts at the intersection of the problem: in their creation they contain components (which themselves can be considered as concepts); in that sense concepts "extend to infinity and, being created, are never created from nothing."[55] In relation to the problem of world order, hierarchy might be related to *anarchy* (as structured versus unstructured relations of power) but, conversely, it could also relate to historical concepts such as *imperii* (as the different between ruler and ruled). The order of *concrete* and *abstract* are here reversed; the more detailed the development of a concept is the more concrete, or rather the clearer it becomes. Second, concepts are a concrete assemblage of constituent parts and what makes them special (in relation to other concepts) is the way in which it render these components inseparable *within itself*: the concept is a constituted unity of multiplicities.[56] Concepts are thus both *endoconsistent* and *exoconsistent*: their internal consistency is guaranteed by the inseparability of its heterogeneous components, while their relation to other concepts secures its place on a plane of immanence (hierarchy as the structure between powers). This is what makes concepts ambiguous, elastic and open for re-interpretation and therefore different from words (it is the context of the problem which transmutes the word into a concept).

Third, concepts are the meeting point of their singular components, which they constantly surveys (*survol*) and endlessly accumulate, arrange, and modify. Concepts are therefore *intensive* rather than *extensive*, meaning that they cannot be subdivided without also altering their kind and are therefore intensive multiplicities that are absolute and relative at the same time. They are relative to their components, other concepts, the plane on which they are generated, and to the problem to which they are a solution;

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[54] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 16
[55] Ibid., p. 19
[56] Ibid., p. 19

and absolute in their condensation, their position of the plane, and the conditions they give to the problem. Furthermore and in so far as they are intensive multiplicities, concepts constitute an event in thought. As such, a concept is an act of thought and consequently it has no referent (it is unescapably self-referential), which means that it cannot have a truth-value (understood as the correspondence between a proposition and a state of affairs).[57] Rather, the reality of a concept is tested in experience; that is, they are either helpful or unhelpful in addressing the experience of problems. To Deleuze and Guattari, the creation of concepts (the practice of philosophy) is to be understood as constructivism and thus concepts are virtual – that is, "the concept is real without being actual, ideal without being abstract."[58] Fourth, and following from this, if concepts are constructed as acts of thought that are self-referential then they cannot also be discursive entities: that is, they have no rules of formation (within a discursive formation philosophy would be impossible: thought has to remain free). Discussion and debate are antimonies to thought; they prevent the process of thought from creating concepts that are sufficient for addressing the problem because they never talk about the same thing. That is the proper meaning of philosophy's test in politics; the arrogance of thought that says *here is my concept*, *it will solve your problem*! However, once philosophy has let go of its creation it can be picked up in discourse – we see and speak with concepts, they determine what is *visible* and *articulable*. The political features of concepts then appear as they are appropriated, rearranged, coupled with other concepts (positive and negative), purposed and repurposed, and aimed at the concepts of ones opponent before finally being deployed in political discourse (*so much for political philosophy*).

[14] We usually think of theory and practice as separate and immutable realms, but if thinking is to 'think' in terms of problems (problematise) and there is thought in practices; a *theory* is a construction of thought. To Historical Epistemology, a theoretical language (in the sense of a spirit – *esprit scientifique*) is something that enables an interpretation of phenomena: an experiment (*expérience*) is not only an observation of a phenomenon; it is a theoretical interpretation of that phenomenon.[59] Facts cannot determine our interpretation; interpretations on the other hand decide what counts as facts. This does not result in a denial of facts, but rather the denial of access to brute facts. To

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[57] Ibid., p. 144
[58] Ibid., p. 22
[59] Pierre Duhem (1906) *La Théorie Physique: son objet et sa structure* (Paris: Chevalier and Rivière), p. 233, "Une expérience de Physique n'est pas simplement l'observation d'un phénomène; elle est, en outre, l'interprétation théorique de ce phénomène."

think is to break with prior thought, to offer a new interpretation – hence the importance of the epistemological break (the belief in the access to brute facts is fatal to thought). Accordingly, a theory is not about a reality beyond the relation between the internal laws of the experiment; rather, a theory is a construction or model that permits us to see the real. The theory is a grasp on reality, not an assertion about it: the theoretical object (*l'objet théorique*) serves as a model for thought to grasp the real object (*l'objet réel*). We can consequently talk of a kind of *Sedimentation* of a theory in material reality: or rather there is sedimentation of thought in the material. This is the assertion that the use of a technical instrument is only possible on the background of a theory; that is, on the background of a theoretical interpretation of the phenomenon: with Bachelard, "instruments are nothing but theories materialized."[60] It is clear then, that just like metaphysics is the foundation of a theory, theory is the condition for a technical instrument. Thought is like the Trojan horse, it sneaks into reality and materializes and imposes its order on the world. Hence, we can talk of the sedimentation of thought in architecture, institutions, instruments, and the body – the theoretical object (*l'objet théorique*) is transmitted to the real object (*l'objet réel*).

[15] Practices are the actualization of thought. As actions or doings of human beings, the actuality of human behaviour has a concrete material existence that can be observed. However, the concept of practice has three opposing registers: practice – as the pathological view of actions as having irrational structures that are determined by the chance and indeterminacy of Heraclitian flux; practical knowledge (*phronésis*) – as the view that human behaviour is rooted in the skill of agents who either display a good or bad performance; and practices – the things that human beings do have a degree of aesthetic normality to them, because they are imbued with meaning they prescribe actions (the norm*al*).[61] To all three belong different notions of historical change: from the viewpoint of practice change is inevitable, from the viewpoint of practical knowledge change is defined as a possibility lodged within the agent, and from the viewpoint of practices: "Practices change but our observation of their change is never direct. It is always mediated by a particular narrative structure or philosophy of history. *How practices change*,

[60] Bachelard, *The New Scientific Spirit*, p. 13

[61] Jorg Kustermans (2016) "Parsing the Practice Turn: Practice, Practical Knowledge, Practices", in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 44(2), pp. 175-196

the direction or meaning of their change and *the impulses driving their change*, remains a matter of appreciation, of irreducible theorisation."[62]

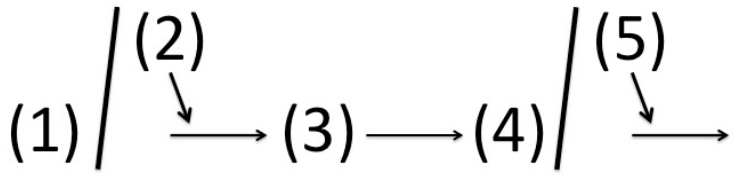
These three concepts of action – practice, practices and practical knowledge – constitute the tripartite registers of *actualized* thought within any traditions of thought. They all relate to the encounter with a problem. Yet, to write a history of thought via the medium of *practice* would be to leave everything to chance, human beings would have absolutely no role to play; and writing a history in terms of practical knowledge (*phronésis*) would be an overemphasis of the individual – a conservatism and essentialism of a particular elite (the thinking elite; or the Aristotelian philosopher) transcending all time: behind every corner we find Plato lurking, waiting to share his eternal wisdom. If a history of thought is to remain anonymous, but not completely given up to the haphazardness of flux, it must strike the balance between them and choose to write its history in terms of *practices* – the clearest manifestation of thought. Which is not to say that the other two registers are irrelevant; in the process of actualizing thought, the attempt of performing a practice will depend on the one who performs it (thus dependent on his or her practical knowledge), and things rarely go as anticipated by the programs of practices (thus resulting in the actual performance, practice). In other words, it is practices that provide the *intensive force* of practice and practical knowledge: it is within practices that we find 'solutions' to 'problems'. To decipher how something came to be a problem they may prove as important, but practices remain the main register because the other two constitute themselves with an irregularity that makes analysis challenging. Everything might be up to chance, but that is an unliveable condition in the long run. Such practices are composed from background knowledge (the givens of a tradition), which depending on the problems experienced, can be either *central* or *marginal* to a culture.

III

[16] For now all that I have done is to develop of a number of concepts, all of which are happening in synchronicity: a) the *problem*, as a anomaly in relation to our practices; b) *realization*, as the event where history makes the problem emerge; c) the dialectic of field of *problematisation*, the specific discursive and non-discursive practices that make

[62] Ibid. p, 192

something enter into the play of the true and the false and constitutes it as an object of thought; d) the *sedimentation*, of thought into practices; and e) *practices*, as part of a taken for granted background (*doxa*) of action. The task now is to show how the arrangement can be stretched out so as to form a succession; the unison of thought has to be broken up in parts that can be placed one after the other – to form the *process of thought*. A model for how traditions of thought progress might look something like the following:



(1) Practices[1]: the existent and taken for granted background practices (*doxa*)
(2) Problem[1]: the (possible) actualization of a practical problem.
↘➔Realisation: the realization of the problem as an interpretation of a question.
(3) Problematisation: thought is put to work on the basis of existing background practices and the problem is strategically 'resolved' by processes of *displacement* or *transformation*.
➔Sedimentation: the subsequent *sedimentation* of thought into un-thought where it either superimposes or are embedded within existing practices.
(4) Practices[2]: a new set of practices is gradually taken for granted and forms the background of intelligibility (*doxa*).
(5) Problem[2]: the (possible) actualization of a new practical problem…

This is a general model, which is to say that there is no content (no explicit thought) at the same time as it accounts for the processes of the creation of explicit thought (or rather the background on which they take place, their formation). It is also general in the sense that it is independent of the specific problem with which human beings are faced: the model can account for the change in thought whether we are analysing European society in the seventeenth century or the Mayan culture in the ninth century. Furthermore, it is also general in the sense that there is no specific societal or political view hidden within it; it is, however, anticonservative in that it is about how thought progresses by refusing that which is given at the present.

[17] Following from the distinction between theoretical and real objects (*l'objet réel*), we can posit that reality is different from a model; it is messy because of the multiple problems in it and the thought that these produce. When we look at the world we see the actualization of thought: we see the circulation of human bodies, some on pilgrimage to distant places, others walking over London bridge like ants to work in the City, and others yet crossing borders in search for new opportunities; we see swords clashing and shields shattering, the guns of a battleship blazing on the inhabitants of a capital city,

the bombs of a plane dropping on an unintended target; we see a plough driven by two oxen though irrigated fields, the roaring combustion engine of a tractor stuck in the mud, the development and production of gene modified seeds which do not last more than one season; the erection of circular walls enclosing a small town, the tearing down of public squalor to make new light in the city, and monuments risen to the commemoration of great men and the ones they vanquished. There is not automatically one prime positive that determines all (say *modernity*): because the reality of brute facts is messy thought has overlapping sets of *positives* addressing different problems and sometimes in conflict with one another. Hence, all the examples above aren't even true brute facts; all of them are only possible to think of given the background thought of today: i.e. gene-modification necessitates a construction of the "gene" as a series of code. As actualised thought, a tradition of thought always folds in on itself. The present is constituted as its own history with practices emanating from its past problems: some are central, others peripheral, depending on the most recent encounter that forced the process of thought, the others remain in the mix and yet some are lost to time. The purpose, therefore, of such an analysis attempted here is to make sense of the *problématique*; to outline its conjures and the problems that has shaped it present form.

[18] In so far as we can talk about *trajectories* in the history of thought: this is a history without teleological points or hidden origins – it is neither about the forgetfulness of being, or the completion of rationality; rather it is with Wittgenstein a history about curved lines that constantly change direction.[63] All there ever is and has been is a series of problems, practices and problematisations that move forward in a rhythmical fashion, with human beings being involved at every step. As such it has synchronic and diachronic properties: each problematisation constitutes a synchronic slice that has its own structure and logic, that taken together one after the other forms a history of with a diachronic course towards the present. It is these episodes that are of interest in the history of a problem.

What all problems of thought have in common, however, is that they all result from our being-in-the-world. They originate in nature, and from our socio-economical, political, cultural, and material conditions of life – in short, the totality of our practices and their problematisations. They do so because our being-in-the-word limits us, and because our conditions of life often are contradictory and our actions carry with them

[63] Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 'Vermischte Bemerkungen', in *Culture and Value*, G.H. von Wright (ed.) (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), p. 14

unintended and unfortunate consequences. In fact, our natural environment and conditions of life determines what problems of thought we are presented with: without existence being dangerous and problematic, without practical problems that force a society to organize, there would be no reason to think. The history of any particular tradition of thought is therefore and foremost the history of the very problems that has ignited its existence. However, we should note that "human history and the history of philosophy [thought] do no have the same rhythm."[64] The intensity of the fundamental encounter that is the problem determines their connection; a problem might be discovered in philosophy but remain hidden to society.

To Bachelard, human beings are a "mutating" species: most problems of thought originate from contradictions that we are directly confronted with in the form of practical problems.[65] Bachelard talks of a "metaphysics of the contradictory": that is, *Being is not unitary*, but contradictory – every 'solution' or synthesis (knowledge) to a given problems necessarily ends in a new paradox: "For the scientist Being can never be wholly comprehended by either experience or reason. It is therefore the task of the epistemology to explain the ever-changing synthesis of reason and experience, even though achieving such a synthesis philosophically might appear to be a hopeless problem."[66] We inhabit the universe of Dionysus, of eternal enigma of duality and paradox. If this is so, there will be no end to the positing of *la problématique*: reality is always changing because it is perpetually problematic. Thus, with such a model it might be easy to give into a kind of Cassandra complex, but we would only deceive ourselves if we think we can predict future mutations – the mutation remains dictated by the problem and the battle that follows in the kingdom of effective history ruled by "the iron hands of necessity which shake the dice-box of chance."[67] Perhaps, the only active part we can hope to play is to bring problems to the fore: *to problematise.*

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[64] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, p. 103

[65] This does not mean however that all problems of thought spring directly from practical problems or contradiction with witch we are confronted; rather we can also pose more fundamental problems of a metaphysical nature or when something new that is taken as a given is introduced in a culture it might contradict something else that is taken as given (without them creating an immediate practical problem). Problems of thought does therefore not inevitably correspond to a particular practical problem (we do not just think because our practical and primary experience demands it); but problems of thought as a category would be meaningless without the category of practical problem – the metaphysical problem withstanding.

[66] Bachelard, *The New Scientific Spirit*, p. 16

[67] Nietzsche, Fridrich. *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 81; See also Foucault, Michel. 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (Penguin Books, 1984), pp. 76-100

IV

[19] The natural consequence of maintaining that the catalyst of traditions of thought is a fundamental encounter with a problem that sensation is unable to grasp is that there necessarily are multiple and different traditions of thought. Such a fact posits *epistemological relativism*. There are many worlds, many 'knowledges' – all human beings have not been confronted with the same problems, neither have they necessarily considered them problems. This much is true historically as well as geographically, and the plethora of practices across the globe testifies to this fact. Different traditions of thought have developed different concepts, constituted different objects, been shaped by different power relations, which has resulted in different experiences (of being human) – all because they have had different problems to deal with. Consequently, even the value of knowledge differs form tradition to tradition, which is why the problems of European epistemology might seem completely unproblematic and irrelevant to other traditions.

[20] Pointing to the historicity of that special kind of knowledge produced by the scientific discipline of International Relations is nothing new. Such a starting point however inescapably, upsets what is taken for granted in the discipline of International Relations. Even though we insist that epistemological anarchy does not derive from political anarchy and conversely political anarchy does not emanate from epistemological anarchy, the existence of *polities* seems to originate with a particular set of problems. There is a critical distinction to be made however, that of traditions of thought on the one hand, and societal traditions on the other. Traditions as cultures or civilizations or societies are not of direct interest, such notions emerge only on the backdrop of traditions of thought. If problems are the catalyst of traditions of thought, they must be primary to any concepts we must create to address them. Thus, the existence of other traditions of thought might not pose a problem to any one tradition of thought; conversely it might also pose *the* problem of that tradition. A parachronistic example would the blindness of International Relations to alternate political units than the territorially fixated state coming from other traditions than the Western one. This is probably one of the most prominent examples of something not being regarded as a problem today (though it was a blatant practical problem in the past). Furthermore, traditions of thought cuts across what we now call 'national traditions,' and thus to insist on national traditions would be to cut the implications short – the production of national *knowledges* would only be possible on background of the western tradition of thought. The planning of cities in Europe has

followed similar lines of developments in response to changing problems (particularly in response to warfare and economic development), whereas for instance the Mayans planned their cities to meet different challenges (in worship of the gods). That is, the very concept of a *nation* (society or polity) as what sets one human being apart from another is only derived at in the special context of the Western tradition and thus referring to "societal multiplicity" cuts it short, because society is a concept created in a response to a particular problem – a problem that cannot be demonstrated as being universal or trans-traditional. From the standpoint of Historical Epistemology, the very concept of a society only arises *a posteriori* of thought. Therefore, what should be the determent of traditions of thought is multiplicity of problems and the sought after solutions (the different ways in which a problem is constituted).

[21] In terms of *ethics*, we might approach the following questions normatively: what does it mean to maintain the primacy of the problem in relation to other traditions of thought? Does the existence of other traditions in their existence alone pose a problem? Can other traditions be swept aside for the greater good because they pose irrelevant problems? And on what criterion can such questions even be addressed? If we start with the problem, a normative *a priori* stance proves to be difficult – while each tradition of thought has a habit of dictating normative stances towards to outside word, it might here be useful to suspend traditional limitations and think *atraditionally* (to think without *positives*). Within the meta-physics of the contradictory, the emphasis would always be on the problem and thus its ethics is constituted in relation to the problem at hand alone and *nothing else*. Such thought takes place not in a vacuum, but between opposing traditions – there is no way to determine how such a confrontation might play out, nor determine what shape or form it might take (which usually tend to favour one over the other). Democratic values are definitely tested: the very premise of democracy is that there is certain agreed upon rules that are derived from constructed *positives* of a tradition of thought. The purpose of the nominalist exercise was thus to create as few concepts as possible so as to make them easier to translate to different traditions of thought. Yet, in so far as we can talk of incommensurability between traditions of thought there are still some problems to sort out; is there nothing but tedious work that prevents the translation of concepts from one tradition to another?

[22] In conclusion, the theoretical position outlined in the chapter can be summed up as follows. It asks the question: how did it become possible to think differently? The basis

for the theory was taken from the French school of Historical Epistemology where the foundational distinction is between 'conscious thought' and the 'un-thought', which constitutes an 'epistemological obstacle' or background upon which conscious thought can appear. Accordingly, there is always an aspect of our thought that remains silent, yet indispensible because it constitutes the concepts (or *positives*) with which we think. The un-thought always stands in relation to the problem, which it was initially moulded. Tradition here signifies not the continuation of something, but rather the break with something specific: the old is in the new and the new was already in the old. What is different is the way in which the problem rearranges the order of things. Thus, a tradition of thought becomes a series of specific breaks with prior thought. The theory is constituted around three concepts: the *problem*, *problematisation*, and *practices*. A problematisation is the event of thought that sits in between the problem and the subsequent practices. The primary insight of this theory is that practices are problematized: That is, human beings cope with the material and social world in terms of problematisations that more or less strategically handle rather than negate or ameliorate problems. Things enter into a tension field between true and false and are constituted as objects of thought where they can be reflected upon in terms of problems that require solutions. In other words, this is the way that an epistemological space is erected between a question and a possible set of solutions. Any given epistemological space is thus populated by concepts and their corresponding problems, which condition and give meaning to different practices. The theory wages that thought should be studied through practices rather than conscious thought. The last section of the chapter was devoted to tentatively contemplating the current multiplicity of traditions of thought in world politics as a result of the encounter of different problems.

Chapter II: Parrhēsia

* * *

[1] This chapter describes what could be called the 'beginning' of the politics of truth in the Western tradition. It examines the historical rupture between a politics of truth which focal point is the ancient figure of the wise king and one with the democratic figure of the *parrhēsiast*. In other words, it surveys the displacement of one epistemological space by another with an altogether different conceptual topology. Through a reading of Homer, the chapter starts by (I) outlining the politics of truth of the wise king and its central mechanism the oath where one swears towards the gods that one is in the true, but truth as such does not appear. In this politics of truth knowledge and power cohere to each other; the wise king is in possession of both. This politics of truth is not exclusive to Greek thought and therefore some similarities with other civilizations in the ancient world are noted. At about the end of the 7th and 6th century BC (II), the two interconnected problems of 'crooked judgement' and the 'rule of one' (*monarchos*) appear in Greek thought. By selectively remembering the rules of oath taking the kings or aristocracy would pass crooked judgements, which was reflected in political practices as well. The response to these problems result in (III) the politics of truth where one 'says everything' (*parrhēsia*), which involves two crucial changes: first, as a demand for straight justice truth would have to appear on the basis of a will to know; and second, the basic mechanism would remain the oath, but instead of swearing it towards the gods, one swears towards ones fellow man and thus involve a kind of contract. To Archaic Greek thought the practice of *parrhēsia* is situated in between on the one hand, a political order (*politeia*) that guarantees the freedom to speak what one genuinely thinks to be the truth (*isēgoria*); and on the other, the exercise of power (*dunasteia*) in the political game, where the point of problematisation was 'ethical differentiation', ones ascendancy to prevail in the contest (*agōn*) to deliver the most persuasive true-discourse capable of governing the city.

I

[2] The furthest we can get from our current hyper-real politics of truth would be one in which there is no manifestation of truth – one in which there is no will to *know* the truth.[1] Indeed, it is difficult to find a politics of truth in which the truth does not have to appear, where there is no manifest distinction between truth and un-truth, where for some reason the difference of thought does not constitute the most immediate danger. And yet, before the democratisation of knowledge that made it possible to admit everyone into the politics of truth, it is possible to reconstruct the epistemological space that governs the general politics of truth centred on the Homeric figure of the wise king.

[3] The way in which the truth would be established in Homeric justice was not solely by decree or command of the king, an all too easy and unstable procedure (the king is not God). Rather, truth could be produced in two ways: one is by the *oath*; the other is by the *ordeal*. The oath consists in a test or challenge of truth that is launched against ones equals, whereas the ordeal is something that the king exposes his subject to, usually in the form of torture, with the aim of establishing the truth of their testimony or their guilt in committing a crime. Both involve being exposed to some undefined danger (Zeus' thunderbolt or the physical danger of blows or wild beasts) which makes them alternatives to each other: when the parties were of unequal status the oath would not be accepted, and the one of lower status would be subjected to the ordeal. In the oath and the ordeal the truthful utterance would not be a testimony of factual observations about what has taken place that relies on perception, but rather one that is related to the *ambiguity and uncertainty of future events* – the anger of the gods, the survival of a test.

In Homeric juridical discourse the key concept is *dikazein*, meaning the "exercise of a right" and the act of passing judgement or the ending of a dispute with a sentence. The derived noun *dikastḗs* constitutes the counsel of elders or some kind of official who would reside as judges; whether or not these were appointed with consent of both litigants is hard to say. In the *dikazein* the structure of juridical production of truth is as follows: first there is an initial struggle or act of violence, sometimes a fraud; then a confrontation by the party that is wronged and the assertion of rights by both

[1] Foucault pursued this question in the first lecture series that he gave at the Collège de France, which was heavily influenced by Nietzsche and in particular his remark about the invention of knowledge in a remote corner of the universe. See, Foucault, Michel. *Lectures on the Will to Know – Lectures at the Collège De France, 1970-1971: and Oedipal Knowledge*, translated by Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

parties; this is followed by the challenge of the oath of truth (do you dare swear to the gods that you are true in your claim and if not face the consequences?); lastly the confrontation with the gods by the one that accepts the oath, here the fact of the matter remains a matter between him and the gods. What is characteristic is that in this last phase the truth never manifests itself. The truth is imprecated by one party and remains in the obscurity of the future wrath of the gods – never able to escape the thunderbolt the one who takes a false oath will never be able to see it coming. Truth thus resides in a space of struggle or discord (*agōnes* or *neikos*) between the two parties, which is not to say that they stand alone; both bring witnesses who will take the oath with them. Such witnesses don't testify to what they have seen or experienced, but are supporters who indicate his social standing of either party. If testimonies were given by either party these were equated with support and does not concern what actually happened: the judge was bound to side with the claimant who could gather the most support. The establishment of the truth hinges on two crucial points: the willingness of the parties to make an oath (acceptance usually means immediate victory and refusal, defeat) and the fact that the rules are followed – a difficult point because in it was up to the king (or in any case the judge, the *histōr*) to remember a specific set of rules (the *thēsmos*, unwritten rules). All justice was about reparations, not a matter of getting to the truth of the matter (who really did commit the crime and why?). Thus, the only justice lies in there being restitution and correct implementation of procedure; the truth as such remains immaterial or arbitrary to the final judgement, it is an autonomous force that one exposes oneself to and surrenders to.[2]

In the *Iliad* we are given a few examples of these ritualized productions of the truth: the engraving on Achilles' shield made by Hephaistos depicting a legal dispute in peace time and later the chariot race where Menelaus challenges Anticlochos with an oath on him having cheated in the race are the most famous; but perhaps the most interesting is when Agamemnon, persuaded by Zeus to attack the Trojans, decides to test the battle readiness of his army and they at his dismay all agree to go back home.[3] I have picked this example because it tells us something about how the politics of truth is constituted around the wise king: how the source of the kings right to rule symbolized by the sceptre, how the structure of the true-discourse of the king which is given as an oath closely linked to the sceptre, and lastly how the relation to the assembly and in the

[2] Foucault, *Lectures on the Will to Know,* pp. 84-85
[3] See: Hom.*Il*.18.490f, Hom.*Il*.23.262ff, and Hom.*Il*.2.84ff

Homeric discursive practice does not provide an alternative to the wise king as it will for the later Greeks.

To begin with, Homer makes a point out of the sceptre – the one that Agamemnon leans on when he addresses the Achaians in book two of the Iliad – being the work of Hephaitos and originally given to Zeus and through several other gods handed over to Agamemnon himself: each god named by his primary quality and thus by being in possession of the sceptre he embodies the qualities being the king of justice, guidance, a shepherd of the people, and rich in flocks.[4] Likewise in both *the Iliad* and *the Odyssey*, king Odysseus is described as "resourceful", the man of many devices (*polytropos*), he is a cleaver king and a hero with a thousand disguises.[5] Furthermore, when the kingship of Odysseus is described by Mentor it is exactly as on of kindness, generosity, and justice, as a "fathers loving care" of his people (…).[6] There is no reason to regress into hereditary principles of monarchy here: the king is the king because by wielding the sceptre he embodies these qualities (Oedipus will do the same later as he became king, not because he inherited power form his father Laos although he was his son, but exactly because he possessed the knowledge that freed the city from the sphinx).[7] Thus a king is a king because of his qualities, a theme that we can find in many other traditions of thought; and the fact that these qualities can coexist in one person, without being made into a problem is what is interesting – it is only when it becomes a problem that the king monopolizes these qualities that we see an epistemological break.

Immediately after the description of the sceptre, Agamemnon while "leaning on his sceptre" encourages the Achaians to sail for home in a failed attempt to test his troops. For a king to raise the sceptre while speaking is the same as giving an oath in the juridical sense.[8] The right to speak the truth is thus symbolized by the wielding of the sceptre, and any man who was not a king was not able to address the assembly in any legitimate sense. Nevertheless, wanting to prevent total disaster Odysseus takes the sceptre and virtually assumes command, to the fleeing men he speaks in two ways: to kings and men of importance he would speak with gentle words encouraging them to come back and take their place in the public assembly, while the commoner would be

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[4] Hom.*Il*.2.100-18
[5] Hom.*Od*.1.1
[6] Hom.*Od*.2.229-41
[7] Kingship is not necessarily passed on by a hereditary principle as Telemachus points out, unable to claim power as he is in the process of growing up while his city is suffering (Hom.*Od*.2.229).
[8] Arist.*Pol*.1258b3

addressed in a very different manner. To those commoners who complained he would smite with the sceptre and say:

> Fellow, sit thou still, and hearken to the worlds of others that are better men than thou; whereas thou art unwarlike and a weakling, neither to be counted in war not in counsel. In no wise shall we Achaeans all be kings here. No good thing is a multitude of lords; let there be one lord, one king, to whom the son of crooked-counselling Cronos hath vouchsaved the sceptre and judgements, that he may take counsel for his people.[9]

The very message of Odysseus to the commoner is revealing as to how it is only the wise kings discourse qua their link to Zeus that have any value. Everyone but the king is denied access to the production of political truth. But it is even more significant that the only man who dares to speak up against the plan is Thersites is described as loose-tongued (*ametroepēs*) and given a rather disparaging description by Homer. By his behaviour he clearly violates the heroic code, which primarily values honour over life. Honour is here determined by the hero's display of courage, the difficulty of the tests he faces, his physical attributes, social status, and the possessions acquired in victory.[10] Odysseus therefore quickly shots him down by beating his back and shoulders with the sceptre while challenging him with a very strong oath – which means that he is ready to expose himself to great dangers for his claims to truth.[11] In this short example it becomes clear how a principle of juridical production of truth is transposed to the political realm: political struggles are settled in the same way as juridical disputes, by the mechanism of the oath.

Lastly, in Homeric Greece the assembly (*agorēnde*), aside form being the locality of true-discourse of the king, is portrayed as a rather negative phenomenon characterized by scruples and plotting.[12] In particular, the scene with the suitors of Ithaca –all wanting to become the king– debating with Telemachus over their harassment of the kings household in the second book of *the Odyssey* is one that demonstrates undesirability of the fluidity of power: in particular the story of Antinous (literally meaning the *unwise*), where he tells of the weaving and un-weaving Penelope is an illustration of how she holds them at bay (keeping them from claiming the throne) while at the same time her actions sustains their struggle.[13] Penelope as the image of political power in conflict with itself is reminiscent of the past when Odysseus ruled – which is

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[9] Hom.*Il*.2.197-206

[10] The code is also paradoxical: in so far as heroism demands courage it also leads to unwise and headless courses of action.

[11] Hom.*Il*.2.215

[12] See for example the scene of the plotting suitors, Hom.*Od*.16.375

[13] Hom.*Od*.2.6ff. See in particular the speech of Mentor (Hom.*Od*.2.229-241), there is a beneficial relationship between governor and governed, which needs to be sustained.

also reflected in her person. The scene thus casts as a negative image on the assembly, which has no real value and poses no real alternative the king. Primarily because the assembly does not posses or share in the qualities of the king; namely that they are not wise or have knowledge. What is valued is therefore kingship, which alone can rule and provide truth and justice thought its wisdom. If an assembly is called it is not to open for political true-discourse, but to display royal power.[14]

In Homer Greece we thus find a politics of truth constituted around the figure of the wise king: who first of all can speak the truth because he posses the sceptre, which indicates his wisdom and knowledge, and thus also his right to rule. This involves knowledge of the heroic code and knowledge as wisdom, a personal quality of the king (which could be acquired through wisdom literature). Secondly, the oath constitutes the mechanism by which truth is produced. Yet, this truth that the oath produces is like autonomous force always remains immaterial or arbitrary. Consequently, this politics of truth does not involve a *will to know* the truth – to ascertain it, to obtain knowledge about it, to define once and for all a division between true and false. In other words, the oath works equally well without there being an event or manifestation of truth. This is so because in the un-thought of the heroic code truth is not linked to knowledge, it is not a thing, but rather something that is not revealed in the contest between heroes. There was therefore no knowledge or un-thought which could be 'opposed' because it was not a common property. Or at any length, knowledge was the sole property of the king; it was not a general political question in which all could participate – the true-discourse given by oath is linked to the royal sceptre. The politics of truth was therefore for exclusively for the king; the assembly does not constitute an alternative, rather it was dangerous to let everyone else speak the truth. We can therefore conclude that in the politics of truth, as constituted in Homeric Greece, the socio-political limit of thought resides in the wise king who alone could claim a right to thought – and yet this limit is hard to sustain because it requires the king to constantly confront the gods: but because the gods *are in the world*, what he really is confronting is always the world and the problems that it contains. So in fact, the wise king is not that free at all because the customs and rituals that enable him to mediate between the community and the gods bind him (he has to be a hero). Furthermore, some kings would also have to face up to his aristocratic counsellors, and in times of war sway the poplar assembly to fight for him, as we saw in the example above; yet neither of these are seen as real alternatives to

[14] As when Achilleus calls for an assembly to exchange insults with Agamemnon, Hom.*Il*.1.54ff. Note how Kalchas needs Achilleus' support to gather the courage to utter his prophetic true-discourse.

the king, another aristocrat might take his place, but he still has to exercise power through the mechanism of the oath.

[4] The wise king was not a native of Greece. The model of the wise king is old, perhaps as old as the early Bronze Age as it requires some kind of social stratification: the king would belong to the scribe and/or religious class of the tribe or society.[15] The model is certainly antithetical to egalitarianism. If we take the kind of problems that such societies were faced with serious, then it is not hard to see why: the tasks of the wise king was exactly to protect the population from attacking nomads and marauders, uphold internal order of the people by the means of law (language, culture, and myths), and provide sufficient resources so that the population could thrive. Whether or not such problems could be addressed on a basis of equality is beside the point, what is important is that this complex situation of problems is formulated around the figure of the wise king or the modes of production of the oath or the ordeal. Given such positionality, the king would govern though a monopolization of knowledge: by knowing the movement of the heavenly bodies the king would know when to plant and when harvest the crops; in that way he was the master over life and death as he could both starve and save the population. Therein laid his control of society and it was in exactly this way that knowledge was the central mechanism of power.

It is here not important to pinpoint the exact origins of the model of the wise king, but rather to notice that this way of thinking about the politics of truth was not unique to the Archaic Greeks – even though the heroic code rarely is found to dominate in other places to the same degree (greater emphasis would for instance be placed on the verisimilitude of knowledges). On an epistemological level what is interesting are the breaks in positives that are manifest *between* traditions of thought, not similarities or spurious breaks: in a word the specific structuring of the epistemological space. It is very likely that a politics of truth constituted around the wise king came from Mesopotamia, where it had spread to the Minoan and Mycenaean kingdoms (a rather hopeless task, as there seems to be a universality to the practical problems that the model of the wise king developed against). At any length it is to be found in various forms throughout the civilizations of the ancient world: the earliest example being the Sumero-Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh, the earliest example of which dates back to the third

[15] The oath was the fundamental act in the Indo-European tradition: when a man would loose or deplete his live stock he would have to borrow from someone else, who would establish himself as chief and require an oath; the same is the case between chiefs. See Neumann, Iver B. and Einar Wigen. *Stepping Off the Horse: The Steppe Tradition and European State Building* (Cambridge University Press, 2018)

dynasty of Ur ca. 2100.[16] The procedure of the oath or the ordeal is set out in the *code of Hammurabi*.[17] In Egypt the pharaohs engaged in a politics of truth were the main problem had to do with upholding *maat*, a complex concept that ties the universe together associated with truth, balance, justice, and order.[18] The best examples of the wise king from Judaism and which the Christian utilized to a full extent, can be found in the *book of Solomon*. In Indus valley as well, there were several texts that dealt with similar problems of a wise king: see for example, the *Arthashastra* (300 BC), the *Mahabharata* (900-400 BC), the *Upanishads* (800-400 BC), or the *Rig Veda* (ca. 1200-900 BC).[19] Lastly, the civilizations that developed around the yellow river delta, in China, established a exemplar conception of the wise king: the mythical example was king Mu, who knew the times of the flood and could therefore predict when to sow the seeds.[20] This was later formalized with Confucius as the sage or the sage king (*sheng jen*), later to be elaborated in *The Mean* (*Chung yung*) and Mo zi, whose critique of this politics of truth centred on the concern for 'worthiness' – that is, moral worth defined in terms of the concept *yi* (right action, righteousness, duty, and justice).[21]

II

[5] The earliest formulation of the problem of *crooked judgement* and the subsequent displacement of justice can be found in Hesiod's *Work and Days*, where in the very beginning he introduces an opposition between *dikazein* and *krinein* (from *krinō*), a new kind of judgement:

> But you will have a second chance to act this way – no, let us decide our quarrel [*diakrinōmetha neikos*] right here with straight judgement, which comes from Zeus, the best ones. For already we have divided up our allotment, but you snatched much more besides and went carrying it off,

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[16] *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian*, translated and with an introduction by Andrew George (Penguin Books, 1999)

[17] *The Code of Hammurabi: King of Babylon, about 2250 BC.*, translated by Robert Francis Harper (University of Chicago, 1904)

[18] For a small selection of lamentations, legal texts, royal inscriptions and teachings see: Wilkinson, Toby. *Writings from Ancient Egypt* (Penguin Books, 2016). In particular the lamentation 'The Words of Khakheperraseneb', contains the concepts and ideas that really show the complexity of the politics of truth in Egypt at around 1500 BC.

[19] *The Mahabharata*, abridged and translated by John D. Smith (Penguin Books, 2009); *The Upanishads*, translated from The Sanskrit with and introduction by Juan Mascaró (Penguin Books, 1965); *The Rig Veda: An Anthology*, selected, translated, and annotated by Wendy Doniger (Penguin Books, 1981).

[20] Zhōu Mù Wáng, 976-922 BC.

[21] Confucius. *The Analects*, translated with an introduction by D. C. Lau (Penguin Books, 1979); Lau Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*, translated with an introduction by D. C. Lau (Penguin Books, 1963); and Mo Zi. *The Book of Master Mo*, translated with an introduction by Ian Johnston (Penguin Books, 2013).

> greatly honoring the kings, those gift-eaters, who want to pass this judgement [*dōrophagous oi tēnde dikēn etēelousi dikassai*] – fools, they don't know how much more the half is than the whole, nor how great the boon is in mallow and asphodel![22]

The first thing that we should note is the apparent opposition between two kinds of judgement: while one clearly has a positive connotation the other has a negative, it constitutes a problem for the peasant part of the population. The later is that of the "gift-eating kings" (which is here associated with *dikassai*), which relies on a payment and an unequal status between the king (who only knows the whole) and the peasant; and that of "straight judgement" (*diakrinōmetha*), which is reliant on equality between those who pass judgement – or at any length judgement between equals who "know how much more the half is than the whole" and those unfortunate enough to have been poor (mallow and asphodel is the poor man's fare). The problem has to do with the structure of the oath, as it can be either true *or* false: "the bad man will harm the superior one, speaking with crooked discourses, and he will swear an oath upon them."[23] Indeed, this is a theme that we find in other traditions of thought throughout the ancient world – kings had to give 'straight judgement' or else they were not respecting the divine law of which they were charged with upholding. This was also the case for the Homeric wise king, but it was up to Zeus to determine whether or not this was the case. In contrast, Hesiod explicitly associates this occurrence with his own times; comparing it to the former races of man that Zeus had created. To swear a crooked oath is to give a false oath, which the gift-eating kings by selectively remembering the rules, seems here to be doing. Hence, there is a need for different kind of justice.

This new kind of judgement is *krinein*, which consist first of all in a simple displacement of the oath: rather than the two parties who competes to give the oath it is now instead the judge (formerly the *histōr*) that takes the oath and exposes himself to the wrath of the gods. By doing so he is allowed to superimpose and assign victory to one of the parties: he is the one who says 'I judge', the literal translation of *krinō*. But on what basis does he do so, which is the discourse that he speaks? The oath as it was elaborated in *dikazein* relied primarily on the kings memory (the *thēsmos*), which was the structural defect utilized by the king, so a new kind of justice needs to be defined. This form of justice was *dikainon* – that is, the just (observant of custom and social rules, well-ordered, civilized).

In *Work and Days* there is a crucial passage on the relationship between the just

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[22] Hes.*WD*.34-41.

[23] Hes.*WD*.193-5. See also 165-94, 248ff. This objection to the oath is not idiosyncratic, but a persistent theme: "Injustice, I mean, should never triumph thanks to oaths," Aesch.*Eum*.445

(*dikainon*) and pride (*ubrin*) that develops this restructuring of the epistemological space in greater depth.[24] The calamities that follow injustice are the same as before, but there is an important shift in the distribution of them. With *dikazein* it was the perjurer himself, his blood, or race that faced the wrath of the gods, now with Hesiod these misfortunes concern the whole city; everyone suffers the wrath of the gods on the account of the king's oath: "Often even a whole city suffers because of an evil man who sins and devises wicked deeds."[25] The fact that the whole city suffers on account of one evil man constitutes a practical problem: or rather, because these violations, perpetrated by one man, affect the whole city and everyone in it suffers there is a moral need to assign blame (in religious terms the city is stained and there is a need for purification). This morality of fault consists in a *will to know* whether a crime has been committed, by whom, and why. That is, there is a moral will behind the desire to know the truth.

Secondly, theologically the just (*dikainon*) is linked to the order of the world. That is, the discourse and practices of justice no longer deal directly with Zeus but rather with *Dikē* – the goddess of justice – who acts as a intermediary between the sovereign Zeus and the world of men: "Justice wins out over Outrageousness when she arrives at the end; but the fool only knows this after he has suffered. For at once *Oath* starts to run along beside *crooked judgements*, and there is a clamor when justice is dragged where men, gift-eaters, carry her off and pronounce verdicts with crooked judgements; but she stays, weeping, with the city and the people's abodes, clad in invisibility, bearing evil to the human beings who drive her out and do not deal straight."[26] Justice is both absent and present in the world at the same time: bad judgement drives *Dikē* away and this insult to *Dikē* incites the wrath of Zeus. To that end, we must recall that the proper meaning of the word *cosmos* is the reign of *justice* (*dikē*); it is a political term per excellence as is signifies divine justice – the order of the universe as envisioned by the gods. Consequently, there are on the one hand those, which live according to justice, who reap all the benefits of just conduct; and on the other those who suffer the consequences of pride and outrageousness, however crucially, this in no longer the individual who commits an injustice, but rather the whole city. To not offend *Dikē* it is necessary that all the citizens do their best to live according to *dikainon*.

Thus lastly, for *krinein* to really be part of *dikaion,* for the judgment to really be just, it is necessary to align truth with justice (*dikaion kai alēthēs*). This is first of all

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[24] Hes.*WD*.202-285
[25] Hes.*WD*.240-1. See also, 262-263
[26] Hes.*WD*.219-224 my emphasis, see also 256-263

involves (a) a different kind of memory, one that does not recall the rules of how to pass judgement, but rather the exact *measure* of identical things. Which also meant that the truth had to disclosed – no longer have to wait for when Zeus got around to passing judgement – speaks about *what is* the case (*ēonta*). Consequently the 'I remember' or the 'I judge' imposes a sovereign decision: it asserts this is the case; this is the order of things. *Krinein* is therefore characterized by a memory of the identical, the disclosure of truth, and the sovereign decision thereof. As such however, *dikaion* (b) extends far beyond the practises of justice: if a decision is just because it recalls the measure of identity, then any discourse that does so is just. In this way the correlation of truth and justice results in the disassociation of power and knowledge; it is the democratization of all knowledge that was previously the possession of the wise king. Power-knowledge is taken from the king and given to the people: knowledge is separated from the direct exercise of power and truth is instead associated with justice. Such a displacement is lodged in a conviction that all men are able and have the capacity to think for themselves, which does not mean that he is alone in that task; a view that we find clearly expressed in Hesiod: "That man is best who reasons (*noēsis*) for himself, considering the future. Also good is he who takes another's good advice. But he who neither thinks himself nor learns from others, is a failure as a man."[27] A conviction echoed in Theognis' image of the poet whose duty it is to assimilate knowledge: "what good is knowledge if just one man knows?"[28] Krinein is about disseminating knowledge, of giving advice as much as to pass sentence; Hesiod is the one who sings about the justness of justice, who judges the judge. Accordingly, the last part of *Work and Days* is devoted to the formulation of a new system of just conduct (*dikainon*). Which (c) consists in the formulation of several kinds of common knowledges, which defines the sameness of the un-thought. They concern: knowledge of the order of the world, knowledge of the time of the cycles, knowledge of promises of payment of debts, and knowledge of a common measure concerning the quality and value of things.[29] Previously these forms of knowledge were linked to the political power of the wise king, but are now, with the democratisation of them, becoming a communal possession, the knowledge that every man needs to live according to the just *dikainon*.[30]

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[27] Hes.*WD*.293-5

[28] Theo.*El*.772

[29] Foucault ascribes these kinds of knowledge to the Assyrians and Hittites. See, Foucault. *Will to Know*, pp. 111-113

[30] In this way *krinein* is a result of the development of a society based on familial ties to one based increasingly on economic relationships. Historically such changes can be associated with major social-

In conclusion, with Hesiod the problem of the wise king is one of equality, not in terms of an inequality of wealth, status, or power; but the inequality in who can speak the truth or who are eligible to take an oath that is the issue, who has the right to possess knowledge (particularly about the rules of justice). In board strokes, his solution was a spilt between power and judgement, as we saw with the establishment of *Krinein*, where the production of truth was displaced to a third party: the judge would now be the one who had to take the oath (the had to swear to the gods that he would uphold the rules of justice as they were written) and the claimants the ones who had to bring forth their case for him to hear. It is around the general regime of *dikaion-alēthē*, where knowledge makes equal, the politics of truth is reorganized: it is the justice of exact return, of a common measure, and of consent and mutual agreement; it is the realignment of the cosmic order of the gods and the world of men that the gift-eating kings had ruined.[31] Because anyone among equals can preside as judge all were equally able to participate in the production of truth, and on equal ground. In the *dikazein* of Homer the word of truth belonged to Zeus (to speak it whenever he pleased), in the *krinein* of Hesiod the word of truth becomes the property of every man of justice.

[6] In what is commonly called the *Age of Tyrants* (650-510 BC) in archaic Greece, a troublesome period of history where the cycle of political systems was in full flow and the social structures were under transformation, the problem of crooked justice also emerges as the more general political problem of the *monarchos*, the 'rule of one' or the 'one who rules alone'.[32] As a political term we know it as monarchy, which would have a positive connotation, but *monarchos* to the archaic Greeks would apply equally to the related terms of king (*basileus*) and tyrant (*tyrannos*). The word *basileus* is an old Mycenaean word, and would be a king or the leader of a group of men.[33] The word

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political changes: (a) the agrarian crisis of the Sixth and Seventhes century BC; (b) the reorganization of the army into hoplites, creating a worrier class; (c) the emergence of craft industry; and (d) more general political transformations. Foucault. *Will to Know*, pp. 121-129

[31] Foucault, *The Will to Know*, pp. 116

[32] Th.1.13

[33] A noticeable difference is that the Mycenaean's had kings who they called *wanax* (*wa-na-ka*, translated as "king" – later in Homeric Greek it is simply *anax*), a term that also sometimes was used as a divine title. (For a critique see: Jorrit M. Kelder, *The Kingdom of Mycenae: A Great Kingdom in the Late Bronze Age Aegean* (CDL Press: Bethesda, Maryland 2010) pp. 11-17) And yet, there were other words that denoted ruler and status: *Lawagetas*, literally meaning "leader of the people" was another terms used, as either the second in command or someone of a higher status, like the king; while *guasileus* the prior form of *basileus* ("king" as the term with which Homer refers to Agamemnon) however, had a lesser significance as the leader of any group of men. All the terms seem to correlate with those in Homeric times, but crucially there was no word for "tyrant", as far we know. See: Chadwick, John and Lydia Baumbach. 'The Mycenaean Greek Vocabulary', *Glotta* 41. Bd., 3./4. H. (1963), pp. 157-271.

tyrannos on the other hand is not originally Greek, but was at the time associated with wealth rather than despotism.[34] To the Archaic and later classical Greeks there was no clear distinction between the two as there is today; at the time of the propagandist Athenian tragedians both terms were used interchangeably.[35] What unites all three is their autocracy – their contrast to the two other groupings of political rule prominent in Greek political theory, the few and the many. The concept of *monarchos* is through and through a critique of the wise king; it is the problem of crooked judgement transposed to the political sphere. Stated briefly, the problem has to do with what can happen when government is left in the hand of one. Take for instance the hostility towards the rule of one in Solon in his warning against Peisistratus, a future tyrant of Athens: "From great men comes destruction of a city, and the people fall though ignorance under the slavish rule of one man (*monachos*). *It's not easy for one who flies too high to control himself afterwards*, but these things should be thought of now."[36] The man who "flies to high", the *monarchos* is associated with lawless rule, the perpetration of *nomos*, and the bending of the rules laid out in the constitution – of this the king may be as guilty as the tyrant, what matters is that there is nothing that controls his actions any longer. The *monarchos* thus constitutes a very clear practical problem: a society fated to the chaotic

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[34] Tyranny was originally associated with wealth Archilochus statement, "all the gold of gyges means nothing to" him – the fact that Gyges usurped his predecessor seem to be less significant (Htd.I.8-12, Pla.*Rep*.359c ff.). In the beginning wealth was the key characteristic of a tyrant: a tyrant was someone who, *qua* his wealth, had been able to take power of the *polis*, in most cases so as to change something it – its constitution, division of land, or for personal gain. Solon (W.5-6): "the citizens themselves, lured, by wealth, want to bring this great city down with their stupidities." This association between wealth and tyranny is confirmed in the fifth century (see: Soph.*OT*.540-2; Thuc.I.13; Pin.*Olymp*.II.58-9). Thus, on the surface the tyrant and the king are similar figures – the normal distinction between a king and a tyrant is that one has inherited his power legitimately whereas the other historically had acquired it though wealth, while the way in which they govern is of the same nature. Which is somewhat confirmed by the fact that the terms initially were used as synonyms (i.e. "Zeus the tyrant"). The bad reputation that the tyrant receives from aristocrats like the poet Theognis is most likely due to the fact that a tyranny usually meant that their lands were brutally taken from them (Eu.1203-6); which was also one of the reasons why Solon refused to go so far as to become a tyrant in his reforms of Athens. This kind of brutal behaviour is where the bad sense of tyrant as a wicket and evil ruler came from. Even in the early days this was the dominant meaning of the word and contrarily our understanding is rather heavily influenced by the Platonic-Aristotelian synthesis where a tyrant is some kind of military leader who takes power in a mature democracy by demagoguery – a definition that fits their own time well, but not the early usage of the word with tyrants such as Dionysius of Syracuse. See: Ure, P. N. *The Origins of Tyranny* (Cambridge University Press, 1922).

[35] As per the observation of Hippias of Elis' (Hypothesis to Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*): "The Poets after Homer have adopted a peculiar usage in referring to the kings before the Trojan War as 'tyrants' (*tyrannoi*). For this term was passed on to the Greeks rather late, in the time of Archilochus, […]. Homer, at any rate, calls Echetus, who was the most lawless of all of them, not a 'tyrant', but a 'king': *to King Echetus, the bane of mortals* (Hom.*Od*.18.85). It is said that the word 'tyrant' is derived from the name 'Tyrrhenians', for they were notoriously troublesome as pirates." See: Dillon, John and Tania Gergel (Ed. Trans.). *The Greek Sophists* (Penguin Books, 2003), p. 130. Modern scholarship associates the Tyrrhenians with the Etruscans.

[36] Solon, quoted in Gagarin, Michael and Paul Woodruff (ed. and trans.). *Early Greek Political Thought: From Homer to the Sophists* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 28 (my emphasis)

mind of one is a society doomed to experiences evils. There is however more to this practical problem than that. Specifically, the figure of the *monarchos* constitutes a danger to the politics of truth for the following reasons:

1. *An aristocratic fear*. The *monarchos* has a special relationship with the people. It is a figure association with wealth and greed, who would often buy his way into office by bribing the citizens. For instance, Solon blames the citizens themselves for brining the tyrant Peisistratus to power by giving him a bodyguard with which he could take control of Athens: "Each of you follows the footprints of this fox, and you all have empty minds, for you watch only the tongue of the man, his slippery speech, but never look at what he actually does."[37] It was a danger for the polis that the citizens were becoming thoughtless in their lust for wealth. Likewise, Theognis prays that the city will not welcome a *mounachoi*, because of their swelling pride and stupidity:

> This city's pregnant […] and I fear She'll bear a man to crush [straighten] our swelling pride [*hubris*]. The people still have sense, but those in charge are turning, stumbling into evil ways. Gentlemen never yet destroyed a town; but when the scum resort to violence, seduce the masses and corrupt the courts to line their pockets and increase their power, then, […] you may know this tranquil town cannot remain unshaken very long. When wicket men rejoice in private graft then public evils follow; factions rise, then bloody civil war [*stasis*], until the state welcomes a dictator [*mounachoi*]. God save us from that fate![38]

The man who will crush their hubris is a tyrant. In this aristocratic correlation of *tyrannos* and *monarchos* as a form of divine punishment it is Hesiod's conception of the just (*dikaion*) that shines through, as it is the citizens themselves that are blamed for the misfortunes of the *monarchos*. This aristocratic fear comes form the way in which the tyrants came to power. Many early tyrannies started with the bloody business of taking land form the aristocracy either by exile or murder. The appearance and elaboration of the concept of tyranny had a transitory role by destroying aristocracy it paved the way for democracy. The age of tyrants thus marked a turning point in Greek history, one that the aristocrats naturally dreaded.

2. *A democratic fear*. In contrast, however, tyranny was also a solution to a practical problem that is rooted deeper than merely a formal question of preferences for a political system. One of the reason for the success of tyranny had to do with this because they were able to challenge aristocracy on the basis of the idea that government could be done better by another man – revolt against a legitimate king or aristocracy would therefore be acceptable if he were to deliver better justice. Thus, to the polis as a whole the relationship to the tyrant is ambivalent: On the one hand the tyrant is the one

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[37] Ibid., p. 29
[38] Theo.*Ele*.39-52

who knows, and is therefore a necessary figure for the functioning of the city; but on the other, he also has the possibility of keeping knowledge for himself, denying his fellow man access and thus claiming a position beyond reproach. Sophocles' play *Oedipus Tyrannos* illustrates this brilliantly. Oedipus saved the town from the sphinx: "I have the knowledge, I solved the riddle of the sphinx, I freed you form this terrible danger, therefore I deserve to rule", says Oedipus. Nonetheless, Oedipus is also the wise king as a figure of failure. For despite all his power and knowledge he did know the most essential thing: his origin story – a fact that only the commoner and a third party knew and could attest to. So while the *tyrannos* is someone who claims sole-rule based on his possession of knowledge, he is still fallible and will often commit terrible atrocities, making him a dangerous figure to have in power. What this democratic fear demands then, is that the wise king renounces either his power or his knowledge. He cannot be allowed to posses both; it is the monopolization of knowledge that is the problem.

3. *Fear of violence*. When Solon wrote the laws (*thesmoi*) of Athens he combined might and right (*dikē*) in order to strike a just balance between the rich (*esthloi*) and the poor (*kakoi*) in terms of the political power and privilege that each were granted. A point that he makes repeatedly is that he was the reluctant tyrant who exercised restraint.[39] In contrast, a *monarchos* is someone who is governed only by the unrestrained impulses of his own mind he will certainly behave accordingly. In all likelihood, this means that he will be violent as there is nothing to restrain him. "Lucky tyrants – the perquisites of power! Ruthless power to do and say whatever pleases them" Antigone taunts Creon.[40] We find this problem already in Hesiod's tale of the hawk and the nightingale, but not in Homer, where the king could commit all kinds of violent acts without offending justice.[41] In Herodotus there are plenty of examples of the violent danger associated with the rule of one. That of Cypselus is probably one of the most memorable. It takes place in book V where the Spartans had proposed to abolish political equality in response to the Ionian revolt. "There is nothing wickeder or bloodier in the world than tyranny" recalls a Corinthian and then tells the terrible story of how Cypselus, the son of the Eëtion who was the daughter of a prominent member of the Bacchiadae (the leading Aristocrats), was fated to bring justice to the city of Corinth. The justice that he brings is against the nobility consisted in exile, confiscation of property, and even more were put to death. The metaphor of madness that Herodotus

[39] Solon.W5-6, W34, W36, W37
[40] Soph.*Ant*.506-7
[41] Hes.*WD*.202-212, Achilles's rampage in the river at the end of book 21

uses to describes the rule of a tyrant is that of Thrasybulus walking thought the fields in silence "cutting off the tallest ears of wheat which he could see, and throwing them away, until the finest and best-grown part of he crop was ruined."[42] The problem is one of a liable system of ethics, as becomes clear when the rule of one –be it a tyrant or a king– is compared to other political system. Herodotus, in a very Greek sounding debate, puts these words in the mouth of the Persian Oranes: "Monarchy is neither pleasant nor good. […] How can one fit monarchy into any sound system of ethics, when it allows a man to do whatever he likes without any responsibility or control?"[43] Thucydides replicates this very same aspect of truth and power in the Melian dialogue where the Athenians are portrayed as the tyrants who unnecessarily behave violently.[44] When might becomes right it constitutes a problem for the politics of truth, exactly because truth is only attainable through violence.

4. *Fear of a foreign enemy*. While the last three characteristics have to do with internal factors of in Greek culture and their political systems, the forth has to do with a foreign treat – namely that of the Persian Empire. By the end of the sixth century the Persian kings started to supported tyrants, whom themselves, when their power declined, took initiative to ask for alliances to endure in their local power struggles. It the Persian Empire was considered a danger, this was not only because of potential invasions or alliances that would alter the balance of power, but also because of the inherent ideological conflicts between Hellenism and Medism, from the Greek verb 'to medize' meant to collaborate with the Persians.[45] The Persian Empire was the natural enemy of the Greek democracies, not just because they would install tyrants, but more importantly because they were the guarantors of the politics of truth of the *monarchos*. We find this theme repeated many times in texts dealing with Persian kings. For obvious reasons, Xerxes was the prime target of many texts that deals with this problem. In Herodotus' accounts of how Xerxes came to the decision to launch his campaign we bear witness to how the Persian politics of truth operated.[46] While most of the councillors advised Xerxes to invade, for their own personal gain, it was only his uncle Artabanus that dared speak against the king's desires.[47] Delivering a true-discourse of

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[42] V.92; cf. III.53, tyranny is a "slippery thing"; III.80, tyranny consists in "insolent pride"; V.78, as a weak motivation compared to freedom.
[43] Htd.III.80
[44] Thuc.V.85-113
[45] Wight, Martin. *Systems of States*, edited and with an introduction by Hedley Bull (Leicester University Press, 1977), pp. 80-83
[46] Htd.VII.5-20
[47] Htd.VII.10 and Htd.VII.16

tragic wisdom about the dangers of the campaign to the empire, he greatly angers Xerxes. Whether he finally reaches his decision because of the Persian *nomos* of conquest, or because of he is *fated* to this course of action, as the dream clearly forces him to realise, is a point of disagreement.[48] One thing is nevertheless clear, in the politics of truth of the *monarchos* there is no room for the true-discourse, it either angers the king or is simply cast aside by a dream. Similarly, the theme of violence appears again when he mocks the reply of the Greek mercenary Demaratus who he had asked about whether or not the Greek would dare to fight him: upon giving a truthful account, Xerxes bursts out laughing signalling his destruction, but in the end let him go.[49] An altogether clearer example is Aeschylus' *The Persians*, a triumphalist account of the Greek victory at Salamis, but equally a piece of propaganda that ridicules the failure of the wise king in the form of Xerxes, condemned by the ghost of his father Darious – who the play portrays as wise. Upon the failed invasion the chorus chants: "Not long now will those in the land of Asia remain under Persian rule, nor continue to pay tribute under the compulsion of their lords, nor fall on their faces to the ground in awed obedience; for the strength of the monarchy [*basilsia*] has utterly vanished. Nor do men any longer keep their tongue under guard; for the people have been let loose to speak with freedom [*ēleutheros basō*], now the yoke of the military force no longer binds the."[50] The practical problem of *monarchos* manifested itself as internal problem in the form of the king or the tyrant, as well as an external problem by the treat of the Persian Empire, but both cases were associated with a politics of truth dominated by the figure of the wise king.

III

[7] As is evident form the material discussed in the chapter so far, the notions of straight (*ithunei*) and crooked (*skolion*) were central to the archaic Greeks. Homer had used straight in this way in his description on Achilles shield where the one who "utter the straightest judgement" was paid two talons of gold.[51] We learn the same form the *Theogony*, where Zeus himself is the image of straightness, which empowers the king to

[48] For the *nomos* as the reason see Htd.VII.8, and for fate as the reason see Htd.VII.17-18
[49] Htd.VII.102
[50] Aesch.*Pers*.584-595
[51] Hom.*Il*.18.508

give straight judgements.[52] It is an image that naturally resonates because the phenomenological difference between them is clear enough; geometrically, straight lines are shorter than crooked lines. The ideal of political discourse in ancient Greece was to be straight (*ithunei*): a straight line had to go from mouth of the speaker to the mind of the listener, speech that was crooked or slippery was frowned upon exactly because it was suspicious by its very nature – why could you not just speak your mind, what hidden motivation do you have? It was for the same reason that speeches in the assembly were encouraged to be short.[53] When Solon, the famous lawmaker (*archon*) of Athens, advises his fellow citizens on the importance of good government (*eunomia*) he employs exactly these notions:

> Bad government brings the most evils to a city; while good government (*eunomia*) makes everything fine and orderly, and often puts those who are unjust in fetters; it makes rough things smooth, stops excess, weakens hubris, and withers the growing blooms of madness (*atē*). It *straightens crooked judgements*, makes arrogant deeds turn gentle, puts a stop to divisive factions, brings to an end the misery of angry quarrels. This is the source among human beings for all that is orderly and wise.[54]

So while the practical problems that ruptured the epistemological space of the Homeric politics of truth, one had to do with juridical practices the other the rule of one (*monarchos*), are framed by the contrast of these two concepts, so too do they help structure that which displaces it. It is nevertheless an epistemological space that emerges on the basis of a historical series or transformation: *krinein* establishes a link between the just (*dikainon*), the order of the world (*nomos*), and the organization of the city. Historically the disappearance of *thēsmos* – which is neither written law or *nomos*, but a custom established from above (unwritten rule) – does obviously no all happen at once, but rather in three stages: first there is the stage of *eunomia*, in which written law fixes the rules and makes them public and the politics of truth now has to conform to a *nomos*; then second, there is the stage of *isonomia*, the guarantee of equal political rights; and the third stage *demokratia*, in which every citizen frankly speaks his mind.[55] At each stage, straight discourse is what is sought after and the word and concept that comes to embody it at the time of Euripides is *parrhēsia*. Accordingly, the emergence of democracy coincides with this problem of true discourse; there is in other words, a fundamental circularity between democracy and *parrhēsia*. Nevertheless, one must distinguish between a concept and a word; in this case the word *parrhēsia* is not as old

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[52] Hes.*Th*.80-86, Hes.*WD*.9
[53] Democritus, B44=B225, Aesch.*Supp*.71
[54] Solon, *Early Greek Political Thought* (my emphasis), p. 24
[55] See: Foucault, *The Will to Know*, p.149ff; Eur.*Supp*.430

as the concept. As a concept that corresponds to a problem complex, it is reasonable to expect that straight discourse is present in pre-Socratic philosophy, a number of sophists' discourses, and most importantly the Tragedians. Indeed, the circularity between democracy and *parrhēsia* is not only clearly defined in the tragedies, but it is worth noting that both the theatre and democracy are very connection and roughly emergence simultaneously. In fact one of the functions of the theatre and the plays that were staged there was exactly to educate in the practices and associated problem of the straight discourse. There was indeed a time, before Plato and condemnation of actors, when the tragedian and comedic authors were able through their stage plays had a positive link to truth.

Nevertheless, this peculiar relationship between *krinein* and *parrhēsia* needs some specification: in contrast to *krinein*, *parrhēsia* constitutes the democratization of the oath, the manifestation of a risky truth rather than a truth that is strictly speaking known. Sure enough, *krinein* as a theme reappears in the concept of public critique: at this time a good two thousand years prior, however, *krinein* is not a political term, but a juridical one – *parrhēsia* is the proper political term, which nevertheless did not become possible before justice had been displaced from the power of the king to that of truth (*dikaion-alēthē*). This is why it is *parrhēsia* that constitutes the central concept of the democratic politics of truth: *parrhēsia* is what gives thought access to the outside realm of un-truth. In other words, it is by speaking with *parrhēsia* that one is able to establish an exterior truth to the truth of politics.

Thus, the epistemological space that emerges around the fifth and sixth century BC in Greek thought is the result of the displacements of three problems: from the mechanism of the oath, to a straight true-discourse captured by the concept of *parrhēsia*; form justice guaranteed by *dikazein*, to one based on *dikaion* that required a constitution (*politeia*) to function; and lastly, from the idea that truth resided in a space of struggle (*agōn*) where it never materialised, to one where the struggle to exercise power (*dunesteia*) was decided by the persuasiveness of ones true-discourse. It is towards this diagram of thought that I now turn.

[8] The word '*parrhēsia*' is an Ancient Greek word that literally means 'saying everything' or 'to say all' – from the roots '*pan'* (all), and '*rhēsis'* or '*rehma'* (speech). It originated in the fifth and fourth century BC in Greek literature – first occurring the in

poetry of Euripides and later in philosophical and political writings.[56] *Parrhēsia* is usually translated in English as 'free speech', in the sense that one speaks frankly, plainly, and boldly. The *parrhesiastes*, a person who uses *parrhēsia*, is someone who employs a degree of 'free-spokenness' in his or her attitude towards others. A person who 'says everything' is then someone who speaks without concealment, being reserved about what one says, or refuses to use rhetorical or technical aids to disguise and cover up what that person really think – that is, what he or she regard as the truth. This positive sense of *parrhēsia* if found in particular the writings of Euripides, Aristophanes, Isocrates, and Demosthenes who, for example, in the *Second Philippic* emphasized that he did not desire to speak without concern for reason – he did not want to "resort to insults" or "exchange blow for blow" – but rather he wanted to tell the truth with *parrhēsia* (*ta alethe meta parrhēsia*): "Ah! I will speak to you with open heart, I call on the gods to witness it, I wish to conceal nothing," and he adds, "I vow that I shall boldly tell you the whole truth and keep nothing back."[57] *Parrhēsia* then is *frank truth-telling* where 'telling all' is tied to the *truth*: the whole truth is told without omitting anything, nor is the truth hidden behind something else. Like so, *parrhēsia* blends two kinds of true-discourse: firstly, it requires like *krinein* that the truth is manifested, and secondly it borrows from the mechanism of the oath that something is risked, that there is a cost to speaking.

1. *personification of truth*. First, *parrhēsia* involves an ontological commitment to truth in so that it may materialise. That is, the practice of *parrhēsia* requires more than the establishment of a bond of belief between the speaker and the truth – spoken as if he was having an inner dialogue with himself. In this way, the *parrhēsiast* personally puts his signature to the truth he speaks; he is ontologically bounded to his true-discourse. Yet, this leaves open the possibility that anyone can bind them to any kind of truth that find authority beyond the one who speaks: the ruler can speak the truth about the laws that he authors; the teacher can recite grammatical rules; or the geographer can point at a map – truths which they genuinely believe and think are true. This is not *parrhēsia*. What distinguishes the *parrhesiastes* from others is that by speaking the truth the *parrhesiastes* risks something by confronting the other with the truth; in speaking the truth to the other interlocutor the individual practicing *parrhēsia* risk the relation that exists between them. Thus, *parrhēsia* requires two bonds: first a bond between the individual who speaks and, second, a challenge to the bond that binds the two interlocu-

[56] Eur.*Hipp*.422; Eur.*Ion*.672
[57] Dem.6.31

tors: the *parrhēsiat* risk offending, irritating, provoking, angering the receiving interlocutor. *Parrhēsia* therefore carries with it a particular *critical voice* which is why it is interesting to note that instead of '*pan*', *parrhēsia* can also originate from the root of '*para'* (against, contrary to). As in, against or contrary to popular opinion or against or contrary to the will of the King. The *parrhēsiast* is someone who speaks against prevailing power, challenging what already counts as truth. In this sense *parrhēsia* is a true-discourse of untruth, the not yet true. In other words, *parrhēsia* has a transformative force.

2. *democratisation of the oath*. It is thus very clear that there exists an asymmetrical relation of power between the subject who speaks the truth and the *other* – the receiving interlocutor. Given such asymmetry, it is also clear that *parrhēsia* is a practice that is always directed *from* below *to* above. If the relations of power would not be asymmetrical there would be no practice of *parrhēsia*. A king for example, can never speak with *parrhēsia* to his subjects; the powerful has little claim to this kind of true-discourse. Yet, they still posses a role to play in the *parrhēsiatic* event, because both parties engage in what could be called a '*parrhēsiatic* pact'. In this pact, the *parrhēsiast* agrees to tell the truth, the whole truth without concealment [straightness], and thereby binding him or herself to the statement and agree to take to risk and consequences of its verisimilitude; while the *other* interlocutor – whether a friend, a assembly of people, or a king – agrees to accept what has been said no matter how unpleasant or provoking, to not take a course of action that would otherwise harm or leave the sole responsibility (the powerful has to be willing to share and show solidarity with the consequences) with the individual who showed the courage to confront them with the truth. Thus, by the *parrhēsiatic* pact we should understand a particular game of truth where the individual involved agree to play their respective parts. In historical motion it becomes quite clear however, that politics is not always played as the *game of truth* that is *parrhēsia*; most of the time there are no one willing – out of lack of courage or interest – to play the part of the *parrhēsiast*, at other times listening party does not accept what truth that has been spoken and either act violently or simply ignores what has been said. In any case, if the game of *parrhēsia* is played like this (if the pact is broken), the truth that is manifested in this very particular way is rendered without effect – *the game fails*, in a finite sense, where the *truth* then is produced by another game of truth.

The practice of *parrhēsia* can be brought about in two ways, it can be *granted* by an assembly or the monarch, or it can simply be *taken* – claimed by an individual who desires to speak out regardless of the consequences. In any case, it is always up to

the receiving part to honour the pact. Thus, whenever someone speaks with *parrhēsia* this person engages in a relation of power with *another*, usually someone of authority. This is always the case for simple moral matters – as in a relation between two people – as well as for political matters, where the role of the listener becomes more complex as their interaction has an effect on the whole community. Hence, as for the latter, and this might appear illogical considering the reciprocity of *parrhēsia*, there are at least three interested parties: the *parrhēsiastes*, the listener(s), and the society at large that the truth will impact.

[9] *Parrhēsia* constitutes what Foucault calls an 'alethurgory form' – a particular way of manifesting truth, which is another way of saying that the practice of *parrhēsia* is a particular modality of truth-telling; one out of many ways of truth being manifested in the form of speech. It is all a question of style; there are different styles of playing games of truth, different ways of being a truth-teller. We shall get more into these different modalities of truth-telling in the chapter on the Ancient Greek problematiztions of *parrhēsia* – so for now this will have to do as a preliminary comment. For now, it will suffice to sketch out the different ways in which truth could be manifested through speech, as Foucault found them. Here, *parrhēsia* is contrasted to three other modalities of truth-telling, which can be found in Ancient Greek society, but no doubt also in alternate and evolved forms in other societies, including our own: the *prophet* (who speaks prophecy and fate), the *sage* (who speaks wisdom and being), and the *teacher* (who speaks technical 'know how' – *technē*). The contrast and comparison Foucault drives at is the of the structure of their speech, the way in which they constitute themselves and are recognized by others and subjects who are speaking with true-discourse.

1. *in contrast to prophecy*. The modality of the prophet (the truth-teller of *fate*) is characterized by it first of all being *mediation*, he does not speak in his own name, but in the name of a higher authority (usually God); second, he is in an *intermediary* position in that his speech is situated between the present and the future – it reveals to men what time conceals for them; and third, that when he discloses what is hidden his revelations are always obscure and spoken in riddles (their require interpretation), which at the same time means that there is always a chance that the interlocutor will not understand (or misinterpret) the truth unveiled.[58] The modality of *parrhēsia* is the complete opposite to this; he by definition speaks only for himself. Second, the

[58] Foucault, Michel (2011) *The Courage of Truth – Lectures at the Collège De France, 1983-84*, translated by Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), p. 15-17

parrhēsiatic never prophesies the future, rather he unveils that which is – he helps his interlocutors in their blindness of the truth, make them see their moral faults, their lack of discipline, or dubious practices. Third, he speaks plainly and frankly, not in riddles – and in doing so he leaves nothing to interpretation.[59]

2. *in contrast to wisdom*. The modality of the *sage* (the truth-teller of *wisdom*) speaks in his own name; the wisdom that he expresses is his own even if it originates from God, tradition, or arcane teachings. He himself is wise, which qualifies him to speak the discourse of wisdom and puts him in an intermediate position between timeless and traditional wisdom and his interlocutor. Second, there is nothing that naturally compels the sage to speak with wisdom to other people, to teach or demonstrate it; he has no need to speak, his wisdom is first and foremost for himself. Foucault calls this the "structural silence" of the sage.[60] Furthermore, and third, if he chooses to share his wisdom he says *what is* – that is, he talks about the *being* of the world and the order of things in abstractions and general principles of conduct. Even more so, he has no concern for the reception of his wisdom and may prefer to speak in an enigmatic and convoluted language.[61] In so far as the sage himself, is present in his true-discourse he resembles the *parrhēsiatic*. In contrast to him however, the *parrhēsiatic* has an obligation and duty to tell the truth; he cannot remain silent, but must confront his interlocutors with the truth, no matter then risk and danger, and he must do so as clearly as possible. Last, both the sage and the *parrhēsiatic* say *what is*; but where the sage's true-discourse concerns the abstract and general, the true-discourse of the *parrhēsiatic* is signified by conjunctions and context, it is delivered in terms of "singularity of the individual". Foucault furthermore adds, that there time and again is made a central distinction between:

> useless knowledge [wisdom of being] which speaks of the being of things and the world, on the one hand, and on the other the *parrhēsiast's* truth-telling which is always applied, questions, and is directed to individuals and situations in order to say what they are in reality, to tell individuals the truth of themselves hidden from their own eyes, to reveal to them their present situation, their character, failings, the value of their conduct, and the possible consequences of their decisions.[62]

In other words, there is in *parrhēsia* a predisposition towards practical wisdom (*phronēsis*).

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[59] Ibid., p. 16-17
[60] Ibid., p. 17
[61] Ibid., p. 17
[62] Ibid., p. 19

3. *in contrast to technē*. The teacher is someone who possesses *techné* (technical knowledge, or 'know-how') about a particular area or practice; he is someone who has gone through the hardship to learn this knowledge or truth and he has the ability to pass it on to others. Consequently, there exists a kind of a principle of obligation to speak the truth out of *necessity* – exactly so because, he would not have it if it were not for his own teacher. This sets the modality of the teacher apart from the sage and unites it with that of the *parrhēsiast*. And yet, the modality of the teacher is not identical to the modality of *parrhēsia*, for if he were to risk all he will not be able to pass on his valuable knowledge – thus he cannot speak his true-discourse at any cost. This, as we have seen, is exactly the obligation of the *parrhēsiast* who inevitably accepts all kinds of dangers. To practice *parrhēsia* one needs *courage*, whereas to teach one does not. Thus, while the modality of the teacher ensures the *survival* of knowledge, the modality of *parrhēsia* involves the risk of *death*.

Thus we understand the practice of *parrhēsia* more clearly, when we contrast it to the respective modalities of the prophet, the sage, and the teacher. Taken together these four modalities contain different personages, different modes of speech, and relate to different domains of being. Thus, while the prophet speaks the true-discourse of *fate*, the sage someone who speaks the true-discourse of *wisdom*, and the teacher speaks the true-discourse of *techné*, the *parrhēsiast* speaks the true-discourse of *ethos* – in that he speaks to the character of his interlocutor, turning him onto himself so that he will see what is hidden to him.

Furthermore, *parrhēsia* is not a *technique* (which, however, does not mean that it is void of technical aspects) that can be thought or learned. This makes it stand in strong opposition of *rhetoric*. Rhetoric, as a technique concerning the different ways to say things does not in anyway, contrary to *parrhēsia*, imply a bond between the person who speaks and what he says; a kind of speech which resembles a hollow shell that merely has an presentable exterior. The rhetorician is a person who a person who does not necessarily say what he thinks or believes, rather his aim is the *effect* of speech – to affect the person to whom he speaks, so as to alter their convictions, their conduct, or their belief. Rhetoric *constrains* the relation between speaker and listener *by what is said.* And while doing so, the rhetorician – if he is good – is able to effectively hide the truth. In this regard, *rhetoric* appears as a technique that enables people to flatter, lie, and deceive. Thus, *parrhēsia* and the technique of rhetoric are opposites. Foucault drives out the difference in saying, that: "the rhetorician is, or at any rate may well be an

effective liar who constrains others. The *parrhesiast*, on the contrary, is the courageous teller of a truth by which he puts himself and his relationship with the other at risk."[63]

[10] An initial definition of *parrhēsia* could be the following: the practice of *parrhēsia* is when an individual speaks with *frankness*, who opens up his inner dialogue of thought, who by speaking with a critical voice risk the relation with the other interlocutor – their indifference, irritation, anger or potentially violent reaction.

1. *straight discourse*. According to Foucault, the practice of *parrhēsia* as he found it in Greek society has five characteristics: First, *parrhēsia* is characterised by *frankness*. That is, the *parrhēsiastes* says everything he has in mind and as such nothing goes unspoken, so that the audience can grasp precisely what the speaker has in mind. The *parrhēsiastes* does this in a way so that he makes it clear that what is said is his own opinion and he does so without technical aids. In contrast again to rhetoric, Foucault explains: "Whereas rhetoric provides the speaker with technical devices to help him prevail upon the minds of his audience (regardless of the rhetorician's own opinion concerning what he says), in *parrhēsia*, the *parrhesiastes* acts on other people's mind by showing them as directly as possible what he actually believes."[64]

2. *a modification of the oath*. Second, in *parrhēsia,* the *parrhēsiastes's* relation to *truth* is very different to our modern way of understanding *truth* (in terms of proof); what could be called the Cartesian 'mode of veridiction'. Foucault explains: "the *parrhēsiastes* says what is true because he knows that it is true; and he knows that it is true because it is really true."[65] Hence, in a way, there is always "an exact coincidence between belief and truth", Foucault elaborates.[66] The only measure of truth in *parrhēsia* would be the courage of the speaker, and therefore "what binds the speaker to the fact that what he says is the truth, and to the consequences which follow from the fact that he has told the truth."[67] Thus, there is a kind of ontological commitment on behalf of the speaker to which he is tied to the truth.

3. *the politicisation of krino*. Third, *parrhēsia* is a form of *criticism*. Because the danger or risk involved in *parrhēsia* comes from the speaker confronting the other, or the interlocutor. Foucault therefore describes this relation as the "game of truth" between the two parties. Thus, *parrhēsia* is a form of *criticism* because it is "ei-

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[63] Ibid., p. 19
[64] Foucault, Michel. *Fearless Speech*, edited by Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), p. 12
[65] Ibid., p. 14
[66] Ibid., p. 14
[67] Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 56

ther towards another or towards oneself, but always in a situation where the speaker or confessor is in a position of inferiority with respect to the interlocutor."[68] Foucault describes a criticism that comes from 'below' which is directed towards 'above'. The *parrhēsiastes* is less powerful than the one to which he speaks to. This is the situation in which the philosopher risks angering the tyrant by confronting him with his way of ruling.

4. *facing the wrath of the demos*. Consequently, forth, *parrhēsia* entails a degree of risk and danger: "frankness is an aspect of liberty, but discerning the right occasion is hazardous."[69] It therefore requires courage (*andreios*). Contrasting *parrhēsia* to other "discursive strategies" such as rational demonstration, persuasion, teaching, and debating, Foucault shows that what distinguishes *parrhēsia* from all of them is the *risk of danger* inherent in *parrhēsia*. Thus, to be a *parrhēsiastes* requires the necessary courage to tell the truth, even if this means death. Foucault explains this by stating: "*Parrhēsia*, then, is linked to courage in the face of danger: it demands the courage to speak the truth in spite of some danger."[70] Consequently, people with power can never speak truth in the *parrhēsiatic* sense; it requires no courage to speak out from a position of power. Either to a tyrant or to the assembly, when one is being a *parrhēsiastes* there is always a risk of danger, either in the form of humiliation, exile or death. In the *First Philippic*, for instance, Demosthenes states: "I am well aware that, by employing this frankness, I do not know what the consequences will be for me of the things I have just said."[71]

5. *adhering to dikaion*. Fifth, *parrhēsia* is characterised by a sense of *duty*. That is, telling the truth is thought of as a duty: "No one forces him to speak; but he feels that it is his duty to do so."[72] Foucault distinguishes between whether or not one is "compelled" to speak the truth, i.e. under torture or in a trail, and the sort of voluntary confession of the truth that is inspired by a sense of moral obligation towards a friend (in a political situation such as the city state, or to a king). Yet, while the context might demand duty the expression of the inner dialogue of thought of the *parrhēsiast*, which might go against it, has to be accepted. *Parrhēsia* therefore requires *freedom* or in other words: abiding to a sense of duty under conditions of freedom. It is in this respect that *parrhēsia* is useful to the community – in times of crisis, granted the necessary freedom,

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[68] Ibid., p. 17-18
[69] Democritus, DKB226
[70] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 16
[71] Dem.4.51
[72] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, p. 19

the *parrhēsiast* will appear and confront the community with the necessary truth(s). From a more detached viewpoint we could also recite an argument made elsewhere, namely that: the room for critique is what keeps a community vibrant and adaptable. To exercise parrhēsia is to live in accordance with *dikaion*.

6. *targeted at the nomoi* (governmentality). Sixth, and this follows directly from the last point, *parrhēsia* aims at (political) action: in practicing *parrhēsia* there is an implicit desire to change the state of things – *parrhēsia* is never neutral to its context. In so far as one practices *parrhēsia* one is engaged in the *government of self and others* – in the very sense Foucault invoked to describe what he termed governmentality: that is, "the conduct of conduct."[73] *Parrhēsia*, by enunciating to the others the truth about their *ethos*, and doing so in a frank and critical way where the truth about oneself is revealed (ones inner dialogue) so that one summons risk and dangers. This particular way of calling for a certain course of action, furthermore makes the practice of *parrhēsia* stand in sharp contrast to much critical theory today, which does not aim at prescribing a course of action under conditions of risk and danger. Rather, such critical thinking reminds more of the modality of truth-telling of the sage who is reserved with regard to his wisdom.

To sum all this up and come to a preliminary definition, we can say *parrhēsia* is a particular manifestation of truth and that the practice *parrhēsia* is a form of speech where one says all and everything as *frankly and plainly* as possible; and by so doing established a particular relation to truth in that one only says what one really thinks, what *is* and *appear* to be the truth to oneself; what is said, is directed towards the *other* in a *critical* way; and by virtue thereof exposes the individual that speaks to *risk* and *danger*; one does so out of a sense of duty and for the common good of the polis. Parrhēsia, then is a kind of courageous practice where, under conditions of freedom and motivated by duty, a person utters a critical and frank speech that calls for a particular action, and subsequently exposes the speaker to personal risk and danger.

[11] For the politics of truth to function, the problem of political order has to be dealt with in some way. In Greek thought it was primarily a problem of how the practice of *parrhēsia* could be guaranteed; how there within the polis could be made room for the true-discourse of *parrhēsia*. We have already seen how parrhēsia was linked with straight discourse and good government.

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[73] Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', p. 220

Now when we turn to the problem of political order, the question of good government (*eunomia*) became a question of a good constitution (*politeia*), which goes back to the tension between harmony (*nomia*) and civil war (*stasis*). The *politeia* is what brings about the conditions for *nomia*; if left on the other hand these questions are not dealt with properly it can lead to *stasis*. In a specific sense *politeia* was the institutions of the state, it had to do with the process of political decision-making, the duties of magistrates, and the exercise of juridical power.[74] Thus there was a whole series of problems associated with the *politeia*; most of which had to do with equality and all compounds terms beginning with *iso*-. They were largely problems dealing the framework for political action, the constitution of authority and legitimacy: Who should rule? How decisions are to be taken? How should power be lawfully exercised? How should leaders be appointed and for how long? How should power be constituted? How should the power of institutions be delineated? Is it to be divided equally between factions (*isokratia*)? To what extend do citizens have equal rights (*isonomia*)? Who has the right to vote and who does not? Is there equality of birth (*isogonia*)? Are all equally accountable to the law (*isos*)? In short, all the different sets of formalities associated with designing a constitution and which are familiar to us today.

Nevertheless, in Greek thought the concept of *politeia* retains a deeper meaning because it is linked clearer to the problem of true-discourse. It is thus far from meaning it has today of being the sum total of laws that govern society, even if that is the common and correct translation. Importantly, there is a link between the constitution, with all the problems outlines above, and a particular way of life. As the polis is a unit made up of citizens, *politeia* could also mean citizenship or citizen rights.[75] As it was linked to the citizen it also had to do with his individual activities, his way of life so to speak. This is why the questions of *politeia* were not just about the total amount of laws of the polis (*thesmoi*), but rather the *total political structure of a polis*.[76] In the *Funeral Oration*, Thucydides has Pericles make a close association between the *politeia* and the general way of life in Athenian democracy. To quote him at some length:

> It is true that our government (*politeia*) is called a democracy, because its administration is in the hands, not of the few, but of the many yet while; as regards the law all men are on an equality for the settlement of their private disputes, as regards the value set on them it is as each man is in any way distinguished that he is preferred to public honours, not because he belongs to a particular class, but because of personal merits; nor, again, on the ground of poverty is a man barred from a public career by obscurity of rank if he but has it in him to do the state a service. And not

[74] Arist.*Pol*.1297b37-1298a9
[75] Hdt.IX.34, Thuc.VI.104
[76] Thuc.II.37, Dem.20.105-106

> only in our public life are we liberal (*eleutheros*), but also as regards our freedom from suspicion of one another in the pursuits of every-day life; for we do not feel resentment at our neighbour if he does as he likes, nor yet do we put on sour looks which, though harmless, are painful to behold.[77]

What makes democracy, as a kind of *politeia*, stand apart is that it makes room for a particular kind of life. Like so, *politeia* signifies the formal conditions for the practice of *parrhēsia*, but as such it also implies a whole way of life that supports this practice. A particular *politeia* is linked to a *nomos* or more importantly *nomoi*, a way of thinking or a form of belief: being a democracy as opposed to a tyranny has an impact on how any particular state would act in relation to others; each would have different expectations of behaviour. Isocrates would later compare it to the soul: "for the soul of a state is nothing else that its polity."[78] The *politeia* is corruptible. Consequently, the problem of political order became a problem of how *politeia* can provide the conditions for a general way of life in which it is possible to practice *parrhēsia*. In his speech *Against Timarchus*, the democrat Aeschines highlighted the importance of providing political order though the law:

> autocracies and oligarchies are administered according to the tempers of their lords, but democratic states according to established laws. And be assured, fellow citizens, that in a democracy it is the laws that guard the person of the citizen and the constitution of the state (*politeian*), whereas the despot and the oligarch find their protection in suspicion and in armed guards. Men, therefore, who administer an oligarchy, or any government based upon inequality, must be on their guard against those who attempt revolution by the law of force; but you, who have a government based upon equality (*isos*) and law (*ennomos*), must guard against those whose words violate the laws or whose lives have defied them; for then only will you be strong, when you cherish the laws.[79]

There is thus a constant need to depend the exercise of true-discourse through the medium of the law, to provide political order by *politeia*. There are two basic values that the *politeia* needs to support for there to be *parrhēsia* in the city. These are the two aspect of democracy that Herodotus praises about Athens when it won its freedom (*eleutheria*) form tyranny and could provide its citizens with equal opportunity (*isēgoria*) to address the assembly.[80]

1. *Liberty* (*eleutheria*). The term *eleutheria* has at least two connotations, both of which were invoked by Thucydides in the quote above: liberty to live as one

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[77] Thuc.II.37

[78] And he continued: "having as much power over it as does the mind over the body for it is this which deliberates upon all questions, seeking to preserve what is good and to ward off what is disastrous; and it is this which of necessity assimilates to its own nature the laws, the public orators and the private citizens; and all the members of the state must fare well or ill according to the kind of polity under which they live." Iso.7.14

[79] Aeschin.1.4-5; see also Heraclitus B44

[80] Hdt.V.78

pleases (private liberty) and participate in political institutions (political liberty).[81] They are the fundamental democratic value which are praised by Ortanes in the constitutional debate in Herodotus, in the speeches of Athenian statesmen in Thucydides, or "to rule in turn" as proclaimed as the most important aspect of Athenian democracy in Euripides' *Suppliant Woman*.[82] However, the problem of political order is exactly that the life of *eleutheria* cannot guarantee itself and thus it has to be guaranteed by the *politeia*.

2. *Equality* (*isēgoria*). Usually equality would be discussed in terms of either equal political rights (*isonomia*), or equal opportunity to address the assembly (*isēgoria*); . While it might be said that if all men are to be guaranteed the opportunity to speak there must be some degree of natural equality between them – "A free (*eleutherosas*) state, with an equal (*isopsephos*) vote for all."[83] Opponents of democracy would usually ridicule *isonomia* as misguided idea, which either meant that the democrats believed that they were equal in everything, or a radical idea that in practice created disorder.[84] Nevertheless, to the Athenian democrats equality was exclusively a political term, there was no connotation to the social or the economical sphere, which is why it was never paradoxical for them to equate it with liberty: to have political equality would not reduce another's liberty. It was *isēgoria*, the equality of opportunity to speak before the assembly, which was praised by the democrats: "Thus Freedom (*eleutherosas*) speaks: 'what man desires to bring good counsel for his country to the people? Who chooseth this, is famous: who will not, keeps silent. Can equality (*isēgoria*) further go?'"[85] A returning problem is thus the theme of which *politeia* would best guarantee the freedom to speak the truth *isēgoria*?

[12] *Parrhēsia* is embedded in what Foucault call "politics as experience" – also called *dunasteia* (form *dunamis*, meaning strength, power, or the exercise of power), to distinguish it from *politeia*, where the dominance or superiority of some allows them to address others and speak the truth and in effect persuading them so that they, as a result, can be said to exercise power over them.[86] As with *politeia*, there is a series of problems related to *dunasteia*: first, the problem of how power is exercised – the procedures,

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[81] Hansen, Mogens Herman. *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes: Structure, Principles, and Ideology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1991), pp. 75-76

[82] Hdt.III.83.2-3, Thuc.VII.69.2; Eur.*Supp*.406-8; see also: Hdt.VII.103, when Xerxes mocks the Greeks for their love of liberty.

[83] Eur.*Supp*.353

[84] Arist.*Pol*.1301b-28-35; Iso.7.20-1

[85] Eur.*Supp*.438-41

[86] Foucault, *The Government of Self and Other*s, pp. 173-174

techniques, and practices of exerting power. In the Greek city-states the exercise of power was limited to the practice of truth-telling, which is only effective in so far as it succeeds to persuade either the people or the king. Second, *dunasteia* constitutes the political game or contest (*agōn*) in which the struggles for power play out in a democracy. Finally, the problem of *dunasteia* is the problem of political man himself, his character, quality, and moral conduct in his relationship to himself and to others, the people he is governing. Towards this complex of problems Democritus warned: "Do not be competitive beyond what is proper, and do not acquire power for yourself contrary to the common good; for a well-managed polis is the most prosperous."[87] Thus, in thought the problem of the political game had to be delineated, which was defining not the rules of the game, but rather the point of the game. The point is excellence – to make the *polis* excellent by having excellent citizens that engage in an *agōn* to distinguish themselves from each other; showing their ethical worth and effectively take charge of the polis via the practice of truth-telling. This is what it meant for them to conduct themselves by a principle of *ethical differentiation*. But who and how should such ethical differentiation take place?

1. *status*. The initial concern of the problem of the political game is to be in the "first rank" (*prōton zugon*) of citizens.[88] It thus not just citizenship that is required, it was also important that ones status was provided with *parrhēsia* as a birth right and that one could document the moral quality of ones ancestors.[89] The most obvious exclusions would therefore either be the foreigner could not claim parrhēsia as he had no birth right to make use of *logos*, or the exile who could exercise *parrhēsia* as he would be absent, which is why this exile was considered a great loss and punishment.[90] Newcomers would also be frowned upon, as they had once been outsider.[91] Yet, as a scene in *the Bacchae* show, *parrhēsia* is not limited to individuals in the first rank – but still status would be a potential point of objection.[92]

2. *qualification*. In Euripides' Ion there is a moment when Ion in discussion with his newly revealed father Xuthus, contemplates the qualifications that he necessarily must posses to engage in politics:

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[87] Democritus (DK 252), *Early Greek Political Thought*, p. 157
[88] Eur.*Ion*.595
[89] Eur.*Ion*.670-672; Eur.*Hipp*.407-423
[90] Eur.*Phoen*.388-394
[91] Eur.*Or*.902-905
[92] Eur.*Ba*.668-673; see also, Hdt.VII.101-102

> if I press to Athens' highest ranks, and seek a name, of dullards shall I win hatred; for jealousy ever dogs success. Good men, whose wisdom well could helm the state, who yet hang back, who never speak in public, to them shall I be laughing-stock and fool, who in a town censorious, go not softly. And statesman who have made their mark, mid whom I seek repute, will hedge me in and check by the assembly's vote. Tis ever so; they which sway nation, and have won repute, to young ambition are the battered foes[93]

Ion thus divides the citizens into three classes: firstly there were the ordinary people who have no power, the *adunatoi*. Secondly, there were those who have power, but which are not ready to engage in politics, the *sophoi*. Thirdly, there were those with power and who are willing to engage in politics, the established politicians with whom he will have to compete. They are the ones with ability (*dunamis*) and are thus qualified to engage in a struggle to govern the city. The practice of *parrhēsia* concerns only this group because they re the ones who will take charge of the city; it is the problem of true-discourse in the relation to the problem of the political game.

3. *agonistic structure*. The tyrant or the king did not have to compete to exercise power – there is no choice one has to suffer the madness of the mad: "The unwisdom of his rulers must one bear. Hard this, that one partake in the folly of fools."[94] Again, this is the problem of the *monarchos*; the city is condemned to the haphazardness of a single mind without resistance. In contrast, the *parrhēsiast* engages in a kind of game where he competes to rule the city through his true-discourse, the use of his reason through speech, *logos*: "*polei kai logō khrēstas*." Thus, because of it competitive structure to exercise power *parrhēsia* acts as a check against the rule of one. But what does it mean to take charge of the city with ones true-discourse?

There is a scene in Orestes that may serve as an example. The assembly of Argos is gathered after the capture of Orestes, to discuss how he and his Electra should be judged for their matricide of Clytemnestra. It starts with the crier (*keryx*) putting the question: "Who wishes to speak?"[95] According to ritual, after the opening ceremonies it would be common practice in the Athenian assembly to ask who wants to make use of *logos* (*logō khrēstas*).[96] The first to speak was Talthybius , a foreign dignitary who is a known herald or spokesperson from the Iliad, which means that he per definition would not speak for himself but for already constituted power.[97] The texts say: "he spake –

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[93] Eur.Ion.595-602
[94] Eur.*Phoen*.393-394; Aesch.*Supp*.340-350
[95] Eur.*Or*.885 (*tis khrēzei lēgein*)
[96] Dem.18.170; Aeschin.1.23, 3. 4.
[97] "Such is the heralds tribe: lightly they skip to fortune's minions' side: their friends is he who in a state hath power and beareth rule." Eur.*Or*.895-897

subservient ever to the strong (*dunamenoisin*) – half-heartedly (*dikhomutha*).”[98] The word *dikhomutha* means ambiguous speak or double-talk – his speech would thus satisfy either side of the dispute equally and notably the text does not actually state what he argues for. Second to speak was Diomedes, also a figure form the Iliad the model of courage and eloquence. Going for the moderate path, he urges neither to condemn them to death nor to acquit them, but to banish them into exile. His speech has the opposite effect and left the assembly split on the issue, with some approving and others disagreeing. The first and second speakers are clearly opposites, so are the last two.

Then a third unnamed person spoke, based on the demagogue Cleophon, who argued that they should both be stoned to death.[99] In the text this person is described as “one of tongue unbridled (*athurhōylōssos*), stout in imprudence (*thrasēi*), an Argive, yet no Argive, thrust on us, in bluster and coarse-grained fluency confident (*thorhubō te pisunos parrhēia*), still plausible to trap the folk in mischief.”[100] The *parrhēsia* is described as *amathēs*, uneducated, rough and course. That is to say it is problematic to the city, exactly because it is not indexed to the truth.[101] A forth man objected to this last proposal, and urged the assembly that they be acquitted because they had done a great service by killing the one who had corrupted the city’s customs (*nomos*).[102] In the texts he is described like this: “No dainty presence, but a manful (*andreois*) man, in town and marked-circle (*agora*) seldom found, a yeoman (*autosurgos*) – such as are the land’s one stay – yet shrewd (*xunetos*) in grapple of words, when this he would; a stainless (*akeraios*) man, who lived a blameless life.”[103] This last figure possesses all the classical virtues of the *parrhēsiast*: he is described as having little beauty or a non-flattering appearance, yet he is courageous (*andreois*); he is described as *xunetos*, means that he is prudent – a man of intelligence capable of engaging in debate when he chooses; and lastly he is described as pure and without stain (*akeraios*) and as *anepiplēktos*, irreproachable. In short, he is described as having the classical virtues of courage, intelligence, and moral quality. Yet, there is an interesting addition, he is also described as a ‘yeoman’ or *autosurgos* – a man holding and cultivating a small landed estate – and

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[98] Eur.*Or*.889-890

[99] Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 165

[100] Eur.*Or*.902-905

[101] The text explains this in an interjected comment: “For when an evil heart with winning tongue persuades the crowd, ill is it for the state: whoso with understanding council well profit the state – ere long, if not straightaway. Thus ought we on each leader of men to look, and so esteem: for both ne in the case the orator and the man in office set.” Eur.*Or*.908-913

[102] Eur.*Or*.925

[103] Eur.*Or*.918-923

therefore rarely found in the city spending time in the *agora*. There is an important opposition between city life and the countryside life.[104] A distinction that goes back to Hesiod's *Work and Days*, where opposition between good strife to bad strife sets up his advice to Perses.[105] It is a distinction that says something about how the *parrhēsia* functions in the general idea of justice and straightness.

Lastly, Orestes would speak himself and engage in the strife; but in vain, the outcome of the scene is that the demagogue carries the day and Orestes and his sister are condemned to death. Nonetheless, what should be noticed is that it is these four opponents structure the contest of *dunasteia*: the heralds who speaks aim to please constituted power, the heroes who aims at the moderate course, the demagogue who excites to violence and has no care for truth, and the good *parrhēsiast* who speaks the discourse of truth. This *agōn* is decided by the principle of *ethical differentiation,* a difference that emerges based on their qualities and abilities in making use of logos. It is this game of truth constitutes the conditions of the possibility for truth to appear; which is another way of saying that in Classical Greek thought the politics of truth is a competition between adversaries who compete through speech (*logos*) to govern the city – "*polei kai logō khrēstas*." *Dunasteia* is that unavoidable part of the politics of truth; the agonistic and dynamic game that one has to engage in if one desires to change what is established as truth.

[13] To show how the problematisation *parrhēsia* constituted a historical rupture, the chapter started with an examination of the model of the wise king and the practice of the oath. The most characteristic part was that in this was a politics of truth, the truth as such did not have to manifest itself and would reside in some future event. The problem of political order would in thought be problematized as a question of remembering the law (*thēmos*) while the political game would be a question of exercising ones right to decide (*dikazein*). In 7th and 6th century BC however, the danger of the king passing crooked judgements started to be regarded as a practical problem that would be discussed through the concept of *monarchos* (the oppressive rule of one). In Hesiod we

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[104] According to Foucault: "what Euripides shows, what he clearly points out in this passage, is that *dunasteia*, the real exercise of power in the city, is not to be entrusted to the use who hand about in the agora all day, or stroll about the town, but that this *dunasteia* should be effectively reserved to the *autourgoi*, to those who work their own fields with their hands and are ready to defend the city." Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 167

[105] "do store this up in your spirit, lest gloating Strife keep your spirit away from work, while you gawk at quarrels and listen to the assembly. For he has little care for quarrels and assemblies, whoever does not have plentiful means of life stored up indoors in good season, what the earth bears, Demeter's grain. When you can take your fill of that, then you might foster quarrels and conflict for the sake of another man's wealth." Hes.*WD*.27-34

find the emergence of the juridical concept of *dikainon*, which instituted a split between truth and power that in contrast demanded a manifestation of truth. At the same time laws were written down. This constituted an epistemological break that set the Greeks definitively apart from other traditions of thought in the ancient world where truth and power were not regarded as separate entities. In practical terms the break was accomplished by displacing the truth-discourse of the oath from the parties swearing an oath to the gods, to the judge swearing an oath to uphold the law. In democracy, the 'I judge' (*krino*) of the law became the property of the free citizen who could make use of *logos parrhēsia* to persuade the demos of his truth. The politics of truth was thus problematized in thought as the ethical differentiation displayed by those who sought to govern the *poleis* by the practice of *parrhēsia*. Yet, at the same time, the problem of *parrhēsia* was situated between the problem of the constitutional (*politeia*) guarantee of the freedom to speak (*isēgoria*) and the problem of ones ability (*dunasteia*) to exercising power in the game of politics.

The socio-political limit of thought was thus governed by a principle of ethical differentiation where the limit of novel thought was constituted in the courage and persuasiveness of the individual truth-teller – the extend to which one could speak the truth, a truth of different and reproach, depended upon the social-mood being susceptible to it. Thus, the socio-political limit of thought with *parrhēsia* lies in the social-mood of the people who are addressed: are the tempered and eager to listen to complicated speeches, or are they angry and only willing to listen to flattering discourses? Because the use true-discourse need to be modified to fit with context in which it is spoken, it is easy to see why rhetoric and sophistry became as popular as they did in Greek society. The Sophists would make good profit of their art of persuasive speech *also* for the good of the city. Today their image is tainted, yet there was a time in which the trait made perfect sense – at least as long as the politics of truth was not destabilised by society becoming a danger to thought. With such a limit it is relatively easy to pinpoint the eventual crisis: if, in this struggle over shaping the social mood, there are some that does not have city interest at heart but only their own, they will easily be able to sway opinion to fit their aims. For it was not only the liberality of thought that destabilised the politics of truth, but equally the intolerance of the difference of thought as epitomised in the sentencing of Socrates. It was this intolerance that was utilised by the bad *parrhēsiast* – the demagogue who makes use of *parrhēsia* to further his own interests, rather than those of the *poleis*. Thucydides lays the blame for the Athenian defeat at the Peloponnesian wars at the feet of the demagogues who made use radical democratic

constitution, while Isocrates charges against the sophists that they have no interest in the truth.[106] And where some, like Aristotle, would take a more hesitant stance towards the possibility of reconciling democracy and *parrhēsia*; others, like Plato, would see it as a choice between democracy and *parrhēsia*. I shall explore this in more detail in the following chapter.

[106] Thuc.II.65.10-11, Isoc.13.9, but see also, Isoc.8.75 and Aeschin.2.1763

Chapter III: Exhortation

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[1] This chapter is about the emergence of politics of truth as exhortation. It covers a rather extensive period, but one that should nevertheless be justified by the fact that the epistemological space that delineates the politics of truth only goes through transformations rather than decisive breaks and displacements. That is, from an historical epistemological perspective, the social forces that underpin a politics of truth that takes the form of exhortation do not fundamentally change; the series of transformations are intensifications in the same points of problematisation. The first part (I) is devoted to a description of how *parrhēsia* constitutes a practical problem for democratic politics: first, in that it becomes too dangerous to confront the demos, and second, that democracy is structurally incapable of making room for a true-discourse of differentiation. The second part (II) is devoted to the transformations and displacements of the politics of truth in Plato, who once again makes the king the focal point, but in a different constellation: truth resides in the good (*agathos*) of which it is possible for the soul (*psūke*) to obtain knowledge through an active relationship with an advisor (*sumbouleuo*) and training (*paideia*). Lastly (III), I turn towards how exhortation is elaborated upon in the High Middle Ages and the Renaissance in discourse of Mirrors for Princes, with a particular emphasis on the danger of flattery, and how the problems of political order and the political game are ordered trough the concepts of the divine right of kings and court society with the institution of council – the moral figure of the *proud homme*.

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[2] Two events are commonly associated with the downfall of democracy in Athens: the death of Socrates and the routing of the Sophists – one the original sin against philosophy, the other his triumphing achievement. That, at least, is the story we are told by his

followers. Yet these events did not happen in a vacuum; there were strong social forces involved in both. On the one hand it was becoming obvious that the demos posed a danger to the politics of truth; their patience in listening to true-discourse that does not seek to please or flatter had become minimal at the same time as their appetite for it grew: "For now, stirred to fury and swayed by passion in all their counsels, they will no longer consent to obey or even to be the equals of the ruling caste, but will demand the lion's share for themselves. When this happens, the state will change its name to the finest sounding of all, freedom and democracy, but will change its nature to the worst thing of all, mob-rule."[1] That was the danger of democracy to the politics of truth. On the other hand, the best – those who were supposed to participate in politics and speak with *parrhēsia* – were being replaced by anyone who was willing to pay money to learn how to speak at the assembly. Yet, this danger came from more than the homonym discourse of the Sophists; it came from the structural inability of democracy to make room for *parrhēsia*.[2] These were the social forces that appeared as the two practical problems that led to a displacement of the politics of truth in a new epistemological space, which eventually would replace the diagram of thought that was *parrhēsia*, *politeia*, and *dunesteia*.

[3] After the golden period of Athenian democracy, the erosion of democratic *parrhēsia* began during the Peloponnesian wars. The circularity between democracy and *parrhēsia* was always dangerous to the person making use of his true-discourse and the polis risking succumbing to a demagogue. Nevertheless, from Thucydides' report on how Pericles is confronted by the Athenians, or the debate between Cleon and Diodotes in response to the revolt of Mytilene, it starts to become evident how much this had already changed during time.[3] In both these cases there is an abuse of *parrhēsia*: one is the people of Athens having to be reminded that they share in the responsibility of the war, the other is the abuse of *parrhēsia* by Cleon. In other words, *parrhēsia* as a form of politics of truth is facing a crisis; it is in the process of being replaced by 'bad *parrhēsia*'. As a consequence of this *parrhēsia* is gradually given a negative connotation. *Parrhēsia* comes to denote the kind of imprudent, thoughtless, careless speech that comes out when someone blabbers out whatever that person happens to be thinking; it is

[1] Polyb.VI.57.9-10. See also, Polyb.VI.9.4-5

[2] By focusing on these two problems I am taking my cue from Foucault, *Government of Self and Others*, pp. 197-201 and *The Courage of Truth*, pp. 40-43

[3] Thuc.II.60-65, Thuc.III.36-50

not so much saying everything, as saying *anything*. It is the kind of person who says anything that comes to mind or which suits the one who speaks purposes or interests – a genuine bull-shitter or chatterbox – without a concern for his discourse adhering to principles of reason and truth. This is *parrhēsia* as it occurs particularly in Plato's *Phaedrus*, or Aristophanes' *Knights*, where Cleon is ridiculed for claiming to speak with *parrhēsia*.[4] In both these texts *parrhēsia* is associated with the figure of the demagogue who seeks to flatter the crowd and represents a reversal of all *parrhēsiatic* values: he seeks to persuade through rhetoric instead of frankness, to tell untruths rather than truths, seeks personal safety over risk and courage, seeks to flatter instead of critiquing, and self-interest instead of interest of the community. These two major experiences, the danger to the speaker and the structural inability of democracy to make room for *parrhēsia*, can be elaborated further.

1. *The danger to the parrhēsiast*. First, the courage of the speaker is not respected, and it thus becomes too dangerous to show one's courage in speaking the truth. This was exactly the case when Pericles had to remind the Athenians not to uphold their end of the *parrhēsiatic* pact: "I have been expecting these manifestations of your wrath against me, knowing as I do the causes of your anger, and my purpose in calling an assembly was that I might address to you certain reminders, and remonstrate if in any case you are either angry with me or are giving way to your misfortunes without reason."[5] Another, but very clear example of this can be found in *On the Peace* (c. 355BC), where Isocrates critiques Athens' policy of aggression, which he sees as bringing about the downfall of the city itself. The root of the problem, as he sees it, is that the citizens have developed a desire to only listen to orators who give pleasing discourses that encourage the policy of war. Even though democracy is capable of presenting them with all the relevant knowledge, they have elected not to listen to those who oppose them.[6] The situation has become so tense that Isocrates declares: "I know that it is hazardous to oppose your views and that, although this is a free government, there exists no 'freedom of speech' (*parrhēsia*) except that which is enjoyed in this Assembly by the most reckless orators, who care nothing for your welfare."[7] Athens is a democracy in name only; there is no room for practicing the principle of ethical differentiation.

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[4] Plat.*Phae*.240e, Aristoph.*Kn*.1008

[5] As Thucydides points out this can be expense of neither party: "For in my judgment a state confers a greater benefit upon its private citizens when as a whole commonwealth it is successful, than when it prospers as regards the individual but fails as a community." Thuc.II.60

[6] Iso.VIII.§9-10

[7] Iso.VIII.§14

Likewise, in the Areopagiticus he diagnosed Athens as a place that had come to understand "lawlessness as liberty, impudence of speech as equality, and licence to do what they pleased as happiness."[8] In another oration, he argues against the *agōn,* claiming that it injures the commonwealth rather than benefits it: "when they do assemble in council, you will find them more often quarrelling with each other than deliberating together."[9] The healthy strife, which would guarantee that the best would rule the city, no longer exists – it has been replaced by an unhealthy strife that makes for a bad environment for the *parrhēsiast* to speak.

In general, this is a practical problem that is associated with the unruly passions of the *demos* – clearly reflected in two crucial trials during the Peloponnesian war, namely the trial of Socrates and the trial of the generals who failed to recue their men from a storm after the battle of Arginusae, where the normal proceedings of the law were set aside.[10] It is thus a problem that, at least in principle, could be reversed according to the cycles of political regimes, as the people could once again acquire an appetite for *isēgoria* and *parrhēsia* – however unlikely that might seem to its contemporaries.[11]

2. *The structural failure of democracy*. In general, *parrhēsia*, when used in its negative connotation, would be attributed to a society of people as a way of life – and thus, generally speaking, there are *good* and *bad* forms of *parrhēsia*; where the former is identifiable with the individual, the latter is predominately associated with groups of people. In so far as it holds these two possible meanings, *parrhēsia* presents itself as a dilemma: if everyone has the right to freedom of speech, then *anyone can say anything*; then even the very worst citizens – the bad, the immoral, the incompetence or ignorant – may take charge and govern the city with disastrous consequences. Consequently, the right to freedom of speech (*isēgoria*) presents a particular problem because it opens up for possibility of bad *parrhēsia*. Hence, there is a kind of structural failure inherent in democracy, which is making room for bad *parrhēsia*, resulting in the break-up of the 'fundamental circularity' between *parrhēsia* and *democracy*. This structural inability has to do with the two distinctions between the worst (*ponēroi*) and the best (*chrēstoi*), and between the few (*ligoi*) and the many (*hoi polloi*). In the politics of truth of *parrhēsia* it was the fact that the few reproached the many in the contest of true-discourse in order to obtain the good for the city that made them the good, which at the

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[8] Iso.VII.§20; see also Ise.XII.§130-131 and Iso.XV.§316-317

[9] Iso.III.§19

[10] Xen.*Hell*.I.5-6

[11] The cycle of political regimes was a widespread idea in Greek thought. See: Polby.VI.9.10-11.

same time made the many the worst.[12] The structural inability of democracy thus consists in it not being able to distinguish between good and bad speakers, because it grants freedom of speech to everyone, the good and the bad alike.

A text that provides an early example of the structural inability of democracy to make room for *parrhēsia*, which has become problematic is the paradoxical and ironic *Constitution of Athens* by the Old Oligarch, dating from around the second half of the fifth century BC. According to the author, the general problem is that the constitution (*politeia*) of Athens "let the worst people (*ponēroi*) be better off than the good (*chrēstoi*)."[13] The way in which the constitution has resulted in this is not by re-appropriating their riches by exiling them, but it has done so in a way that the whole city is worse off. It is because of the ideals of democracy, to live as one pleases (*eleutheria*) and to have the freedom to speak (*isēgoria*), that Athens has bad government: "For the people do not want a good government under which they themselves are slaves; they first want to be free and to rule. Bad government (*kakanomia*) is of little concern to them. What *you* consider bad government is the very source of the people's strength and freedom."[14] On the other hand, the author notes, "If it is good government (*enomia*) you seek, you will first observe the cleverest men established the laws in their own interest. Then the good men will punish the bad; they will make policy for the city and not allow madmen (*hoi mainomenoi*) to participate or to peak their minds or to meet in assembly (*ekklēsiazein*)."[15] Good government is based on the distinction between the good (*chrēstoi*), who serve the interest of the city, and the bad (*ponēroi*), who serve their own interest. The bad should therefore be excluded because they are not in their right mind from government. But in a democracy, according to the author, it is exactly the opposite which occurs: "Someone might say that they ought not to let everyone speak on equal terms and serve on the council, but rather just the cleverest and finest. Yet their policy [the Athenians] is also excellent in this very point of allowing even the worst people to speak. […] But, as things are, any wretch who wants to can stand up and obtain what is good for him and the likes of him."[16] In other words, the democratic ideal of *isēgoria* makes it impossible to differentiate between good and bad speakers: the many (*hoi polloi*) cannot be the best (*chrēstoi*) and serve the interest of the city and

[12] Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, pp. 43-44
[13] Ps.Xen.I.§1
[14] Ps.Xen.I.§8
[15] Ps.Xen.I.§9
[16] Ps.Xen.I.§6

at the same time be free to serve their own interests. It is impossible to reconcile the desire for freedom of the many (*hoi polloi*) with the need for true-discourse.

A similar, but more complex, critique of democratic *parrhēsia* is to be found in Book VIII of Plato's *Republic*, devoted to comparing the five different constitutions in terms of their *politeia* and the character (or soul, *psūke*) of the men ruling them.[17] Socrates starts by describing how democracy comes into being by the poor (*ponēroi*) being victorious in a civil war, having killed some and exiled others to share among them the business of ruling the city equally (*ex ison*).[18] He goes on to explain how people that have divided the spoils of war according to equality (*isonomia*) live. As would be commonplace for the democrats themselves, Socrates notes the two characteristics of democracy: "To begin with, are they not free? and is not the city chock-full of liberty (*ēleuthesias*) and freedom of speech (*parrhēsia*)? and has not every man licence to do as he likes?"[19] Acknowledging these two seemingly positive characteristics, he then considers the consequences of them.

First, in such a constitution, where everyone is wholly free to arrange their life as they see fit, Socrates notes, you would naturally find people of all "sorts" (*pantodapoi*).[20] This *pantodapoi* is an altogether negative term, a kind of 'free for all' where anyone can pick and choose his own constitution (*politeia*): to participate in government is a choice, to participate in war is a choice, and to participate in the legal system is a choice – none shall look down on those who prefer not to participate in the polis.[21] The second consequence has to do with the conditions for the people who make use of true-discourse. "What about," asks Socrates in a passage that has been translated in very different ways because of the irony applied, "the tolerance of democracy, its superiority to all our meticulous requirements, its disdain for our solemn (*semnunintes*) pronouncements made when we were founding our city, [what about the fact] that except in the case of transcendent natural gifts no one could ever become a good man unless from

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[17] Respectively these are, from best to worst: the *kallipolis* which is rule by philosophers-kings whose soul is governed by knowledge of the good (*540a*); timocracy which is ruled by the spirited part of the soul, desiring honour and victory (*550b*); oligarchy which is occupied by people who are ruled by necessary appetites (*554a*); democracy which is ruled by people whose souls is governed by unnecessary appetites (*561a-b*); and tyranny, which is ruled by someone whose soul has given into lawless and unnecessary appetites (*571a*).

[18] Plat.*Rep*.VIII.557a

[19] Plat.*Rep*.VIII.557b

[20] Plat.*Rep*.VIII.557d

[21] Plat.*Rep*.VIII.557e. The word *pantodapoi* (which means 'of every kind', 'of all sorts', or 'manifold') in central to the whole passage, it occurs at 559d and 561e as well. For other instances of the mixture of things in a democracy see: Ps.Xen.II.§8, Iso.III.16

childhood his play and all his pursuits were concerned with things fair and good?"[22] Democracy, according to Socrates, has none of it and has instead made a virtue out of it, "– how superbly (*megaloprepōs*) it tramples under foot all such ideals, caring nothing from what practices and way of life a man turns to politics, but honouring him if only he says that he loves the people!"[23] Thus, democracy does not reward the best (*chrēstoi*) – those who because of their "transcendent natural gifts" have chosen to participate in the government of the city – but only those who flatter the crowd.

So because of its characteristics of *isēgoria* and *parrhēsia* democracy has a structure of non-differentiation: the problem is that democracy is that kind of constitution, which "assign[s] a kind of equality indiscriminately to equals and unequals alike."[24] Plato thus exposes the twofold problem of democracy: on the one hand, everyone has freedom to the extent that they constitute their own political unit – they have their own *politeia* and are not necessarily a part of the collective; while on the other hand, they all have *isēgoria*, which allows anyone to say what he wishes (*parrhēsia*), especially the worst – those who only aim to please the crowd.

These characteristics of democracy as *politeia* also reflect on the democratic man himself. Drawing a distinction between necessary and unnecessary desires, Socrates explains that the democratic man is one in whom the unnecessary desires have triumphed over the necessary, just as the democrats overthrew the aristocrats, taking up hold in the citadel they empty it of knowledge (*mathēmatōn*), honourable pursuits (*epitēdeumatōn kalon*), and words of truth (*logos alēthēs*).[25] All these good qualities have been banished from the soul; at the same time it is the same *pantodapoi* that rules the desires and so the democratic man turns over "his soul to each as it happens along until it is sated, as if it had drawn the lot for that office, and then in turn to another, disdaining none but fostering them all equally (*ex ison*)."[26] The democratic man who lacks *logos alēthēs* and who is ruled by unnecessary desires will then be completely haphazard; one day he will be "wine-bibbing and abandoning himself to the lascivious pleasing of the flute" and the next "drinking only water and dieting" – and yet more

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[22] Plat.*Rep*.VIII.558b. Note that *semnunintes* has an ironical tone – 'high-brow' or 'top-lofty'.

[23] Plat.*Rep*.VIII.558b. Here *megaloprepōs* is meant ironically cf. *Symp*.199c, *Theaet*.161c, *Meno*.94b

[24] Plat.*Rep*.VIII.558c

[25] Plat.*Rep*.VIII.560b, Plat.*Rep*.VIII.561c

[26] Plat.*Rep*.VIII.561b. The term equal (*ex ison*) refers back to the democratic takeover Plat.*Rep*.VIII 557a, for as Socrates explains next: "And he does not accept or admit into the guard-house the words of truth when anyone tells him that some pleasures arise from honourable and good desires, and others from those that are base, and that we ought to practise and esteem the one and control and subdue the others; but he shakes his head at all such admonitions and avers that they are all alike and to be equally esteemed." Plat.*Rep*.VIII.561b-c

dangerous for the city he will, in his enslavement to unnecessary desires, drag the rest of it with him: "he goes in for politics and bounces up and says and does whatever enters his head. And if military men excite his emulation, thither he rushes, and if moneyed men, to that he turns, and there is no order or compulsion in his existence, but he calls this life of his the life of pleasure and freedom and happiness and cleaves to it to the end."[27] That is the problem of democratic man; he is wholly a devotee of *isonomia*.[28] Thus, to Plato neither democracy nor the democratic man is structurally capable of making room for *logos alēthēs* – the combination of freedom and equality leads to anarchy.

[4] The democratic politic of truth erected around the concept of *parrhēsia* contains two paradoxes, which will eventually bring it to an end.[29] First, while democracy needs *parrhēsia* to function on the one hand, *parrhēsia* introduces ethical differentiation to the egalitarian structure of democracy on the other. Second, while *parrhēsia* requires an antagonist structure to function, the demand for equality inherent in democracy stifles the difference of true-discourse. In other words, *parrhēsia* and *isēgoria*, the two principles of democratic government, are in practice shown to be irreconcilable.

II

[5] The displacement and transformation of the politics of truth from *parrhēsia* to *exhortation* was in a sense both abrupt and gradual. On the one hand, it was the above constellation of social forces that constitutes the practical problem that triggered the break with the epistemological space stretched out between *parrhēsia*, *dunasteia*, and *politeia* in their democratic conception. On the other, the elaboration and transformation of the epistemological space of exhortation would take a long time before it came to full maturation. The initial break is anything but clean as the platonic model of exhortation is largely shaped on the model on *parrhēsia*. The complexities of this weak break are outlines with in this section (II), and the subsequent transformation in the next (III).

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[27] Plat.*Rep*.VIII.561d

[28] *Isonomia*, not *isēgoria* is the term used by Plato here, Plat.*Rep*.VIII.561e

[29] Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, pp.183-184

[6] In the *Seventh Letter*, Plato provides us with a clear justification for displacement and transformation of the politics of truth from *parrhēsia* in a democracy to exhortation in the court of the king. It is a displacement that initially keeps many of the positives from *parrhēsia* intact, as Plato understands the problem of the politics of truth as a choice between *parrhēsia* and democracy. The letter is a description of how he carried out such an experiment in Syracuse acting as a political advisor to the new king Dionysius the Younger. The aim is thus to justification for autocratic *parrhēsia* and what that entails as a form of an exhortation.

Plato starts by explaining through two instances why he has been reluctant to enter public life despite his ancestry.[30] The first has to do with the Thirty Tyrants, whom he, as a young man, considered joining because they promised to rid the city of injustice by instituting a new constitution. Yet, by the examples of their lawless rule, he soon came to see how the previous constitution had been a valuable thing. Plato explains how the Thirty tried to have Socrates, whom he considered the most just man of that time, take part in an illegal execution. Socrates bravely refused, which led Plato to dismiss the oligarchical regime as unjust. The second instance has to do with what happened when the supporters of democracy returned to Athens. Similarly, he describes how there were old scores to settle and how lawless rule would descend, even if those returning from exile would act with restraint. Again, Socrates is the centre of his reflections as, according to Plato, some powerful men accused him of impiety unjustly and the juries condemned him to death – the man who had the courage to stand for justice while they were in exile. This is the well-known story of the original sin against philosophy. Nevertheless, upon experiencing these two instances, the kind of men who are active in politics (problems of *dunasteia*) and the importance of laws and customs (problems of *politeia*), Plato realises how difficult it is to govern the city's affairs justly: one would need friends and loyal followers, but obtaining these would be a strike of good luck as both the written laws and customs of the city had been corrupted with immense speed.[31] Plato thus concludes that:

> all existing states are badly governed and that constitution of their laws practically incurable, without some miraculous remedy and the assistance of fortune; and I was forced to say, in praise of true philosophy, that from her height alone was it possible to discern what the nature of justice is, […] until either those who are sincerely and truly lovers of wisdom come into political power, or the rulers of our cities, by the grace of God, learn true philosophy.[32]

[30] Plat.*L*.VII.324b-325c
[31] Plat.*L*.VII.325c-d
[32] Plat.*L*.VII.326a-b

The passage is reminiscent of his earlier work in the *Republic* and *Laws*.[33] Critics, like Popper, rather crudely analyse it as a justification for totalitarianism; others would see a split between the two works.[34] An analysis that nevertheless would neglect the reluctance that Plato has with entering into political affairs: in both instances he was tempted to enter politics, but in the end did not. This is of crucial importance; to him they are two different and irreconcilable bodies that have to coincide (*dunatai kai philosophēsōsi gnēsiōs te kai ikanōs*).[35] It is not the case that one dominates the other, Plato's game in relation to politics is completely different: philosophy has to retain an exterior existence to politics.

[7] Of what does this union consist? Philosophical counsel or advice (*sumbouleuo*) is not about what should be done, which courses of action should be followed and which shouldn't – it is not practical advice on how to obtain political results. Rather, it is about confronting politics and political practice about what it (politics) is in essence; philosophical counsel is about telling politics the truth about what it itself is: 'you are the king', 'a king has these qualities', 'be a good king an rule like this'. This is the reading of Plato presented by Foucault in his lectures. According to Foucault's reading of Plato, philosophy finds its own reality in an active confrontation with political power. It is not philosophy's objective to test the truths of politics, but rather to test its own truths in politics. The philosopher is not a political actor; the philosopher has his own particular game to play in relation to politics. In other words, philosophical practice is characterized by its "restive exteriority" in which it brings ethical differentiation, just as with the game of *parrhēsia*, within the exercise of power into play.[36] This is a heterodox reading of Plato, because it places the emphasis, not the systematisation of the contents of knowledge (*mathēmata*), but rather on philosophical practice as mode of being (*askēsis*).[37] Thus, the platonic displacement is not a return to the model of the wise king precisely because the king remains structurally incapable of telling the truth; but instead of a struggle in which the best strive to rule the city through true-discourse, it is now the philosopher who counsels the king on how to obtain the truth.

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[33] Plat.*Rep*.V.473c-d, Plat.*Laws*.VII.328a

[34] Popper, Karl. *The Open Society and its Enemies*, in *2 Volumes* (London: Routledge, 2003); for a review see Lewis, Bradley V. 'The Seventh Letter and the Unity of Plato's Political Philosophy', *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 38 (2000): pp. 231-250

[35] Plat.*Rep*.V.473d

[36] Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, p. 351

[37] Ibid., p. 219

To Plato it had become a choice between philosophical true-discourse (*parrhēsia*) and democracy – he chose philosophy, and the only way to save it was to seek a model of autocratic *parrhēsia*.[38] That is the moral will behind this displacement of the politics of truth – but nonetheless a moral will that rests on the concept of the good (*agathos*) to delineate the true from the false.

Now, in the text Plato explains how it can be tested whether a tyrant really has acquired knowledge about the good (*agathos*). The test relies on Plato's concept of the good: "For every real being, there are three things that are necessary if knowledge of it is to be acquired: first, the name; second, the definition; third, the image; knowledge (*epistēmē*) comes fourth, and in the fifth place we must put the object itself, the knowable and truly real being."[39] Although Plato does not state it here, the fifth thing is the good (*agathos*). In the text Plato gives the example of the circle, but the true extent of the doctrine is easier to grasp through his other works. In the *Sophist*, Plato distinguished between two kinds of copy-making: likeness-making (*eikastikon*), the faithful reproduction of an original because of an inner coherence to the ideal on the one hand; and appearance-making (*phantastikon*), which is intentionally distorted so as to please or persuade the viewer of its truthfulness, while it is really not it only has an external and illusory semblance to the ideal on the other.[40] This distinction is mirrored in the practices of true-discourse: the former belongs to the statesman and the philosopher while the latter pertains to the demagogue and the sophist.[41] The real aim of the distinction is therefore political; in the hands of these bad men the simulacrum is clearly a danger to the city. The same distinction reappears in the cave allegory from the *Republic*, but we are here given the principle by which the good copy can be distinguished from the bad.[42] The story is a familiar one: a group of men are bound at the bottom of a cave and forced to only see the artificial shadows (*skeuaston skia*) cast on the wall in front of them by the reflections of figurines against the fireplace. Thus to the men in the cave "truth is nothing other than the shadows of those artefacts."[43] Then if one of the prisoners were released and is able to stand up, turn his head and face towards the light

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[38] In *Laws*.III.694a, Plato uses the rule of Cyrus as a model

[39] Plat.*L*.VII.342a-b

[40] Plato mentions sculpting as a craft that consciously diverts from truth in order to make it appear from a particular point of view as if it adhered to truth, yet these "craftsmen say goodbye to truth, and produce in their images the proportions that seem to be beautiful instead of the real ones." Plat.*Soph*.235e-236d. See also: 264b, ff.

[41] Plat.*Soph*.268a-268d

[42] By use of reason: measuring, counting, and weighing. Plat.*Rep*.X.602d

[43] Plat.*Rep*.VI.

– no doubt reluctantly because leaving the world of simulacra he would know would be painful and perplexing. After adjusting to his new environment, dispelling all the illusions of his old world, he would recognize that "the sun … governs everything in the visible world, and is in some way the cause of all the things he used to see."[44] In the last instance the sun embodies the good (*agathos*): "In the knowable realm, the form of the good is the last thing to be seen, and it is reached only with difficulty. Once one has seen it, however, one must conclude that it is the cause of all that is correct and beautiful in anything, that it produces both light and its source in the visible realm, and that in the intelligible realm it controls and provides truth and understanding, so that anyone who is to act sensibly in private or public must see it."[45] Just as the journey upwards caused confusion, wandering from darkness to light, so too the return from light into darkness will be filled with difficulty, ridicule, and anguish – possibly death.[46] The return to the cave (to the "evil world" of humankind) is a dangerous but a wholly necessary movement – it is at this point only that the simulacra can be dispelled (or to put it differently, the light of the sun can be tested in the darkness of the cave).

Reality according to Plato splits into the three orders of the original (*idoles*), the copy (*icones*), and the simulacra (*phantasmes*). There are however only two levels, the copies and the simulacra exist side by aside on the same level (they are both kinds of *beings*) – always (re)appearing is the question or problem of truth; only one of them can be true to the model. Herein lies the act of judgement (*krinno*) to weight the scales and discern the copy from the simulacra: the latter is not evil because it promotes the false over the true, or the evil over the good, but because it internalises the difference and thereby renders them indistinguishable, obstructing true judgement. The model is the Archimedean point from which everything else is defined. The level of the model (the ideas, the good) only functions as a means to an end, to sort the good copies from the bad by means of comparison – in other words it is in their relation to the model that the quality of the copy is decided. Now, the three phases of imprisonment, escape, and return each correspond to an order of reality: the imprisoned are condemned to the order of simulacra, the escaped are given the chance to discover the original in the light of the good (*agathos*), and the ones who return are fulfilling their promise to the polis. The very presence of the simulacrum upsets the order of reality, and thus it must be dispelled. Thus, it is only by "turning around" (*periagoge*) towards the good, against the

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[44] Plat.*Rep*.VI.516b
[45] Plat.*Rep*.VI.517a-b
[46] Plat.*Rep*.VI.517

world of appearance and simulacra, that one may obtain knowledge of the real world. That is the true purpose of education (*paideia*) – it is not about the mere transfer of knowledge, but a craft and a stylization of life: "to make the ascent and see the good" so that one may return to the cave and engage in the production of copy-making pertaining to the good, with the aim of binding the polis together.[47] This is the heart of Platonism. The good (*agathos*) is thus *only* constituted in the moral decision to banish the malevolent sophist, producer of the simulacra: what is required is the devotion to truth and correct method.[48]

But how is knowledge of the good obtained? How can the king be made aware of the good? How can the king make the ascent and see the good? Through the cooperative efforts of philosophical counselling (*sumbouleuo*), answers Plato. In the Seventh Letter, when Plato explains how philosophical counselling functions he uses the doctor as a diagram: "When one is advising a sick man who is living in a way injurious to his health, must one not first of all tell him to change his way of life and give him further counsel only if he is willing to obey?"[49] Thus, the relationship between a philosophical counsellor and a king is like that of a doctor and a patient. Nonetheless, there is also an implicit reservation, in that the patient has to be willing to receive the help of the doctor. This goes back to the *parrhēsiatic* contract, but in addition Plato set out a clear principle of engagement: "If they are fixed in a way of life that pleases them, though it may not please me, I should not antagonize them by useless admonitions, nor yet by flattery and complaisance encourage them in the satisfaction of desires that I would die rather than embrace."[50] This is also what allows the philosophical counsellor to back away from his duty, which was a necessity as the business of *sumbouleuo* would sometimes be dangerous; a experience Plato would have himself with regard to Dionysius.[51]

The aim of philosophical counsel (*sumbouleuo*) is to reach a *homologie* – an agreement between the two who speak.[52] Plato develops the idea of *homologie* in the *Gorgias*, where Socrates and a group of Sophists are discussing whether oratory is an art or nothing at all. Rhetoric, argues Socrates, is useless for advising the king on justice because it at the same time can be used unjustly – in other words, rhetoric cannot teach the just and the unjust at the same time without contradicting itself, as neither is intrin-

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[47] Plat.*Rep*.VI.519c
[48] Plat.*Phae*.260a
[49] Plat.*L*.VII.330c-d
[50] Plat.*L*.VII.331c-d
[51] Plat.*L*.VII.331d-333
[52] Plat.Gor.487a-488b

sic to it.[53] In contrast, the philosophical counsellor is like the touchstone used to test precious metals (*bosanos*); he possesses the qualities of knowledge (*epistēmē*), good will (*eunosian*), and frankness (*parrhēsia*).[54] When Socrates is presented with a painstakingly long and honest rebuttal from Callicles, he recognises these qualities in him: "I run into many people who aren't able to test me because they're not wise like you. Others are wise, but they're not willing to tell me the truth, because they don't care for me the way you do. […] You have all these qualities, which the others don't. You're well-enough educated, as many of the Athenians would attest, and you have good will towards me."[55] The value that Socrates sees in Callicles is that of the *basanos*; he is because of his qualities able to make use of him and follow the Delphic oracle's prescription 'Know thyself'. Through dialogue (*dialoges*) and the spirit of *homologie* they are able together to discover the truth.

As the choice of a way of life (*bios*) comes to the centre, the politics of truth is problematised around this relation between the sovereign and his philosophical counsellor. Recall the tripartite theory of the soul from the *Republic*: the three necessarily opposed parts of the soul, the logical (*logos*), the spirited (*thymos*), and the appetitive (*epithymia*) – that of course also provides us with the three classes for the state.[56] Now, while it is only proper that the rational part governs, the purpose of exhortation – being an attempt to work towards knowledge – then is to help the king to govern his soul according to justice.[57] In the practice of counselling a king, the goal would be to teach the royal virtues, wisdom (*sophia*), justice (*dikē*), self-mastery (*sōphrōn*), and courage (*andreia*).[58] The philosopher takes on the role of *counsellor* in an effort to influence and shape the sovereign's ethical development, so that he may govern the kingdom in the service of the good (*agathos*). Like the *demos* who had to accept the ascendancy of the best, the sovereign must commit to play the *parrhēsiatic* game and accept what the adviser tells him, even if it is critical or unpleasant. In this way the focus is on the king's ethical relation to himself and others, just as it was for the one who made use of *parrhēsia* in a democracy. Moreover, by limiting the number of souls towards which true-discourse is addressed, Plato argued, it becomes less complicated to establish this

[53] Plat.Gor.460e-461a
[54] Plat.Gor.487a
[55] Plat.Gor.487a-c, see in particular 486a-c
[56] Plat.*Rep*.IV.436b
[57] Plat.*Rep*.IV.441e and 442c
[58] Plat.*Alc*.221e-122a

ethical difference, as it is "only necessary to win over a single man."[59] The reality upon which the politics of truth acts is the soul (*psūke*) of the king – it is there that thought can test its own truth.

Thus, exhortation, in contrast to *parrhēsia,* is a politics of truth not about cosmological knowledge, but about self-knowledge – knowledge that is centred in the subject, its locus and horizon. That is the implication of the soul as the access to the good, but as Socrates also points out in *Gorgias*, truth is not public, but exclusively aligned with the individual: "You don't compel me; instead you produce many false witnesses against me and try to banish me from my property, the truth. For my part, if I don't produce you as a single witness to agree with what I'm saying, then I suppose I've achieved nothing worth mentioning concerning the things we've been discussing."[60] Thus, in exhortation one does not bind oneself to the truth as in *parrhēsia* – a wager that pre-Socratic philosophers could invoke the cosmic order. Rather, the truth is a result of the collaboration (or rather the *homologia*) of a master and his student as Plato makes clear in the *Seventh Letter*: "Only when all of these things – names, definitions, and visual and other perceptions – have been rubbed against one another and tested, pupil and teacher asking and answering questions in good will and without envy – only then, when reason and knowledge are at the very extremity of human effort, can they illuminate the nature of any object."[61] Accordingly, the 'unforced force' of the better argument of *parrhēsia* is precluded by the good (*agathos*) – epistemologically the economy of forces is subjected to the regime of correctness within the human subject. In this way an epistemological space of exhortation opens up from within the already constituted space of *parrhēsia*, only to close it behind it.

III

[8] It may seem somewhat of a mystery, that for almost 1500 years – through the numerous political transformations from the polis, to empire, to feudalism – the general structure of the politics of truth as set out in the model of exhortation was kept intact. Yet, with the problems associated with democracy and aristocracy receiving less and less attention, because of the potential dangers they would result in if introduced as the

[59] Plat.*L*.VII.328c
[60] Plat.*Gor*.472b-c
[61] Plat.*L*.VII.344b

politics of society, there is a stability or constant in political regimes as they were almost exclusively autocratic in nature. By that I mean something very limited and quite broad at the same time: namely, that the focal point of the autocratic politics of truth is the king's soul. That is, all throughout this long period of history the epistemological obstacle of the politics of truth remained the problematic figure of the king – how could he reach knowledge of the good? What was required of him in terms of his ethics and training? What people were suitable company for him? Naturally, such problems go through a number of transformations; some problems are regarded as trivial, others receive more attention, some proposed solutions are in vogue and others are not, but crucially their point of convergence remains the same. In other words, the social forces that shaped this epistemological space could sustain it, and only underwent a series of minor transformation.

We may start to understand these transformations by recognising that as the politics of truth is displaced towards an autocratic relation between truth and politics a divide opens up in moral philosophy between two related styles of exhortation, or in giving advice and council: *logos protrepsis* and *paraenesis*.[62] Neither of these approaches is simply a question of providing the king with advice on a course of action; both signify a kind of practice that works on his moral character. That is, they both are concerned with the formation and workings of the soul. Modern scholars, in contrast to classical philosophers, employ a sharp distinction between the two.[63] *Protrepsis* signifies a kind of conversion or transformation, where the aim is to make someone who is an outsider or practicing one style of living, to change his or her way of life and follow a particular path as spelled out by the *protrepsis*.[64] In contrast, *paraenesis* signifies the continuation of the path that he or she is already on; the *paraenesis* aids in giving advice on how best to follow the current course.[65] With a politics of truth centred on the con-

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[62] Etymologically they are rendered *protrepsis*, from Greek *protreptikos* (instructive), from *pro-* (before) + *trepein* (to turn); and *paraenesis*, from Greek *parainein* (exhort), from *para-* (beside) + *ainein* (speak of, praise).

[63] This is a distinction that at goes back to Paul Hartlich. See: 'De Exhortationum a Graecis Romanisque scriptarum historia et indole,' in *Leipziger Studien zur classichen Philologie*, vol. 11 (1889): pp. 207–336 . See also Stowers, Stanley K. *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (LEC 5. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), p. 92

[64] Collins, James Henderson. *Exhortation to Philosophy: the protreptics of Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle* (Oxford University Press, 2015); Kirkeby, Ole Fogh. *The New Protreptic: The Concept and the Art* (Copenhagen Business School Press, 2009)

[65] Within New Testament studies *paraenesis* refers either to a literary genre that ethical imperatives, and/or list of vices and virtues; a loose umbrella term designating any kind of moral instruction; or its social function in that contains a written down of the (sometimes self-evident) moral codes of conduct a society would have. Starr, James and Troels Engberg-Pedersen (eds.). *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005)

cept of exhortation – of which both *protrepsis* and *paraenesis* are a kind – this division is of crucial importance when it comes to the socio-political limit of thought. During the development and elaboration of the model exhortation, a shift in the point of problematisation occurs from that of questioning that which is given, towards that of following an already constituted way of life. In other words, with time the emphasis moves from *protrepsis* towards that of *paraenesis*.

1. *Contemporaries*. In the wake of the trial and death of Socrates the politics of truth is forked in terms of concepts. This is evident if we compare Xenophon and Isocrates to Plato' practice of exhortation. Xenophon is mostly in agreement with Plato. His *Cyropaedia*, a biography of the Persian ruler Cyrus, was meant as an example to follow; it inquires as to "who he was in his origin, what natural endowments he possessed, and what sort of education (*paideia*) he had enjoyed that he so greatly excelled in governing men."[66] Yet, there is nothing particularly Persian about the upbringing that Xenophon describes; it is Greek through and through, with an emphasis on freedom of speech and self-control.[67] The rather Socratic council that he receives from his father underlines this point – for no king who is not better than his subjects is fit to rule.[68] Likewise in *Hiero*, the poet Simonides counsels the tyrant Hiero on how to be a better ruler and obtain happiness by treating his country as his fatherland and surpassing all others in generosity and kindness.[69] As the politics of truth, exhortation is as relevant a question for the tyrant as for the king.[70]

In the Cyperian Orations, Isocrates offers a politics of truth that is similar in form as that of Plato, but radically different in others. The displacement of the politics of truth from the demos to the king: "we should be right in pronouncing monarchy also a milder government, in proportion as it is easier to give heed to the will of a single person than to seek to please many and manifold minds."[71] *To Demonicus* is a showcase of the tripartite structure of a treatise on practical ethics: first the relation to the Gods, then the relation to other men and society in general, and lastly how he should govern himself, developing his character and soul. In *To Nicocles*, one of the first texts to pre-

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[66] Xen.*Cyro*.I.i.6
[67] Xen.*Cyro*.I.iii.10, Xen.*Cyro*.I.iii.18
[68] Xen.*Cyro*.I.vi.3-6, Xen.*Cyro*.VIII.i.37
[69] Xen.*Heiro*.XI.13-15. See VIII.1-2 for the division between a ruler's activities into good and bad.
[70] See for example the correspondence between Strauss and Kujève on the relationship between the philosophy and the tyranny: Strauss, Leo. *On Tyranny: revised and expanded edition including the Strauss-Kujève correspondence*, edited by Victor Gourevitch and Maichael S. Roth (Chicago University Press, 1961)
[71] Iso.III.16

sent itself as an unconditional gift offered to a king, he notes, "a good counsellor (*sumboulos*) is the most useful and the most princely of all possessions."[72] He emphasises the importance of self-government (*enkratia*), education (*paideia*), and granting "freedom of speech (*parrhēsia*) to those who have good judgements, in order that when you are in doubt you may have friends who will help you to decide."[73] All teachings, which Isocrates locates in the gnomic poets Hesiod, Theognis, and Phocylides – whom he thinks are the best "counsellors (*sumboulos*) of human conduct."[74] Nevertheless, there are some crucial differences between Isocrates and the philosophers, and it is with this idealisation of these poets that it originates. Right before this recommendation Isocrates notes a stark difference between him and the philosophers:

> the truth is that in discourses of this sort we should not seek novelties, for in these discourses it is not possible to say what is paradoxical or incredible or outside the circle of accepted belief; but, rather, we should regard that man as the most accomplished in this field who can collect the greatest number of ideas scattered among the thoughts of all the rest and present them in the best form.[75]

The purpose of philosophy for Isocrates is radically different from Plato: where the latter had emphasised that knowledge of the *agathos* was possible, even though the world seemed paradoxical, the former reduces philosophy to a practice of gathering all constituted truths together. One finds its model in dialectics capable of working out paradoxes, the other spouts out gnomic advice that would be tolerable within the bounds of tradition.

> I see, moreover, that fortune is on our side and that the present circumstances are in league with us; for you are eager for education and I profess to educate you are ripe for philosophy; and I direct students of philosophy.
>
> Now those who compose hortatory discourses addressed to their own friends are, no doubt, engaged in a laudable employment; yet they do not occupy themselves with the most vital part of philosophy. Those, on the contrary, who point out to the young, not by what means they may cultivate skill in oratory, but how they may win repute as men of sound character, are rendering a greater service to their hearers in that, while the former exhort them to proficiency in speech, the latter improve their moral conduct. Therefore, I have not invented a hortatory exercise, but have written a moral treatise.

Isocrates' *paraenesis* thus proposes to distinguished from the *protrepsis* of the philosophers in that it exists in accordance with traditional values and beliefs; it was a politics of truth in which thought was sacrificed at the alter of already established truths. This contrast to the philosophers comes out more clearly in the *Antidosis*, in which Isocrates defends himself against the same charges that were directed at Socrates:

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[72] Iso.II.53
[73] See: Iso.II.29 and Iso.II.28
[74] Iso.II.43
[75] Iso.II.41

> I maintain also that if you compare me with those who profess to turn men to a life of temperance and justice, you will find that my teaching is more true and more profitable than theirs. For they [the philosophers] exhort their followers to a kind of virtue and wisdom which is ignored by the rest of the world and is disputed among themselves; I, to a kind which is recognized by all. They, again, are satisfied if through the prestige of their names they can draw a number of pupils into their society; I, you will find, have never invited any person to follow me, but endeavour to persuade the whole state to pursue a policy from which the Athenians will become prosperous themselves, and at the same time deliver the rest of the Hellenes from their present ills.[76]

According to Isocrates himself his true-discourse was thus distinguished from the dialectic philosophers in two respects: their teaching was untraditional or different from what was already taken for granted, whereas his was uncontroversial; and the philosophers sought fame and private gain, whereas he was neutral and only sought to promote the interests of the *polis*. In short, Isocrates did not seek to provoke; his was not an attempt to propose a different truth. To him, the problem of the politics of truth is presented in such a way that there is no need to challenge that, which is already established, as true.

While Plato in his model of exhortation had rejected rhetoric as being unable to teach justice, Aristotle brings it back into philosophy. In the *Art of Rhetoric* he attempts to establish rhetoric as *technē*: "rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic. For both treat of such things as are in a way common for all to grasp and belong to no delineated science. Accordingly, indeed, all men engage in them both after a fashion"[77] Thus, philosophy needs rhetoric to be effective in its exhortation to the king. Aristotle also wrote the *Protrepticus*, a thesis that defends the theoretical as well as practical relevance of philosophy, which only exists in fragments.[78] In it he argues for a disinterested position of philosophy – philosophy (or thought) in Aristotle is then on its way to disentangling itself from the politics of truth.

2. *Romans*. Long after Democracy had been deemed too dangerous in Greece, the Roman Empire would remain a republic with the difficult challenge of maintaining a moderate and mixed constitution.[79] Accordingly, Cicero's exhortation on practical ethics, *De Officiis*, and the more theoretical works *De Republica* and *De Legibus*, similar to Aristotle all expose hesitations about the autocratic politics of truth.[80] To Cicero, the institution of council (*consilium*) is both that which is necessary to govern

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[76] Iso.XV.84-86

[77] Aristot.*Rh*.1.1.1-2

[78] For an elaborate reading of this text see Collins, *Exhortation to Philosophy*, pp. 242-264

[79] Lintott, Andrew. *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 189-203

[80] Cic.*Off*.I.1-10, 52, 60, 123, Cic.*Off*.II.2, 33, 65, Cic.*Off*.II.40, Cic.*Rep*.I.45, 48-49, 51, 54-55, Cic.*Rep*.II.41, Cic.*Rep*.V.11b, Cic.*Rep*.VI.13, Cic.*Leg*.III.17

well and the founding acts of the commonwealth; an institution which he thinks Caesar ruined: "when everything passed under the absolute control of a despot and there was no longer any room for statesmanship (*consilio*) or authority of mine."[81] Later, in the time of the Caesars, the autocratic displacement would be more prominent; Seneca, a master at exhortation, would advise the young emperor Nero, and Dio Chrysostom would write four discourses on kingship addressed to the emperor Trajan.[82] Plutarch's *Moralia* also contains a number of texts that deal with exhortation. In *To an Uneducated Ruler*, Plutarch notes how it is "difficult to give advice to rulers in matters of government," because "they are afraid to accept reason as a ruler over them, lest it curtail the advantage of their power by making them slaves to duty."[83] They falsely maintain that the best aspect of ruling is the freedom from not being ruled. "Who, then, shall rule the ruler?" – the law (*nomos*), "not the written outside him in books or on wooden tablets or the like, but reason endowed with life within him, always abiding with him and watching over him and never leaving his soul without its leadership."[84] Exhortation thus falls to the philosopher. The benefit of autocratic exhortation, Plutarch reasons, is all the greater than exhortation aimed at the general public, for if the teachings of the philosopher take hold of a ruler's soul, the many benefit more than if they themselves were taught.[85] If the teachings of philosophy achieve this they "acquire the force of laws."[86] This theme of autocratic exhortation also what appears to be a *protreptic* text (or at least it is a second part to a *protreptic* text), by pseudo Plutarch, which poses the question of what the best form of government is for exhortation?[87] It only exists in fragments, but goes about answering the question by largely following what Plato argues in the *Republic*, namely monarchy. For monarchy is the only form of government in which the *politeia* does not also control the statesman; it is the only one in which the politics of truth does not deteriorate.[88]

3. *Church Fathers*. As the Roman Empire was 'Christianised' – a highly complex social process that cannot be done justice here – the politics of truth was taken up and reinterpreted with the same problems associated with exhortation in St. Ambrose

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[81] Cic.*Rep*.I.41, quoted at Cic.*Off*.II.2
[82] D.Chr.I-IV
[83] Plut.*AdPrinc*.779e
[84] Plut.*AdPrinc*.780c
[85] Plut.*Maxime*.776f-777a, Plut.*Maxime*.778e-f
[86] Plut.*Maxime*.779b
[87] Plut.*DeUnius*.826b-c
[88] Plut.*DeUnius*.827b-c, Plat.*Rep*.399c-d

of Milan, St. Augustine of Hippo, and St. Gregory the Great.[89] It is thus more prudent to talk of a continuation rather than a break in the history of the politics of truth. Once Ambrose had declared the emperor a son of the church (*filius ecclesiae*), it became a matter of *paraenesis* rather than *protrepsis*: with this Christian emphasis the emperor becomes a subject to Christian self-government rather than pagan ethics.[90] Likewise, In the *City of God* Augustine provides a brief exhortation for the Christian emperor, where he emphasises virtues of justice, humility, mercy, and benevolence – the true happiness of the emperor was to be found in following the precepts of the Christian God.[91] Christian self-government is a particular art of government, which works through a moral codex of prohibitions and the technology of confession (it is through the act of confession that the truth is brought to light and man is set 'free') – there are strict rules that needs to be observed if the soul (self) is not to be subdued by a dangerous mentality of evil.[92] With the king being part of the church he would submit to the same governmental technologies. From here, the politics of truth evolves into a big body of political thought concerning how that prince should govern himself and his kingdom called the mirrors for princes.

4. *Mirrors for Princes*. Today we refer to this collection of texts as the mirrors for princes, although in the beginning these works rarely refer to any actual mirrors, but are rather a collection of accounts of the life of the king, mixed with references to the biblical kings David and Solomon that his successors and subjects may follow as an example. That at least is the case with a number of texts from the Early Middle Ages, there among Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks*, which attests to the need for government through Christian exhortation in a turbulent time of social and political unrest and change; Alcuin's *De virtutibus et vitiis liber* (c. 800), a short *exhortamenta* on wisdom (*de sapientia*) faith (*de fide*) and literary study (*de lectionus studio*) and a whole range of other topics; and the two accounts of Charlemagne's life given by

[89] The concept of 'Christianisation' is difficult and controversial to employ because it contains a degree of triumphalism. For a revisionist account see: John Curran. *Pagan City and Christian Capital* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000)

[90] The emperor is within the church, not above it; good emperors do not refuse the assistance of the church. "*Imperator Enim intra Ecclesiam, non supra Ecclesiam est; bonus enim imperator quaerit auxilium Ecclesiae, non refutat*." Ambrose. *Sermo*.36

[91] Augustine, *City of God*, book V.24

[92] Foucault, Michel. '"Omnes et Singulatim": Toward a Critique of Political Reason', in James D. Faubion (ed.) *Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984 Volume 3* (Penguin Books, 2002)

Einhard and Notker the Stammerer.[93] In the tradition of exhortation these mirrors for princes are best understood as textbooks intended to guide or instruct the prince on how to rule his kingdom. In contrast to their more religious predecessors, these textbooks pay greater attention to practical matters of how to rule than to abstract thought. They are closer to the *paraenesis* of Isocrates than the *protreptic* of Plato. They are texts that, in a moralizing, encouraging, or biographical way, seek to create the 'ideal' prince, which both includes the prince's characteristics (virtues and vices) as well as the legitimization, duties, and temptations of the prince. The mirrors deal with a wide range of problems relating to government: sovereignty, justice, authority, legitimacy and the law, but the theorizing on these points is usually a mixture of Christian teachings and pagan philosophy – *De regimine principum* written in 1267 by the master synthesiser Thomas Aquinas testifies to this.[94] More importantly they continue the politics of truth of exhortation in dealing with the problem of the structural inability of the king to speak the truth. As such, this body of literature thus reveals a specific interest in who can, will, and should speak the truth to the prince, what legitimates their true-discourse and what duties fall upon the prince upon hearing such speech.

They are both an attempt to claim that position by usually being an offering or unconditional gift to the king and at the same time they seek to establish such boundaries within the text itself. The mirrors written after the reintroduction of Aristotle in Europe were all addressed to a king or prince with the specific purpose of being an exhortation on kingship: Godfrey of Viterbo's *Speculum regum*, from ca. 1183, was dedicated to Frederick II and his son Henry VII; the Norwegian Konungs Skuggsja, from 1275, was written for the sons of Håkon Håkonsson; Giles of Rome, *De Regimine Principum*, from around 1279, was written for Philip the Fair; and William of Pagula wrote *Speculum regis*, from ca. 1331, for Edward III of England. The fact that these texts are always offered by one party to another underlines the two-part structure of exhortation. The peculiar name of a 'mirror' is usually ascribed to Seneca's opening remark in *De Clementia*, where he states, "I have undertaken, Nero Caesar, to write on the subject of mercy, in order to serve in a way the purpose of a mirror (*speculi*), and thus reveal you to yourself as one destined to attain to the greatest of all pleasures."[95]

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[93] Tours, Gregory of. *The History of the Franks*, translated by Lewis Thorpe (Penguin Books, 1974); Stammerer, Notker. *Einhard and Notker the Stammerer: Two Lives of Charlamange*, translated by David Ganz (Penguin Books, 2008)

[94] Aquinas, Thomas. *Political Writings*, translated by R. W. Dyson (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 5-52

[95] Sen.*Cl*.1.1

Thus, the function of the mirror underlines exhortation, a point that is already made by Plato in *Alcibiades*.

Socrates and Alcibiades are pondering what the inscription 'know thyself' above the Delphic temple might mean. "Suppose that," says Socrates "instead of speaking to a man, it said to the eye of one of us, as a piece of advice—'See thyself'– how should we apprehend the meaning of the admonition? Would it not be, that the eye should look at that by looking at which it would see itself?"[96] To which Alcibiades asks if he means a mirror (*katropton*) or something of that sort. The eye does exactly that replies Socrates, noting that when a man looks into an eye his own face appears like in the mirror. He then concludes by saying that "an eye viewing another eye, and looking at the most perfect part of it, the thing wherewith it sees, will thus see itself. […] And if the soul too, my dear Alcibiades, is to know herself, she must surely look at a soul, and especially at that region of it in which occurs the virtue of a soul—wisdom, and at any other part of a soul which resembles this."[97] It is the externality and reflection of the mirror that is capable of making the soul the focal point of exhortation.[98] Thus, in contrast to wisdom literature, which generally consists in a series of statements of sages and wise men, mirrors for princes are preoccupied with working on the soul that takes place between self and other. Exhortation is specifically a practice that involves two parties because truth and power are split: the king does not have access to the truth through a confrontation with the gods or otherwise, he requires a counterpart with whom he can work together to obtain it.

This point is also clear if we compare this particular Christian genre to other traditions of thought: the Byzantine and Islamic mirrors for princes, both of which were heavily influenced by the Greeks and in particular Aristotle, follow this two-part structure of exhortation; whereas the Indian and Chinese literature that addresses the problem of how the king should govern his kingdom does not.[99] With the latter two, the politics of truth are constituted differently: for instance, none of these ever discuss

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[96] Plat.*Alc*.132d

[97] Plat.*Alc*.133a-b

[98] A similar idea is found in *Magna Moralia* (1213a20-24) where self-knowledge is best gained through a philosophical friendship in which we see ourselves in another self, as if in a mirror.

[99] From India there is the *Panchatantra* ascribed to Vishnu Sharma, dates to ca. 300 BC, but most likely older, and Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, composed between the third and second century BC. From China, the legalist thesis *Han Fei Tzu* from the third century BC, or the *Zizhi Tongjian* (資治通鑑, which means *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*) form 1080AD, by Sima Guang.

theories of government in terms of the problems associated with *politeia*, nor would they outline a similar political game to that of *dunasteia*.[100]

[9] The politics of truth is also a question of form and presentation: what kind of discourse is necessary to speak the truth? Can the person who is telling the truth be distinguished from the one who doesn't by the way in which he or she speaks? At the heart of the problem of *parrhēsiatic* discourse was the distinction between rhetoric and *parrhēsia*, where the former provided the speaker with technical means to make his argument. Here, the problem of flatterers was known, in particular how flattery is a kind of rhetoric designed to gain the favour of the crowd or king: flattery is aligned with rhetoric. Nevertheless, as the politics of truth breaks with *parrhēsia*, rhetoric is no longer seen a dangerous. Rather than being opposites and excluding one another, the frankness of *parrhēsia* and eloquence of rhetoric merged and became one and the same; in relation to government the distinction disappeared with true-discourse becoming just another form of rhetoric. It was Isocrates that established rhetorical skill as a legitimate means in the governance of the city. Yet, it was mainly due to Aristotle's efforts in making room for rhetoric in the philosophical discourse by recognising it as a *technē* that it became a positive part of the politics of truth.[101] It is much the same endeavour pursued by Cicero in his theory of rhetoric: is rhetorical skill a science or an art?[102] Both would ponder the relation between rhetoric and the governance of the state; and both would be careful to define limits for the good use of rhetoric in relation to it.[103] In fact, for exhortation to be effective in governing the king it must study and make use of rhetoric; it must be eloquent.[104] Later with the re-discovery of Aristotle, which became quite influential in the later years of the mirror for princes genre, the emphasis on rhetorical skill and eloquence would intensify.

These problems are taken over by the mirrors for princes. To Giles of Paris for example the purpose of rhetoric was to serve practical intelligence, in particular that which would seek to promote the common good of society. During the Italian Renais-

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[100] See for instance part II of the *Arthashastra* where the problems of constitutions are discussed only in relation to the king, there are no real alternatives; or take this short description from *Han Fei Tzu* where the problems of wielding power are discussed in very different terms that the *agon*. Truth emerges from the silence and passiveness of the king: "The ruler and his ministers do not follow the same way. The ministers name their proposals, the ruler holds fast to the name, and the ministers come forward with results. When names and results match, then superior and inferior will achieve harmony." Fei, Han. *Han Fei Tzu: Basic Writings*, translated by Burton Watson (Columbia University Press, 1964) p. 37

[101] Aristot.*Rh*.1.1.1-2

[102] Cic.*deOrat*.I.Xiii.55-57

[103] Aristot.*Rh*.1.1.5 Cic.*deOrat*.I.viii.30-32, Cic.*deOrat*.I.ix.35-38

[104] Cic.*deOrat*.I.xiv.61-63

sance we find the same elements of true-discourse: that is, there were a desire and positive view of the way in which the men at court spoke and acted with effortlessness, or *Sprezzatura* (nonchalance), as well as an appreciation of this speech being effective and able to persuade the interlocutor. The first aspect can be found in Baldesar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, where he praises the effort to "practice in all things a certain nonchalance which conceals all artistry and makes whatever one says or does seem uncontrived and effortless." The goal is to conceal the art; conceal the effort one puts into making one's speech. Idealizing the ancient orators – who "made their speeches appear to gave been composed very simply and according to the promptings of Nature and truth rather than effort and artifice" – truth becomes shrouded in a concealment of effort; this problematisation of the politics of truth does not require the speaker to 'say all' and speak his mind without concealment as in *parrhēsia*. It is by this linking of truth and nonchalance that the politics of truth is submerged into a specific aristocratic stylisation of life. The second is more in line with the ideals about persuasiveness known from *parrhēsia* and game *dunesteia*. In chapter XV of *the Prince*, when Machiavelli turns to the issue of "how a prince must regulate his conduct towards his subjects or his allies" he makes a sound point about exhortation.[105] To this question however, Machiavelli is after what he call an "original set of rules" for the prince to follow and thus he famously states: "I have thought it proper to represent things as they are in a real truth, rather than as they are imagined."[106] He then warns that the "gulf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide that a man who neglects what is actually done for what should be done moves towards self-destruction rather than self-preservation."[107] Most analysis of the passage focuses on aspect of *della cosa* – the realm of reality, the *thing*; they emphasize the real-political qualities of Machiavelli's argument. In doing so they neglect the vocal and lingual aspect of effective truth. If we come at the sentence from the problem of how one ought to speak to and address the prince, the picture changes: Machiavelli is after what he calls *verita effectuale della cosa* (effective truth of the thing or matter), which he intends to show the prince. Thus, by emphasizing this aspect we are drawn towards that fact that the discourse of exhortation should be able to communicate the truth to the prince effectually. In other words, Machiavelli wants to speak a discourse of *effective truth*. Consequently, rhetoric is the proper instrument of the statesman to persuade the king to govern in accordance with

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[105] Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*, translated by George Bull (Penguin Books, 2003), XV, p. 50
[106] Ibid., p. 50
[107] Ibid., p. 50

the common good. Thus, rhetoric itself did not contain the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' rhetoric; rather, the opposite of proper rhetoric would be flattery. So much is also evident in the writing of Erasmus, who at some point in the first chapter of *The Education of the Christian Prince*, elaborates on how around the prince there should be created an "atmosphere of civilized talk" – e.g. there should be no need for flattery or bolstering rhetoric in the company of the prince.

[10] The main danger to the politics of truth of exhortation is flattery. The danger posed by flattery was not a new one: "we observe that flattery does not attend upon poor, obscure, or unimportant persons, but makes itself a stumbling-block and a pestilence in the great houses and great affairs, and oftentimes overturns kingdoms and principalities" remarked Plutarch in his famous *How to tell a flatterer from a Friend*.[108] Nevertheless, with *parrhēsia* the flatterer was more or less conflated with the demagogue: that is, someone who makes use of bad *parrhēsia* to flatter the crowd. He was a public figure whom it was possible to confront. The problem of flattering the king did not occur in this politics of truth, as the king was not the focal point. In relation to the King, the flatterer stands both alone and stronger; the demagogue is isolated outside the court and especially the church that had many demagogical figures that it would prosecute and burn.[109] The flatterer can be countered neither by *parrhēsia* nor the oath; both he incorporates in his defence.[110] The aim of the flatterer is dangerous because, according to Plutarch, "the flatterer always takes a position over against the maxim 'Know thyself', by creating in every man deception towards himself and ignorance both of himself and the good and evil that concerns himself; the good he renders defective and incomplete, and the evil wholly impossible to amend."[111]

A number of texts, dating from the 1150s to the 1530s, develop this theme of flattery (and to some extent tyranny) as a particular danger for the government of the kingdom. Four of these texts are especially noteworthy: Book III and Book VII of Salisbury's *Policraticus* where he discusses flattery in the former and the difference between academics and philosophers in the latter; the set of chapters in Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the Body Politic* where she talks about how the prince should take advise, and from whom; The second chapter, *the Prince must avoid Flatterers*, in Eras-

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[108] Plut.*Adulator*.49c, Plut.*Adulator*.61c, D.Chr.3
[109] Plut.*Maxime*.778d
[110] Plut.*Adulator*.51c, Plut.*Adulator*.60b, and Plut.*Adulator*.62d
[111] Plut.*Adulator*.49c

mus' the *Education of the Christian Prince* where he addresses the, as he sees it, biggest challenge for a new prince; and a passage from Baldesar Castiglione's book IV of *the Book of the Courtier* in which Ottaviano elaborates the highest duty of the courtier.

1. John of Salisbury's *Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers* is in many ways a very peculiar book: first of all it is one of the last works of politics written before the re-discovery of Aristotle's *Politics*; it is also a work that is put together anachronistically and compiled over many years of exile and service; and it is usually published incomplete.[112] The entire work consists of about 250.000 words divided into eight books: Book I and II are mostly concerned with just government (which mostly consist of the idea that the ones who govern should first of all govern themselves in their pursuit of pleasure) and the problems of truth; that is, John devotes a series of chapters to criticizing a variety of practices – soothsaying, dream interpretation, astrology, and so on – that proclaim to (as *magicians*) be able to reveal truth. Book III is entirely about the problem of flattery, which we shall turn to in a moment. Books IV, V and VI, the last parts to be written, represent the most "political" sections of the book; they each deal with the problem of Divine Right, the best constitution, and military matters. Meanwhile, book VII is about the differences between academics and philosophers and book VIII is about tyranny; written at a stage when Henry II had exiled John from Canterbury. They form an interesting pair: thought and truth par tyranny.

In book III John writes about the problem of flatterers. The objection to the flatterer is not so much his methods of fraud and deceit, under a facade of love and faith; neither the fact that he seeks favour with the prince, or rather his goal of attaining the ear of the prince and forwarding his own interest at court; no, the true reason for despising the flatterer is that he is "inimical to all virtue" – "he plugs up the ears of his audience in that they do not hear the truth."[113] The flatterer stands in direct opposition to truth – "men of this sort all speak towards the end of pleasure, not truth." – and the superfluous use of pleasure leads to unjust government.[114] Again there is a strict need for moderation on behalf of the ruler. Rather, truth is the opposite of flattery, John explains: "Truth is harsh and very often is the parent of difficulty in so far as it will refuse to flatter anyone. For the bitter truth is more useful and more esteemed by a mind

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[112] Salisbury, John of. *Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers,* edited and translated by Cary J. Nederman (Cambridge University Press, 1990)
[113] Ibid., p. 18
[114] Ibid., p. 19

of integrity than the distilled honey of a prostitute's speech."[115] Thus, truth is the essential link between the art of government and virtue: it is only by being confronted by the truth that prince is able to follow the path of virtue.

There is a particular link between those who would speak the truth, the specific act of them taking the *liberty* of doing so, and the interlocutor who has to somehow react to this confrontation. This triad of actors and act is explored in the two last books of *Policraticus* – book VII and VIII. Having spent the first three books making clear who cannot or does not intend to speak the truth – the magicians and the flatterers – John has outlined the problem clearly: who can and who is willing to tell the prince the truth? The problem is constituted mainly between two parties: the truth-teller and the ruler; how these two parties play their respective roles determines ultimately what they are. The danger comes from flattery, which if it not kept in check will leave no space for true-discourse: "There are no elements of true and natural liberty, however, where flattery claims everything for itself, where vanity claims everything, leaving behind nothing of either truth or virtue."[116]

For the truth-teller, John explores in Book IV two possible characters: the academic and the philosopher. The main difference between the two is that the academics are more modest and uncertain about what they examine than philosophers, who seem to be more rashly interested in contradictions and always sure of themselves: "As if bound by an oath of Pallas they [the ancient philosophers] talk only of paradoxes and of authoritative doctrines, and they affirm those to be at all times true. But Academics, evading the precipice of falsehood, are more modest in these sorts of matters because they hardly disavow their defects and, in a position of ignorance about things, they are entirely uncertain about each one."[117] The distinction between philosophers and academics is only a temporal one, John stresses the different ways in which the two different truth-tellers are attuned to truth: while the academic can demonstrate the truth through the authority of the senses, or by reason, or by religion, the matter is completely different for the philosopher, whose truth is much more dependent on him being personally involved in it. He states: "There are no philosophers expressing both the true and the false, teaching both the good and the evil. Even the mere futile imitator of the philosopher teaches correctly sometimes, but *he who correctly follows that which he*

[115] Ibid., p. 20
[116] Ibid., p. 23
[117] Ibid., p. 149, John is here talking about the Stoics and Epicurus.

teaches is the true philosopher [my emphasis]."[118] Thus, while the academic is dependent on the successful demonstration of his truth the philosopher is himself integral to the truth, what he say is true becomes so out of him speaking and acting it.

The character of the ruler is more straight-forward because it is dependent on whether or not the ruler is subordinate to the law: thus, "the tyrant is … [the] one who oppresses the people by violent domination, just as the prince is [the] one who rules by the law."[119] But that is not all, as John argued already in the third book, the only time flattery can be permitted is when it is to please the tyrant – for "it is only permitted to flatter him whom it is permitted to slay."[120] Thus the second difference between the tyrant and the prince is that the tyrant is beyond truth – or rather, truth is no longer a possibility – while the prince is capable to truth; that is, the link between truth and power is maintained by the virtue of temperance in the prince.

This link between the truth-teller and the ruler consists of the *liberty* (or rather *parrhésia*) the truth-teller makes use of towards the ruler. Liberty, according to John, "judges in accordance with the free will of the individual, and it is not afraid to censure that which seems to oppose sound moral character."[121] It is not possible to separate liberty from virtue: rather there is, John argues, a circularity between them so that virtue "does not arise in its perfection without liberty, the loss of liberty demonstrates that virtue is not present. And, therefore, anyone is free according to the virtue of their dispositions (*habitus*) and to the extent that one is free the virtues are effective."[122] Liberty also places itself between two aspects of political life apart from the truth-teller and the ruler: that is, the law – John refers to how there are "laws were introduced in support of liberty" – and the concrete exercise of power taking place at court society – how, says John, "historians [are] continually mentioning what great deeds were done for the love of [liberty]."[123] So *liberty* is that activity that can bring forth virtue, while it on the one hand is seated in the laws, because rule without law remains tyranny; and on the other is dependent on the court society in which it takes place.

After John writes about a few examples of the practice of *liberty,* he turns to how the two parties should conduct themselves. The ruler should react with temperance and moderation when someone practices liberty and tells him the truth about himself:

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[118] Ibid., pp. 161-162
[119] Ibid., p. 190
[120] Ibid., p. 25
[121] Ibid., p. 175
[122] Ibid., p. 176
[123] Ibid., p. 176

John explains, "the best and the wisest man is moderate with the reins of liberty and patiently takes note of whatever is said to him. And he does not oppose himself to the works of liberty, as long as damage to virtue does not occur."[124] Even though the ruler would be tempted, "patience with censure is among wise men far more glorious than its punishment."[125] The truth-teller on the other hand is faced with a different dilemma: is he going to be an academic or a philosopher – that is, will he be able to govern himself in what he says? While according to John the philosopher talks with rashness and opens up his mind, the academic will govern his tongue and only say what he can demonstrate. When it comes to the practice of telling the truth the difference is very slight, perhaps only a matter of degree, to John because "those things which are said and done freely are devoid of rashness just as of timidity and, so long as the correct path is advanced, they are entitled to praise and esteem."[126]

2. Christine de Pizan's *The Book of the Body Politic* is an attempt to outline the "virtues and manners" that will lead to a life, which attains honour.[127] It has three main parts: Book I deals with princes, their duties, qualities, and problems they are faced with; Book II lays out conditions for the honour of knights and nobles; and Book III deals with the common people and their relation to the two other classes. There are many dangers associated with the government of the kingdom, as well as the prince himself; all such dangers crystalize themselves into the problem of who can speak the truth? What is the answer to the problem of advice or council? Who can inform the prince of the truth of the state of the world and himself so that he may govern successfully? Within Book I there is a series of chapters that talk to the themes of giving advice and what kind of people may be able to give advice, which ones the prince should listen to: that is, different *modes of veridiction* that the prince can chose from when governing the kingdom. In this series of chapters Christine de Pizan outlines four, all too familiar to the Greeks, possible answers: the sage, who speaks of wisdom; the expert, who speaks of technical knowledge; the prophet (or philosopher as Christine calls him), who can predict the future in the constellation of the stars; and last, in a chapter that has interestingly different style, a *mirror* that can tell the prince about his adherence to the virtues.

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[124] Ibid., p. 177
[125] Ibid., p. 179
[126] Ibid., p. 176
[127] Pizan, Christine de. *The Book of the Body Politic*, edited and translated by Kate Langdon Forhan (Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Drawing from Aristotle and Cicero, Christine de Pizan considers who would be best to advise the prince: the young or the old? As the young have bodily strength they often give bad advice; the old have experience from which they can draw, but that is not enough. There are two kinds of age, however: the one "which follows after a well-ordered and temperate youth" and the other that "comes after a wasted and dissolute youth."[128] Where the latter ends in "misery and many is not worth recommending" the former leads to wisdom which is praiseworthy.[129] The old and wise are characterised by having "understanding, discretion, and knowledge" – but here another aspect of the age-old link between *truth* and sensual abstinence comes to the fore: "There is no evil that sensuality will not attract the human spirit to do. It is that which extinguishes the judgement of reason that blinds the human soul, and it has no affinity nor connection with virtue."[130] Consequently, for the sage to acquire wisdom he must exercise abstinence from all sensual pleasures: the relation that the sage has to truth is established through his moderation of sensuality; the relation to truth is constituted on the freedom from pleasures.[131]

While the sage might be a good generalist, there are areas of which he knows very little other than its general relevance and application. He would not possess technical know-how gained through hard work. "[O]ne ought to believe each expert in his art." To Christine de Pizan "[t]his means that the good prince ought to consult a variety of people according to the variety of things they do."[132] There are many forms of expertise and the prince should be aware that soldiers and knights know not how to advise on matters of law and that equally clergy and jurist know not about strategy and fighting; each craft has its own *techné*. And thus, as Christine de Pizan explains through *exempla*, "everyone to take care of the branch of knowledge to which one was devoted, no more."[133] The challenge, both for the prince as for the expert whose advice he chooses to follow, is to resist the temptation to think that one know about everything.

Having dealt with what is general and what is particular, with *epistéme* and *techné*, Christine de Pizan now turns to that which is yet to be known, the future. There are certain benefits from following the wise, or rather those of them that are "serious speculative philosopher" – which resembles the alethurgary form of the prophet, whose

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[128] Ibid., p. 37
[129] Ibid., p. 37
[130] Ibid., p. 37
[131] Foucault, *History of Sexuality Volume II*, pp. 78-93
[132] Pizan, *The Book of the Body Politic*, p. 39
[133] Ibid., p. 40

truth comes not from himself but is written in the stars. The prince "should not repudiate the science of astrology", but rather welcome it to his councils. To show this, Christine de Pizan tells the story of how Archimedes, with his "good sense" (that is, his ability to predict the future) helped defend the city of Syracuse against the Romans; the prophet runs into an obvious problem when he, despite having predicted his own death, stayed in the city: how can we know that his predictions are true? That is, there seems not to be any criterion for when the "science of astrology" is real, other than of course when their predictions turn out to be true: as Thales, who became rich by predicting that olives would be abundant one year and not the next, can be used to show the practical application of astrology. The language of the prophet, however, is obscure and hard to understand for the Christian prince, who is easily misled. Christine de Pizan captures this aspect when she says: "the good prince ought to be careful that only wise men establish his particular affairs so that he is not deceived by *abusers* (my emphasis)."[134] Abusers, Christine de Pizan tells us, are those "who by the illusion of learning simulate knowledge, but know nothing and often deceive and mislead princes and lay persons by their trickery."[135] Due to the uncertainty of the future and the language that the prophet uses, the problem of whether or not the prince should listen to the prophet becomes difficult to answer; the prince will no doubt have to run the risk that the advice he follows turns out to be wrong.

The sage can offer advice on general matters of the government of the kingdom; the technician on particular problems; and the prophet can predict the future so that the prince may make the right decisions – these are all more or less lumped together as "the wise" in the text; but from all these modes of *veridiction* there is none that speaks to virtue – what Christine de Pizan at the beginning of the book stated was the central thing to posses if one desired honour. Towards the end of Book I however, Christine de Pizan introduces a fourth person who will tell the prince the truth. Here she tells us that: "[A] good prince out to control himself from something so repugnant and degrading" as anger and hatred, which every powerful man is naturally bound to sometimes be.[136] As an example, Christine de Pizan explains that Valerius "even spoke to princes thus: 'Often persons, especially when they are high and powerful, commit great cruelties through impetuous hatred."[137] Valerius then went on to distinguish wrath from hatred,

[134] Ibid., pp. 43-44
[135] Ibid., p. 44
[136] Ibid., p. 53
[137] Ibid., p. 53

in that while the former can be satisfied the latter cannot. Two things are of interest here: first, the fact that there is a concrete problem of the prince showing a vice – not so much which one or how bad it is; second, that Valerius "even spoke to princes thus" would mean that the prince was not able to correct his own behaviour, someone else had to step in and make the clarification between the two vices and make him exercise self-government. The prince, as well as everyone else, therefore is dependent on someone who will provide him with the proper guidance on how he should govern himself: "Let these things be a mirror for the prince, in which to look at himself, and all others should do so as well. For let us suppose that there was one of these vices to which one were naturally inclined. If the person does not learn how to master himself, an conquer it, it is a sign that he is not virtuous, and a person without virtue is not worthy of honour."[138]

To the prince the problem is quite clear: who offers the right council to the prince? How from all these different truth-tellers, who all are represented as the wise, does the prince choose the one that will lead him to obtain honour? The old and wise stands in contrast to the young and reckless; the technician and artisans stand in contrast to each other offering contradictory advice; the prophet stands in contrast to those who are his imposters and abusers; but the *mirror* or the person willing to tell the prince the truth about himself does not, at least in Christine de Pizan's text, have a opposite. Because of these problems "it is necessary for the good prince to be a good judge" and furthermore, it is expedient that [the prince] be wise himself and know something of the sciences, […]."[139] To that end, the kind of government of himself that the prince is supposed to conduct is not just temperance and judgement, but he should also able to speak well and wisely: "there is no doubt that wise and well-ordered speech out of the mouth of the prince s more weighty and willingly heard than when it comes from another."[140] Christine de Pizan joins "bodily movement" with speech: "When eloquence is combined with gentle moment of the body, it affects the listener […]" by bringing delight to their spirit, eyes, and ears.[141] Thus, the problem complex exposed here is one that has two positive images – that much becomes evident when Christine de Pizan refers to Plato: "the world will be happy when the wise begin to rule, or kings begin to be wise" – but there is always the risk that someone with ill intentions comes between

[138] Ibid., p. 54
[139] Ibid., p. 45
[140] Ibid., p. 46
[141] Ibid., p. 46

the prince and the wise, no matter how wise the prince himself might be; in there lies the trick of not being flattered.[142]

3. Erasmus had started *The Education of a Christian Prince* with a long exhortation and praise of that particular kind of wisdom that was to be desired by the prince: "Whenever kings invite her to their council and cast out those evil counsellors – ambition, anger, greed, and flattery – the commonwealth flourishes in everyway and, knowing that it owes its felicity to the wisdom of its prince, says with well-earned satisfaction: 'All good things together came to me with her'."[143] Already here Erasmus outlines some of the issues which the prince should keep in mind when governing his kingdom: first, that there exists a strong link between good government and truth (which he takes from Plato); second, that the successful government does not depend on his wisdom alone, but that "no man does the state a greater service than he who equips a prince's mind, which must consider all men's interest, with the highest principles, worthy of a prince" – (which he takes from Plutarch); and third, that the kingdom will always be in a state of danger, so the best thing the prince can wish for is unshakable determination – that is, governing himself as only the ideal prince would (this art of self-government he takes from Diogenes).[144]

To attest to the importance and the dangers associated with the prince being dependent on wisdom – how he attains it and subsequently uses it to govern his kingdom – we should note that the chapter called *The prince must avoid flatterers* is positioned in a very special way in relation to all the other chapters in Erasmus' book; peace, taxation, laws, treaties, marriage, alliances, and war are all subjects that can be dealt with after this very important subject. This particular problem is paramount for the successful resolution of any of the other issues facing the prince. Erasmus starts by saying:

> The prince must avoid flatterers; but this cannot be brought about unless flatterers are kept at bay by every means, for the well-being of great princes is extremely vulnerable to this particular plague. Youthful innocence in itself is particularly exposed to this evil, partly because of the natural inclination to enjoy complements more than the truth, and partly because of inexperience: the less suspicious the prince is of trickery, the less he knows about taking precautions.[145]

There are in a prince's life certain times and places when he particularly vulnerable to the tricks and schemes of these flatterers – these "repulsive depraved little men … [who

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[142] Ibid., p. 46

[143] Erasmus, Deciderius. *The Education of Christian Prince*, translated by Neil M. Cheshire and Michael J. Heath and Edited by Lisa Jardine (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 2

[144] Ibid., p. 2

[145] Ibid., p. 54

are the] masters of the masters of the world" – we could say that flattery is constituted around four distinct axes: from the upbringing of the prince, the court society, the prince himself, and from the various titles a prince would have.[146]

First, flattery can come from the upbringing of the prince: that is, first of all the nurses that take care of the prince in his youth; these usually take "take on the emotional tendencies of the mothers, the majority of whom frequently spoils the character of their children by over-indulgence."[147] Thus, the first time the prince encounters the danger is within an encounter with the opposite sex, with women. The next threat is the companions of the prince who need to be "well-bread" and "groomed" by the tutor; who furthermore need to create an "atmosphere of civilized talk" that is without the need for "using pretence or lies to gain favour."[148] Lastly are the "attendants" who "often pander to a boy's predilections, either through stupidity or in the hope that some sort of recompense will come their way." If these positions cannot be filled with "prudent and honest" men and women, Erasmus considers a measure of "public punishment" to be rid of such behaviour. Of course there is the tutor himself who would be the greatest threat of the four, because he is inclined "conduct his business with a view not to passing out a better prince but to walk out a richer man himself."[149]

Second, the very antagonistic structure of the court society incentivises flattery: if the goal of the social game is to advance in the ranks, gaining the favour of the king becomes one of the prime strategies – and here flattery will in many cases prove a suitable tactic. And thus, many figures loom within the court society, all willing to corrupt the prince's soul: "Officers of state do not give frank advice and counsellors do not consult with … enough openness at heart. […] The priests are flatterers and the physicians are yes-men."[150] Nor is there any hope that frankness is to be found from the prince's enemies from aboard, because everywhere it has become a custom to welcome "undiluted praise" from "orators from abroad". The ones who enjoy the most intimate contact with the prince – the 'royal confessors' – do not make proper use of it. In fact, with the continuous practices of all these kinds of people who are in regular contact with the prince, an undesirable structure emerges: "while each one is looking out for his own interest the means of serving the common good are neglected."[151] There are other

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[146] Ibid., p. 54-55
[147] Ibid., p. 55 – compare to Plat.*Laws*.III.694d
[148] Ibid., p. 55
[149] Ibid., p. 4-54
[150] Ibid., p. 57
[151] Ibid., p. 57

groups of figures, which have less access to the prince and therefore are less harmful: "poets and orators" for example, talk more to their own inspiration than to the prince's achievements and shortcomings. Far more dangerous figures are the "Magicians and soothsayers" who promise the prince "long life, victory, triumphs, pleasures and kingdoms and then again threaten others with sudden death, disaster, affliction, and exile, trading upon hope and fear."[152] Just the same are the "astrologers who foretell the future from the stars," – whose "science" Erasmus is particularly sceptical of.[153] The worst of them all, however, are the ones that "operate with apparent frankness" – these Erasmus does not describe in full, but instead refers to Plutarch's work on the matter.[154] In sum, we see that court society is filled with potential flatterers and people bent on telling the prince lies and hiding the truth from him, and there are more sources of danger within the structure of court society; these last two however, have not to do with the people surrounding the prince, but rather the prince himself.

Hence, third, the prince is also prone to *folly*, which always brings self-love with it – that is, "when someone is his own flatterer."[155] This is shown in all the kinds of implicit flattery that can be seen around the prince: in portraits, statues, and inscriptions, the prince has the potential to forget who he really is (in truth) and can instead have artists portray him as legends of the past, as god-like figures, all-powerful and larger than life. The danger is doubled because self-flattery does not only mean that the prince flatters himself, but he also is more willing to let others do the same. Fourth, the very honorary titles that are central to the projection and manifestation of the asymmetrical power relation between the prince and his subject can also be a source of flattery: despite there being a clear need for a "tribute of respect", Erasmus prefers these to be "of such a kind that they remind the prince in some way of his office" – meaning only that there are a set of honorary titles that are acceptable and a set that are not, which are essentially arbitrary; the point is that the prince should be able to decide which titles are flattering and which are not.[156] Erasmus reminds us of Alexander Severus who "regarded all flatterers with such a hatred that if anybody saluted him too obsequiously or bowed his head too humbly, he would at one noisily denounce the man and send him packing."[157]

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[152] Ibid., p. 57
[153] Ibid., p. 57
[154] Ibid., p. 57
[155] Ibid., p. 58
[156] Ibid., p. 58
[157] Ibid., p. 59

With all these sources of flattery, what is the prince to do? Erasmus offers two solutions: first, and this a most humanist solution – the prince ought to read books: because "very often he may learn from these what his friends have not dared to bring to his attention."[158] Upon saying that, Erasmus has a large curriculum to offer the prince, but books need no courage, they are as spoken from a distant past yet still relevant in the present provided that the prince can draw the right lesson from them; and thus he ends by cautioning: "Whenever the prince takes a book in his hands, let him do it not for the purpose of enjoyment but in order that he may get up from his reading a better man."[159] Thus the first solution to the problem of flatterers rest solely on the prince being wise enough to read and draw the right lessons from the books at his disposal, but the solution has an obvious flaw: there is no one like the guardians of Plato to keep the prince honest to himself; that is, truth does not exist in a dynamic relationship to power, rather power all too easily becomes truth. The prince has but to stop reading and the wisdom of the book ceases to speak to him. The second solution to the problem of flatterers that Erasmus provides the prince with is one the Greeks would have recognized as well, namely the *parrhēsiatic* pact: "nobody speaks the truth more honestly or more advantageously or more candidly than do books; but the prince must nevertheless accustom his friends to the knowledge that they find favour be giving him frank advice. It is indeed the job of those who keep the prince company to advise him opportunely, advantageously, and amicably, but it will nevertheless be well to forgive those whose advice is presented clumsily in order that no precedent mat deter those who would advice him properly from doing their duty."[160] That is, the advisor agrees to tell the truth, the whole truth without concealment (such is his duty), and thereby binding himself to his statement and agrees to take the risk and consequences thereof, while the *other* interlocutor, the prince, agrees to accept what has been said no matter how unpleasant or provoking, to not take a course of action that would otherwise harm or leave the sole responsibility (the powerful has to be willing to share and show solidarity with the consequences) with the individual who showed the courage to confront them with the truth.

4. In Baldesar Castiglione's book IV of *The Book of the Courtier*, the character Fregoso Ottaviano starts with a long discourse on what he sees as the central task of the courtier – the book is divided into four chapters, each representing a day of con-

[158] Ibid., p. 60
[159] Ibid., p. 64
[160] Ibid., p. 64

versation and the previous days they had been discussing everything from the qualities that a perfect courtier must have, life at court, to the role of ladies.[161] Now, the passage starts with drawing a distinction between on the one hand what he calls "sterile courtship" - that which associates the "fruit" of courtship with merely the fact of the courtier being of "noble birth, gracefulness, charms and skills" – and on the other, the kind of courtship which is good, not as something that is good in itself (here Ottaviano mentions temperance, fortitude, and health), but because it is directed towards a particular end (like laws, liberality, or riches).[162] The specific problem with the latter, according to Ottaviano is that fewer will posses the courage to "die" and "take a risk".[163] Instead the "activities of the courtier" should be directed towards "the virtuous end" – what exactly this "virtuous end" consists of we shall return to shortly. The distinction is clearly between a particular kind of passive *being* (drawing its roots in the specific background practices necessary to navigate the court society) and an affirmative *doing*; the courtier should ideally be a man with purpose.

For such a "perfect courtier", Ottaviano says, the end is "to win himself the mind and favour of the prince he serves that he can and always will tell him the truth about all he needs to know, without fear or risk of displeasing him".[164] The courtier should "be in a position to dare to oppose [the prince] … [to] persuade him to return to the path of virtue."[165] The prince has two aspects or qualities, the former established in books I to III, that is, he should be "quick-witted, and charming, prudent and scholarly," – while the latter, the specific aspect of being able to confront the prince. While the former is what Ottaviano considers the "flower" of courtiership the "real fruit" – the latter aspect – "is to encourage and help his prince to be virtuous and to deter him from evil."[166] Here, in regard to this latter aspect, Ottaviano reminds us of the double role that the courtier has: that is, he has "to choose a truly virtuous end" and "to know how to find convenient and suitable means for its attainment."[167] That is, he has both a spiritual role as well as a secular; an exercise of power aimed at the individuality of the prince's soul as well as at the totality of the territory, solving its practical matters.

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[161] Castiglione, Baldesar. *The Book of the Courtier*, translated by George Bull (Penguin Books, 1967)
[162] Ibid., p. 284
[163] Ibid., p. 284
[164] Ibid., p. 284
[165] Ibid., p. 285
[166] Ibid., p. 285
[167] Ibid., p. 285

Ottaviano then goes on to characterize the "present-day rulers" who have many faults, of which the greatest are "ignorance and conceit."[168] These are rooted in "falsehood" – "a vice rightly detestable to God and man and more harmful to princes than any other."[169] The problem of falsehood is not only a problem in terms of it corrupting the prince's soul, but also in more practical matters of government. The courtier has two tasks before him: to ensure that the prince is "truly virtuous" and to find "convenient and suitable means" of solving practical matters.[170] Consequently: "princes lack most of all what they must have in the fullest measure, namely, someone to tell them the truth and remind them of what is right."[171] There are two potential candidates that can help the prince overcome this problem of falsehood: on one hand are his enemies who, although they might wish the prince harm, "dare not criticize the prince openly for fear of being punished."[172] While on the other hand there are his friends who, according to Ottaviano, do not have free access to him in the same way that they have to ordinary people: reproaching the prince comes as a risk due to the asymmetrical power relation between the friend and the prince. This structural logic of this relation leads to the result that "from being friends they become flatterers" – that is, they speak and act in ways that produce the very falsehoods they should help the prince to get rid of.[173] The consequences of this are clear:

> [A]part from never hearing the truth about anything, princes become drunk with the power they wield, and abandoned to pleasure-seeking and amusements they become so corrupted in mind that […] they pass from ignorance to extreme conceit. […] they never accept anyone else's advice or opinion; and, believing that it is very easy to know how to rule and that successful government requires no art or training other than brute force, they devote all their mind and attention o maintaining the power they have and they believe that true happiness consists in being able to do what one wants.[174]

This leads to a reversal of perspective when it comes to the prince: from having virtue as the ideal, it becomes his own happiness that is the ideal, which in consequence leads him to despise all virtuous things. Seen from the prince's view, reason and justice exercise their dictatorial power over him; as a result, the reversal means that the prince resists all government of his person. He becomes the tyrant; everything is subordinate to his private happiness. It would seem that there is no way out of this spiral: that neither

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[168] Ibid., p. 285
[169] Ibid., p. 285
[170] Ibid., p. 285
[171] Ibid., p. 285
[172] Ibid., p. 285
[173] Ibid., p. 286
[174] Ibid., p. 286

the enemy nor the friend (who is doomed to be a flatterer) is able to convince the prince that he has become a tyrant bent on his own pleasure. This is truly absurd, thinks Ottaviano: "for they who realize how outrageous and pernicious it is when subject, who must be governed, are wiser that the rulers who must govern them."[175] The gap between the wise and the ruler – between truth and power – becomes a problem for the governed, not when the prince's talents in music, dancing or riding is in question, but when his ability to govern them is. How can the government of the wise by the rulers be legitimized? To this end, Ottaviano turns to the ancients for examples, and he finds three: "Cimon was censured for loving sine, Scipio for loving sleep and Lucullus for loving banquets."[176] The idea is all along the same, censure; the prince needs to be censured on those aspects where he fails to govern himself. Ottaviano therefore praises the Ancients rulers' willingness to correct themselves – "they took meticulous care in ordering their lives on the pattern of exceptional men."[177] This is a model to be followed and thus, Ottaviano says:

> "If some of our rulers [today] were to be confronted by a strict philosopher, or indeed anyone at all who openly and candidly might wish to show them the awesome face of true virtue, teach them a good way of life and how a good prince should conduct himself, I am sure that as soon as he appeared they would loathe him as if he were a serpent or mock at him as if he were dirt."[178]

There are a few things to note here, however, that beg questions: first, what does it mean that "anyone at all" can confront the prince with his wrongful conduct of his own person – does this not place less emphasis on the figure of the courtier, could it just as well be the kitchen boy who confronted the prince? That is, what importance does it play that the one who confronts the king should be well versed in the background practices of the court society? Second, what emphasis should we place on the discourse being with an "open and candid" spirit – was that the very problem that faced the enemy and courtier before? That is, what limits are there imposed on the kind of speech the interlocutor can make use of? Third, will loathing and mockery of the prince bring about a change of heart of the prince, or is it simply a remark on how irreversible the development has become? The only way out of these predicaments is to phrase the practice (for both parties) as in a dilemma or paradox: that is, the prince needs the courtier to confront him with the truth, but at the same time courtier is reluctant to do so because the prince – at least in Ottiviano's day - do not get how this functions (which is

[175] Ibid., p. 287
[176] Ibid., p. 287
[177] Ibid., p. 287
[178] Ibid., p. 287

extremely important for the further development of the practice) – which is due to the asymmetrical power relation not being willing to tolerate any such discourse. Thus, Ottiviano has three parts to his problematisation of exhortation: there is the courtier, with his training and his duty to the prince (the qualities and this double role of leisure and advisor); the prince and his qualities and tendencies towards tyranny – which is where the third part of the triad comes in; the specific problem of flatterers who are the root cause of falsehood and the tyranny of the prince. So the problem of how it can be ensured that the prince governs in accordance with virtue seems to be at a point where the only way forward is an ever-deeper commitment to the structure between divine right, court society, and the specific problem constituted by the flatterer. In other words, Ottaviano has no way of reconstituting the problem and thus the commitment and coupling of exhortation to the prince and virtue remains.

[11] In archaic and classical Greek thought, the problem of *politeia* framed the fundamental circularity between *parrhēsia* and democracy. In contrast, the problem of political order would with the politics of truth of exhortation be framed by a relationship between the ruler and the gods as it once was with the wise king. The question of who would have authority to rule over the dominion of men was debated through the concept of the divine right of kings, a biblical concept that was traced back to the Jewish kings Saul and David. The concept contains three parts, each of which could be formulated and developed as a problem. First, responsible government: God gives power for a purpose, namely the well-being of the people committed to the ruler's charge. There is thus a kind of contract between God and the ruler. Second, sovereign authority: the ruler stands supreme in his God-given authority. The subjects have to respect the ruler like they would God – that is, there is a contract between the king and his subject that is guaranteed by God. Third, earthly unaccountability: the ruler is accountable to God alone and even should he fail to fulfil his obligations he must still not be resisted. This was a particularly delicate point, but one which was rarely discussed, as questioning this part of the concept would effectively be a rebellion against God. In sum, it is the three ideas of responsible government, sovereign authority, and earthly unaccountability that are inherent to the divine right to rule; if broken, the right to rule was lost. Thus, the question was who would be God's rightful representative on earth and rule in his stead? To St Ambrose of Milan, for example, the clash between the all-embracive autocratic powers claimed by the emperor and the Church's right as a place of worship, led him to treat the emperor as a "son of god" – "divine things are not subject to the imperial pow-

er."[179] That is, the emperor was not above the Church but *in* it: the idea of the emperor as the humble prince, ready for penitence and willing to heed the authority of his bishop emerges; the ruler, just like everyone else, was a Christian and thus subject to ecclesiastical censure. These issues would be discussed all the way up to Dante's *Monarchy*, John of Paris's *De potestate regia et papali* and Marsilius of Padua's *Defensor pacis*. Despite these struggles over hierarchy, one thing that was widely agreed upon was the source of authority in writing the laws of man. That source was God; the only question was who was closest to him. God was the creator of everything, and thus, like everything else, political power existed by God's will alone and those who would wield it did so by the grace of God.

Furthermore, as with the circularity between *parrhēsia* and democracy, there is a secondary constitutional element in divine right and the circularity between God and truth. Through the many reinterpretations of the Neo-Platonists and Christians, the concept of the good (*agathos*), particularly as Plato had developed it in *Timaeus,* was associated with God. Yet, despite his divine right to rule the king would remain structurally unable to discover the truth for himself. That truth is something that remains hidden from the king, yet linked with the conception of the world as the unfolding of God's eternal will, is very clear from a long passage in the Norwegian text *Konungs-Skuggja* called "The Speech of Wisdom" where the Son ask the Father about the sources of wisdom:

> Father: "It ought not to cause displeasure to have one inquire closely into subjects which one is not likely to understand without some direction. But God's mercy *reveals* and makes known many things to mankind, which would be largely hidden from them, if He were unwilling to have them revealed. And many things, which were formerly *concealed* in His own knowledge; He has made, known to us, because He wishes man to take a profitable interest in the wealth of knowledge, which he draws from the divine treasures. But as a guide toward this interest, which we have just mentioned one should take special note of the words that Wisdom used concerning herself when she spoke in these terms."[180]

And so it goes on for a while. The father later ends by saying: "However, it is the duty of every king to know thoroughly all the accounts that Wisdom has given of herself or wise men like those just mentioned have written, and each day to ponder some part of those speeches, if the duties of his office leave him any time for that."[181] It is an important point here that this circularity was independent of the law; no law, secular or

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[179] St Ambrose of Milan, quoted from in Burns, J.H. (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350-c.1450* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 545-554

[180] *Speculum Regale, Konungs-Skuggja: Konge-Speilet Et Philosophisk didaktisk Skrift*, (Christiana: Carl C. Werner comp, 1848), p. 156 [my italics]

[181] Ibid., p. 158

ecclesiastical, could guarantee that the king would govern in accordance with the truth: only the practice of exhortation and divine right of kings are dependent on one another.

[12] With the practice of exhortation the problem of the political game also changes: in the wake of the democratic game of *dunasteia* – where the political game was ordered according to experience – what me might call 'court society' emerges as the political game. This does not have anything exclusively feudal about it, but there is a higher degree of social stratification about it than the tripartite division of the political game of *dunasteia*. This involves three changes: First of all, there is *a relativisation* in two senses: politics is a way of life as well as a practice – it is a personal choice that is not foreground in one's status; and, one exercises power in a network as one node among many where there is a certain rotation; one is now the ruler, now the ruled. Second, there is an emphasis on *political activity and the moral agent*: building on Greek political thought, the art of governing oneself in relation to governing others is still very much important – the political man must establish his own *ēthos*, take care of himself, his soul. He should be governed by prudence. Third, there is a sense of *political activity and personal destiny*: the precariousness of fortune (the Roman goddess Fortuna spinning the "wheel of fortune" remained a popular image throughout the Middle ages) introduces into the political game an economy of favours (as opposed to merit) and a sense of an ultimate purpose in the form of bettering one self, to do the ethical work on one's own person. To overcome the unevenness of fortune one needs to gain favour and to sculpt one's character.[182] What started with a stylization of the way in which the citizen should govern himself in order to govern others, became with time more and more intensive – it was a matter of proving himself capable of governing others; and even later this self-government take its form as rules and codes of conduct (there was a genuine mistrust in the individual), although this took some time for the Christians to establish.

[13] To conclude: in this chapter I have attempted to show how the politics of truth is displaced from the practice of *parrhēsia* in a democratic setting to the practice of exhortation in relation to the soul of the king. What initiated this shift was the realization of the danger of the demagogue as practical problem and the paradoxical demand for freedom in a democracy that had to be dealt with in thought. Then, I tried to show how

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[182] Foucault, Michel. *The Care of the Self: History of Sexuality, Volume III*, Translated by Robert Hurley (Penguin Books, 1984), pp. 87-95.

the politics of truth was problematized in thought around the relationship between a philosophical counsellor (*sumbouleou*) and the king. The condition of the possibility of truth was the existence of the good (*agathos*), which rested on the moral decision to banish the sophists and required devotion to truth through correct method. Being incapable of discovering the truth for himself, the king would through rigorous education (*paideia*) and by working together with the counsellor in a *homologie*, confess the thoughts residing in their soul (*psūke*) they would obtain the truth. My main source for elaborating these concepts was Plato, but I also showed how Xenocrates and Isocrates dealt with the same problems. Here I found that the socio-political limit of thought differed depending on the application of the two concepts of *protrepsis* and *paraenesis* – where the latter would appeal to tradition, the former would welcome the activity of thought. Then, I turned to the perceived danger of the flatterer as it was elaborated in the mirrors for princes and how exhortation would act as a remedy. Lastly, I briefly summarised how the concepts of divine right and court society would be used to contemplate the problems of political order and the political game of feudal societies.

Chapter IV: Public Critique

* * *

[1] The topic of this chapter is the changing topology of the politics of truth starting from the sixteenth century. First (I) a new epistemological space was emerging, realised by the social forces involved in the practical problems of the European wars of religion and the new degree of tyranny of the European monarchs; both of which were associated with the danger of superstition in Early Modern thought. It is in this period that there in the politics of truth is (II) a break from autocratic exhortation to public critique, where the concept of *krinō* moves from the margins of the un-thought to the centre; and the divine right of kings is (III) replaced by popular sovereignty of the modern state, guaranteeing the possibility of true-discourse through freedom of the press; while (IV) the political game of court society is replaced by a public sphere governed by a principle of toleration, in which true-discourse circulated with the king as a glorified spectator. Accordingly, the socio-political limits of thought, in which thought would test its reality, was now established by a new diagram of thought stretched out between *critique, the state, and toleration*.

I

[2] The metaphysics of the contradictory dictates that all practices eventually become problematic, either in the conflict with other practices or on their own terms, when the assumptions that underpin them collapse (that is, they become paradoxical in relation to experience). For a new world to be conjured up (*realised*) by thought, it requires that problems represent a *lasting encounter* – that is, the encounter must have a certain weight and impact that demands a response (*intensity*, to borrow Deleuze's concept), in the proper sense of a problem as an obstacle that has to be overcome. The practical problems that give rise to a new epistemological space of the relationship between

philosophy and politics – the horrors of the European wars of religion and the intolerable tyranny of princes, as seen from the point of view of the nobility and later the bourgeoisie – do exactly this.[1]

[3] From the early sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth, Europe was ravaged by religious wars: The peasant revolts in Germany, supported by Protestant clergy, and the Swiss Reformation between the thirteen cantons; the Eighty Years War between catholic Spain and the Seventeen Provinces with their different variants of Protestants with its series of *Beeldenstorm* –the Iconoclastic fury– on catholic churches; the Massacre of Vassy in 1562 that started to the French wars of Religion; the Thirty Year war between 1618 and 1648 that involved most of Europe; and the War of the Three Kingdoms on the British isles. These conflicts were complex because of the divisions between the various Catholic and Protestant factions that were spread territorially and intertwined with conflicts between political elites, as in France with the Huguenot Bourbons, the Catholic Guise, and the royal family of Valois. These wars therefore took the character of civil wars that, fuelled by extreme fanaticism, had turned into the savage butchery where all the killing took place in close quarters and by hand-to-hand combat; the slaughter of Magdeburg, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and Cromwell's model army's sacking of Drogheda all bore witness to this.[2] Such ferocity was an expression of religious passions that drove the conflict, passions which were a result of a fundamental disagreement about the nature of God and the proper relationship between man and God. The Catholic Church viewed itself as the embodiment of the Holy Spirit, instructed by Christ to Peter and thereafter passed on via a hereditary principle, with the organized hierarchical clergy acting as a conduit between God and man. Luther's objections that sparked the Reformation were not just about the immoral and

[1] There are no clear-cut criteria for what makes an *encounter* lasting. A way to get at one however would be to look at how a given problem would change thought – thus we could say that there is a lasting encounter when there is an *epistemological break* and a epistemological space is constituted. Consider the gravity of one of the problems, the European wars of religion: In *Dieu et les hommes*, Voltaire estimated that religious wars throughout European history had claimed 9,468,800 victims – the majority of which had died after the Reformation. Voltaire is not far off, contemporary estimates run from four million to eleven million for the Thirty Year War and from two to four million for the French Wars of Religion. The reality of such numbers is terrifying and it opens the cracks of nihilism (the world stops making sense) that sets off the *process of thought*.

[2] The devastation of these events was heavily imprinted on the minds of the sixteenth century. See for example the paintings of François Dubois, a Huguenot painter born circa (1529), *St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre* or that of Johann Philipp Abelin, (†1634) *Sack of Magdeburg 1631*, imperial troops conquer the toll redoubt and the suburbs in April 1631. For a graphical description of the Sacking of Magdeburg see *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* – the book's many examples of atrocities also helped cement the sectarian lines throughout Europe.

abusive practices of this "mediating" church noted in the *95 Theses*, but about the fundamental disagreement about the nature of God and his relationship with man. In contrast to the Scholastic metaphysics upon which the institutions of the Catholic Church rested, Luther held that there was an unbridgeable gap between divine being and created being, which he had absorbed from his nominalist predecessors.[3] Only Christ is a source of unity that can bridge this gap, he does so in an inexplicable manner through the Incarnation and thus the only access to truth about being is though *faith*: *sola fides*, *sola gratia*, and *sola scriptura* – faith arises only though grace and grace only though scripture.

In the previous chapter we saw how the ideal of the philosopher king translated into the pious Christian prince that governed by divine right and could tell flattery from truth if he would only remain moderate towards the subject who dared speak the truth. Such a practice rested on the assumption that the circularity between divine right, court society, and *eloquence* in the council (of which the clergy was the important participant) remained intact, but with the advent of the religious wars these *positives* had eroded because of the corruption of the church: if the prince could buy plenary indulgences there was no need for him to govern by the truth, he could neglect the quality of his court and let himself pamper in flattery.[4] The tendency to worry about this problem, as

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[3] The deeper cause of the Reformation itself – and the thought-ammunition that Luther was armed with – lie in the nominalist revolution within Scholasticism, where Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and others found a predictable and beneficent God irreconcilable with the fact of life that they were presented with: The Western Schism within the Catholic church over who was the right Pope, the Hundred Year War between France and England, the Black Death that ravaged Europe from 1346 to 1353 that killed 75 to 200 million people, the beginning of little Ice Age in the fourteenth century that had disastrous economic consequences, and finally the displacements of peoples that was a product of urban development, social mobility and the Crusades. All such practical problem fuelled a paradox that traditional Scholasticism – with their realist insistence on extra-mental existence of universals – did not provide good answers to. And thus the nominalist God, who was unconstrained by nature and reason, unknowable, unpredictable, and all-powerful, a fearsome god indeed that was indifferent to good and evil entered the stage. The natural order that God had created with man occupying an exalted position that had organized thought for almost a millennium collapsed. See, Gillespie, Michael. *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008) pp. 19-43. A point of discussion, however, would be whether this collapse was inevitable because of the re-introduction of Aristotelian texts in the Western tradition of thought, or because of the emergence of these practical problems that demanded answers to paradoxes emanating from the evident clash between lived experience and Scholastic doctrine. Though, in other periods of the Western tradition the denial of a beneficial and predictable God was not conditioned upon the availability of Aristotelian texts.

[4] For the Catholic side, see Francisco Suárez (1613) *Defensio fidei catholicae*, in which he defended Catholic faith against Anglicanism. Here he argued that it was impossible for the universal catholic to *err* or *commit heresy* because of *a.* the promise of Christ (to Peter) and *b.* that the institution of the Church constitutes the pillar of truth: "if the Church could err", how, he asked, "could the faith of believers, or the truth of things to be believed, depend on it?" – by implication to deny the truth of the church would be to deny the Christian God and that would mean that the whole *Lebenswelt* would collapse (I, Ch. 4). At the end of book III he draws the following conclusion: distinguishing between the temporal and spiritual power by which the world is governed, he urges the king to recognise that he should "[k]now that you are a sheep of the flock of Christ, not a pastor" – *scito te ouem gregis Chrifti effe, non paftorem* (III, *summa*).

we have seen, was evident in all humanist writers of the Renaissance. Erasmus in *The Education of a Christian Prince* considers the dangers of a single tyrant versus an entourage of tyrants of the court and opts for the *status quo* as he sees no clear-cut solution, and therefore urges the prince to "avoid all innovations as far as proves possible: for even if something is changed for the better, a novel situation is still disturbing in itself."[5] Crisis demands action and thus the humanist endorsement of the *status quo* was fatal. Luther had already noticed a similar, but to him necessary, problem when he remarked, "Frogs needs storks" – a natural consequence of the nominalist conception of God. If anything, there was no need for the king to be pious, rather he was God's hangman on earth: as Luther writes in *On Secular Authority*: "If a prince becomes wise, pious or a Christian, it is one of the great wonders, and one of the most precious tokens of divine grace upon that land."[6] To Luther there was no paradox, no need of a government of truth. It was totally irrelevant, only faith could save the soul and faith was between man and God alone. If kings are either the hangmen of God or they, guided by the cunning hand of the devil, follow their pride, their self-interest, their reason or even their concern for their fellow man in a quasi-Machiavellian fashion, the result can only be devastating war.

To later generations, however, the wars of religion were a manifestation of how the problematisations of the relationship between philosophy and politics, that had stated out with the political principles of Plato and since then reformulated in the Christian mirrors for princes, had become problematic on their own terms. The wars of religion were a pressing problem in sixteenth century France where the minority groups of the Huguenots and the majority Catholic groups alike regarded the problem of religious wars emanating from the existence of the opposite side (they in truth, the other in error). Different were the *Politiques* – a group of moderate Catholics and Huguenots loyal to the intentions of Michel de l'Hôpital, the Chancellor of France from 1560 to 1568 – who argued for sovereign impartiality and religious toleration. They, at least initially, recognized that the prince would always be presented with an uncomfortable dilemma if he heeds the exhortation of religious councillors that demand the enforcement of religious unity, *cuirus region eius religio*. Jean Bodin alluded to this exact dilemma when debating the merits of monarchy in relation to popular rule, the latter of

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This however does not resolve the problem that the faith had; it exactly did not provide good answers for the harsh fact of life.

[5] Erasmus, *The Education of The Christian Prince*, p. 71

[6] Luther, Martin. *Luther and Calvin On Secular Auhority*, edited and translated by Harro Höpfl (Cambridge University Press, 1991) p. 30

which holds that sovereignty is vested in a divided people. He notes that a monarchy is preferable exactly because the sovereign is a third party that can bring them to reason by attuning to their general mood, like a musician playing a tune to a lunatic to calm him down.[7] This is, according to Bodin, exactly what happened during the religious wars – coercion proved a futile means when it came to demands of religious unity. The monarch should always strive to be the judge and arbiter of his subjects' conflicts, regardless of his own religion (*even if it is the true religion*, Bodin tells us).

Later still, in the seventeenth century, a similar problematic is found in the writing of Samuel Pufendorf. Having distinguished between the two autonomous normative realms of a "civil kingdom" and a "kingdom of truth", pertaining to the prince and the clerical teacher respectively, Pufendorf asks "why should Sovereigns be too forward in deciding Religious Differences, which are of much greater Moment, (the eternal and temporal welfare of Millions of People do depend thereon) unless they be very well instructed in every thing that has any relation to it?"[8] The great danger is, as history demonstrates, that over-zealous clergymen turn princes into tyrants that commit the most gruesome atrocities against the populous they are charged with caring for. But neither Bodin nor Pufendorf's solution to the problem solved it by displacing the question entirely – only parts of it, namely that of sovereignty.

[4] If the wars of Religious exemplified a problem on one side of the game of truth – that of a fanatical true-discourse – then tyranny exemplified the other side of it: the recipient king. Thus, we should consider the European wars of religion a related, yet separate, problem to that of *tyranny*. Most certainly intertwined – political reality is rarely neat and dissected beforehand – these wars were also politically motivated, but the savagery with which they were fought was undoubtedly inspired by religious fanaticism, which was of great consequence to how the wars were understood at the time – as two separate evils in league against humankind.[9] Today we would probably understand the problem of tyranny to have more to do with the centralization of political power – or rather, the emergence of the modern state. Yet, this would be a presentist reading of

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[7] Bodin, Jean. *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, abridged and translated by M. J. Tooley (ed.) (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967) IV, VII. p. 142-3

[8] Pufendorf, Samuel. *Of the Nature and Qualification of Religion in Reference to Civil Society*, translated by J. Crull (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002) p. 110

[9] See for example the 1643 illustration of the perceived danger of king Charles I "body politic" half papist and half cavalier – one preaching fanaticism, the other arrogant flattery.

history, taken on their own accounts the story is a different one.[10] Furthermore, as we saw in the second chapter, tyranny is not a new problem to the government of truth. Rather, what I want to show here is that tyranny is a problem that to sections of the nobility and the bourgeois becomes intolerable – it is *their* problem, and they decide to do something about it.

An exemplar of the problem is the debate over whether the execution of the English monarch Charles I was a regicide or a tyrannicide. The history of the English civil war is well known: the quagmire of sectarian divides between Arminians, Episcopalians and Royalists on the side and Presbyterians, Independents and Republicans on the other; Charles' many suspensions of parliament, general taxes and the more controversial Ship Money, and his strong authoritarianism exemplified thereby. After a horrible civil war the Independents eventually gained the upper hand and Charles I was tried, convicted and executed for high treason in January 1649.

To execute a king was not a common event – at least since the days of the Roman Empire. Unlawful *regicide* or *tyrannicide*, John Milton attempted to rationalize the decision. The problem of tyrannicide was a well-known one: there were two kinds of tyrants, that of a tyrant by practice and that of a tyrant by usurpation (usually foreign and by conquest) – the difference consisted in one of legitimacy. The positions on who could be resisted were thus mixed. What was typically at stake was whether individuals (that is, *subjects* and not inferior magistrates) could lawfully resist tyrants in practice, and within the doctrine of *Dei Gratia* there was little room for citizens lawfully rising up against their king.[11] In fact, this doctrine made resisting a monarch almost impossible, because it would effectively be the same as resisting God. In Greek antiquity, however, the word *Tyrant* had a positive as well as a negative connotation – an ambiguity Bodin would later play on – but there were plenty of justifications for resisting a

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[10] The scholarly discussion of what motivated these wars has favoured different opinions: either it is religion or the political elites (the formation of the state) that caused them. For example, William T. Cavanaugh, who argues that, "to call these conflicts 'Wars of Religion' is an anachronism, for what was at issue in these wars was the very creation of religion as a set of privately held beliefs without direct political relevance. The creation of religion was necessitated by the new State's need to secure absolute sovereignty over its subjects." See, 'A fire Strong Enough to Consume the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State', in *Modern Theology*, 11:4, (1995) p. 398. Exactly, these wars of religion meant the separation of ecclesiastical and secular power: the communities of the middle age rested exactly on these two pillars – the faith and the crown – but it would be imprudent not to ask why this was so; the true discourse that this constellation produced and relied on to sustain it was subdued by the dangers of superstition and flattery. Whether we call them religious wars or the formation of the state matters little to the argument I want to make, which is that these wars meant the end of the autocratic relation between philosophy and politics.

[11] See the religiously motivated works that still think in terms of divine law and therefore stops short of allowing the resistance to tyrants by practice: *Loci Communes* by Peter Martyr, Theodore Beza's *De Jura Magistratum* (1574) and the Huguenot theses *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* from 1579.

tyrant.[12] Milton would have to strike a balance between the Ancient and Christian world when he developed his concept of tyranny. And thus while Milton drew on Xenophon, Cicero, and Seneca to establish his definition tyranny, he ultimately justified tyrannicide by the example of *Ehud* against *Eglon* the King of *Moab*; a line of argument that he strategically followed to convince the Presbyterians and later continental Europeans for whom heathen sources were objectionable to say the least.

Charles I had, like his father King James I, made a point out of his divine right to rule, for which he found support in the Absolutists theories of John Heywood, Robert Parsons, Calybute Downing, and Sir Robert Filmer. In *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* Milton therefore starts with the rationally founded argument that a common wealth is established by men that are all naturally born free and who "communicated and deriv'd" their individual power to Kings and Magistrates."[13] Milton discusses four problems: the power of the king, which according to Milton is not bestowed upon them by God, but is "committed to them in *trust* from the people [my emphasis]."[14] The inheritance of the crown makes the citizen nothing but the king's slave, to which Milton objects *major singulis, universis minor* – the king is greater than each individual citizen, but inferior to the people as a whole. To the accountability to God alone, he asks: "How then can any King in Europe maintain and write himself accountable to none but God, when emperors in their own imperial Statutes have writt'n and decreed themselves accountable to Law."[15] And lastly, that of regicide – if the power of the king originates from the people, they might take it back (regardless of him being a tyrant). In the *confirmation*, Milton strives to show what a tyrant is and what the people may lawfully do to him. It is here that Milton constructs a new *problematic* by deploying a new concept of tyranny which makes a different distinction: rather than maintaining a difference between a tyrant by practice and usurpation, he annulled the difference altogether and thus all *tyrants* were *tyrants* – whether foreign, an enemy, or by special warrant – and could be resisted lawfully by his subjects: "A Tyrant whether by wrong or by right coming to the Crown, is he who regarding neither Law nor the common good, reigns only for himself and his faction."[16]

The first reaction to Milton's rationalization was the royalist propaganda pam-

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[12] Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, Book II, IV-V.
[13] Milton, John. *Milton: Political Writings*, edited by Martin Dzelzainis and translated by Claire Gruzelier (Cambridge University Press, 1991) pp. 8-9
[14] Ibid., p. 10
[15] Ibid., p. 13
[16] Ibid., p. 17

phlet *Eikon Basilike*, which proclaimed Charles a martyr – to which Milton responded with *Eikonoklastes*. A more serious attack was that of the Protestant scholar Claudius Salmasius in *Defensio Regia Pro Corolo I,* in which the main lines of attack were that the people was not the origin of the kings power and that the king was *legibus solutus* – above all positive laws. Milton's reply, an inflammatory polemic (*you old windbag of a man Salamasius*, as he starts chapter I), *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* defends the Commonwealth's cause to the Europe public by reiterating a less radical position in *Tenure*. In 1652 Sir Robert Filmer published *Observations,* where he restated his position from *Patricia*, which had been written from the 1620s onwards (finished in 1631), but published posthumously in 1680.[17] To Filmer, the principle of natural freedom of mankind to choose their own government was faulty and he could not tell "whether it be more erroneous in Divinity or dangerous in policy."[18] Contrariwise, he held that (6) no man is born free and (1) the only possible form of government was monarchy: (5) "there is no such form of government as a tyranny."[19] Hobbes, another opponent of the Independents, thought that Milton and other writers suffered from *Tyrannophobia* and he warns, "[t]he toleration of a professed hatred of Tyranny, is a Toleration of hatred to Common-wealth in general."[20] He was however no absolutist and did not uphold the divine right of kings, thus playing along, he sought to defend monarchy on similar grounds as Milton and others had attacked it. His *Leviathan* is famous exactly for the unintended consequences in displacing the question in order to defend the monarchy. Some thirty years later, Algernon Sidney wrote *Discourses Concerning Government* (published in 1698), a completely mirrored refutation of Filmer's *Patraircha*, and Locke who started his *Two Treatises of Government* (1689) with the following complaint:

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[17] See: Skinner, Quentin. 'Genealogy of the Modern State', in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Volume 162, 2008 Lectures (2009), pp. 330

[18] Filmer, Sir Robert. *Patriarcha and other Political Works*, edited by Peter Laslett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), p. 53

[19] Ibid., p. 229

[20] Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*, edited by C. B. Macpherson (Penguin Books, 1968), p. 226 and 486 Nevertheless, Hobbes had already objected to tyrannicide in *De Cive* (1642). As he saw it, the problem was that to the Ancients "anyone whom they want killed as a *Tyrant*, rules either by right or without right." (if he hold power wrongly, fine, it can be *hosticide* [from *hostis*, public enemy]). However, "if he holds power rightly, the divine question applies: *Who told you that he was a Tyrant, unless you have eaten of the tree of which I told you not to eat* [Genesis 3. 11]." Therefore, Hobbes concludes, "one may easily see how dangerous this belief is to commonwealths, and particularly to *Monarchies*, by recognizing that it exposes any *King*, good or bad, to the risk of being condemned by the judgement, and murdered by the hand, of one solitary assassin." Hobbes, Thomas. *On the Citizen*, edited and translated by Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 133-4

> "In the last age, a generation of men has sprung up among us, who would flatter princes with the Opinion, that they have a Divine Right to absolute power […] to make way for this doctrine they have denied Mankind a Right to natural Freedom, whereby they have not only, as much as in their lies, exposed all Subject to the utmost Misery of Tyranny and Oppression, but have also unsettled Titles, and shaken the throne of Princes […]; As if they had design'd to make War upon all Government, and subvert the very Foundations of Human Society, to serve their present turn."[21]

The problem of regicide was not just an English phenomenon, the execution of Charles I was a spectacle that would send shockwaves throughout European monarchies: if the king could be executed with impunity then power-relations would be permanently subversive. Chaos ensues.[22] What Charles had done in England was not that different from what other monarchs had been doing – the Tudor period before him had already seen the creation of a centralized state. The process of centralisation and state formation was always open to interpretation as a form of tyranny: struggles over authority in medieval Europe were always zero-sum games. All over Europe the process of centralization had been on-going for at least a few decades. The formation of the state can therefore be seen as the compromise between the kings' attempts to centralize power and the view that this is tyranny: centralization only became possible by the king giving up some of his power. The efforts of the kings to centralise undoubtedly posed a particular problem to the nobility and although there can be many explanations for why this was, what is central is that *the government of truth cannot be arranged around the king if he is a tyrant per default*. Thus, the dispute was at least in part about the concept of *tyranny*: how could it be determined that a king was indeed a tyrant, and what did that mean for his subjects? Moving the parameters for what constituted the problem of tyranny was crucial because it made a different kind of knowledge possible – his people could now judge a king a tyrant regardless of him being one.

[5] The *theoretical problem* that renders the practices of the autocratic relation between philosophy and politics can now be specified *a posteriori*. On the one hand, there are

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[21] Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government*, edited by Peter Laslett (Cambridge University Press, 1988) p. 142. "*Tyranny* is *the exercise of power beyond Right*", (§199, p. 398) and Locke is more concerned with distinction between the dissolution of *government* and the dissolution of *society*; to him the breakdown of society is worse still than un-lawful regicide. See, pp. 406-428

[22] In the pamphlet *The Power of Kings, and in particular, of the King of England* written in 1648, Filmer notes: "Oh how many tyrants should there be, if it should be lawful for subjects to kill tyrants? How many good and innocent princes should as tyrants perish by the conspiracy of their subjects against them? He that should of his subjects but exact subsidies, should be then, as the vulgar people esteem him, a tyrant: he that should rule and command contrary to the good liking o f the people, should be a tyrant: he that should keep strong guards and garrisons for the safety of his person, should be a tyrant: he that should put to death traitors and conspirators against his state, should be also counted a tyrant. How should good princes be assured of their lives, if under colour of tyranny they might be slain by their subjects, by whom they ought to be defended?" Filmer, *Patriarcha*, p. 325

the two religious wars and the tyrannical behaviour of monarchs, on the other, the ideal model of the philosopher king. The philosopher king might have been able to deal with these problems in isolation – the fanatic could have been send away and a new and better king might have followed – but both at the same time leaves little of the autocratic game of truth intact in experience. The relation between the two problems is apparent: one implies the other and vice versa, we could perhaps talk about a synthesis. Neither practice of *parrhēsia* nor that of *exhortation* are able to address the practical problems that the government of truth is suppose to solve, and thus a crisis in knowledge (at the level of the un-thought) was apparent. The purposes of the practices are reverted and a paradox emerges: How can the true-discourse of exhortation be reconciled with either the prince or the advisor if its principles are being reversed? It is history that *realises* a new problem: the government of men, both spiritual and secular, was infested with what was perceived to be corrupt doctrines. On one hand, it was the speaker of the most important true-discourse (that of the ecclesiastical elite) that had been corrupted not just by flattery, but also by *fanaticism*; on the other, the prince was no better, he had himself given into his passions and become a inoperable tyrant. This was not an idiosyncrasy, the same held true for either side of the divides; whether you were Catholic or Protestant, whether you were a Royalist or against monarchical power.

The exemplar of Luther illustrates the vulnerability of the autocratic relation clearly. The underlying premise in government of truth of the mirrors and Plato's philosopher kings was that the king, through either his *wisdom* or his *piety* (the Christian version), would be able to discern the truth. Faith as the arbiter of truth however, amounts to nothing but fanaticism: as the distance between philosophy and politics diminishes, there instantaneously is no dynamism, no power to oppose truth, no politics of truth. *Truth is power and power is truth*. The politics of truth rest on the premise of *differentiation* – if the king occupies the same position as the interlocutor then there is no possibility of a true-discourse. Superstition, as we shall see, was what was identified as the cause of these problems. Voltaire captures this dilemma when he says: "Superstition is the most horrible enemy of the human race. When it controls the Prince, it stops him from seeking the good of his people; when it controls the people, it causes them to rise against their prince."[23] Superstition effectively meant that the prince could not abide by the pact with religious truth – accordingly, the production of truth becomes problem-

[23] Voltaire, *Political Writings*, translated and edited by David Williams (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 216. See also: Bayle, Pierre. *Various Thoughts on the Occasion of a Comet*, translated by Robert C. Bartlett (ed.)(Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), §153 and §154, pp. 190-193

atic if truth is conceived as a unity (*deus veritas est*).[24] If truth is unitary on the one hand and two people lay claim to it on the other, how can the prince judge which true-discourse is really true? *Minerva's owl is dead, the zealot's arrow struck* – the arrogant assertion of *the one true faith* rings hollow in the face of the bare facts of life.

[6] Early on the 14th of November 1680, the German astronomer Gottfried Kirch discovered a comet with his telescope. The comet would later reappear in December the same year and would attract much attention across Europe: Astronomers and laypeople followed with great excitement and awe. The comet had a long golden tail, and it was so bright that it could be observed during the day. But what did it all mean? Why would such an occurrence happen, was it a cause to celebration? Or was it rather a sign of God's displeasure with humanity and a sign of his impending judgement; was the comet a warning that something terrible was about to happen? All kinds of beliefs and interpretations of the event circulated in Europe: some held that the comet was a bad omen that would cause war, death, and famine; others thought it was a sign that such terrible occurrences had already happened.[25]

Indeed, superstition was seen a great danger to humanity from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Superstition is not only a religious problem, but also an epistemological and therefore ultimately a political problem. That is the exact point of Bayle's *Pensees diverses sur la comete*, a book that was a response to all the outrageous things that people were saying and writing about the occasion of the comet. In it he aruged that "[t]o maintain that comets are the efficient cause of wars, the establishment of new religions, conspiracies, and such other plagues on society as depend on the free will of man and on the coming together of a thousand fortuitous things" is both profane and absurd. Rather, he wanted to show that: "Comets are not what one imagines, […] they are bodies as ancient as the world that, according to the laws of movement by which God governs the vast machine of the universe, are determined to pass from time to time within our view and to send the sun's light to us, modified in such a way that we perceive a long train of rays either in front of or behind their head."[26] "[T]heir passage into our world" Bayle continued, "is of no consequence either for good or ill, any more

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[24] Augustine. *On the Trinity: Books 8-15*, Edited by Gareth B. Matthews and translated by Stephen McKenna (Cambridge University Press, 2002), VIII.1.2, p. 5

[25] The association between natural phenomena and societal events was typical of natural philosophy: in *Theatrum Universae Naturae* Jean Bodin for example, held that eclipses were related to political events. A claim that was not uncommon with the episteme of similitude.

[26] Bayle, *Various Thoughts on the Occasion of a Comet*, pp. 312-314

than the voyage of an Indian into Europe. It is nevertheless permitted each, according to the movements of his piety, to become mortified at the sight of this phenomenon."[27] Superstition is a danger to society, Bayle maintained, and the main goal of the book was therefore to undermine the influence that superstition had on political life – by way of suggesting a moral law and society based on atheism. The example is a famous one and was much discussed during the Enlightenment. Bayle's argument builds on *experience* and he reasoned thus,

> If it is true, then, as history and the course of common life suggest, that men can plunge themselves into every sort of crime while they are convinced of the truth of their religion, which teaches them that God severely punishes the sinner and that he magnificently rewards good works, one must agree that those who give us this conviction as a proof and pledge of the good life are necessarily mistaken and that it is to reason poorly to conclude from the fact that a man is an idolater, that he lives in a manner morally superior to an atheist.[28]

The example of the atheists shows that religion is contrary to society: that is, it has a social function rather natural one. If religion is contrary to society and has socio-political utility, then it can also be used for creating strife and conflict – and in that, it thrives on the superstitions of a populous or of the princes.

Likewise, in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, Spinoza starts by saying that: "If men were always able to regulate their affairs with sure judgment, or if fortune always smiled upon them, they would not get caught up in any superstition."[29] Superstition is the danger that befalls men that have little or no sense of judgment or self-knowledge; being incapable of self-reflection as to why things are as they are with regard to their actions and practices – and in their senselessness, they oscillate between hope and fear making them ready to believe almost anything. Because most people are plagued by dread and despair, "fear" Spinoza holds "is the root from which superstition is born, maintained and nourished."[30] Their superstition thus leads them to "develop an infinite number of such practices, and invent extraordinary interpretations of nature, as if the whole of nature were as senseless as they are."[31] In a word: *religions*. In fact, it is in this way that superstition is directly linked to power and politics: commenting on his age, he says, "there are many men who take the outrageous liberty of trying to appropriate the greater part of this authority and utilize religion to win the allegiance of the common people, who are still in thrall to pagan superstition with the aim of bringing us

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[27] Ibid., p. 314
[28] Ibid., p. 180
[29] Spinoza, Benedictus de. *Theological-Political Treatise*, edited by Jonathan Israel and translated by Michael Silverstone and Jonathan Israel (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 3
[30] Ibid., p. 3
[31] Ibid., p. 4

all back into servitude again."[32] The preaching of prophecy, the practices of religious ceremonies, and the postulation of miracles are all ways in which the church has been able to secure the obedience of the people. Faith is nothing but "credulity and prejudices" to Spinoza, and what happened when the church started to harness the fear of the common people was riots and ferocious wars:

> Churches became theatres where people went to hear ecclesiastical orators rather than to learn from teachers. Pastors no longer sought to teach, but strove to win a reputation for themselves while denigrating those who disagreed with them, by teaching new and controversial doctrines designed to seize the attention of the common people. This was bound to generate a great deal of conflict, rivalry and resentment, which no passage of time could heal[33]

The same goes for monarchies, which are able to sway men to sacrifice their blood and life for the glory of a single one man. Spinoza makes little distinction; the state and church both are responsible for the many horrors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Indeed the influence of superstition on politics and government can be great, as Montesquieu remarks, when discussing the way in which the Natchez Indians of Louisiana have come to experience despotism by the *force de la superstition*: "the prejudices of superstition are greater than all other prejudices, and its reasons greater than all other reasons."[34] Superstition, Hume tells us, is "enemy to civil liberty", and it "renders men tame and abject, and fits them for slavery," which is why superstition is advantageous to priestly power and ambition.[35] To Voltaire, superstition was directly responsible for the horrors of the religious wars in France, England and Bohemia. He states: "It is superstition that had Henry III, Henry IV, and William of Orange, and so many others assassinated. It is superstition that has made rivers of blood flow since the time of Constantine."[36]

Superstition was a danger to political order.[37] But what exactly is superstition?[38] In *De Cive*, Hobbes linked it with atheism, but where atheism was characterised

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[32] Ibid., p. 6-7

[33] Ibid., p. 7

[34] Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat. *The Spirit of the Laws*, translated by Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller, and Harold Samuel Stone (eds.)(Cambridge University Press, 1989), XVIII, chap 18, p. 294

[35] Hume, David. 'Of Superstition and Enthusiasm', in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, edited by Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1985), pp. 60-62

[36] Voltaire, *Political Writings*, p. 216

[37] This was not necessarily the case before and under the Wars of Religion, Bodin for example still considered atheism more dangerous than superstition, see: Bodin *Six Books of the Commonwealth,* p. 145. This is likely because of the way in which the previous *episteme* was constituted: If knowledge consists in understanding *resemblances* between things (believed to be created by God) it would not necessarily be wrong to believe that a walnut would cure headache (God had created both so naturally they were good for each other), but atheism would because it denied the system. On the other hand, if knowledge consists

by "*opinion of reason* without fear", superstition was "fear of the invisible when separated from right reason."[39] For Locke superstition was "false opinion of a deity" and to Hume it was "the corruption of true religion."[40] Thus, superstition was a kind of false religion and philosophy that much was sure: but for a long time the problem remained how to tell one from the other. The purge of reason by reason itself in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is well known and absolutely necessary, because according to Kant, *reason itself gives way to superstition*. The root cause of the danger was of course the very nature of what he describes as the *Kampfplatz* of metaphysics.[41] Or rather, the highly speculative and unfounded basis of metaphysics (sought through either intuition or experience) that gives rise to all sort of impossible beliefs that is politically dangerous. Accordingly, "if it is disputed that reason deserves the right to speak *first* in matters concerning supersensible objects such as the existence of God and the future world, then a wide gate is opened to all enthusiasm, superstition and even to atheism" as he wrote en *What is Orientation in Thinking?*[42] In the essay *What is Enlightenment?*, superstition takes the form of self-incurred tutelage or immaturity, depending on the translation: "*Immaturity* [*Unmündigkeit*] is the inability to use one's own understanding

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in analysing *representations* via *mathesis* and *taxonomia* this becomes another matter. See, Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 79-84, 122-123.

[38] *Superstition* is of Latin origin: *sŭperstĭtĭo*, *ōnis*, f. *super-sto*; *orig* as in standing still over or by a thing in amazement, wonder, or dread (especially of the divine or supernatural). In Cicero (*De rerum Natura*) superstition thus means excessive fear of the gods, unreasonable religious belief, (superstition is different from *religio*, a proper, reasonable awe of the gods) – "*superstitio, non religio, tollenda est*" – religion is permissible superstition is not. The opposition to superstition goes further back to the early search for (or *will to*) truth in Ancient Greek philosophy, but it is not yet called by the name superstition but religion: Epicurus and Lucretius attacked the belief in gods and punishments after death not as superstition, but as *religion*; the two were closely related. Superstition also had a positive connotation with reference to an *instrumentum regni*: to Polybius superstition (*deisidaimonia*; meaning superstition, but also religion in general) was what maintained cohesion within the Roman State by providing the multitude of the common people with an "invisible terror" (Poly.*Hist.*VI.56), a solution that was only necessary because the state was not made up of wise men. Superstition has however also an antagonistic usage: as in "*religio veri dei cultus est, superstitio falsi*" according to Lactantius (*DivInst*.4, 28, 11), the political and religious advisor to the Roman emperor Constantine, implying that other kinds of worship than the Christian is false. In a pagan sense however, this juxtaposition makes little sense; to them superstition equalled religion that was external to the state religion: for example Pliny the Younger describes to emperor Trajan the Christians as a perverse and extravagant *superstitio*, a plague that has infected the lands (Plin.*Ep*.10.96). Later in the 17th century Christian theologians sought to purge all undesired practices which they branded superstition and persecuted as heresy. The way in which superstition is used in the 17th to the 18th century is similar, but instead of being in opposition to religion, it is opposed to reason – religion that cannot be defended within the bounds of reason is seen as superstition (*religion = superstition < reason*). The sense in which superstition is used here plays only on negative elements, Polybius' positive use as an *instrumentum regni*, is viewed in a negative sense by Bayle, Spinoza, Kant and Voltaire in particular.

[39] Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, XV, I, p. 187

[40] Locke, *Superstitio*, in *Political Writings* p. 292-3; and Hume, '*Superstiton and Enthusiasm*', p. 61

[41] Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 99-105

[42] Kant, Immanuel. '*What is Orientation, in Thinking?',* in *Religion and Rational Theology*, translated and edited by Allen W. Wood (Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 15

without the guidance of another. This immaturity is *self-incurred* if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another."[43]

Between the opposing forces of superstition and philosophy a great battle was about to unfold over the human mind – with modification, "*écraser la superstition!*" Voltaire proclaimed: "In becoming perfect, reason destroys the seed of religious wars. It is the spirit of philosophy that has banished this plague from the world."[44] Superstition is therefore perceived to be *the* danger laying behind the two all dominating problems of the time; all the more so because it effectively means that the relation between philosophy and politics is non-existent. The epistemological space in existence was unable to provide good answers to superstition. If anything, they made the problems worse, as we have just seen some authors emphasize.[45]

II

[7] We have seen how in the sixteenth up until the eighteenth century it was thought that superstition was the danger that caused the very real problems of religious wars and tyranny with which they were faced. Towards this danger of superstition, we hear a boasting rallying call: "In it becoming perfect, reason destroys the seed of religious wars. It is the spirit of philosophy that has banished this plague from the world. […] If Luther and Calvin were to come back," Voltaire affirms, "they would make no more of an impact than the Scotists and the Thomists. Why? Because they would be born in a time when men are starting to become enlightened."[46] Still, Voltaire is not completely wrong with his assertion, as the diagram of thought really does change and the age of enlightenment does confront superstition. It does exactly so by the displacements of the three problems: the question of the conditions upon which one claims to speak the truth is reformulated as a question and method of *individual* doubt where *pour et contra* form the basis of ones use of reason. In other words, a model of eloquence is replaced by one of *critique*. Second, the reference to the divine right of kings is displaced by the ques-

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[43] Kant, Immanuel. '*What is Enlightenment?*', in *Kant: Political Writings*, translated and edited by Hans Siegbert Reiss (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 54

[44] "*écraser l'Infâme*", Voltaire, *Political Writings*, p. 214

[45] Voltaire for example wrote: "Superstition is the most horrible enemy of the human race. When it controls the Prince, it stops him from seeking the good of his people; when it controls the people, it causes them to rise against their prince." See, *Political Writings*, p. 216

[46] Ibid., p. 214

tion of the origin of the power of the state. Which then becomes a problem of natural law rather than of an inflexible hierarchy created by God. If such a hierarchy is no longer as each individual can claim the same authority to speak the truth. In such a situation, the political game needs to be governed by a principle of toleration so as to not deny anyone the freedom to search for and speak the truth as he finds it.

It is towards this circulation and flow between *critique*, the *state*, and a political game governed by the principle of *toleration* that we now turn. Together these displacements form a new diagram of thought, a diagram that we might call the *règne de la critique*. The clearest manifestation of this diagram was formulated by Kant: by taking up the same problematic as Plato in a very important section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant confronts a central question of the recurrent present; namely, that of the proper relationship between truth and politics. The clearest encapsulation of the circularity between the problem of truth, the problem of political order, and the problem of the proper political game can be found in Kant's the principle of reason which can only be found by reason itself. In approaching the problem of truth and politics we are in searching for "a constitution providing for the *greatest human freedom* according to laws that permit *the freedom to each to exist together with that of others* (not one providing the greatest happiness, since that would follow of itself) is at least a necessary idea, which one must make the ground not merely of the primary plan of a state's constitution but of all the laws too; […] and in it we must initially abstract from the present obstacles, which may perhaps arise not so much from what is unavoidable in human nature as rather from neglect of the true ideas in the giving of laws."[47] That is, the freedom to apply one's thought (as the ideal of critique), the guaranteed by a *state* of laws and rights that are not arbitrary, and lastly the freedom to exist together and exercise ones freedom, a principle of toleration.

This new epistemological space sets up as the solution to the danger of superstition and quite schematically we could say that this is how, in early modern thought, the relationship between truth and power, philosophy and politics was conceptualized and thought to function in practice. At the centre of this problematisation was the concept of *critique*, which addressed the problem of truth in a way where it imposes certain limits upon the method of inquiry around a subject-centred use of reason, as well as structure the alethurgary game by a harmless civil war where reason is met by reason. Both the most immediate aim and guarantor of this game is the concept and reality of the *state* –

[47] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 397

that is, the state is assigned the double role of the protector of the conditions of critique on the one hand and being the object that is continuously critiqued on the other. [48] Finally, because the concept of truth is no longer monolithic as when God assured it, the political game necessarily had to be one in which there is room for different truths; and yet such a space was never distributed without a cost. The social strata therefore had to be modelled on the toleration of difference, but with the natural exclusion of the untolerable.

[8] *Critique* in French, *Kritik* in German, and *criticism* in English all derive from the same word in ancient Greek *krínō* – from *krei-*, to differentiate, select, judge, decide.[49] As a verb *krínō* means, "I separate", "I order", "I judge". Yet, the way in which the concept has been established or constituted on particular backgrounds has changed quite a lot, and therefore, to discuss the early modern usage of the word critique, we should explore the development of the concept itself. In general we can say that the critical attitude has is origins in the pastoral self, from the Greek *technè technon* and the Roman *ars artium* – they give rise to an art of government in pedagogical, political, and economic terms. Where in the sixteenth century the question of government becomes inseparable from the question of: *comment ne pas être gouverné?* – how not to be governed, or at least how to be governed less? Critique evolved from there on different levels: a critique of the bible, a critique of the law, and a critique of science.[50]

In the *Odyssey*, Homer mostly uses it in the sense to 'pick out' or to 'choose', but he also uses it in the sense of deciding upon a dispute; as when Odysseus describes the resurfacing of his mast and keel, to which he was clinging on, while they were sucked down into the deep between the rocks Scylla and Charybdis whirlpools, as that exact moment when a judge rises for supper after a long day of *deciding on many disputes* (*krínōn neikea polla*).[51] Being a *kritikos* is a weighty business and it is always caught up between forces (gods or moods) pulling in different directions. In the Iliad,

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[48] The transference from divine to a sovereignty achieved through reason. Gillespie "The apparent rejection or disappearance of religion and theology in fact" Gillespie tells us, "conceals the continuing relevance of theological issues and commitments for the modern age." We should therefore talk about secularization or disenchantment as a *process of re-enchantment*; that is, as "the gradual transference of divine attributes to human beings (an infinite human will), the natural world (universal mechanical causality), social forces (the general will, the hidden hand), and history (the idea of progress, dialectical development, the cunning of reason)." See, *Theological Origins of Modernity*, p. 272-3

[49] I have already discussed the concept of *krino* in terms of juridical practices, but here I want to elaborate on it as a concept applied to a wider set of problems.

[50] Foucault, Michel. *The Politics of Truth*, translated by Lisa Hochroth and Catherine Porter and edited by Sylvère Lotringer (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1978/2007), pp. 23-29

[51] Hom.*Od.*12.440

Agamemnon speaks in a similar fashion when he urges his men to contest with hateful war the whole day (*krínōmeth Amri*) – this is the hour by which their fate is decided by contest (*agōn*).[52] Again one finds oneself caught up in the situation pulled back and forth and thus we could speak of a critical art (*kritike techne, or techné technon*) that enables one to overcome the situation.

Predominately, the concept of *krínō* was about jurisprudence and the juridical system: in a court of law, the critic (*kritikos*) would be the *one who blames*, the one who *accused*; while in its co-concept of *crisis*, which at the time was the exact same word (*krínō*), had an objective connotation.[53] A critic is therefore able to weigh the scales or in other words consider 'pro and con' in a given case. To the ancient Greeks this critical art (*kritike techne*) was about the ability to distinguish, evaluate, and reach a decision, which makes this critical attitude distinguishable from more contemplative and theoretical ones. Nevertheless, from its attachment to the juridical system the concept had a wider usage. When discussing the merits of democracy over oligarchy, Thucydides uses the same sense of *krínō* by saying that while the rich would be the best guardians of property and the wisest the best councillors, the many (*tous polla*) would "after hearing matters discussed […] be the best judges."[54] This same *power of discerning* also belongs to the king: in the *Statesman*, Plato shows that the *politikos* is not just a spectator (*theatmn*) who has the ability to judge, rather he has a dual function like that of a master-builder; that is, they both posses the art of judging (*kríticōs*, he contributes knowledge) as well as the art of governing (*epitaktikōs*, he assigns tasks).[55] Thus, this critical art is not just about jurisprudence but also relevant to the wider field of politics and ethics. In this sense, critique connotes the ability to establish future guidelines for future actions and considerations. Accordingly, a last connection between politics and critique is that critique establishes and addresses the problem of political order. This can be found in Book III of *Politics*, where Aristotle argues that the essential element of the state is its citizens: the citizens are defined by their right to deliberate in the juridical bodies and participate in the offices of the state; hence, only the ones who participate in the office of judge (*aikm*) can claim to be citizens.[56] In that sense the art of criticism or

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[52] Hom.*Il*.2.385

[53] Dem.21.64. *Crisis* is was then most known for its specific medical use. *Krisis* constituted the event (what had happened) while *kritik* the reaction (what was to be done) – *Crisis* was a medical term in Hippocrates and Galen and the Romans largely restricted crisis to medical usage (Augustine.6.*Conf*.I), which did not change in medieval times.

[54] Thuc.VI.39; see also Thuc.I.87, Thuc.III.67

[55] Plat.*Stat*.260c

[56] Arist.*Pol*.1275a22, b19

judgement is the creation or establishment of order – *no judgement, no political order*, and the polis must be ordered so as to keep on enjoying its independence.

Furthermore, critique is also a more epistemological and philosophical connotation. In Plato's *Theaetetus*, Socrates is the one who can help men "distinguish between the real and the false" (*krínein to alethēs te kai mē*).[57] Like the good midwife who helps the woman at the critical stages of birth, Socrates helps men, with their soul heavily in pain over being in labour, give birth to their judgements. And again we should notice that like the midwife, Socrates is *sterile* when it comes to wisdom (he has none); in fact, he has little choice himself in the matter, the "god compels me to act as midwife" he stubbornly claims.

In the Roman world *krínō* becomes *cerno*, (*crēvi*, *crētum*). Criticism and critique still denote the ability to decide juridical dispute (to decide for something, reach a decision, conclude); just as well, in the forms of struggle and fights.[58] The Greek *technè technon* becomes *ars artium*, the art of art – that is, logic, to reason correctly and reach correct and valid inferences. The emphasis in *cerno* is thus more on philosophical usage: to distinguish by the senses, predominantly the ability of eye vision (*video*, "I see"). This is especially the case with Lucretius in the first book of *De Rerum Natura* where he lays out the ultimate constitution of the universe as infinite atoms in infinite space. Here, he wrestles with the existence of "first bodies" or particles and how they affect our senses. He argues that our eyes do not perceive (*cerni*) primary things; he illustrates this with the example of wind he concludes: "we know the varied smells of things; Yet never to our nostrils see them come; With eyes we view (*cernere*) not burning heats, nor cold; Nor are we wont men's voices to behold. Yet these must be corporeal at the base; Since thus they smite the senses: naught there is; Save body, having property of touch."[59] To Lucretius, the senses are in error, they are not capable of perceive the real mechanics of the world. Subsequently, critique is transferred to be the ability to comprehend or understand an *intellectual object*.[60] In that regard, c*riticus* is still the one that is capable of judgement, suitable for deciding on a particular matter, but the matters of concern have rather to do with the authentication of historical texts than the political matters. Displeased with the division of labour between rhetoricians and teachers of literature (the *criticus*) in the education of young boys, Quintilian seeks

[57] Plat.*Th*.150B
[58] Cic.*Off*.1.12
[59] Lucr.1.269 and Lucr.1.300
[60] Cic.*deOrat*.3.31

to put *Grammatrice* (the science of letters) in its rightful place so as to give the *power of eloquence* back to rhetoric.[61] According to him *grammatrice* had "gathered strength from the historians and critics and [had] swollen to the dimensions of a brimming river, since, not content with the theory of correct speech, no inconsiderable subject, it [had] usurped the study of practically all the highest departments of knowledge."[62]

This situation remains almost the same a thousand years later towards the end of the medieval Christian world. During the Italian Renaissance critique is with expanded to works of art and architecture – both historical and contemporary. Yet, it is only in the middle of the 17th century that critique gains distinct principles, which are then afterwards generalised. In *Critica Sacra* (from 1632 but published in 1650) Louis Cappelle attacked the verbal foundation of scripture by comparing and pointing out the invariances of various translations to the original Hebrew Bible. Later, in *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament* (1678), Richard Simon appropriated this method and devised an argument against the Protestant insistence on Scripture being the only link between Man and God. He reasoned that, if the rules of criticism are external to faith, then the Protestants must abide by them as well. Likewise, Spinoza had in *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* proposed a revolutionary method of textual criticism. Spinoza's proposed method of interpreting Scripture consisted first of all in freeing the mind of all theological prejudges and only examine its data by the natural light of reason: "the method of interpreting Scripture," Spinoza held, "does not differ from the [correct] method of interpreting nature, but rather is wholly consonant with it."[63] The view of nature as mechanical causes and effects can equally be applied to scripture. Thereafter followed a careful reconstruction of the historical context, which included the thought systems central to any interpretation of text written in a past epoch; Spinoza intended to "assemble a genuine history of it and to deduce the thinking of the Bible's authors by valid inferences from this history, as from certain data and principles."[64] Not surprisingly, the difficulties of language play a big part in Spinoza's analysis. In the preface to *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, Bayle notes similar principles of analysis.[65]

Thus it is first with the early moderns that critique becomes a generalised concept, even more so than in its Homeric origins. From the very beginning to critique is

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[61] Quin.*Inst*.2.10
[62] Quint.*Inst*.2.14
[63] Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, p. 98
[64] Ibid., p. 98
[65] Bayle Pierre. *Bayle: Political Writings*, translated by Sally Jenkinson (ed.) (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 5-14

then to resist power – a power of the gods that compels, the social moods which push one to actions that one does not agree with, the complex web of opposing individuals that might want to absorb ones independence. Nevertheless, it seems that the concept of critique mainly changes it character in relation to the person who practices it. Accordingly, the criticism of the ancients was always a public matter; it was always constituted in socio-political existence. The *parrhēsiast* was someone who attuned to the *mood* of the public to deliver his or her true-discourse: there was little choice, criticism was either public or it did not exist at all. By the time the Christian world emerged, conscience was something private, a matter between oneself and God; or rather this relation was mediated by the pastor, though the practice of confession. And thus, in the early modern world the use of reason, to make judgements, to critique, is a private matter – Descartes' *thinking thing* is alone in the world contemplating the object before he even considers talking to anyone else. There is a reversal of order: we move from the inside and out, not along the social surface as an exteriority. Critique was a private matter, is so far as it was individual reason: "Have courage to use *your own* understanding!"[66] Yet, and this is crucial, such personal use of reason is prone to error unless it is tested against others use of reason – i.e. personal reason has to be tested in the public at large. By making it a matter of *public* use of reason, critique becomes a generalised concept applicable to everything. It is from this position that Kant starts his critiques – as he proclaims in the preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "Our age is the genuine age of criticism, to which everything must submit. Religion though its holiness and legislation through its majesty common seek to exempt themselves from it. But in this way they excite a just suspicion against themselves, and cannot lay claim to that unfeigned respect that reason grants only to that which has been able to withstand its free and public examination."[67] Everything has to be judged in that public court of law that is reason; everything is a potential object of criticism.

To be critical was a personal attitude. This mode of being is perhaps presented most clearly in Kant's essay *What is Enlightenment*? Here Kant insisted that enlightenment consisted in having courage to *make use of ones own reason*.[68] Enlightenment is that which frees one from one's own tutelage and "for enlightenment of this kind," Kant says, "all that is needed is freedom. And the freedom in question is the most innocuous

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[66] Kant, '*What is Enlightenment?'*, p. 54 [my emphasis]

[67] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 100

[68] In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant describes the same point more explicitly in relation to superstition: To think for oneself. See, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, *translated by* Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge University Press, 2000), (5:294f), p. 174

form of all – freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters."[69] Yet, everywhere this freedom is inhibited by authorities crying, '*don't argue, obey our command*!' The only result is that freedom of thought is restricted and limited in all areas of life. The question that Kant asks is what kind of limitation can be put on the use of reason so as to ensure that the old guardians, who governed men's reason through dogmas and formulas, will not come to dominate the masses. He answers this question by drawing a distinction between the private use of reason on the one hand and the public use of reason on the other. The *private* use of reason is the reason that is used when an individual is "a cog in a machine," or when one "has a role to play in society and jobs to do: to be a soldier, to have taxes to pay, to be in charge of a parish, to be a civil servant." This kind of reason may be limited exactly because it does not present the progression of enlightenment. The *public* use of reason, which is the "reasoning as a reasonable being […], when one is reasoning as a member of reasonable humanity" as cannot be limited and should completely free without any restrictions. Kant identifies a dilemma that he admits is paradoxical by it nature: "A high degree of civil freedom seems advantageous to a people's *intellectual* freedom, yet it also sets up insuperable barriers to it. Conversely, a lesser degree of civil freedom gives intellectual freedom enough room to expand to the fullest extent."[70] *Critique cannot therefore be anything but public* – the critic is always a public figure. The private use of reason is not critique because it never tested, but only comply with given structures of thought.

Thus, when it comes to the concept of critique, within the *Règne de la Critique*, there are two parts of that needs to be considered: first of all, the positives that forms the *character of the critic*, and second the public realm in which he is active – its structure, principle, and relation to other realms of thought (i.e. politics). We could talk about a set of interrelated *internal* and *external* limitations to thought as un-truth set up by the practice of critique.

[9] We may start by recalling that the critic is the one who judges. To the Early Moderns, the access to truth is obtained the use of *reason* (not courage, rhetorical skill, or faith). That reason is therefore central to the concept of critique comes as little surprise. The concept of critique, if we focus on its internality, is made from a number of components, all of which can be identified from different themes within its discourse; and it is from studying these that we can elaborate on some of the general characteristics

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[69] Kant, '*What is Enlightenment?*', p. 55
[70] Ibid., p. 59

of the practice of critique:

1. *The need for a foundation*. The (modern) individual of Petrarch and Descartes was the foundation of the *critic*, who finds support in his own experiences rather than the divine logos. The question of what constitutes this foundation of such an individual is therefore a major theme in the problematique. In the first meditation, Descartes talks about a "general demolition" of his opinions that is necessary because of the "large number of falsehoods" that he had come to accept as true in his childhood, which had later come to constitute the foundation of his whole edifice of beliefs.[71] The main problem that Descartes identified was there he had no secure knowledge of the existence of God – a problem that was central to the religious wars (do we know God though scripture or the institutions of the church).[72] It is *reason* that now leads him to think, to the task of correcting his beliefs. The demolition famously starts with the process of doubting everything until Descartes reaches what he takes to be an irrefutable foundation of existence; the realization that the only thing he can be certain of is that he is a thinking thing – expressed in the *cogito*. From this basis, Descartes believed that all his former falsehood could be corrected with the application of a deductive method. Descartes was not the only one to contemplate such a foundation in response to falsely held beliefs about the world – it was a general epistemological problem. The theme of the need, foundations in the form of the individualized use of reason as a kind radiating natural light shows up almost everywhere. Faith or blind belief is juxtaposed as the *unfounded*, a position that only leads to error. In Bayle, we learn that "all particular Doctrines, whether advanc'd as contain'd in Scripture, or propos'd in any other way, are false, if repugnant to the clear and distinct Notions of natural Light, especially if they relate to Morality."[73] In Spinoza, it comes out in his complaint about organized religion that it, "turn[s] rational men into brutes since they completely prevent each person from using his own free judgment and distinguishing truth from falsehood."[74] Similarly, to Locke there is a problem with faith as being the access to truth: "*Credo, quia impossible est* [I believe, because it is impossible] might, in a good man, pass for a mark of zeal, but would prove the very last rule for men to choose their opinions by."[75] Kant touched

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[71] Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies: A Latin-English Edition*, translated by John (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.12

[72] This problem constitutes an important theme in the preface to the *Meditations*.

[73] Bayle, Pierre. *A Philosophical Commentary on These Words of the Gospel, Luke 14.23: "Compel Them to Come in, That My House May Be Full"*, translated by John Kilcullen and Chandran Kukathas (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), p. 75

[74] Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, pp.7-8

[75] Locke, John. 'Faith and Reason', in *Locke: Political Writings*, p. 250

on the same theme when he insisted that, while metaphysics is too frail an endeavor to have any lasting impact on the moral and ethical world, there still is a "*thought* must go all the way back to the elements of metaphysics" because any practical philosophy cannot retain any coherence without it.[76] This element of metaphysics Kant had already located within man himself: "Any such [moral] principle is really an obscurely thought *metaphysics* that is inherent in every human being because of his rational predisposition."[77] By that Kant constitutes a moral *positive* inherent in every human being as the categorical imperative. The foundation of philosophy – of the liberty that thought grants itself from politics – is thus lodged within the confines of man, the secured metaphysical foundation from which all truth can be asserted: "reason is by its nature free and admits of no command to hold something as true (no imperative 'Believe!' but only a free *credo* [I believe])."[78]

To trace this development we can say that in this particular moment faith is contrasted to reason. Reason was not as partisan concept which one side had a monopoly on; rather it was a truly *doxic* concept, which was deployed in the struggle between Catholics and Protestants by both sides. The access to truth went through the personal use of reason, and thus the establishing of a relation to truth works by a different logic. We go from the act of attuning to social-moods, to the Middle Ages where *faith* had been the foundation upon which one could have access to truth, to finally a state of doubting within, provides one with basis from which one can then reproach others. The burden and difficulty that this places on the individual making public use of his reason is necessarily greater than that of the *parrhēsiast* of the Greek city-state, whose mood based true-discourse was already attuned to the interlocutors (for this same reason the demagogue has a innate advantage because he is already tapped into the mood of the crowd). But when the foundation is the universal being of Man, all claims to truth subsequently has to be universally applicable, there is no longer any possibility particularity or idiosyncrasy (banishing the idiot means that the demagogue becomes a universalist by nature).

2. *A perpetual process*. Critique is a continuous process because by being a faculty of a limited humanity *the nature of reason is to err*. Reason no sooner than it has made one judgment will change and arrive at another. There is therefore an unavoidable

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[76] Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Mary J. Gregor and Jens Timmermann (eds.) (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 142.
[77] Ibid., p. 142
[78] Kant, Imannuel. '*The Conflict Between Faculties*', in *Religion and Rational Theology*, translated by Allen W. Wood, and George Di Giovanni (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 249

ambiguity to human reason that constituted it as problematic at its core: "Our reason is only suitable for making everything perplexing and for raising doubts about everything. No sooner has it built something than it provides the means for destroying it. Reason is a veritable Penelope, unravelling during the night what she had been weaving during the day."[79] Bayle at times sees reason as an utterly hopeless project. In his entry on the Manicheans he proclaims: "Human reason is too feeble for this. It is a principle of destruction and not of edification. It is only proper for raising doubts, and for turning things on all sides in order to make disputes endless…"[80] Reason has a inherent weakness that constantly misleads the ones who attempt to make use of it; by its uncertainty, flexibility, and changeability all our inquirers are turned "in all directions like a weather vane."[81] Bayle has a profound doubt in reason to deliver, but he also sees necessity in the struggle against superstition – even though it may lead to other dangers.[82]

3. *The need of an orientation*. Related to this theme of critique being a perpetual process that and changes direction as "the wind blows" therefore runs the risk of degenerating into delusion, is the theme of orientation. The obviousness in critique and thought more generally being oriented towards some end was not clearly stated before Kant wrote *What is Orientation in Thinking?* perhaps, but as Kant also points out in the essay there is no thinking that does not have an orientation. The problem is, as he states, that if one is not aware of this orientation one will most certainly be led astray. Though rational beliefs are completely self-contained, their components can only be found in pure reason: "All believing is a holding true which is subjectively sufficient, but *consciously* regarded as objectively insufficient."[83] A rational belief is not the same as (sure) knowledge, but rather it is subjectively certain on the basis of a *feeling* – a feeling that when considered in terms of reason manifests itself as a *need*. Kant here emphasizes:

> A pure rational faith [belief] is therefore the signpost or compass by means of which the speculative thinker orients himself in his rational excursions into the field of supersensible objects; but a human being who has common but (morally) healthy reason can mark out his path, in both a theoretical and a practical respect, in a way which is fully in accord with the whole end of his vocation; and it is this rational faith which must also be taken as the ground of every other faith, and even of every revelation.[84]

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[79] *Bunel*, quoted in Bayle, Pierre. *Historical and Critical Dictionary: Selections*, translated by Richard H. Popkin and Craig Brush (eds.) (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1991), p. 42. From now on referred to as *Selections*.

[80] Bayle, *Manicheans*, quoted in *Selections*, p. 151

[81] Bayle, *Hipparchia*, quoted in *Selections*, p. 99

[82] See also Bayle, *Takiddin*, quoted in *Selections*, p. 342

[83] Kant, '*What is Orientation in Thinking?*', p. 13

[84] Ibid., p. 14

If we do not allow reason to speak first in matters of thought, the danger of superstition will dominate our thinking. Such domination is evident when the deviation from an orientation of thought given by reason naturally leads to the civil coercion of thought, the destruction and denial of any actualization of morality, and last a declared lawless use of reason. Reason should only be subject to the laws, which "it imposes on itself." The *declared lawlessness in thinking* which is the opposite of thought based on rational belief will result in a situation where Kant predicts a terrible outcome: "Since reason alone can command validly for everyone, a confusion of language must soon arise among them; each one now follows his own inspiration, and so inner inspirations must ultimately be seen to arise from the testimony of preserved facts, traditions which were chosen originally but with time become *intrusive* documents - in a word, what results is the complete subjection of reason to facts, i.e. superstition, because this at least has the *form of law* and so allows tranquility to be restored."[85]

[10] "How can the truths of philosophy become more universal and useful for the benefit of the people?" was a prize question asked by the "patriotic society" that Herder responded to in an anti-universalist essay.[86] "The people […] is the greatest, the most venerable, part of the public, in contrast to which philosophy [*Weltweisheit*] is a troglodyte-people living in caves with Minerva's night-owls!" If the philosophers have something of value to present to the people they have a duty to do so; yet if they have nothing to offer or are "useless to the state" then better be rid of them and "let their caves be destroyed and let the night-owls of Minerva be taught to look at the sun."[87] The 'people' is to Herder any citizen that obeys lives by the law (a totality which he equates with the state), which is opposed to the category of 'philosophers' – the *philosophoumenos*, an arrogant Pyrrhonist figure who sets himself apart from the people. Herder wants philosophical discourse to be *one with the people*, be at home and speak the same language; he wants *Popularphilosophie*. Thus, the opposition between philosophy and politics is not necessarily presented as one between the state and the critic (as in the autocratic relation): the power relation between the public and the philosophers who form part of it is therefore complex and diverse. The theme is considered many times and the philosophers are not there for their own sake or for wisdoms sake (as a

[85] Ibid., p. 17
[86] Herder, Johann Gottfried von. *Philosophical Writings*, translated by Michael N. Forster (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 6
[87] Ibid., p. 7

Sage in the mountains), but for the public as a whole – a public that they themselves are inseparable from (they are critics, like everyone else).[88] This constellation of circularity and changing roles or positions presents a number of problems, which are addressed though a set of themes we can here identify as:

1. *An antagonistic structural principle*. The game of critique operates on the basic principle of antagonism that sets up a structure of the war of all against all - *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Yet, this is not a violent and brutish war that ensures the survival of some and the death and destruction of other; rather it is a "peaceful" war where no one is really hurt. Bayle described it in his dictionary in an entry on Catius as the *Règne de la Critique*:

> This commonwealth is a state extremely free. The Empire of Truth and Reason is only acknowledged in it; and under their Protection an innocent war is waged against any one whatever. Fiends ought to be on their guard, there, against their Friends, Fathers against their children, Father-in-law against their Sons-in-law, an in the Iron Age. […]
>
> *Non hospoes ab hospite tutus – non focer a genero* (Ovid)
> NO right of hospitality remain, The Grief by him, who habour'd him, is flain. The Son-in-law purfues his Fathers life, &e. Dyden
>
> Every body, there, is both Sovereign and under every-body's Jurisdiction. The laws of the Society have done no Prejudice to the Independency of the State of Nature, as to Error and Ignorance: in that respect, every particular Man has the Right of the Sword, and may exercise it without asking leave of those who govern. […] It is very easy to know why foreign Power ought to leave every on at liberty write against Authors, who are mistaken, but not to publish Satires. It is because Satires divert? A Man of his Reputation, which is a kind of civil Homicide, and consequently a Punishment, which ought only to be inflected by the Sovereign; but the criticizing of a book tends only to shew, that an Author has not such and such a degree a Knowledge. Now as he may enjoy all the Rights, and all the Privileges, of the Society, with this Defect of Knowledge, without his Reputation of an honest Man and a good Subject of the Common-Wealth receiving the left Blest by it; no Usurpation is made on the Majesty of the State, in shewing the public of faults, which are in a Book."[89]

The game of critique is a court or a tribunal without a presiding judge or king, but where everyone is the prosecutor and the persecuted. Critique is not an *exhortation*, it does not prescribe certain kinds of action; *it constitutes new grounds for action*. The antagonism is therefore not about telling the people in power what to do in this or that situation as in providing council as much as it is about clarifying what is was their prejudices prevented them from seeing.

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[88] Diderot: "I regard philosophes in a society, when they fulfil their duties, as the best defenders of the sovereign, if he is good. Sitting in their studies, they are like those buckets of water hanging up in the corridors of out police commissioners, ready to be thrown over the flames of fanaticism." Diderot, Denis. *Political Writings*, translated and edited by John Hope Mason and Robert Wokler (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 115-114

[89] Bayle, Pierre. *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle*, translated by Pierre Des Maizeua, vol. 3 (London: J.J. and P. Knapton, 1735), Catius [D]: *Règne de la Critique*, p. 389

2. *The strategic need for a (differentiated) space*. The game of critique in being played set up a designated space a network of critics that share a common object. Such a space operates by it own rules – the rules of the perpetual game of critique.[90] The constant danger of intrusion by an outside party that does not share the goals, nor the principles of the critics, is always present – hence Bayle's warning against foreign powers. Any given space (territory) within the state can be de-territorialized and subsequently re-territorialized with a game of critique: the game of critique is therefore actu-actualized in a variety of contexts (the arts, religion, and politics). Although Bayle stood alone in maintaining that the game of critique was a completely separate game from that of politics, to most thinkers critique was integral to politics in that there was a public sphere consisting the use of individual reason opposing a political sphere proper of the state.[91] It was at such a site that "public opinion" was produced.[92] At any event, the republic of letters, men of letters, the public sphere, the *règne de la critique* sets up the two poles of *state* and *critique* (understood as private reasoning) by means of a public sphere where flows circulate between them. In that way, public opinion feeds back to the state and provides it with its foundation. As Diderot explained it in the preface of the *Encyclopédie*:

> A society of men of letters and artisans, working in different places, each occupied with his own subject, bound together only by the general interest of humanity and a sense of mutual goodwill. […] If governments were to become involved in such an enterprise, it would never be completed. The sole influence which government should have upon it must be limited to that of rendering assistance. With a single word, a king may make a palace rise up from a field, but a society of men of letters is not like a gang of workmen. An *encyclopaedia* is not produced on command. It is an enterprise better pursued with obstinacy than begun by zeal. Work of this nature is conceived in courtyard, by chance, through conversation.[93]

So what was this 'assisting' role of the state in all of this? To the early moderns there was a kind of 'pact of critique', between the state on the one hand –that is, in last instance the king (as its representative)– and the population in the other hand. Critique is a great spectacle that takes place on the "stage" of the public as a war of all against all where everyone indulges, sometimes even the king (Frederick the Great or Catharine of

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[90] "*The public of authors* is" say Herder, "thus of a distinctive kind: invisible and omnipresent, often deaf, often dumb, and perhaps after years, after centuries, very loud and active. Lost and yet unlost, indeed unlosable, is that which gets deposited in its lap. One can never tally up with it; its book is never closed, the trial before and with it never gets concluded; it is always learning and never arrives at the final result [emphasis in original]." See, Herder, '*Letters for the Advancement of Humanity* (1793–7)', in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 372

[91] See, Habermas, Jurgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 23

[92] Ibid., p. 54

[93] Diderot, '*Encyclopédie*', in *Political Writing*s, p. 22

Russia). Yet, the formal sovereign power of the monarch is not expected to be on this stage – rather, the political power of the monarch has become more mysterious and secretive, painstakingly trying never to have its exercise caught in the public eye; the state institutes a differentiation between it and civil society. The King could therefore enjoy the whole show from the comfort of his balcony – only occasionally would a Wilkes Booth character with an unloaded gun show his face, he was out in the open after all. He was no longer in the spotlight representing itself publically. Nor is the King the judge, *reason* is – and not the kind of governmental reason that the rulers had always submitted to. Contrary to the mirrors with its philosopher king and the *gentilhomme*, who pointed out the rights of the king, critique consists in making distinctions – and distinction may very well work against power. What is the role of the king then? If anything, the king's very practical role is to guarantee that the game of truth of critique that is occupying the stage keep on going – like a janitor or grounds keeper. The good monarch is the one who says: "*Argue* as much as you like and about whatever you like, *but obey*!"[94] There is a necessary bifurcation in the game of critique where roles are assigned: the critics have to only let themselves govern by their own reason while the king has to ensure the integrity of the game itself – he only asks them to obey when the game gets out of hand (when it turns into counterproductive and bad critique). This is absolutely necessary: "a faculty that is independent of the government's command with regard to its teachings" Kant states, "one that, having no commands to give, is free to evaluate everything, and concerns itself with the interests of the sciences, that is, with truth: one in which reason is authorized to speak out publicly. […] For without a faculty of this kind, the truth would not come to light (and this would be to the government's own detriment)."[95] To Kant, critique involves rejecting any mode of thinking or acting, which cannot be adopted by all (including the king). He therefore ultimately was a subject to reason, and not the other way around. We find this same insight in the blatant irony of Voltaire when he stated that "A king who is not contradicted can hardly be wicked" is that it is only when he is contradicted that he will show his true nature.[96] If the king abides by the pact of critique he will not be contradicted; he would have submitted to reason. The king must submit his rule to reason, and now contrary to in the past that means critique; or in other words, it is the king's *tolerating* posture towards

[94] Kant, '*What is Enlightenment?*', p. 55 and 59
[95] Kant, '*Conflict of the Faculties*', p. 249
[96] Voltaire, *Pensées*, p. 219

critique is what is important.[97] But it was not only the king and his patience that were bound – the critic too had to be of an earnest posture. In works of critique was therefore commonplace to give a kind of *oath to the sovereign,* which clarified that, the intention of the critique that it was clear and earnest that the king may now do with it as he chooses (this is not flattery; *just saying*). From Spinoza to Kant, almost everyone has a place where they present their work with humility this or the other king – a gesture that goes back to the autocratic relation and not that interesting because its purpose is to assure that there are no ill intentions in the work presented. It is as if they say, "oh kind prince, let me publish these wise words, I assure that they are not superstitions demagoguery" and then hope not to be censured.[98] Therefore a pact of critique to which both parties agrees to concede.

3. *The dynamic of censure of self-censure*. There are two ways in which the game of critique was *censured* that follow different logics and would unavoidably cross each other. The first is external and was motivated by those who stood relatively outside the game of critique itself: as reason sets up what is reasonable and tolerable those in power will (against their own interest, or so the argument usually went) attempt to prevent others from making use of reason. "…if this freedom [of the pen] is denied, we are deprived at the same time of a great means of testing the correctness of our own judgments, and we are exposed to error" Kant writes as a warning of the problematic of censure in the *Anthropology*.[99] This was an old struggle between those in power and those striving to replace them, and thus the theme was nothing new; Milton had in 1644 written *Areopagitica* – a speech for the liberty for unlicensed printing that was at the time denied by Charles I. "People have wanted to appoint guardians for this eternal minor, the *censors*" writes Herder, "but as experience has shown, with fruitless effort and for the most part with the most unpleasant outcome."[100] Clearly there was a contradiction in insisting on the game of critique being governed by reason alone and, at the same time, having an appointed censure act as a judge over what was worthy of publication. The appointed censer, Herder held, will never be able to outweigh the "voice-vote

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[97] As Bayle stated: "those who govern states should employ an aide to recite each morning: *persecute no one for his opinions in religion and do not use the right of the sword against conscience* [emphasis in original]." *Mâcon*, in *Political Writings*, p. 176

[98] Spinoza for example wrote: "I maintain nothing that I would not very willingly submit to the examination and judgment of the sovereign authorities of my country. If they judge anything I say to be in conflict with the laws of my country or prejudicial to the common good, I wish it unsaid. I know that I am human and may have erred." *Theological-Political Treatise*, p. 12

[99] Kant, Immanuel. *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, translated by Robert B. Louden (Cambridge University Press, 2006), (7:129), p. 17

[100] Herder, *Philosophical Writings*, p. 372

of the public" – he has no *legitimation*: "The author will hence always have the ground of objection against him that he is usurping in advance the judgment of the world."[101] The problem was dynamic as became apparent with the French Revolution; something that Diderot was not too interested in when he wrote: "Undoubtedly, freedom of the press produces these drawback [?]. But they are so trivial and short-lived, in comparison with the advantages, that I shall not bother to dwell on them."[102] There is yet still not a firm conviction that the positive effects of the freedom to publish ones thoughts could be overshadowed by its negative consequences.

When Voltaire proclaimed that "in a republic worthy of the name, the freedom to publish one's thoughts in the natural right of the citizen. He can use his pen as he uses his voice; he must no more be forbidden to write than to speak, and crimes committed with the pen should be punished in the same way as crimes committed by word of mouth" a second logic appears in the end.[103] This second logic of censure that was an intramural part to the game of critique is that of *self-censure*. That reason takes the form of unreason has become a dominating theme today, but to the internal logic of the game of critique it did not follow: there was still a belief in the ability to tell truth from lie by means of the public use of reason. Yet, there were strong warnings about the damages of inflammatory language in many works of the time. "Satires divert", as Bayle proclaims, they should not be written. As he states in another place in the *Dictionnaire*: "This Republic [of letters] has nothing to do with "*libellés diffamatoires*" and "*satire*" – it has a non-polemical nature."[104] Bayle also complained about the damaging nature of Milton's writings: "he everywhere acts the part of a droll and buffoon."[105] Another example is how Voltaire, after they had broken the bonds of friendship, would complain about Rousseau's enflaming writing in *the Social Contract*: "when a man, whomever he might be, thinks enough for himself to give lessons on public administration, he must give the appearance of good sense and impartiality, like the laws themselves which he is invoking."[106]

4. *The price of admission*. To be critical was an attitude that had a cost – there is a price to be paid to enter the game of critique; and not just any price, but one

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[101] Ibid., p. 372
[102] Diderot, *Political Writings*, p. 183
[103] Voltaire, *Political Writings*, p. 201
[104] Bayle, Catius [D]: *Règne de la Critique,* p. 389
[105] Bayle, Pierre. *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle,* translated by Pierre Des Maizeuax, vol. 4 (London: J.J. and P. Knapton, 1737), *Milton* [F], p. 218
[106] Voltaire, *Political Writings*, p. 205

that is deeply personal. The experience of participating in the game of critique is therefore associated with something like a sacrifice – it is of course a re-iteration of an old theme, which is revealed when Kant returns to the Socratic midwife to explain his doctrine of methods of ethics in *Metaphysics of Morals*.[107] In the preface of a second letter to Bordes, Rousseau contemplates the cost of his many critical engagements throughout his life – costs suffered as blows inflicted upon his character, like the ridicule he had suffered in Charles Pilissot's *the Philosophers*, where Rousseau upon all four proclaims that he would confine himself to the animal kingdom rather than converse with fools. Although Rousseau professes a "duty … to tell them the truth or what I take to be the truth" with a "dangerous frankness" that demands all his "courage" – the maxim *vitam impedere vero* "to dedicate life to truth" that he would develop in the forth of the *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* ("know thyself" was not as easy a maxim to follow as he held in *Confessions*).[108] Faithfully establishing factual truths of places, times and persons will not do, that act of committing a life to truth is a *sacrifice*, there has to be a cost.[109] Yet, this would still be the public at large that he is addressing

Furthermore, there is even a kind of ritualistic offering the realm of critique when true-discourse is delivered: in most prefaces to books there is an almost ceremonial offering and plea, not to the gods who one hopes will hear one's discourse and help it set the mood, nor the king placed on his throne by God almighty, but to the realm of critique – to the reader who will take care to read ones work carefully and without prejudices, that they will think long and hard over the issues raised, and engage in a debate over what they did not find convincing. So Hobbes writes to the reader: "I offer this little book more for your criticism than for your praise, since I have come to know by sure experience that opinions gain favour with you not by fame of the authors or the novelty of the views of the attractive way they are presented, but by the strength of their reasoning."[110] Sometimes such gestures are even followed by a declaration that if the readers critique is sound and just the author will strive to answer them point-by-point.

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[107] Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Mary J. Gregor and Jens Timmermann (eds.) (Cambridge University Press, 2012), I.§50, p. 222

[108] Rousseau, '*Letter to Bordes*', in *The Discourses and Other Political Writings*, pp.107-110

[109] cf. Ibid., 51

[110] Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, p. 6

III

[11] In a world that is dominated by Zealotry and superstition, how does one safeguard philosophy but prevent spurious true-discourses from contaminating thought and politics – that is how the game of critique comes to fall under the problem of political order; a problem, which is defined in terms of authority and community. The absolutist had already dealt with this problem by banishing all true-discourse than that of the state, but the question then became how to open enough space for critique and at the same time prevent it from spinning out of control, a balance that many thinkers at the time struggled with.

"In a free state," Spinoza proclaimed, "everyone is allowed to think what they wish and to say what they think"[111] To be one's own judge of what is true and what is false is up to each individual, not a government bent on oppressing its people and controlling their minds: "No one, therefore, can surrender their freedom to judge and to think as they wish and everyone, by the supreme right of nature, remains master of their own thoughts."[112] And yet therein lies also a danger because on the other hand making each individual the master of his own thoughts, there would also be a real risk that he is fooled by some demagogue or gruesome person who persuades him. The problem as Spinoza identified it was that "if it is impossible altogether to deny subjects this freedom, it is, on the other hand, likewise very dangerous to concede it without any restriction. For this reason we must now ask how far this freedom can and ought to be granted to each person, so as to be consistent with the stability of the state and protecting the sovereign's authority."[113] And he therefore continues:

> the fundamental principles of the state which I explained above that its ultimate purpose is not to dominate or control people by fear or subject them to the authority of another. On the contrary, its aim is to free everyone from fear so that they may live in security so far as possible, that is, so that they may retain, to the highest possible degree, their natural right to live and to act without harm to themselves or to others. It is not, I contend, the purpose of the state to turn people from rational beings into beasts or automata, but rather to allow their minds and bodies to develop in their own ways in security and enjoy the free use of reason, and not to participate in conflicts based on hatred, anger or deceit or in malicious disputes with each other. Therefore, *the true purpose of the state is in fact freedom*.[114]

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[111] Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, p. 250

[112] Ibid., p. 251

[113] Ibid., p. 252

[114] Ibid., p. 252 [my emphasis]. The theme of security is here not what I want to focus on, it should be quite obvious, that for there to be a free game of critique there need to be security for the individuals participating – anarchy is counterproductive to critique.

The role of the state becomes very explicit; it is to safeguard the game of critique, and it does so by setting limits to what kind of true-discourse is possible. With the danger of superstition and bad critique – i.e. slander and insult – these limits are set towards the state itself, its citizens, and a designation as to what kind of knowledge that is permitted to be created.

This unavoidably makes the state the target of critique and in a way it is exactly the critique of the state, which brings the state into existence–*thought conjures up a world that can then be experienced*. The origin and strength of the authority of the state lies in the many efforts to question the basis of its authority; from Hobbes and Spinoza to Locke and Rousseau, all philosophies of natural right have tried to unmask the state with a state of nature. Imagining it away to reveal its absolute necessity. Critique is thus a way of appropriating the state (the critics claim to authority), to bend it to ones will and thus, the bourgeois, by insisting on popular sovereignty and natural law appropriates the state from the absolutist king. But like Bayle's Penelope who would unravel at night what she had weaved at day, critique is perpetual and without end, then so is the state appropriated, re-appropriated and under the way given new purposes. There is no critique without the state and there is no state without a critique of it. In Jens Bartelson's words, "criticism shares the conditions of possibility of its object."[115] To that end, there is a fundamental circularity between the game critique, as it emerges at the middle of the seventeenth century, and the state: for there to be critique, there needs to be a state that creates the possibility of such a critique and for there to be a state, there needs to be an unmasking of authority that redefines and sets the limits to the problem of political order. It is critique (i.e. the freedom of thought) that conjures up the reality of the state, which we then can experience.

[12] The concept of the state has at least three components that are given by two distinctions that provide it with its two boundaries. First distinction is that between the inside and the outside of the state: *the constitutive outside*. It is constitutive, because it is exactly on this background that the state receives its unity. The political disorder that once existed within the state is displaced beyond its boarders by the constitution of sovereignty. Today we predominately know this distinction as that between the domestic and the international. Second distinction is that between *government* and *civil society*. This differentiation constitutes the government as the sole holder of authority over the multi-

[115] Bartelson, Jens. *The Critique of the State* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 184

plicity of individual as well as collective actors within civil society. While the first distinction is *absolute* because it secured the states integrity, the second is *fluid* as there can always be more or less government. Within this concept of the state that authority, community, and imposing limits on knowledge, which can be identified in the following three themes:

1. *The displacement of authority.* Everything has to be questioned, that is the spirit of critique. This includes political authority. The problem of political order always rested on mythical foundations: just like discussion of the *politeia* was rooted in the concept of *dikaion*, the kings' authority to rule was bestowed upon him by the grace of God (usually justified through the rule of Abraham), so too does the authority of the state come from the *critique* of it. What this critique aimed to do was to displace the problem of political order by posing it as a different question. The question no longer by what right can the king claim to rule. Rather, the question was: *what is the origin of society*? The answer to the question is the problems of the state of nature and the social contract. The *positive* of thought thereby moves from the concept of a king's divine right, to a society formed on the basis of a social contract entered into by free individuals. Thus, political order came to be constituted in an abstract principle rather than by the political personage of the king and the theological-cosmological continuum is rejected over rational government.

Because of the obvious paradoxical characteristics of the state of nature –in whatever way the different authors conceptualise it– it is always the very antinomy of society, but somehow it contains and elucidates in advance the ideal of the society to be created. And thus the second implication is that where the natural inequality of men that is characteristic of feudal society is challenged and replaced by a bourgeois doctrine of a social contract between men *equal* status there was always a critique of the legitimacy and authority of the state.[116] This constant rehashing of the foundations of society keeps the basis for state authority in suspense, a process that can only create civil conflict. After Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, and Rousseau had debased the foundation of state authority and posited their own version of the origins of political order – positives that nourished the various conflict in Europe, Kant sought to put a stop to this inquiry by constituting a limit to the critique of the state: "[t]he origin of supreme power … is not discoverable by the people who are subject to it. In other words, the subject ought not to indulge in speculations about its origin with a view to acting upon them … Whether in

[116] See especially Rousseau, Jean Jacques. '*Discourse on the Origin and the Foundation of Inequality Among Men*', in *The Discourses and Other Political Writings*, pp. 111-160

fact an actual contract originally preceded their submission to the state's authority, whether the power came first and the law only appeared after it, or whether they ought to have followed this order – these are completely futile arguments for a people which is already subject to civil law, and they constitute a menace to the state."[117]

*2. A community united in the authority of the law***.** "Freedom consists in being dependent only on the law," proclaims Voltaire.[118] If the realm of critique is to function, there must be self-imposed limits on who can critique and who cannot; the *right and law of a community of citizens* was therefore another important theme in the discourses on the state. If the state is to guarantee any kind of stability in the relation between truth and politics then the citizens must be provided with rights that are secured by the law. It too late for appeals to *isēgoria* or to a benevolent God who would install a ruler in his own image; rather, these rights and laws had to be given in *reason*. And thus this theme of the "rights" and "duties" of the citizen toward the state (i.e. themselves) appear in almost all treatises of political thought at the time, something that was completely foreign to the Mirrors of Princes, where the subjects had different duties towards the king based on their caste as well as he to them. In the discourses on natural right the common problem is to define exactly how far the right of the state should impose on the rights of the citizen. That power is transferred to the sovereign is always the case, but how much and what does comes in return: "Each one therefore surrendered his right to act according to his own resolution, but not his right to think and judge for himself," is an example of how Spinoza approaches the problem when the theme becomes the right of each citizen to practice critique.[119] This theme is special because, according to Spinoza, attempts to impose restrictions on freedom on thought has only ever resulted in "schisms" within the "*ecclesia"* (community), and later he proclaims that "freedom of judgment must necessarily be permitted and people must be governed in such a way that they can live in harmony, even though they openly hold different and contradictory opinions."[120] Spinoza illustrates this with two examples: the republic Amsterdam and Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants (as the negative example where settling religious disputes by law ended in a the Orangist coup d'état), of which "the real agitators [were] those who attempt to do away with freedom of judgment in a free republic – a

[117] Kant, *Groundwork on the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 143
[118] Voltaire, *Political Writings*, p. 216
[119] Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, p. 252
[120] Ibid., p. 256-7

freedom which cannot be suppressed."[121] Thus the question becomes what rights can be given to the citizens of the state by means of law, and how does that secure their ability to use their own reason to think and judge for themselves?

And, in so far as the rights of the citizens and laws of the state are established though knowledge –that is, by drawing distinctions– theories of natural right sets of structures that inclusion and exclusion thought the social contract, i.e. the law. This is exactly the same theme that we find later in Kant: if we could talk in terms of an "original contract," Kant declares, there are three principles that can be established according to pure reason, and thus are not a real state (phenomenal) but an ideal (noumenal).[122] First of all, *freedom* (*liberty*) where "each may seek his happiness in whatever way he sees fit, so long as he does not infringe upon the freedom of others to pursue a similar end which can be reconciled with the freedom of everyone else within a workable general law – i.e. he must accord to other the same right a he enjoys himself. […] This right of freedom belongs to each member of the commonwealth as a human being, in so far as each is a being capable of possessing rights."[123] Second, *equality* (…) of citizens, understood as a state where all members in the commonwealth has the right to coerce one another except the head of state who is a non-member but a preserver that is not subject to the laws, but also that of a meritocracy where the appointment to any office or rank within the state is independent of any hereditary privileges (the bourgeois principle of equality).[124] And lastly *independence* (*sibisufficientia*), by which Kant means, "anyone who has the right to vote on this legislation is a *citizen* (*citoyen*, i.e. citizen of the state, not *bourgeois* or citizen of a town). The only qualification required to be a citizen (apart, of course, from being an adult male) is that he must be his *own master* (*sui iuris*), and must have some *property* (which can include any sill, trade, fine art or science) to support himself. In cases where he must earn his living from others, he must earn it only by *selling* that which is his, and not by allowing others to make use of him; for he must in the true sense of the word serve no-one but the commonwealth. In this respect, artisans and large or small landowners are all equal."[125]

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[121] Ibid., p. 258

[122] According to Kant, "the civil state, regarded purely as a lawful state, is based on the following *a priori* principles: 1. The freedom of every member of society as a human being; 2. The equality of each with all the others as a subject; 3. The independence of each member of a commonwealth as a citizen." See, Kant, Immanuel. '*On the Common Saying: 'This May be true in Theory, but is does not apply in Practice*', in *Kant: Political Writings*, p. 74 – from here on referred to as *Theory and Practice*.

[123] Ibid., p. 74

[124] Ibid., p. 74

[125] Ibid., pp. 77-78

3. *A specialized knowledge.* Ever since the discourse of *Raison d'État*, the search for a proper *Scitentia Politica* has been a well-known theme. It is one we find in the writings of Hobbes, Montesquieu, and Vico as well as many others. When it comes to the game of critique as a break from the game of *vir civilis* (and eloquence), however, it is particularly telling how the absolutist authors rehash the exact same themes as those of the autocratic relationship between truth and power when it comes to how philosophy is to relate politics. In *Politics drawn from the very word of holy scripture*, for example, Bousset devotes a large discussion which completely rehashes the themes of the past: "the king does not have to justify his use of reason," "royal authority is subject to reason," "the prince must know himself" he must have a "love of truth," the prince "must take council and give full freedom to councillors," he must choose them well and be aware of bad ones, etc. Filmer did much the same thing in his *Patraircha*. Yet, someone who is even more puzzling is Hobbes, who cannot decide how the question should be addressed, let alone posed: he either starts from the position of power (the monarch) or he starts with truth (the production of knowledge). He first takes up a position in favour of the new scientific way of producing political knowledge, where after he revises this position in light of the historical circumstances of the English revolution. To Hobbes there is no easy solution, because one excludes the other and vice versa, and thus in the end he sides with the king and inevitably with the old model. A relationship that when put into practice has shown to be problematic on its own terms.

In *De Cive*, he proclaims that "if the patterns of human action were known with the same certainty as the relations of magnitude in figures, ambition and greed, whose power rests on the false opinions of the common people about right and wrong (*jus et iniuria*), would be disarmed, and the human race would enjoy such secure peace that […] it seems unlikely that it would ever have to fight again."[126] The old models of eloquence and the "teaching of fables" that mystify the origins of authority (Hobbes's way of reject the Homeric Greeks) have not made any attempt to obtain such results. In fact, says Hobbes:

> the war of the sword and the war of the pens is perpetual: there is no greater knowledge (*scientia*) of natural right and natural laws today than in the past; both parties to a dispute defend their right with the opinions of philosophers; one and the same action is praised by some and criticized by others; a man now approves what at another time he condemns, and gives a different judgement of an action when he does it than when someone else the very same thing.[127]

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[126] Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, p. 5. In *The Element of Law*, Hobbes posed the problem as one between reason and the passions. See: Hobbes, Thomas. *The Element of Law: Natural and Politic*, edited by J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 19

[127] Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, p. 5

A science that is occupied with intellectual exercises may contain errors, he concedes, but a science occupied with government that contains errors will have terrible consequences. Any such science should therefore according to Hobbes be based on true principles so as to avoid these and mentions the following problems as the result of deliberation of "private men": the false doctrines of tyrannicide, unlawful conquest, sovereign kings reduced to servants of society, and whether the king's commands are just or unjust is a private matter necessarily discussed. A science of politics therefore "belongs to princes and to show whose business it is to govern mankind. "[128]

The starting point of science, Hobbes proclaims, is reason: "in the very shadows of doubt a thread of reason (so to speak) begins, by whose guidance we shall escape to the clearest light."[129] And thus, after rejecting the structure of conventional rhetoric, Hobbes proposes to go about taking apart the state as an automatic Clock – a complex thing that is "best known from its constituents." By the reductive method he can subsequently split the commonwealth into three parts and relate them back into a coherent whole: a *Libertas*, which constitutes the nature of man, an *Imperium,* which is the government, and *Religio*, which reconciles natural law with divine right, thus showing how this method is not in conflict with holy scripture.[130] To Hobbes, it should not be a question of whether one is able to persuade others of the value of science – its method secures that its results would be followed; they are after all given by nature.

In *Leviathan*, however, Hobbes returns to the themes surrounding the problems of *eloquence*, and not surprisingly the discourse on council in this text on natural law is almost identical to those seen in the Mirrors for Princes. Except, and this is important, there is a new task for philosophy hidden in there, one which is moved further away from politics, yet has remained closer: there is clearly a change in emphasis (?).[131] In the preface to *Leviathan* Hobbes had proclaimed that *salus populi* was the business of the state and that counsellors would have an important role to play because they knew everything that was useful. Yet, when it comes to chapter twenty-five, where he discusses the problems of council, Hobbes is wonderfully suspicious of any attempt of exhortation –"*Counsell vehemently pressed*"– and sees immediately three problems with

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[128] Ibid., p. 8
[129] Ibid., p. 5
[130] Ibid., p. 10
[131] According to Skinner there was in Hobbes' *scientia civilis* a need for both reason and rhetoric. By the time of publishing *Leviathan*, Hobbes had come to the view that "the methods of demonstrative reasoning need to be supplemented by the moving force of eloquence." Skinner, Quentin. *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 5

this kind of council: it is he who gives it that decides to give it not the listener, it is always given in a multitude and can therefore not be interrupted and examined, and those who give it are corrupted by their own passions and by their own interest.[132] And yet Hobbes struggles here, because the new model for philosophy and politics based on reason and a proper science makes little sense in the eyes of the old model because it has no persuasive power in it rhetoric – the only possible way in which philosophy can have a relation to politics is if it remains a distinct entity. In other words, there has to be *reason* in council and so we end up with a sort of mix where Hobbes ends by concluding that "in all Deliberations, and in all Pleadings, the faculty of solid Reasoning, is necessary: for without it, the Resolutions of men are rash, and their Sentences unjust: and yet if there be not powerful Eloquence, which procureth attention and Consent, the effect of Reason will be little."[133] Hobbes therefore concludes: "Reason, and Eloquence, […] may stand very well together."[134]

The ambiguity of Hobbes is hardly surprising, as the theme of political knowledge has obviously always been central to discourses on politics; yet in periods of revolution and transformation of thought such questions always have different points of entry. The emergence of the state within the discourse of critique has the purpose to limiting the activity of critique itself by subjecting it to a set of rules – that is, critique should only permitted in relation to the state (the realm of politics proper) if it comes in the form of a science.

The most ambitious and extreme example of this kind of thinking is probably that of Spinoza's idea of the state as a 'single mind'. He starts his discourse by complaining about how the old philosophers conceived of "man not as they are, but as they would like them to be," and thereby rejecting the model of exhortation. The authoritative basis of the state has to be different from that of a *politeia* and divine right of kings.[135] Rather, the authoritative basis for the state is reason: "the commonwealth that is based on reason and directed by reason is most powerful and most in control of its own right. For the right of a commonwealth is determined by the power of a people that

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[132] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 178. See also chapter 46 of Leviathan on how Hobbes interprets the ancients and is unable to reconcile the democratic relation between philosophy and politics with the Christian soul.
[133] Ibid., p. 483
[134] Ibid., p. 483-4
[135] Spinoza elaborates: "We have also shown that reason can indeed do much to control and moderate the passions; but at the same time we have seen that the path taught by reason [philosophy] is a very difficult one, so that those who believe that ordinary people or those who are busily engaged in public business can be persuaded to live solely at reason's behest are dreaming of the poets' golden age or of a fairy tale." See, Spinoza, Benedictus de. '*Political Treatise*', in *Complete Works*, translated and edited by Samuel Shirley and Michael L. Morgan (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub., 2002), p. 682

is guided as though by a *single mind*. But this union of minds could in no way be conceived unless the chief aim of the commonwealth is identical with that which sound reason teaches us is for the good of all men [my emphasis]."[136] The aim is, of course, the *salus populi suprema lex estoi* and the maintenance of freedom. We see again how the typology of constitutions ceases to matter because what really needs to be established is a "single mind" of the people – which is the only way in which true reason can govern.[137] In other words, the type of government is irrelevant as long as it governs according to reason alone. The model mirrors that of the critic himself: "the king is to be regarded as the mind of the commonwealth, and this council as the mind's external senses or body of the commonwealth, through which the mind perceives the condition of the commonwealth and does what it decides is best for itself."[138] So great is Spinoza's faith in a reasonable nature that a strict division is instituted between the "single mind" of the government and the citizen – everything is to be mediated between a council, and also communication with other governments.

By the creation of this monotone entity of a "single mind," Spinoza compartmentalizes thought into (*Scientia Politica*) and (*Philosophia*), and thereby the creation of political science effectively limits the relationship philosophical discourse can have to politics. Or rather, the *scientia politica* constitutes a limit, a barrier put up by politics that is placed on philosophy's ability to test its reality in politics. The true-discourses of the *parrhēsiast* and the philosophical counsellor are only admissible in so far as they are given in the language of this new 'political science', which per definition they are not; consequently they are either, as discourses, eliminated or mocked. Similar limits are constituted in Montesquieu's proposed solution to this, where the proper task for philosophy was work out the dialectic of history, aligning *principle* with *nature* within the totality of the state.

Between freedom and necessity, natural law leaves little room for any dynamism between politics and philosophy – everything is necessarily predetermined by the mind of God, who designed the natural law. The *scientia politica* was supposed to resolve this paradox between freedom and nature. Yet, "whatever conception of the freedom of the will one may form in terms of metaphysics," Kant argued, "the will's manifestation is in the world of phenomena, i.e. human action, are determined in accordance with natural

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[136] Ibid., p. 692

[137] "how a community governed as a Monarchy or as an Aristocracy should be organised if it is not to degenerate into a Tyranny, and if the peace and Freedom of its citizens is to remain inviolate." Ibid., p. 680

[138] Ibid., p. 704

laws, as is every other natural event."[139] And thus taking Kepler or Newton as a model, Kant thought that the "only way out for the philosopher, since he cannot assume that mankind follows any rational purpose of its own in its collective actions [the great world-drama of folly and childish vanity] is for him to attempt to discover a purpose in nature behind this senseless course of human events, and decide whether it is after all possible to formulate in terms of a definite plan of nature a history of creatures who act without a plan of their own."[140] It is therefore up to the critical philosopher to try in error, until he succeeds with his political science. Kant was aware of this when he formulated his idea of what a *scientia politica* can achieve in *The Metaphysical Elements of Right*, where he lays out the principles of the categorical imperative that forms the basis for his 'moral science'. And what an inherent contradiction it is: the state becomes immune to novel thought (thought that is not useful as inflexible determined beforehand), meaning that the state is a resilient solution to the problem of political order (before there was a range of political anatomies available; monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, and everything in between). Worse still, no re-imaginations of the question of political order are acceptable because only the state can safe guard the game of critique – *the limit of critique is its very object*.

IV

[13] We should recall that the problems of political game consisted mainly in the *procedures*, *techniques*, and *practices* that governed it, as well as the *character*, *quality*, and *moral conduct* of the political man. Indeed, the *salons* of France, the coffee houses of England, or the *Tischgesellschaften* of Germany; the architecture of the buildings and the display of culture in public theatres, concert halls, and art museums; the various technologies in the printing presses that produced the many journals and gazettes; or the structure of the bourgeois family and the individualization of political man whose most intimate spaces are oriented towards the dumbstruck audiences – all constitutes the material possibility and limitations of the game of critique. The critic is sustained by a combination of entertainment and paper sullied in ink, and when it gets a little too dull, coffee and sugar. But these procedures and techniques do not in themselves provide us

[139] Kant, Immanuel. '*Idea for a universal history with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*', in *Kant Political Writings*, p. 41
[140] Ibid., p. 43

with a principle that governs the relation between politics and philosophy, but their conditionality. And probably more so, they produce and govern the *same* – the production and reproduction of a modern subjectivity in the proper double sense of the word. We can therefore not look here for a principle that would govern the political game in such a way as to leave open a space, however small, for novel and authentic thought. What about morality and moral writings? In the political treatises of the time, it is true, *morality* –ever since it was separated from politics under the Absolutists– was a central concern in early modern and modern thought: how could morality and politics coexist? Yet, morality does not function as the principle by which game of critique is governed – or rather, there is nothing new to the theme of morality after the Mirrors of Princes had prescribed moral behaviour to king and commoner alike. The *régne de la critique* did not make the distinction either; but it was also a different game all together. And for all that it could not be governed by the same principle that had structured the court society (nor for that matter that of ethical differentiation, as the antagonistic structure produced moods that the religious demagogues had used). This is exactly what happens when Kant grounds the principles of morality and ethics in the categorical imperative which was anchored in reason – by comparison, the ethics and morality that it produces looks much like those produced by earlier techniques and strategies.

We might consider the story of the protestant merchant Jean Calas –a man who was falsely accused by furious crowd of murdering his own son, and condemned to be broken on the wheel by a court of eight judges in Toulouse in 1762– who, according to Voltaire, only showed that "in the age when philosophy has made too much progress, and a hundred academics are writing for the improvement of our morals! It would seem that fanaticism is angry at the success of reason, and combats it more furiously."[141] Here was a man whose faith was sealed by the superstition of the crowds that would celebrate the murder of thousands of their own citizens, the corruption of a court of law that although all the evidence pointed to the innocence of the man had convicted him nonetheless, and the indifference of the king and general populous, even the "*devout*", that had only contempt for the man and considered it better to sacrifice one innocent man over the integrity of the court. This was only one incidence, but to Voltaire one that stressed the gruesomeness of the wars that followed the reformation, and the spectre of fanaticism that had swept though Europe lead him to propose the following principle of toleration: "every citizen shall be free to follow his own reason, and believe whatever

[141] Voltaire, '*Treatise on Toleration*', in *Toleration and Other Essay by Voltaire*, translated by Joseph McCabe (New York: The Knickerbsroker Press, 1912) pp. 6-7

this enlightened or deluded reason shall dictate to him […] provided he does not disturb the public order."[142] Toleration is primarily about the freedom of religious conscience and is one of the most well known themes of Early Modernity and the Enlightenment; it is also about the use of one own reason, which is exactly why it is central to the game of critique. We can now explore how the game of critique is governed by the principle of toleration more broadly.

[14] Toleration was hardly a new concept in the sixteenth century, but it became central to political-philosophical discourse because of the religious-political conflict that ravaged Europe after the Reformation. Toleration comes from Latin *tolerantia* (to tolerate) meaning to bear, support, or endure – from *tolerātus* (past participle of having endured, to have been tolerated), from *tolerō* ("I endure"). Cicero, in line with Stoic thought, used toleration (*tolerantia*) to denote the virtue of endurance – *virtus tolerantiae* – for when a person would withstand suffering, pain, or injustice by inner strength and self-control.[143] Later in the early Christian discourses, toleration is considered on the one hand as an attitude *to oneself*, or rather *to God*, and on the other toleration denoted the relation *to others* – *mutua tolerantia* – that is, to other religions. Augustine speaks of God reserving an "eternal reward" for the "pious endurance of temporal ills", while Tertullian used toleration in a juridical considering of how Christians were treated in the relation to other religions in the Roman Empire, while Cyprianus' plea for the toleration of Christian was based on reason and humanity.[144] To the Christians, only faith based on inner conviction was pleasing to God. True faith cannot therefore be attained by external force; the dictum *credere non potest nisi volens* (one can believe unless he is willing) thus constituted the most important justification for the freedom of conscience.[145]

Later on the discourse on toleration in the sixteenth century were both about religious coexistence as well as political stability – but predominantly the latter as it was religious intolerance that was the pressing challenge of the age. Therefore in particular, toleration could not be defended on religious grounds as such a defence would neces-

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[142] ibid., p. 54

[143] Cic.*PaStoi*.IV.27

[144] Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, translated by R. W. Dyson (Cambridge University Press, 1998), vol. 1, §29, p. 44; Tert.*Apo*.37; Cyprianus, *De bono patientiae*, §15

[145] Such conviction, even among the early Christians proved problematic and justifications of toleration are Janus-faced because they are ultimately bound up on serving the true faith. In a sense there is a *duty of intolerance*. See for example Augustine's discussion of the schism between Roman Catholics and Donatists, 408: *Letters*, vol. I (1.81)

sarily mean that whatever arguments were used would be intrinsic to one party's reasoning, and so toleration had to be defended on political grounds (an external position): and so Bodin, in *Six Books of a Commonwealth,* justified toleration on political grounds, because what was at stake for him and the *politiques* was the stability of the state.[146] Contrary to the original prudential outlook, this shortly led to policies of *intolerance* under the later Absolutist – a point that disappoints Bayle greatly.[147] Hobbes, for example, quite explicitly banishes worship that is not that of the sovereign to a private sphere because he saw uniformity of religion as the basis of a well-functioning commonwealth: "Publique, is the worship that a Common-wealth performeth, as one person […] Pivate, is in secret Free."[148] Publically the states religion had to be performed, privately one could pray as one pleased – a dogma with a Roman ethos. However, later this insistence of making the discourse of religious toleration a matter of the state would link it to the famous problem and theme of moderate government: not as the moderation that one had to exercise over oneself to gain self-mastery, but as a moderation that had to be implemented in the government of others. That is, it was not the king that had a problem with moderation, but rather the compulsions and predispositions of the peoples he was charged with governing that were to be moderated. Thus, when addressing the question of religious tolerations "we are political men not theologians," says Montesquieu, and argues that we must reason by the principle that "every religion which is repressed becomes repressive itself", and that therefore when there is a reversal of power-relations the repressed religion will become tyrannical. It is therefore necessary to ask of all religions that "they not disturb the state, but also that they not disturb each other."[149] Toleration is a principle that applies equally to the whole stratum of society. Yet, Montesquieu qualifies this by recommending that once it is established a religion is to be tolerated, but because religion are intolerant towards one another the state should strive to prevent them from establishing themselves.

Before him, Locke had formulated the most noticeable statement on religious toleration in his *Epistola de Tolerantia*. In some of his early notes for the essay, Locke frames the problem of religious toleration in a similar fashion as Bodin and the early Absolutists: "In the question of liberty of conscience both parties have with equal zeal and mistake too much enlarged their pretensions, whilst one side preach up absolute

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[146] Bodin, *Six Books of a Commonwealth*, IV.VII, p. 143

[147] See especially the following entrées in *Dictionnaire historique et critique*: Bayle, *Political Writings*, Bodin, De l'Hôpital, Mâcon, and Sainctes (Claude de)

[148] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, II.31, p. 401

[149] Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, book XXV, chap. 9, pp. 487-8

obedience, and the other claim universal liberty in matters of conscience, without assigning what those things are which have a title to liberty or showing the boundaries of imposition and obedience."[150] Thus it is from the "impartial" third position that Locke starts his inquiry. The argument is well known: Locke seeks to distinguish civil government from that of religious government by defining one as having to govern matters that are external to the individual whereas the latter govern matter that are internal to the individual – that is, civil government is about (*bona civilia voco*) life, liberty, and the welfare of the citizens and religious government is about the salvation of their eternal soul.[151] Thus, contrary to Absolutist like Hobbes, Locke makes it the explicit duty of the state to tolerate; secular government should not concern itself with the care of souls. Having allocated a role for the magistrate, the question he has to answer is this: what ought to be tolerated and what ought not to be tolerated in order to obtain the goal of preserving the commonwealth?

Firstly, it naturally follows that there are a number of practices which might be unwanted and problematic on their own terms that nevertheless does not come within the magistrate's purview and therefore are worthy of toleration: like speculative opinions towards divine worship, the unorthodox practices by which one is indifferent towards others (like polygamy and divorce), or other actions or practices that might conflict with moral teachings of various kinds.[152] The second problem that Locke sees is one where "men herd themselves into companies with distinctions from the public," only to grow in size and become a menace to society.[153] These are the fanatic and other dissidents of Christianity. However, because violence and persecution are unable to change their opinions and because they are inconstant in their beliefs, Locke holds that the different parties amongst themselves are "so shattered into different factions are best secured by toleration."[154] Yet, the real problem is with those that like the papists, who according to Locke, held opinions that are destructive to government; would deny toleration of others where they had power; and were irreconcilable enemies in both principles and interests because they answer to the Pope alone. As he states in the Letter: the Catholics "can have no right to be tolerated by the magistrate which is constituted upon such a bottom that all those who enter into it do thereby *ipso facto*

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[150] Locke, John. '*An Essay on Toleration*', in *Locke: Political Essays*, edited by Mark Goldie (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 135

[151] Locke, John. *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, edited by Mario Montuori (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), p. 14

[152] Locke, *Essay on Toleration*, pp. 136-144

[153] Ibid., p. 147

[154] Ibid., p. 157

deliver themselves up to the protection and service of another prince."[155] Differently from the fanatics and dissidents, these were real competitors to the prevailing order and "toleration cannot make them divide amongst themselves" – they could therefore only be dealt with by intolerance.[156] Conversely, to enforce uniformity is also problematic in and by itself, there are certain dangers associated of establishing uniformity: Locke submits the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of the Huguenots (1572) and the Shimabara Revolt (1637-8) in Japan as evidence, and asserts that: "If anyone thinks uniformity in our church ought to be restored, though by such a method as this, he will do well to consider how many subject the king will have left by the time it is done."[157] Thus, there are four initial problematiques to deal with, and the various strategies that Locke comes up with for determining the answer to these questions are unequivocally inventive rationalizations of a political position – as when he is unable to unite his political principles with why exactly it is the Catholics that are intolerable. They are also quite different from those of Bayle, who accepted atheism: the strategic distinction that he made did not allocate respective realms to state and religion, but showed by the fact that atheists could live in relative peace with one another that it was in fact religion that was external to society.[158]

[15] Following these developments of the discourse on toleration, we can now begin to explore how the political game was regulated by the *principle of toleration*. When discussing the practical problem of the wars of religion we touched upon toleration as a policy, but we could also more abstractly talk about toleration as a concept that constitutes a part of a field of problematisation. The difference is striking; where the former is formulated so as to dictate specific actions – *tolerate this, but do not tolerate that* – the latter is a concept that resides in the un-thought and from there structures the way in which such policies are articulated. In theoretical terms, a policy of toleration is always a particular *program* against the *general model* of toleration that makes it possible (i.e. *thinkable*). Here, we should think of toleration as a necessary principle of action in the *régne de la critique*, without which the spirit of reason would lose its momentum. That is, the structure of the concept of toleration as it was developed at the time predominately as a way to society containing more than one religion, but the same problem was reflected in; if the game of critique is to function its players must be tolerant towards

[155] Locke, *Letter on Toleration*, p. 91
[156] Locke, *Essay on Toleration*, pp. 151-153
[157] Ibid., p. 158
[158] Bayle, *Various Thoughts on the Occasion of a Comet*, §145, pp. 179-180. §151, pp. 187-188

one another, else the game will break down. To be sure, it is the principle of toleration, like the principle of differentiation and principle of before it, which regulates the game of critique. Three themes appear:

1. *A stratum of toleration.* Being a principle of exclusion, toleration contains two boundaries: there are those practices and beliefs that one agrees with; those that are found to be in error but *tolerated*; and lastly those, which are rejected and determined to be *intolerable*. Thus there are three realms: a realm of truth, a realm of error, and a realm of the intolerable. The drawing up of any such boundaries was one of the ways in which the discourse on toleration functioned as a political tool: here, toleration is a concept deployed in a relation of power that makes it possible to justify the persecution of one opponent. The concept of toleration contains at least three compartments (or unoccupied components): one of which is unproblematic because it is the same; another which contains that which can be tolerated; and a third of the behaviour, practices, or beliefs which cannot be tolerated for this or that reason. It matters little whether toleration is religious or secular; it always contains a principle of exclusion. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, more often than not this principle was determined by political concerns.

2. *Tolerance of what?* The discourse concerned with the concept of toleration always contains a normative component: there is always something that is the object of toleration, be it freedom of conscience, obscure practices, or more broadly the *freedom to philosophize*. In other words, there is always a goal of toleration: political, religious, critical – why should we tolerate? That is, can the practice of critique be tolerated in society? And to what degree does the game of critique function without the concept of toleration? If truth is really split into a thousand pieces with an individual critic hold onto each of them, then they each have to tolerate each other's point of view. This is both an individual test of toleration, in the stoic sense, as well as a societal test in which a group of critics may be excluded because of the opinions they hold. The crucial focus was here on the toleration of philosophy within the context of politics; and surely this was a theme as well in the sixteenths and seventeenth centuries. Spinoza talked at great length about *libertas philosophandi* (freedom of thought) as the free and unrestricted thought and expression, which as he saw it was entirely different from what Cartesian theologians took it mean; that is, the freedom to philosophize on everything that did not impose on interpretations of scripture and theological issues. It was thus a much wider category that transcended the immediate worldview in which it was conceived. Spinoza's thesis is that this kind of "freedom (*libertas philosophandi*) may not

only be allowed without danger to piety and the stability of the republic but cannot be refused without destroying the peace of the republic and piety itself."[159] To Bayle the toleration of true-discourse was essential for all aspects of the *règne de la critique*; it was completely gratuitous to imagine that, after a critical conversation among equals, people would dispute no more, and that there would be the veritable "death of controversy", something Bayle expressed as: "if I propose objections to which you cannot reply, I cannot fail to hope to convert you; for since you do not claim that evidence is the mark of theological truth, the obscurity of your reason and the weakness of your arguments will never seem to you a mark of falsehood. It would thus be in vain for me to reduce you to silence. Your taste would, for you, take the place of a demonstration."[160] Later we find a similar theme in Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*. Here, he talks about "Philosophical liberty" as the "exercise of one's will" or rather of "one's opinion" that one is exercising ones will – and "political liberty" on the other hand as being about *security*, specifically the "opinion one has of one's security" – "When the innocence of the citizen is not secure, neither is his liberty," exactly because such laws depends on the accused being able to defend his innocence.[161] "Liberty can be founded only on the practice of this knowledge" and thus to Montesquieu, philosophical liberty is what makes politics (and political liberty) possible in the first place, whereas political liberty provides the conditions for philosophical liberty. [162] There is therefore to Montesquieu a fundamental circularity of between philosophical liberty and political liberty as guaranteed by right of the citizen and the laws of the state; as he tells us "the citizen's liberty depends principally on the goodness of the criminal laws." Kant was no exception either, he argued in the *Conflict of the Faculties* that, "it is absolutely essential that the learned community at the university also contain a faculty that is independent of the government's command with regard to its teachings; one that, having no commands to give, is free to evaluate everything, and concerns itself with the interests of the sciences, that is, with truth: one in which reason is authorized to speak out publicly."[163] "For without a faculty of this kind," Kant continued:

> the truth would not come to light (and this would be to the government's own detriment); but reason is by its nature free and admits of no command to hold something as true (no imperative 'Believe!' but only a free *credo* [I believe]). - The reason why this faculty, despite its great prerogative (freedom), is called the lower faculty lies in human nature; for a human being who can

[159] Spinoza, *Theological Political Treatise*, p. 6
[160] Bayle, Nicole, in *Political Writings*, p. 204
[161] Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, book XII, chap. 2, p. 188
[162] Ibid., p. 188
[163] Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties*, p. 249

> give commands, even though he is someone else's humble servant, is considered more distinguished than a free man who has no one under his command.[164]

3. *Toleration and the problems of political game*. To the extent that the principle of toleration makes the political game flexible and prevents relations of domination to develop and become be irreversible it requires that some elements are rendered intolerable; something had to be excluded, namely those elements that are seen as counterproductive to the goal of toleration.[165] With regard to the toleration acting as the principle that governs the political game its triadic structure has to be implemented. There are many examples of this: Locke's different arguments as to why the Catholics should not be tolerated and Bayle's objections of the duty of intolerance in the proverb "compel them to come in" have already been discussed. But even earlier than that, in his essay *Of True Religion*, Milton showed his dissatisfaction with Charles II's toleration of the Roman Catholics because of their politically dangerous nature, and he built his argument for intolerance upon the following distinction: "true religion is the true worship and service of God, learned and believed from the Word of God only," whereas heresy, hereunder popery, "is a religion taken up and believed from the traditions of men, and additions to the word of God" – and because the Catholics fell into the latter they should not be tolerated.[166] Much later, the same theme of intolerance reoccurs in a letter to Voltaire, where Rousseau discusses the theme of toleration. Here he wanted to work out a principle by which he could exclude, without exception, those that parties that were a danger to society:

> Among these dogmas that ought to be prescribed, intolerance is easily the most odious; but it must be checked at its source; for the most bloodthirsty Fanatics change their language as their fortune changes, and when they are not the strongest they preach nothing but patience and gentleness. Thus I call intolerant on principle any man who imagines that one cannot be a good man without believing everything he believes, and mercilessly damns all those who do not think as he does.[167]

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[164] Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties*, p. 249

[165] That absolutism is completely antithetical to the game of critique comes out in Hobbes when he in *Leviathan* claims the complete opposite goal – *critique of power is irreconcilable with the state*, and thus has to be rejected: "The toleration of a professed hatred of Tyranny, is a Toleration of hatred to Commonwealth in general." Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 486 (722)

[166] Milton, John. '*Of True Religion*', in *The Poetical Works of John Milton: 2 volumes*, edited by James Montgomery (William Harvey New York, Harper & brothers, 1847), p. 562

[167] Rousseau, *Letter to Voltaire*, in Rousseau, Jean Jacques. *The Discourses and Other Political Writings*, translated by Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 245

Bayle and Kant were somewhat unique by the fact that they defined these boundaries in a different language (that of reason), but the effects are not that different at all from how the concept of toleration has functioned in the *règne the critique* all along.[168]

Accordingly, in the game of critique what is intolerable to reason is *unreason*. Everything has to submit to critique, even reason; or in other words reason has to submit to an examination by reason. Consequently, everything that falls short or is outside reason, which is just about any thought that is not founded on the basis of reason is therefore intolerable. When reason establishes such a boundary –the boundary between the reasonable and unreasonable– then all beliefs that do not abide by the principles of reason are naturally excluded. Only reason is tolerable because it includes both *truth* and *error* – the possibility of failure is intrinsic to the process of critique. Its antithesis on the other hand is unreason, which can only ever be in error; the possibility of truth is here only accidental. Reason can therefore not tolerate anything but itself: the margin between the tolerable and intolerable therefore grows ever smaller as reason comes to dominate cultures and societies. In fact, it is a margin that becomes so infinitely small that all other ways of life seem inherently false and are therefore any intervention in them is unquestionable justifiable.

[16] In conclusion we can say that critical thought, just like all other kinds of thought, conjures up a world: it establishes boundaries. Not necessarily boundaries that are drawn up for egotistical reason, but always boundaries that are drawn up in a response to particular problems. And so, discourses on toleration were a response to particular problems that the culture was faced with: chiefly among them religious schisms between Protestants and Catholics. Schematically we might say that, where the problems of the political game in the ancient Geek *polis* had to do with how one could govern oneself so as to differentiate oneself from others so as to govern them, and the problems of the court society of the Roman and Christian societies had to do with rhetorical eloquence and piety, the problems of the political game in the *règne de la critique* have to do with toleration. The principle of toleration was necessary for the political game to function – without it there would be no room for the game of critique with politics: in other words, the game of critique would have remained unrealized thought, a *virtuality*. Where the former two were characterised by courage and piety, it was now reason by which truth was accessed; and because of the transformative nature of reason, toleration

[168] Reasons intolerance of superstition follows naturally from its irreconcilability and can be extended to anything that is unreasonable, see: *Synergists*, Bayle, *Dictionary*, quoted in *Political Writings*, p. 277

was a requirement, intolerance on the other hand would thwart reason and superstition would once again come to dominate – a completely deplorable outcome. In sum, we have seen the ancient Greek conception of *dunesteia* with its antagonistic structure of persuasive true-discourse; the court society with its hierarchical structure of pious and moralising true-discourse; and we have now seen the concept of toleration unfold a juxtaposed structure of rational true-discourse comes to define the principle by which the relationship between philosophy and politics is to be governed: the boundary of reason as perceived in the minds of a public distinguishes the true from untrue. A boundary that as we shall see becomes so narrow that it is unable to sustain the very game of critique that constituted it.

The socio-political condition of thought can be formulated as such: thought – *liberty to philosophize*– is permissible on the condition that it abides by the rules of reason and do not in any way attempt to set up boundaries that that will prevent the transformational power of the spirit of reason. Thus there is a *fundamental circularity* between critique, the state, and toleration: *you have your reason and I have mine, only experience will be the judge of who is right and establish the truth, and because of that we have to tolerate one another – a toleration that at the same time is inscribed in the state as the guarantor and constant object of our use reason, our critique*. Thereby the field of problematisation consists in these three concepts of critique, the state, and toleration; and all problematisations that wanted to come to terms with the practical problems of the European cultures of the time ties their thinking to these concepts in one way or the other.

Chapter V: Hyper-real Politic

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[1] This chapter is about the hyper-real politics of truth, a kind of politics where the precession of simulacra makes it no longer possible to separate reality from the model of the real, and the true from the false. All epistemological spaces are sustained by an inherent logic particular to them, even if this logic has to be discovered rather than created. It is certainly the case that hyper-real politics is discovered rather than formulated by anyone in particular; as any form of politics of truth, it is the result of complex strategic situations – a constellation of social forces, each striving for different goals. Nevertheless, hyper-real politics of truth is perhaps for this very reason also the hardest to account for, as any attempt to disentangle these relations will inevitable itself be caught up them. To complicate matters further, it is hard to identify a clear historical rupture between public critique and hyper-real politics, before a series of transformations that may rightly be associated with modernity, which is also the reason for the chapter's erratic structure.

The chapter first (I) deals with these transformations of the epistemological space of public critique – a period I have tried to describe as the interregnum of the revolutionary. For that purpose, I have used as a helping hypothesis that the realization of modern thought brings about practical problems that will later make way for hyper-real politics. The chapter then turns to (II) the practical problems of technological advancements and population growth that will result in the involuntary break from public critique. Through the Lippmann-Dewey debate, the chapter demonstrates how public critique becomes difficult and later the clash between the social forces behind mass-society and scientific government inherent to Modernity. In fact (III), hyper-real politics is the unintended consequences of this clash between mass society and scientific government logic of factual reality. That is, in this confrontation, scientific government quickly degenerates into the scientism. Meanwhile, political order is in thought problematized as silent majorities and cybernetic systems, while the political game is a

question of the spectacle. Thus taken together, hyper-real politics of truth sets the socio-political limit of thought in *factual truths*; the techno-scientific production of truth that follows can then only result in a hyper-reality completely hostile to thought.

I

[2] Modernity usually plays a crucial role in a genealogy of any concept in the late 20th century. Indeed, the period where public critique undergoes a series of transformations to make room for hyper-real politics could be called the 'interregnum of the revolutionary' – a politics of truth that is dominated by the figure of the revolutionary who's true-discourse is a promise about and invitation to participate in a promising future. The question is how distinguished this figure is from the critic and whether it merits attention; in any case, I cannot do it justice here. I shall therefore confine the analysis to the series of transformation that make the historical rupture possible.

[3] Accordingly, even if the French Revolution provides the earliest background against which the emergence of hyper-real politics can be observed, it would remarkably not be anticipated this early in modern thought. A series of transformations would have to be completed before it was possible to break with the epistemological space of public critique; in some aspects we are still tied to the modes of thought particularly associated with it, unwilling to give them up as we attempt to live in a nostalgic version of the past.

In the thick of Jean-Paul Marat publishing his dreadful lies in *L'Ami du peuple* and the Reign of Terror brought on by Robespierre and the Jacobins, it would seem that the same generation that championed the practice of public critique was also the generation that undermined it. In was during the Revolution, in the hands of the famed men of letters who enjoyed a liberality like never before, critique finally became *hyper-critique*: the image of reason, as a Penelope that constantly weaves and un-weaves, which Bayle so dreaded, was irreversible realized. Yet, the scaffolding of public critique – the natural rights of men and the toleration and freedom of thought – are not cast into total doubt. Rather, we see a slight movement towards the edges of this epistemological space, an exploration of the tension between the problems of true-discourse and political order in the limits of *natural* vis-à-vis *civic* rights: where Edmund Burke, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, rejected the absolute and theoretical proclamation of the rights of men insisting, "men cannot enjoy the rights of an uncivil and of a civil state together"

and thus had to give up their natural rights including those of freedom of thought.[1] Thomas Paine, in *Rights of Man*, argued that it is only when we fail to execute our natural rights perfectively that civil society may step in, and thus "a man, by natural right, has a right to judge in his own cause; and so far as the right of the mind is concerned, he never surrenders it."[2] Paine mounts a sound defence for the revolution and is firmly committed to the ideals of the enlightenment wherever they may lead: the man of reason "sees the rationale of the whole system, its origins and its operation," – the omnipresent citizen, moulded by the ideal of the critic, still possessed the sole rights to true-discourse and novel thought.[3] Where the revolutionary Paine thought that he was looking forward, the conservative Burke would prove to have greater foresight [nature of man]. The critical proclamation of Burke that the "age of chivalry is gone," does not make it possible to discern the future: the emergence of "barbarous philosophy," and the reactions of "a swinish multitude," which he bemoans is not yet the mass-society that is to come, neither are the men of letters who "act [as if] in a body, and with one direction, have great influence on the public mind," yet the well-oiled propaganda machines of totalitarian states.[4]

Even framing the debate as such, the epistemological space remains the same and although it is pushed to its limits (there is a paradox looming in this conflict), it does not cave in. We are thus not yet at that point where Western thought was coming to the realization that the practices build around public critique were showing cracks at their deeper levels. Yet we may say that the dissolution has commenced. Thus, despite all the irrationalism of the revolution, neither discovers the limits of the epistemological space erected by public critique; the hidden forces within man did not appear to its contemporaries.

[4] At a greater distance from the French Revolution and after Napoleon would mobilize the force of the masses to the detriment of European monarchies, the problem of the tyranny of the majority started to emerge in the thought of Tocqueville and Mill. In his

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[1] A civil state can only be established if "*no man should be judge in his own cause*. By this each person has at once divested himself of the first fundamental right of uncovenanted man, that is, to judge for himself, and to assert his own cause." Burke, Edmund. *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Penguin Books, 1986), p. 150

[2] "But what availeth it him to judge, if he has not power do redress? He therefore deposits this right in the common stock of society, and takes the arm of society, of which he is a part, in preference and in addition to his own." Paine, Thomas. *The Rights of Man, Common Sense, and Other Political Writings* (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 120

[3] Ibid., p. 190

[4] Burke, *Reflections*, p. 213

analysis of the French Revolution, Tocqueville pointed out the dire consequences when the frame of mind of the critic – the man of letters – is applied to the materiality of politics: "The writers provided the nation not only with the ideas which brought the Revolution into being but also with its character and mood. […] The Result was that, when the time came at last to act, the nation brought all the habits of literature into politics."[5] The writer of prose and the mob were governed by the same impulses:

> They reflected the same attractions for universal theories, comprehensive systems of legislation and an exact symmetry in the laws; the same contempt for existing facts; the same faith in theory; the same taste for the original; the ingenious and the novel in shaping institutions; the same desire to reconstruct the entire constitution at one and the same time following the rule of logic and according to a single plan instead of seeking to reform it in its separate parts. A frightening spectacle![6]

And when, in *Democracy in America*, he talked about the problem of the "tyranny of the majority," he noted, how in American democracy, an immaterial despotism ruled over the exercise of thought – surpassing in power all known forms of rule in Europe.[7] Likewise, John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty* warned against the problem for independent thought posed by the "Tyranny of the Masses".[8] "There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence; and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs as protecting against political despotism." Human history, Mill argues, testifies to the fact that "men are not more zealous for truth than they often are for error."[9] The pronunciation of truth is therefore always in danger of being extinguished. Meanwhile in his present day, Mill claims the "individuals are [all] lost in the crowd. […] public opinion now rules the world," and public opinion is for Mill nothing more than the

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[5] Tocqueville, Alexis de. *The Ancien Régime and the Revolution*, translated by Gerald Bevan (Penguin Books, 2008), p. 148

[6] Ibid., p. 148

[7] Where the power of the sovereign consisted in the violence that followed by speaking the truth, the democratic republic would go straight for the soul and encircle the exercise of thought. Anyone who dares speak the truth would be met with apathy: "Thought is an invisible and almost intangible power that makes sport of all tyrannies. […] You are free not to think as I do; your life, your goods, everything remains to you; but from this day on, you are a stranger among us." Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*, translated and edited by Harvey C. Mansfield and Delbra Winthrop (University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 245-7

[8] Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty* (New York: Cosimo, 2005), p. 7

[9] Rightfully situated the whole quote: "It is a piece of idle sentimentality that truth, mere as truth, has any inherent power denied to error of prevailing against the dungeon and the state. Men are not more zealous for truth than they often are for error." Ibid. p. 35. This is not the same as claiming that truth is relative, as Mill continues: "The real advantage which truth has consists in this, that when an opinion is true, it may be extinguished once, twice, or many tomes, but in the course of ages there will generally be found persons who rediscover it, until some one of its reappearances falls on a time when from favourable circumstances it escapes persecution until it has made such a head as to withstand all subsequent attempts to supress it." Ibid., p. 36

"only power deserving the name is that of masses."[10] There is a risk that the power of public opinion swallows up all other forms of power. Taken together, the monotony of thought inherent to the masses and the repression of true-discourse steer public opinion towards despotism. This presents a particular problem for exercise of public critique (freedom of thought has no basis) – to which Mill's diversity of opinion is the only remedy: "only through diversity of opinion is there, in the existing state of human intellect, a chance of fair play to all sides of the truth."[11] Yet, the diversity of opinion of which Mill talks is nothing but a version of the principle of toleration that governed the political game of public critique.[12] Mill therefore talks of an idealized version of a "real morality of public discourse" – one in which nothing is kept back, while at the same time calmly restraining from unnecessary abusive language. In the third chapter of *On Liberty*, this translates into an eccentric ideal of the individual – of the individual that maintains an attitude of nonconformity towards public opinion and the masses: "In this age, the mere example of nonconformity, the mere refusal to bend the knee to custom, is itself a service. Precisely because the tyranny of opinion is such to make eccentricity a reproach, it is desirable, in order to break through that tyranny, that people should be eccentric."[13] The "chief danger," we are told, is that so few dare be eccentric. Nevertheless, while Mill's problematisation contains many themes from past thought on the subject, it does not anticipate the full extent of the future, the way in which the epistemological space will turn the eccentricism of individuals into the core value of hyper-real politics. To put it in another way, Mill still thinks within an epistemological space in which eccentrism is not a means of distraction and spectacle.

The thought of Tocqueville and Mill represents a kind of interregnum: while it is still very clear that it is before Marx shows the degree to which man is alienated by society through labour, before Freud exposes the irrational nature of the unconscious, and before Nietzsche proclaims that the will to truth leads to the relativity of all knowledge and truth, thought has embarking on a remarkable transition into a new milieu. Western thought had not yet passed by the threshold of hyper-real politics where the displacement of the problems of true-discourse, political order, and the political game are totally situated in a new epistemological space. That is, we are yet to see the

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[10] Ibid., p. 80

[11] Ibid., p. 58

[12] Although, in all fairness, Mill does not base his principle on reason alone, discovering the truth is rather a matter of reconciling opposites: it is a question of *epistemological perspectivism*, the only criterion of discussion should be temperament and toleration of opposite opinions because else we would never discover the errors committed by the one-sided ness of prevailing opinion.

[13] Ibid. p. 66-67

emergence of hyper-real politics. We might even be puzzled today that even after all the chaos of the French Revolution, it was not possible to identify it as the demise of public critique – rather we might say that at this point in time, public critique takes on an ethereal existence: it surely is a problem that grabs the attention of thought, but it is still not clear to what degree the new forces are unleashed by presuming an omnipotent citizen (a tension that surely is not as visible in Burke and Paine as it is in Tocqueville and Mill). Failing to read our own history, it would seem that this has all been forgotten: while we in our present day speak of public critique as the foundation of our societies, clinging to the hopes of traditional liberalism of western civilization to save us from the post-factual society, we do not comprehend how the failure of public critique led directly to hyper-real politics.

II

[5] A short sociological-historical excursion reveals that in the nineteenth century, the public sphere – which constituted the conditions of possibility of the practice of public critique – was faced with two practical problems: technological advancements and population growth. Technological advancements, such as the invention of the telegraph, which makes it possible to instantaneously transmit information across great distances, and new printing techniques, that makes it inexpensive to print and publish books and newspapers, put pressure on the public sphere by breaking down the barriers of accessibility and participation (which does not necessarily mean democratization). Thus, the importance of distance diminishes and the capabilities for distributing large amounts of information increased. Meanwhile, population growth, apart from creating urbanization and large cities that requires increased bureaucratization and centralization of the state, also increases the number of the potential audience and participants of the public sphere, putting pressure on its functionality and cohesiveness.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the public sphere started to erode when it penetrated more spheres of society by technological means and at the same time lost its political functions due to the enlargement of the public.[14] On the one hand, due to the commercialization of the media, guided by private interest and business advertisement,

[14] See in particular chapter five "The Socio-structural Transformation of the Public Sphere" and "VI The Transformation of the Public Sphere's Political Function" in Habermas, Jurgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*

the public sphere changes from a debating culture where the main lines of communication go between citizens and new-papers to a consuming culture where citizens passively absorb news without the possibility of answering back. [15] On the other hand, the growth of administrative and bureaucratic bodies coupled with the practices of public relations and opinion management shift the onus onto "non-public opinion" (specialized knowledges that are not shared but are aimed at the manipulation *of* and legitimation *before* the public), which severs the production of truth from civil society (the public discourse between rational citizens) to the state. Taken together, these two tendencies result in a displacement from "critical publicity" to "manipulative publicity" – in this "refeudalization", the affairs of state are no longer subjected to the reason of the public.[16] Thus, a genuine transformation of the public sphere is taking place where power shifts from the citizenry to a narrow group of powerful individuals.[17]

[6] While it is apparent that the formulations of this problematique inherent in the transformation of the public sphere were plentiful (the Dreyfus Affair would only be the most obvious), I shall dwell with only one, namely that of the Lippmann-Dewey debate because it apprehends the epistemological space of hyper-real politics which is opening before them, which makes a different set of questions conceivable.[18] If anything, the debate illustrates the point in time when the concepts of the *public critique*, the *state*, and *toleration* are slowly dissolving under the pressures of technology and mass-society.

In 1922, on the backdrop of the First World War and the creation of the League of Nations, Walter Lippmann wrote *Public Opinion* – a book that received much acclaim – and in 1925, *The Phantom Public*, which proved too grim in its view of the world for the general American reader. Lippmann started by exploring the epistemolog-

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[15] In *Power Elite*, C. Wright Mills notes how the classical democratic public was characterized by (1) the ratio between *giver* and *receivers* of opinion was not proportionally skewed towards to the former; (2) it was possible to answer back to an opinion giver without obstruction from informal structures of opinion leadership; (3) the formation of opinion was directly linked to the realization of social action; and (4) the public enjoyed relative autonomy from institutional authority. It is these characteristics that are under transformation. Mills, C. Wright. *The Power Elite* (Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 302-3

[16] Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 201

[17] C. W. Mills differentiates between a classical democratic public, a totalitarian mass media, and a synthesis between the two, which he thinks is predominant in America in the 1950s; the question then becomes which model is predominant. To Mills, at least at the time, peer-to-peer conversations were more effective in shaping public opinion than mass media. See, 'Mass Media and Public Opinion', in Mills C. Wright. *Power, Politics and People: Collected Essays of C. W. Mills*, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz (Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 577-598

[18] For an overview see: Bybee, Carl. 'Can Democracy Survive in the Post-factual Age?: A return to the Lippmann-Dewey debate about the politics of news', in *Journalism & Communication Monographs* vol. 1 (1) (1999): pp. 28-66

ical problem of the gap between real events and our experiences of them, which is mediated by mental pictures: "the real environment is altogether too big, too complex, and too fleeting for direct acquaintance."[19] Rather, "what each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge, but on pictures made by himself or given to him."[20] That is, we do not directly know the world we inhabit; it is wholly mediated by mental representations. These inner worlds of pictures with which we perceive the outside world, Lippmann terms a "pseudo-environment" and explains that they are comprised of manmade myths and fictions that provide us with maps that are wholly necessary to navigate in social existence: we live in the same world, but we are likely to believe and act as if there were different worlds. In other words, our actions are wholly dependent upon our pseudo-environment. Because of this gap between events and experience, our mental pictures are per definition always misleading, they are never finished and can always be more clear or nuanced. The process of adjustment that follows is limited by external and internal factors: thus, on the one hand we are limited by the inevitable prejudices and stereotypes given to us by our culture that colours our perception; on the other, Lippmann explains, we are limited by:

> the artificial censorship, the limitation of social contracts, the comparatively meagre time available in each day for paying attention to public affairs, the distortion arising because events have to be compressed into very short messages, the difficulty of making a small vocabulary express a complicated world, and finally the fear of facing those facts which would seem to threaten the established routine of men's lives.[21]

Later, in *Phantom Public*, Lippmann would develop a more sophisticated Heraclitian position in which he held that we would always be at odds with the world, as problems emanating from the external and always changing world elude us. If the fractured nature of the public originates in these external and internal limitations, how then is communal action possible at all?

Public opinion, in so far as we can speak of one, Lippmann asserts, can be rightfully said to only consist of those misleading pictures that groups of people and societies act upon.[22] The public does not *express* its opinion, but rather *aligns* itself for or against an already articulated position on a given topic. There is no common or national will, no group mind or social purpose. Lipmann thus rejects traditional liberal political theory (to which the notion of *vox populi*, of the natural endowment where

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[19] Lippmann, Walter. *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922), p. 16
[20] Ibid., p. 25
[21] Ibid., p. 30
[22] Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, p. 29

rational citizens come together to form a common will was so central) as it fails to deal with this complexity because it assumes that the rational individual is capable of perfectively knowing the outside world. In practice, public opinion can only ever appear, Lippmann argues, by skilfully playing on the irrationality of man and the ambiguity of symbols – that is, as every political leaders know, public opinion has to be manufactured by the technical use of symbols to produce an illusory yet effective common will. Lippmann terms this the "manufacture of consent" and asserts:

> The creation of consent is not a new art. It is a very old one which was supposed to have died out with the appearance of democracy. But if has not died out. It has, in fact, improved enormously in technic, because it is now based on analysis rather than rule of thumb. And so, as a result of psychological research, coupled with the modern means of communication, the practice of democracy has turned a corner. A revolution is taking place, infinitely more significant than any shifting of economic power.[23]

Public opinion is the mobilization of force.[24] Thus, when leaders claim to represent the public opinion, the "public" as such does not exist: public opinion is wholly manufactured by special interest groups with advanced techniques to serve their interests.

It is not only because the press is organized as a business where advertisement is necessary since consumers are unwilling to pay the real costs of gathering quality information (a free press means that news are practically given away); or because of the relative nature of news where events are only newsworthy when they truly stand apart from the general background of happenings in the world; but also because of an epistemological distance between news and truth that modern mass communication media (whether in the form of print, radio, or television) fail to produce a genuine public opinion which can guide communal action. As Lippmann points out: "news and truth are not the same thing, and must be clearly distinguished. The function of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them into relation with each other, and make a picture of reality on which men can act."[25] It is only those rare points of disinterested social conditions that require little knowledge to comprehend that bodies of truth and news overlap. The journalist does not, in contrast to the scientist, have special access to truth. Yet, Lippmann observes that the press has slowly become the main actor in the public sphere; it has, in the absence of well-functioning

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[23] Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, p. 248. For a further and perhaps more famous elaboration of the concept today, see: Chomsky, Noam and Edward S Herman. *Manufactured Consent: The Political Economy of Mass-Media* (Pantheon Books, 1988)

[24] Lippmann suggests that we are only now coming to grips with what these new innovations in the art of persuasion will change the way in which we think about the political game and its premises. Ibid., pp. 248-9

[25] Ibid., p. 358

institutions, falsely become the vital organ of direct democracy: "The Court of Public Opinion, open day and night, is to down the law for everything all the time."[26] The Press, Lippmann explains:

> is too frail to carry the whole burden of popular sovereignty, to supply spontaneously the truth which democrats hoped was inborn. And when we expect it to supply such a body of truth we employ a misleading standard of judgement. We misunderstand the limited nature of news, the illimitable complexity of society; we overestimate our own endurance, public spirit and all-round competence. We suppose an appetite for uninteresting truths which is not discovered by any honest analysis of our own tastes.[27]

The problem, Lippmann argues, lies deeper than the functioning of the press: it lies in "the failure of self-governing people to transcend their casual experience and their prejudice, by inventing, creating, and organizing a machinery of knowledge."[28] The common citizen "lives I a world which he cannot see, does not understand, and is unable to direct." It is therefore impossible to "move him … with a good straight talk about service and civic duty, nor by waving a flag in his face, nor by sending a boy scout after him to make him vote."[29] The private citizen "gives but little of his time to public affair, has but a casual interest in facts and but a poor appetite for theory."[30] Thus, the problem is not with the press, but the conditions and foundations of the practice of public critique – its assumptions have through the experiences of mass-democracy been shown to falter and collapse: the critic whose omnicompetence and reason was flawed, the perpetual construction of the state by a genuine *vox populi*, and the principle of toleration necessary for a smooth political game shown to be unrealistic in the face of divided special interest groups.

Having rejected the traditional theories of public opinion, Lippmann turns towards (social) science to safeguard democracy from the challenges emanating from the complexities of the world. He envisions a "machinery of knowledge" – made up of social scientists working for the various agencies of government – that may ameliorate the "failures of self-governing people to transcend their casual experience and their prejudice." In *Public Opinion*, Lippmann's version of a realistic democracy thus rests on the ability of this new scientific aristocracy "neutral to their prejudice, and capable of overcoming subjectivism" to discern the truth about the world.[31] For Lippmann, the

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[26] Ibid., p. 363
[27] Ibid., p. 362
[28] Ibid., p. 365
[29] Lippmann, Walter. *The Phantom Public* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1991 [1927]), p. 4-5
[30] Ibid. p. 14-5
[31] Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, p. 396

point of democracy is not that everyone engages in self-government (how could they ever achieve this in the modern world) but to realize the "good life". He therefore does not see this elitism as an enemy of democracy, but rather a necessary measure to save it. Yet, when in *The Phantom Public* from 1925, Lippmann rejected Newtonian and Darwinian science (that because it is based on metaphysics of certainty that makes knowledge of universal and unalterable truth possible) and started to explore the epistemological space of uncertainty that opened up because of the advancements in quantum physics, he stood in awe: science, he now believed, could no more than the mass communication media produce a public opinion that could face up to the world and he thus restrained himself to only talking about the "neutralization of arbitrary force" by "workable adjustment" as the only way to deal with the challenges to the social body.[32]

In response to Lippmann's two books, John Dewey published in 1927 the *Public and its Problems* where he talked about the "eclipse" of the public: "the public is so bewildered that it cannot find itself."[33] Yet, while he recognized the false basis of traditional political theory, he did not agree that the public as such did not exist. Thus, he attempted to conceptualize the public differently by merging the concepts of *public* and *state*: "the public is a political state," it is an organization of associations between people that takes the form of a state.[34] Only an externality (a communal problem) can call the public into being: "Indirect, extensive, enduring and serious consequences of conjoint and interacting behaviour call a public into existence having a common interest in controlling these consequences."[35] Thus, there is an inherent democratic nature of human experience that cannot not be swatted because we will always form communities (which does not amount to public critique). Yet, in the "machine age" – in that new age of human relationships in which the proliferation of associations and impersonal rela-

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[32] Lippmann, *The Phantom Public*, p. 57

[33] Dewey, John. *The Public and its Problems* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), p. 108. Prior to this, Dewey had written two reviews of Lippmann's books – *The Public and its Problems* was an attempt to elaborate on the points raised in these.

[34] Ibid. p. 58. He explains: "The lasting, extensive and serious consequences of associated activity bring into existence a public. In itself it is unorganized and formless. By means of officials and their special powers it becomes a state. A public articulated and operating through representative officers is the state; there is no state without a government, but also there is none without the public." p. 76. The epistemological space that Dewey expands is – by focusing not on the facts of interpretation but on the fact of social association the state co-aligns with the public – even though Dewey discards a lot of political theories of the state his conception comes close to the ideals of […] "*The State* is pure myth" (p. 37). Dewey elaborates this epistemological position in *The Quest for Certainty: A study of the relation of knowledge and action* (New York: Minton, Balch and company, 1929) where he distinguishes cognitive experience from aesthetic experience – as the dynamism between the two unfold historically, one aspect of experience overshadows the other.

[35] Dewey, *The Public and its Problems*, p. 109-110

tions reveal the ineptness of individualistic philosophy – Dewey maintains that the public is obscured because of the existence of too many diffused and scattered publics originating from the great many different problems, that are in the world, of too many different political parties with vested interests (that again claim the public opinion) and of the availability and variety of amusements and distractions that muddle and jam their smooth communication of the publics. The picture painted is a grim one: "Men feel that they are caught in the sweep of forces too vast to understand. Thought is brought to a standstill and action paralyzed."[36] Yet, it is not unsalvageable.[37] The public, Dewey asserts, can only regain a sense of self with the perfection and improvement of communication – an achievement that is only attainable if scientific knowledge is presented in an artful manner, which is able to "break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness."[38] In the end, Dewey still had hopes in the revitalisation of a truly democratic public; in no way did he grasp the degree to which its conditions were about to disappear.

Despite these insights on the politics of truth, the solution for both Lippmann and Dewey was to place the social sciences in a central role: where Lippmann initially formulated an elitist solution, that in *Public Opinion* would rely on scientific government, he would later in *Phantom Public* display a great disbelief in science to provide the necessary guidance to govern society. [39] Dewey, in contrast, insisted on a democratic solution, where the public would only exist in so far as it was willing to engage with a particular problem.

What becomes clear from debate is that the practice of *public critique* is in crisis. As Lippmann's central concept of "manufactured consent" is based on a currency of symbols rather than reason, it becomes clear that the basis for the smooth functioning of public critique does not exist: the dynamism that was supposed to exist between truth and power – between novel thought and politics – would suffer to the point of nonexist-

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[36] Ibid., pp. 114-5

[37] Because the public comes into being when a group of people are confronted with a problem it will always have the potential to re-form itself even when lose track of its self-interest and is eclipsed, it will never disappear or become a phantom.

[38] Ibid., p. 141. Dewey's account is not a wholesale account of pure science: he remains critical towards the power and destructive potential of science and maintains that the value of science depends on its use application in human concerns not to them. See, p. 40 and pp. 135-137

[39] Drawing on Charles Peirce, Lippmann raged against the religious worship of scientific materialism. As he saw it, it was unable to fulfil human desires for truth: "When we say that something has been explained by science, we really mean only that our own curiosity is satisfied. [As science advances, it] does not yield a certain picture of anything which can be taken naively as a representation of reality, [but only] provisional dramatizations which are soon dissolved by the progress of science itself." There is no formal limit to search for truth. See: Lippmann, Walter. *A Preface to Morals* (London: George Allen and Unwin ltd., 1929), pp. 129-131

ence. Dewey, on the other hand, would remain hopeful that the public could welcome the activity of thought, but much to his dislike, his hopes would be in vein. Nevertheless, whatever their hopes might have been, the epistemological space that was unfolding would have little room for the kind of democratization of knowledge (as opposed to *scientification*) that Dewey and Lippmann were concerned with; rather the bandwidth of this space was severely narrowed to the point where the democratization of thought was withdrawn. Although both were sensitive and critical to the social forces that pushed their inquiry Lippmann would stand in fearful awe of the space that was expanding before him without a clear remedy while Dewey would prove to be a more fortitudinous guide for future travellers. The social forces of early twentieth century pushed the socio-political conditions of thought over the "threshold of *scientificity"* – although it's pundits would not realize the consequences of their actions.[40] Thus, the Lippmann-Dewey debate might have ended with downplaying the role of science, but the social forces did not; and the politics of truth was displaced from the common man and restricted to the scientist – the final arbiter of reality.

[7] The growing irrationalism of the emergent mass-society gave cause for concern for many writers.[41] Mass-society was dangerous because it threatened and cast into doubt, as we have seen, the positives of public critique: reason, the state, and toleration. With the Russian revolution in 1917 and the Nazi takeover from 1933 and onwards, all these fears materialize in the danger of totalitarianism: when the critique surrenders to ideology, it only engages in eternal rotation and is unable to discern the truth; simultaneously, the atomized public of mass-society is completely unreceptive to any form of critique. In there lies the theoretical problem; it is neither the case of *hypocrisy* on behalf of the critic nor of a hermeneutics of suspicion (seeks a deeper layer of explanation that has to be critiqued into existence), but ideology – the false representation of reality (true and false). If public critique has become ideological, how can it truthfully inform the people and free them from tutelage? Reason and critique after Hegel becomes ideological critique: Liberalism, Marxism, and Fascism are all guilty of the same error, but it is the latter two that pose the biggest and most immediate danger because of their swift transformation into totalitarianism. Totalitarianism, like demagoguery and superstition, signals the collapse of power and truth into one another – in other words, it has a "spirit

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[40] Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 187

[41] Le Bon, Gustave. *The Crowd: A study of the Popular Mind* (The Floating Press, 2009 [1896]); Gasset, Ortega y. *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1930); and Lederer, Emil. *The State of the Masses: The Threat of the Classless Society* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1940)

of complete cynicism as regards truth" which is denied as exterior to politics.[42] The dynamism between truth and politics dies out. To Voeglin, totalitarianism is a form of *Neo-Gnosticism* – Hitler is the reappearance of the wise king having waited in the wings of the historical scene for decades.[43] Indeed, in Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* we find that it is a danger that emanates wholly within the Western tradition of thought.[44] Totalitarianism as a kind of modern sophism is not merely about winning the argument at the expense of truth, but instead demands a lasting victory over reality itself; the very factuality of history – the totality of human events and not just their interpretation – is at stake.[45]

In the added chapter from 1958 in *Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government*, Arendt asks whether there is such a thing as totalitarian government, as distinguished from other forms of tyranny and despotism? There is: its principle of action is *terror*, its nature is found in *ideology,* and its basic experience is *loneliness*.

1. *Terror*. Totalitarianism interprets all laws as laws of movement, laws of race struggle, and laws of class domination. In presiding over society, terror claims neither wisdom nor justice, but only that it is the realization of a law of a supra-human force such as nature or history. As such, terror is not the lawlessness of tyrannies but *lawfulness*: "Terror is the realization of the law of movement; its chief aim is to make it possible for the force of nature or of history to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous human action."[46] Terror establishes the socio-political limit of thought in totalitarianism in the realization of movement – there is no room for anything else, there is only the truth of the terror. The principle of terror is Solzhenitsyn's principle: it is not because everything is done in secrecy and with the aid of deceptions, but because everyone knows – it is the truth of terror that freezes action.[47]

2. *Ideology*. Ideologies have a pseudo-scientific character (although its *logy* – *logoi* would indicate otherwise); they apply the logic of a single idea to the explanation of history. They thus impose the strait jacket of logic upon their followers – not as

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[42] Hayek, F. A. *The Road to Serfdom* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 167. This is in particularly visible with totalitarian propaganda which is "destructive of all morals because [it] undermine[s] … the foundations of all morals, the sense of and the respect for truth." p. 159

[43] Voeglin, Eric. *Hitler and the Germans*, in Maurice P. Hogan. *The Collected Works of Eric Voeglin: in 34 Volumes* (University of Missouri Press, 2001)

[44] On this point see especially the end of part II where internal and external dangers to political community are discussed, Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 391-6.

[45] Ibid., p. 11

[46] Ibid., p. 610

[47] "Terror is precisely governmentality in the naked, cynical, obscene state. In terror it is the truth and not the lie that immobilizes." Foucault Michel. *On the Government of the Living – Lectures at the Collège De France, 1979-1980*, translated by Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 15-6

the control of thinking, but as the singular mover of thought (one determines *form,* the other *content*). There are totalitarian elements within all ideological thinking: they are first oriented towards the motion of history and the explanation of becoming (not being), which they claim to explain in its totality (past, present, and future). Secondly, by doing so, they claim to emancipate thought from experience and reality for which they have no need (once in power, ideologies overturn the order of reality into realization). Third, since this is in principle impossible, according to Arendt, ideologies proceed by a method of demonstration: "Ideological thinking orders facts into an absolutely logical procedure which starts from an axiomatically accepted premise, deducing everything else from it; that it, it proceeds with a consistency that exists nowhere in the realm of reality."[48] It is out of the fear of self-contradiction that the original idea is abandoned in favour of the logical process that could be developed from it: "the tyranny of logicality begins with the mind's submission to logic as a never-ending process, on which man relies in order to engender his thoughts. By submission, he surrenders his inner freedom as he surrenders his freedom of movement when he bows down to an outward tyrant. Freedom as an inner capacity of man is identical with the capacity to begin, just as freedom as a political reality is identical with a space of movement between men."[49] It is this space – the space in which the possibility of different thoughts exists – that vanished when ideologies come to total domination.

3. *Loneliness*. It is in here, at the mercy of the tyranny of logicality, that the basic experience of loneliness resides. This is not the isolation and powerlessness in relation to the realm of political life that we find in traditional tyrannies (in these political contracts there were always left some degree of private space), but the loneliness that involves the whole of human life. Neither is it a kind of solitude where there still is a possibility of both thought and a return. Like Kafka's protagonist K in *The Trial*, this atomized individual, isolated and without normal social relationships, is confronted by an impenetrable and alienating world that it cannot hope to understand.[50] What makes loneliness so agonizing is that "[s]elf and world, capacity for thought and experience are

[48] Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 619. Arendt has earlier explained that "what convinces masses are not facts, and not even invented facts, but only the consistency of the system of which they are presumably part" (p. 460) and thus the masses escape the fortuitousness of reality only if propaganda is able to sustain a consistent fiction.

[49] The ideal subject for totalitarian rule, writes Arendt, is that person "for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (*i.e.* the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (*i.e.* the standards of thought) no longer exist." Ibid., p. 622

[50] See discussion Ibid., pp. 407-427

lost at the same time."[51] The only kind of thinking that is possible in a state of loneliness, because it needs neither self nor other or experience for that matter, is logical reasoning. By the beginning of the twentieth century, mass-society had made the atomized and individualized subject an everyday experience ripe for the tyranny of logicality totalitarian movements; if mass society had not created this kind of loneliness, the basis for ideologies to develop into totalitarianism would not have existed.

[8] From the middle of the 19th century, it is possible to identify a growing faith in the ability of science to govern society. Lippmann's proposal of scientific government was nothing new, it had been one of the main ideas driving the nineteenths century and the rise of Modernity. A precursor can be found in the physiocratic idea that if politics were guided by the rules of evidence, it would not be the struggle for power, but the things themselves (i.e. the world) that would governed. After the revolution was over, Henri de Saint-Simon claimed that it was time to start imposing scientific conclusions on society by law. The "government of men" must give way to the "administration of things" he stated: "In the present state of enlightenment, the country no longer needs to be governed, but to be administered as cheaply as possible; now, it is only in industry that one can learn to administer cheaply."[52] Later, the student of Saint-Simon, August Comte, elaborates these ideas into an all-encompassing project for the development of society.[53] Similar ideas also found their expression in the utilitarianism of Bentham and Helvetius and in the Marxism of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Taking a less ideological approach, the most extreme proponents of scientific government would be formulated in the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle. In the *Wissenschatliche Weltauffassung*, they laid out a scientific conception of the world and claim that "the scientific world-conception knows no unsolvable riddle. Clarification of the traditional philosophical problems leads us partly to unmask them as pseudo-problems, and partly to transform them into empirical problems and thereby subject them to the judgment of experimental science."[54]

There are more moderate or reflective proponents as well. To Russell, "scientific society" was caught between two tendencies: on the one hand it drove technological advancement that could discern the truth of the world, and on the other free spirit of

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[51] Ibid., p. 627

[52] Saint-Simon, quoted in Foucault, *On the Government of the Living*, p. 24

[53] Comte, August. *A General View of Positivism*, translated by Bridges, J.H. (Cambridge University Press, 2009)

[54] Hahn, Hans, Otto Neurath, and Rudolf Carnap. 'The Scientific Conception of the World. The Vienna Circle 1929', in Sarkar, Sahotra, ed., *The Emergence of Logical Empiricism: from 1900 to the Vienna Circle* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996) pp. 321–340

science which was based on a doctrine of fallibility.[55] Although it was not without its dangers, the attraction of scientific society for Russell was that it provided an escape from the real-politics of national? states. Later, Popper would advance similar ideas in the *Open Society and Its Enemies*, where the scientific, or rather open society would be one in which disputes would be addressed through the mediator of science. Scientific government becomes a kind of *piecemeal* social engineering, in contrast to the *utopian* kind of Plato. Popper applies the principle of falsification to society: "The piecemeal engineer will, accordingly, adopt the method of searching for, and fighting against, the greatest and most urgent evils of society, rather than searching for, and fighting for, its greatest ultimate good."[56] The legitimacy of social engineering, for Popper thus rests on the same principles of science. His description of the scientific process was that it rests on public criticism, the scientific community works by sharing and criticising each other's work. The concern is not only with the place of science in the public discourse, but also with the purification and health of science itself: the scientific community, if it were to be of any use to the open society, needed to be cleansed of political interest. That much is clear from Popper's critique of the sociology of knowledge, which he claims is an instance of "historicism" that leads straight to totalitarian society.[57]

At the core of scientific government is the belief in the ability of science to discern a factual reality. Indeed, it is the ability of science to delineate factual reality that legitimizes the interventions of scientific government. The desire to rid science of political concerns, however, is where the notion of scientific government starts to become problematic. The only way science that can become non-political is by either an agreement on metaphysics or banishment of metaphysical questions. (The politics of science is a difficult question, which I unfortunately will not have room to discuss here). While the agreement on metaphysics would amount to a quasi-prohibition against thought (as there would be no possibility of changing positives), in the (positivist) rejection of metaphysics however, science denies the existence of its own metaphysical presuppositions. Thus, it rejects the interrogation of metaphysics only to posit its own discourse beyond reproach. Now, it is important to point out that this is not the case for

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[55] It is not possible to go through Russell's many writings on the problems of scientific society, but see: Russell, Bertrand. *The Impact of Science on Society* (New York: AMS Press, 1953), *The Scientific Outlook* (London: George Allen and Brothers ltd., 1954); and *Prospects of Industrial Civilization* (London: Routledge, 2010)

[56] Popper, Karl. *The Open Society and its Enemies, 2 Volumes* (London: Routledge, 2003)

[57] Ibid., pp. 200-211

the practice of science in and by itself; it is only the attempt to install science as the master of the politics of truth that I am here criticising.

III

[9] As I pointed out earlier, all epistemological spaces are erected and sustained by social forces – there is a will behind them. The epistemological space of hyper-real politics is no exceptions: the interplay of the social forces, the masses, the elites, and the technological developments, which both enjoy, establishes the epistemological field upon which a post-factual society may grow: where the problem of the problem of truth is solved by simulation and simulacra; the problem of political order in thinkable in terms of the masses (or cybernetics system); and the problems associated with the political game are dealt with in terms of the spectacle. It is, much like Hobbes proclaimed four hundred years earlier, the unintended consequences of scientific government, and like Bousset who kept on writing as if the power was still at the court of the king. We too, express a reluctance to recognise this new epistemological space presented to us. But why is that?

From the nineteenth century till now *scientism* – the belief that science is the only mode of knowledge capable of truly comprehending the world – has played an increasingly important role in shaping society. To Voegelin, scientism amount to the "reductionist theory that all reality should be knowable by the methods of the natural sciences (especially mathematical, quantitative method). Tends to involve the expectation of control of man through scientific knowledge and technique."[58] Scientism is a political project as much as it is scientific. To Voegelin scientism has succeeded in building an alliance between science and social power that be. Accordingly, the scientific breakthroughs like those of the Einstein and quantum physicist will have no social effects: "The damage of scientism is done."[59] Yet, at the same time scientism is a wholly liberal phenomenon: that totalitarianism deploys a scientific discourse is all too obvious – Nazism naturalness of racism and for Stalinism history – but as soon as it obtains power it discards it.[60] Scientism can therefore only survive in liberal societies, where it acts as a kind of total ideology.

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[58] Eric Voegelin (1948) "The Origins of Scientism," *Social Research*, Vol 15 (1), pp. 462-494
[59] Ibid., p. 463
[60] See: Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 451-454

The dynamic that establishes hyper-real politics can be described as the catalyst of scientism. That is, scientism produces hyper-reality and thereby the experience of post-factual society, more than bullshitting or lying, exactly because it combines the success of science with the dogmatism of realism it produces vast amounts of truth (that is, experiences of truth, or moments of truth). Post-factual society is less about lying than about a world saturated with facts: the overproduction of facts and truth to the point where they no longer matter or have any bearing on our lives. To be more specific, the catalyst of scientism is what occurs when a new hierarchy is between philosophy and science is established. While it is true that thought is inherently disorderly and disruptive, the solution of scientism is to subjugate it to scientific methods; thought has to not only be scientific, it also has to restrict itself to contending with factual reality only.[61] Thought is no longer able to overthrow or overturn what counts as true – only factual reality counts as true. There have been many critiques of this mode of thought from when it was first proposed. Kant was the first to warn against the superstition of the fact as it robs thought of its freedom. In *The Crisis of European Sciences* Husserl worried that "merely fact-minded sciences make merely fact-minded people."[62] Thus, the problem with scientism is that in its distain for philosophy and thought, fails to recognize the epistemological space it extends.

It is perhaps fitting to understand the result of scientism as what Baudrillard refers to as "the height of reality."[63] The hyper-real is not the loss of reality – of truth or knowledge – at the expense of the malevolent forces of politics. It is rather the "height of reality" a manifestation of our scientific achievements: "We labour under the illusion that it is the real we lack the most but actually, reality is at its height. By our technical exploits, we have reached such a degree of reality and objectivity that we might even speak of an excess of reality, which leaves us far more anxious and disconnected than the lack of it. That we could at least make up for with utopianism and imagination, whereas there is neither compensation for – nor any alternative to – the excess of reality."[64] The oppositions, he adds: "Today, the world has become real beyond our wildest expectations. The real and the rational have been overturned by their very realization."[65] Accordingly, the process is not one by which truth and politics are folded in upon each

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[61] Reichenbach, Hans. *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (University of California Press, 1951)

[62] Husserl, Edmund. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An introduction to phenomenological philosophy*, translated by David Carr (Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 6

[63] Baudrillard, Jean. *The Perfect Crime*, translated by Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1996), pp. 65-71

[64] Ibid., p. 65

[65] Ibid., p. 65

other by the manipulation of propaganda, but rather a collapse of truth and politics which we are caught up in a way where all concepts are inverted or reversed: the true becomes the false, the false the true.

The epistemological space of hyper-real politics is a result of the clash between scientism and mass-society. It is characterised by the conviction of scientism and the relativism that comes with the indifference to contradictions of mass-society.

[10] In hyper-real politics, truth is problematized as *simulation*. The closely related problems of simulation and simulacra have long received the attention of thought in the West – of which Plato account as outlined in Chapter III is the most influential.[66] The question of the truth of simulation can only be posed in terms of what it attempts to simulate, that is, its likeness to an original. Yet, if we take the measure of truth to be a measure of comparison, then we will miss the hyper-real logic of simulation: that the simulation is out to convince us that it is better than the original. It is the doubling of the real in dual sense of both being a copy of the real and at the same time being better. Thus, the verisimilitude of simulation is therefore dependent on an altogether different set of characteristics.

1. *The doubling of the real*. The problem is a famous one; we know it from Borges' fable about the map that covered the territory, from Eco visits to the wax museums and superman's fortress of solitude, and from Baudrillard's visits to Disneyland. Yet, it is perhaps easier to understand how this secondary layer, that is being spread all

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[66] This powerful and versatile division has stuck for a great variety of reasons, none more so than as an eternal source of power, with our tradition of thought. On a easy note, illusions and simulacra have always occupied the lower part of conceptual hierarchy: degenerated and deformed the Christians would mock the man that Prometheus moulded in clay as a simulacrum, a bad copy of God's divine creation (Lactantius Firmianus, *Div.instit.*II.10). More seriously though, just as Plato struggled against the Sophists, the simulacrum also poses a danger. For instance, the danger of simulacra appears in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, when he deals with the problem of how to interpret and teach the scriptures. Here we are presented with two opposing models for the interpretation of true and false signs (*signum*): one is love (*caritas*) that propels the soul towards the enjoyment of God for his own sake and the other lust (*cupiditas*) that strives towards ones own enjoyment. The two are mutually exclusive: "The more the realm of lust is destroyed, the more the realm of love is increased." (*De Doctrina Christiana*, III.10.16.) The polemics against Varro in the *City of God* (IV) would recycle many themes from Plato's engagements with the Sophists. The unpopularity of the Manicheans and Cathars share a similar logic. In Descartes' *Meditations* the simulacrum is personified in the Evil Genius who mirrors the powers of God in every way – there is no way to really tell one form the other. Exactly because of the danger that it poses, we have in the Western tradition of thought been taught to fear the simulacrum. In the realm of fiction and myth therefore the simulacrum has preserved its monster-like existence that Plato assigned it: like the Jewish Golem, an anthropomorphic magical being that was conjured up from clay and mud to avenge any wrongdoing, or Frankenstein's monster which he created out of body parts from a graveyard, the simulacra is something dangerous, something which we need to fear as it constantly alters appearances. "Nothing is absolute reality; all is permitted" says the protagonist Hassan-i Sabbah in the novel *Alamut*, by Vladimir Bartol. Unmistakably, it would seem that this Platonic moralism permeates the whole of Western thought.

over the real world, is being ritualistically produced if we consider Boorstin's concepts of a "pseudo-event" and the image. When Boorstin developed these concepts he saw both as rooted in our attitude towards the world: "By harbouring, nourishing, and ever enlarging our extravagant expectations we create the demand for the illusions with which we deceive ourselves."[67] That is, we have too high expectation in terms of the amount of novelty in the world and secondly we exaggerate our own power to mould it. "We have become so accustomed to our illusions that we mistake them for reality." He states, "They are the world of our making: *the world of the image*"[68] It is this synthetic novelty, flooding our experience that is called "pseudo-events" by Boorstin, that have the following characteristics: a pseudo event is not like a real event (i.e. an earthquake or some other natural occurrence that naturally draws people together in experience), it only "comes about because someone has planned, planted, or incited it."[69] The pseudo-event is not spontaneous, but planned, like an interview (it involves planning and careful execution). Secondly, there is no genuine or un-interested purpose behind the instigation of the event, there is only "immediate purpose of being reported or reproduced" – to be put in circulation and create derivatives. The question of newsworthiness takes precedence over reality because its success is measured not in terms of how accurately it depicts reality, but how fast it spreads. Next: "Its relation to the underlying reality of the situation is ambiguous" – the question is not *what* happened but *whether* it really happened. Lastly, the pseudo-event is usually intended to be a self-fulfilling prophesy.

2. *The logic of proximity and the loss of aura*. The logic of proximity is as follows: by placing a copy next to a lesser reproduction of the original, it is possible to make the copy seem more real than the original. The effect is produced by two orders of fakes: the copy and the lesser copy, and the original completely removed. Eco encountered this logic many times in American waxwork museums: "So, in one museum after the other, the waxwork scene is compared to a reduced reproduction carved in wood, a nineteenth-century engraving, a modern tapestry, or a bronze, as the commenting voice insistently urges us to note the resemblance of the waxwork, and against such insufficient models, the waxwork, of course, wins."[70] The purpose of the reproduction is to free us from the desire of the original – to make us contend with the fake. This logic is

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[67] Boorstin, Daniel J. *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-events in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), p. 5

[68] Ibid., p. 5-6 [my emphasis]

[69] Ibid., p. 6

[70] Eco, Umberto. *Faith in Fakes: Travels in Hyperreality* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 19

particularly applied in the medium of television where the commentator will be casted weaker depending on the interest that the network seeks to promote. But, if the reality of the fake can be amplified by a logic of proximity, then it is just as much because the "aura" of the original had been cast aside: while we used to think that truth shines bright (the inherent truth-value of reality), it's light is now diminished by the shear force of sensual discharge that we have become capable of. In *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin explores how works of art have lost their aura.[71] While traditionally a work of art had in principle always been reproducible, it became possible at the beginning of the twentieth century to make technological reproductions that gained the status of an independent artistic mode. Yet, "[e]ven with the most perfect reproduction, *one thing* stands out: the here and now of the work of art – its unique existence in the place where it is at the moment."[72] This is the context of a work of art – a context that can, as we have seen, be altered by *proximity*. Thus, in relation to technological reproduction, a work of art does not keep its authority: firstly because, "a technological reproduction is more autonomous, relative to the original, than one made by hand." – and secondly, "it can also place the copy of the original in situations beyond the reach of the original itself."[73] Here Benjamin introduces the concept of "aura" in relation to a work of art: "*Reproductive technology, we might say in general terms, removes the thing reproduced from the realm of tradition. In making many copies of the reproduction, it substitutes for its unique incidence a multiplicity of incidences. And in allowing the reproduction to come closer to whatever situation the person apprehending it is in, it actualizes what is reproduced*."[74] These two simultaneous processes of multiplication and actualization warp the work of art so that it loses aura. This loss of aura is not a point about reality, but about *potentiality*. of simulacra in hyper-real politics. Here, truth no longer possesses an aura and in effect truth is reproducible everywhere: first in radio, then TV, and now the Internet.

3. *Visualization*. In hyper-real politics there is no longer a requirement for a particular orientation of thought (courage, piety, reason) as the real simply manifests itself through technical reproduction. "The much-vaunted 'virtual reality' is not so much a navigation through *cyberspace* of the networks. It is, first and foremost, the

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[71] Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (London: Penguin Books, 2008)
[72] Ibid., p. 5
[73] Ibid., p. 6
[74] Ibid., p. 7 [italics in original]

amplification of the optical density of the appearances of the real world."[75] The way in which technology (*technē*) and realism have moved closer to each other and the way in which this alters out conception of truth, is a theme in itself.[76] The realism of the medium, only brought about by technical achievement, is superb at rendering something that would normally be inauthentic as completely authentic.[77] Thus, one of the ways in which the lawlessness of thought has been dealt with is by equating thought with the visual: by saying "thought is a picture", Wittgenstein equated the two. The real purpose of "picture-thinking" was of cause to render thought a system of signs. The photographic medium thus comes to play a particular disruptive role: again with McLuhan we could say that there is constantly the necessity to think how the medium dominates the message; or should we say thought, because it is the epistemological field that is dominated by a kind of thinking where it is only legitimate to think in terms of the visually representable. *Thought imposes a limit of visualization upon itself*. When Umberto Eco set out to explore hyper-reality, he did it not with spectacular cases in mind – Pop art, Mickey Mouse, or Hollywood – but with photorealism, that more secret yet public side of American culture that proudly parades its two slogans "the real thing" and "more". Hyper-reality is about conveying information, not authenticity (complete non-engagement with the problem of authenticity); it therefore fabricates a reality that is not historical but *visual*: "everything looks real, and therefore it is real."[78] By that standard, the sensory orgies of modern cinema contain more truth than reality itself – blood never looks more real than on the screen. But what is cinematography, if not an illusion – the optical illusion of movement created by a series of images (simulacra).

If photorealism is complicit in the production of simulacrum and hyper-reality, why is it then that we buy so strongly into photo-realism? In *Camera Lucida,* Barthes outlines a phenomenology of the visual spectrum. The photography consists of three elements: The operator, the spectator, and the objects photographed (the image or *eidolon* "a kind of little simulacrum") which Barthes calls the "spectrum" as it resonates with it being a spectacle.[79] The crucial thing is not just how in photography the subject is transformed in object – how it changes our behaviour – but the degree to which this is perceived to be really true: "… every photography is somehow co-natural with its refer-

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[75] Virilio, Paul. *The Information Bomb*, translated by Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2005), p. 14
[76] Mumford, Lewis. *Technics and Civilization* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1934)
[77] In cinematography the artistic and the scientific meet according to Benjamin, see: *The Work of Art*, p. 29
[78] Eco, *Faith in Fakes*, p. 16
[79] Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage Books, 2000), p. 9

ents [spectrum], I was rediscovering, overwhelmed by the truth of the image."[80] This is because, explains Barthes, the photographic referent is a "*necessarily* real thing" placed before the optic lens of the camera and in contrast to painting and discourse; phenomenologically a photography is authentic and not merely a representation, we cannot deny that this object really *has been there*.[81] The photograph is not merely something that is "*is no longer*", but something that really "*has been*" – the latter being photography's *noeme*. Accordingly, and without really noticing in what process we are engaged, we perceive "Every photograph [as] a certificate of presence" – the presence of reality, of truth. We are all like Barthes' Photo-realist: "the realists, of whom I am one and of whom I was already one when I asserted that the Photograph was an image without code – even if, obviously certain codes do inflict our reading of it – the realist do not take the photograph for a "copy" of reality, but for an emanation of *past reality*: a *magic*, not an art."[82] The photography truly displays the magic of simulacra – a photography is really only laborious when it fakes. It is *flat,* a banality in the true sense because we cannot penetrate it and expose it as the simulacrum it really is: "I exhaust myself realizing that *this-has-been*; for anyone who holds a photograph in his hand, here is a fundamental belief, an 'ur-doxa' nothing can undo, unless you prove to me that this image *is not* a photograph."[83] Photography can only be tamed segregating it as an art form, or by plunging headfirst and with total commitment into its reality – with the former; its realism remains *relative*, with the latter *absolute*. With hyper-real politics, we have opted for the latter.

4. *The digestion of other forms of discourse*. There is no shortage of examples of how, in hyper-real politics, all previous practices of true-discourse are prone to being simulated. In fact, if they are even attempted with the outmost earnestness practiced within an epistemological space of hyper-reality, they succumb to the logic of hyper-real politics. All too easily, they become their opposites: the critic naturally becomes the hyper-critic (Baudrillard), the political advisor becomes the fanatic (Kissinger), the *parrhēsiast* becomes the demagogue (Trump). This is so because in hyper-real politics, the obviously synthetic, i.e. the inauthentic, becomes the very marker of the authentic. Yet, the simulation of authenticity in hyper-reality will only ever appear as the inauthentic if viewed from the semblance of the original epistemological

[80] Ibid., p. 76
[81] Ibid., p. 76
[82] Ibid., p. 88
[83] Ibid., p. 107

space. In hyper-real politics, there is no difference: if all the conditions of these true-discourses, the environment in which they made sense, are removed, then it is no longer possible to tell the genuine critic from false, vice from virtue, or courage from cowardice. As a consequence, it is no longer possible to turn back and reclaim these practices in any meaningful sense.

[11] With the emergence of hyper-real politics, the traditional formulations of the problem of political order are displaced. That is, the social force of mass society constitutes a new problem complex for thought about political order: the concept of the masses. *In the Shadow of Silent Majorities*, Baudrillard attempts to capture the nature of the masses. It is like a "statistical crystal ball," that is "swirling with currents and flows," much like the image of matter. As we know it from natural elements, it is just as hard to grasp for the imagination.[84] The mass stands in defiance of social concepts like individuals, classes, or social relations in general; it is, Baudrillard tells us, "an *in vacuo* aggregation of individual particles, refuse of the social and of media impulses: an opaque nebula whose growing density absorbs all the surrounding energy and light rays, to collapse finally under its own weight. A black hole which engulfs the social."[85] Mass is therefore a peculiar and problematic concept for thought: the mass does not possess qualities, attributes, or referents – its most basic characteristic is its radical lack of definition, "It has no sociological 'reality'. It has nothing to do with any real population, body or specific social aggregate."[86] A fact that sits hard with traditional political analysis is that without either law (written or remembered) or hierarchies, political order is dictated by the weight of the masses alone. Where in the past, political order was something that could be managed somehow, today it is out of our control. Two characteristics of the concept of masses deserve brief attention for their source of authority in cybernetics and the way in which they produce political order by silent majorities.

1. *Cybernetics*. How is it possible to think in terms of masses as opposed to other concepts of political order? One possible answer can be found in the epistemological rupture of how modern science views the world. In the 1940es and 50es, the American mathematician Norbert Weiner published two books in which he explored the

[84] Baudrillard, Jean. *In the Shadow of Silent Majorities*, translated by Paul Foss, Paul Patton and John Johnston (Semiotext(e), 2007), p. 1
[85] Ibid., pp. 1-3
[86] Ibid., p. 5

concept of cybernetics as a way of viewing and understanding the world.[87] In these two books, Weiner was interested in positing a new metaphysics of science; in particular in physics and chemistry, that replaces the Newtonian universe. He writes: "This revolution has had the effect that physics now no longer claims to deal with what will always happen [certainty], but rather with what will happen with an overwhelming probability."[88] The key here was the concept of entropy, also known as 'the arrow of history'. Weiner argues that statistical probability dictates that the universe of entropy is a universe in which "order is least probable, [and] chaos most probable."[89] In a universe where order is least probable and chaos most probable, human beings have to organize – they have to set up systems of control. Weiner says it like this:

> We are immersed in a life in which the world as a whole obeys the second law of thermodynamics: confusion increases and order decreases. Yet, as we have seen, the second law of thermodynamics, while it may be a valid statement about the whole of a closed system, is definitely not valid concerning a non-isolated part of it. There are local and temporary islands of decreasing entropy in a world in which the entropy as a whole tends to increase, and the existence of these islands enables some of us to assert the existence of progress.[90]

The concept of order in cybernetics is thus radically different from those in *thēsmos* or the divine right of kings, and particularly that of the state, where the power of the state is equal to that which the people gives it. Even so, cybernetics derives from the Greek word *kubernētês* – meaning 'steersman', the same Greek word from which we eventually derive our world 'governor'. To Weiner, communication and control are classed together: that is, communication is a form of control (the channels for giving orders), and control a form of communication (the giving of orders). *The limits of communication* is the cybernetic system which consists of three components: first, the information being communicated; second, the difference between what is send and what is received caused by interference and noise; and third, the feedback loop which allows for corrections and evolution of the system.

This is a general outlook of cybernetics and systems of control that can be seen throughout society and the physical universe. The brain is a cybernetic system, the animals on the savannah form a cybernetic system, the oceans, the planet, and off cause

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[87] Wiener, Norbert. *Cybernetics: Or control and communication in the animal and the machine* (MIT University Press, 1948) and *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and society* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1954)
[88] Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings*, p. 10
[89] Ibid., p. 12
[90] Ibid., p. 44

the masses are all cybernetic systems.[91] Any cybernetic system provides order in terms of *code.* A code is a means of conveying information, as such it determines what bits of information is allowed to pass and what is not.[92] The code itself as a concept of order comes from biology (the genetic code of DNA orders the organism, determining its characteristics and its life). The 'will' and 'call to order' of the masses constantly has to be called into existence by asking it through statistical surveys, polls, and other tests.[93] When the order of the universe is found in code, the silent majorities that characterize the masses are but the algorithmic side product of communication bobbles, visible only through the crumb trail of data that they leave behind. In fact, their silence is completely paradoxical, "it isn't a silence which does not speak, it is a silence which *refuses to be spoken for in its name*."[94] Anyone can claim to speak in their name; yet it is the masses that are in control. As Baudrillard poses the question: "Are the mass media on the side of power in the manipulation of the masses, or are they on the side of the masses in the liquidation of meaning, in the violence done to meaning and in the fascination that results? Is it the media which induce fascination in the masses, or is it the masses which divert the media into spectacle?"[95] It is not the media, but the masses, that controls the means of communication.

2. *The silent majorities*. I have already noted how 'the masses' was an unclear concept when it first appeared, no doubt because it was Man that constituted the main focal point for modern thought. As such, it was a dangerous entity, one that, if thought through the concept of man, became the locus of the dark desires within him. With Nietzsche, we could say that the presence of the masses would mean the amplification of the herd instincts. As a silent majority, the masses have a peculiar relationship to true-discourse in that only that which is already a part of the code (i.e. the sameness of truth) can be reincorporated. The external position that constitutes the ground upon which the confrontation of thought can be mobilized is disbanded. About the fruition of technological reproduction and its confrontation with the *masse,* the onus of critique has

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[91] Similarly, the political system, economic system, social systems, and states systems can be thought of as cybernetic systems.

[92] Deleuze, Gilles. *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, translated by Martin Joughin (Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 177.182

[93] "That the silent majority (or the masses) is an imaginary referent does not mean they don't exist. It means that their representation is no longer possible. The masses are no longer a referent because they no longer belong to the order of representation. They don't express themselves, they are surveyed. They don't reflect upon themselves, they are tested. The referendum (and the media are a constant referendum of directed questions and answers) has been substituted for the political referent." Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of Silent Majorities*, p. 20

[94] Ibid., p. 22

[95] Ibid., p. 105

reversed as written by Benjamin: "The conventional is enjoyed without criticism, the truly new is criticized with aversion."[96] The masses are truly hostile to novelty, they would much rather enjoy in distractions: "The audience is an examiner, but a distracted one."[97] Benjamin thereby downplays the role of contemplation, the demand for reception of new pieces of art requires only of us *getting used to them*. In that respect no one is exempt, even political correct culture display just as much unwillingness to consider other points of view as legitimate as those whom they are trying to combat; through 'intolerance', the aim is to control discourse.

[12] Where in the past there would be *dunasteia* or toleration, now the political game is problematized in thought as one of spectacle. That is, in hyper-real politics the problem of the political game is always tied to the concept of spectacle. We must be careful not to understand the spectacle as an occasional event, like the gladiator games in the ancient Rome, nor the horrific execution of a criminal designed to scare the populace during the Wars of Religion. By the spectacle, we should also understand more than the "manufactured public sphere" that Habermas talks about, although it is not entirely unrelated.[98] In other words, the problem of spectacle is not purely a matter of elites exercising power over society by putting on displays of spectacle – even if this is the dominant way of framing the problem.[99]

The problem of the spectacle is not only about publicity. Rather, the problem of spectacle must be understood conjoined with the problem of order as cybernetics; in the same way as the codes of the silent majorities leaves nothing unaffected, the spectacle is something that permeates all social relations. Similar statements of the problem can find in Boorstin's concept of the "pseudo-event" or McLuhan's dictum *the medium is the message*, but in Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle,* we learn that "life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has receded into representation. […] The spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images."[100] Thus understood, the spectacle is the medium through which people experience reality: under such conditions, the political game becomes as spectacle as well, even if the parties involved in a conflict are

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[96] Benjamin, *The Work of Art*, p. 26
[97] Benjamin, *The Work of Art*, p. 35
[98] Habermas, *Transformation of the Public Sphere*, pp. 211-221
[99] See: Mills, *Power Elite*, pp. 269-297 and Chomsky and Herman. *Manufactured Consent*
[100] Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*, translated by Ken Knabb (London: Rebel Press, 2004), p. 7

presented as irreconcilable antagonisms, they are actually a part of this same system.[101] There is nothing outside it and it treats everything else as if it was inside it. Thus, the spectacle produces truth in accordance with the logic simulation: "The spectacle, where the real world is replaced by a selection of images which are projected above it, yet which are at the same time succeed in making themselves regarded as the epitome of reality."[102] At the same time the spectacle is driven by the logic of images, appearances, and representations: an example would be terrorism, which displays a gruesome appetite for the spectacular. Terrorism only works by creating images of terror, if it fails to do so it would be nothing but an empty murderous gesture. It is only through its absurd brutality that it can obtain an effect. Transposed to politics, what this means for our understanding of the political game is that it is exclusively about the creation and maintenance of images. The inflated personalities of movie stars, celebrities, and politicians are all preoccupied with maintaining and projecting an image: *harder*, *better, faster, stronger*. Like the pseudo-event, they display nothing but "pseudo-qualifications."[103] "Our politics, religion, news, athletics, education and commerce have been transformed into congenial adjuncts of show business, largely without protest or even much popular notice. The result is that we are a people on the verge of amusing ourselves to death," as Niel Postman states in the aptly titled *Amusing Ourselves to Death*.[104] In describing the logic of the spectacle, Eco compares politics to pro-wrestling: "The virtue of all-in wrestling is that it is the spectacle of excess." – "The public is completely uninterested in knowing whether the contest is rigged or not, and rightly so; it abandons itself to the primary virtue of the spectacle, which is to abolish all motives and all consequences: what matters is not what it thinks but what it sees."[105] This is another way of saying that the public agrees not to think in exchange for being contend with the reality they are presented, regardless of how contradictory or banalized (as in treating fundamentally important questions as banalities) it has become. We are so accustomed to living with contradictions and paradoxes that they no longer bother us. Meanwhile the critique of mass-culture has become so popular that it itself is mass-culture. It is only what can grab their attention that is allowed to subsist.

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[101] Ibid., p. 27
[102] Ibid., p. 19
[103] Boorstin, *The Image*, p. 43
[104] Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the age of show business* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 4
[105] Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers (London: Vintage Books, 2009), p. 3

[13] In conclusion, I have in this chapter attempted to show how, through a series of transformations of the public sphere, the clash between the social forces involved in mass society and scientism have brought about hyper-real politics of truth – where the distinction between truth and untruth is vanishing because of the over-production of truth. Expressed in genealogical terms, it is by some historical accident that the hyper-real politics of truth emerges from the clash between the social forces of scientism and mass society. It should be relatively clear why the discourse of post-truth politics is unhelpful in this situation: on the one hand, it can be affirmation of the conviction of scientism that it alone possesses the truth (the same goes for the opponents of science, but that would be nothing new); on the other hand, its instance on politics being a theatre of appearance and nothing but power struggles gives credence to the political game as a spectacle.

In this present chaos, hyper-real politics has put a full-scale prohibition against thought – scientism institutes such prohibition by its denial of meta-physics and the invalidation of non-scientific truths while the silent majorities institute such a prohibition on the basis of non-tolerance and apathy for everything different or alien to its own code. It is here that we find the most troubling socio-political limit of thought in a politics of truth: between the over-production of factual reality and truth of scientism and the excessive appetite for the spectacle of the masses. For what are the active forces of thought to do in the face of the paradox of hyper-real politics? – an epistemological space held up by a belief in that the access to brute facts should naturally collapse, yet this is exactly what seems impossible or irrelevant in a mass-society accustomed to contradictions.

If there is something that most of the critics of hyper-real politics have in common, it is the pessimism about its demise. For Debord, "a critique seeking to go beyond the spectacle must know how to wait" for the end of capitalism.[106] For Heidegger and Deleuze alike, we are waiting for the forces that can make thought active again – be they social or those of God. Let us therefore recall, as Baudrillard points out: "the value of thought lies not so much in its inevitable convergences with truth as in the immeasurable divergences which separate it from truth."[107] The question is this: "Why might there not be as many real worlds as imaginary ones? Why a single real world? Why such an exception? Truth to tell, the real world, among all the other possible ones, is unthinkable, except as dangerous superstition. We must break with it as critical thought

[106] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, p. 124
[107] Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*, p. 95

ones broke (in the name of the real) with religious superstition. Thinkers, one more effort!"[108] Indeed, if this is the epistemological space, the tyrant of truth, in which thought is forced to test itself, then the only option left to us seems to be 'radical thought'. For if, by its very success, critical thought culminated in hyper-reality, a kind of modern Oedipal patricide, then it will not provide us with the weapon necessary for the coming tyrannicide. Radical thought works in the opposite direction of critical thought: it is not aiming at objective reality, it does not seek to make the world more comprehensible and knowable, it does not possess the conviction of truth. Rather it "anagrammatizes, it dispenses concept and ideas and, by its reversible sequencing, takes account both of meaning and of the fundamental illusoriness of meaning." [109] To leave the world with more than you received: "Cipher, do not decipher", that is the motto of the radical thought.[110]

[108] Ibid., p. 98
[109] Ibid., p. 103
[110] Ibid., p. 105

Conclusion: The Socio-Political Limits of Thought

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[1] In this thesis, I started by presenting the diagnosis of the present as I found it in the discourse of post-truth politics, in which we are told that contemporary politics is dominated by a complete disregard for truth and truthfulness; in which emotions, alternative facts, and conspiracy theories are more important than evidence and rigorous scientific facts. Curiously, these themes were nothing new in the Western tradition of thought and had long been made, in what I termed the antinomy hypothesis, which holds that truth and politics are opposites, they are external to one another, where one exists the other disappear; truth is abstract and absolute on the one hand, and politics is a hostile realm of men where there is no room for truth on the other. On close inspection however, I argued, this antinomy hypothesis is self-contradictory: truth cannot be all-powerful and completely power-less at the same time; neither can politics be a realm without truth as it also contributes to what *is* (i.e. that which is true). Thus, it was reasonable to doubt some of the main claims of this discourse – in particular that post-truth politics is an established historical fact, the underlying rejection of a complex relationship between truth and politics, and that post-truth politics marks a decisive historical rupture. Nevertheless, while I did not want to reject that there has been an increase in lying and untruthfulness in politics, that conspiracy theories have entered mainstream political discourse, or a growing animosity and mistrust towards the political establishment and scientific community, I observed that in the present moment, Western societies has become insecure about one of its main terms, namely *truth* – and in particular it's relationship to politics. By ascribing an absolute value to truth, I argued, the discourse of post-truth politics and the antinomy hypothesis are implicated in what they claims to criticise – it is by the realisation of this paradoxical thesis that it becomes impossible for it to see the conditions of its own possibility.

Given this state of affairs, I sought to replace the antinomy hypothesis with a history of the politics of truth – in short, the struggle at the most general level of society, where the true is separated from the false and where what gets to count as truth and reality is decided. As I argued in the introduction, the politics of truth establishes the socio-political limits of thought: how and by what practices is it possible for thought to test its own truth in politics? Here, I argued that the ultimate aim of the politics of truth was the transfiguration of these socio-political limits of thought. Thus, rather than engaging in a debate about what truth *is* and whether it can exist in politics, I attempted to circumvent these questions of being by considering the *becoming* of the complex relationship between truth and politics in the politics of truth, as it has been constituted as a problem for thought in the Western tradition since ancient Greece. In all its simplicity, I asked the question, *how did get here*? By posing the meta-political question of how the politics of truth has been turned into a problem in thought more broadly, I hoped to discover how it had become possible to think with the utmost conviction that we now live in a post-factual society, one in which there is no longer room for truth in politics?

Nevertheless, for such a question to be addressed, it was necessary to formulate a social theory of *how it becomes possible to think differently*; that is, how and why the epistemological space of the un-thought changes. In the first chapter, I therefore attempted to formulate such a theory based on the French school of Historical Epistemology, which would explain the historical development of epistemological space that delineates the politics of truth as a series of displacements of *problems* and *practices*, by how they have been *problematized* in thought. Taken together these problematisations establish an epistemological space with an inherent logic that constitutes the conditions of possibility for reflecting on these problems. In other words, I was interested in how practices were problematized in thought based on the confrontation with a practical problem. It is around these practical problems that I have attempted to show how the trajectory of the history of the politics of truth has taken shape. Accordingly, I have attempted to write a history of the politics of truth on the basis of practical problems.

[2] Throughout the thesis, I have approached the history of the politics of truth by the way it has been problematized in thought. In doing so, I followed the strategy of making the socio-political limits of thought visible by situating them within an epistemological space that is stretched out between three interrelated problems complexes: true-discourses in politics, political order, and the political game. This was necessary to

outline general and distinguishable models for the politics of truth. Accordingly, to the general question: *how should the difference between the true and the false be established in politics*? I have taken as the answer *the problem of the politics of truth*. When put in historical motion this answer was first by the wise king, then by *parrhēsia*, third by exhortation, fourth by public critique, and lastly by hyper-real politics. I will now go through them in turn.

In the second chapter, I started this history by considering how the archaic Greeks had come to problematize the politics of truth through the concept of *parrhēsia* – the practice of frank truth-telling. To show how this problematisation constituted a historical rupture, the chapter started with an examination of the model of the wise king. In this model, the politics of truth was a matter between the king and the gods decided by the practice of the oath, and all three problems of the epistemological space converged in the figure of the king: it was only the king who would confront the gods with an oath, others he would expose to the ordeal. At the same time, political order was problematized as remembering the law (*thēmos*), and the political game was about exercising ones right to decide (*dikazein*). This model of the wise king was discussed as the practical problem of *monarchos* (the oppressive rule of one) in 7th and 6th century BC in Greece because the danger of the king passing crooked judgements was regarded too great.

The emergence of the juridical concept of *dikainon* instituted a split between truth and power that demanded a manifestation of truth and laws were written down. In many ways, this was a genuine epistemological break that set the Greeks definitively apart from other traditions of thought in the ancient world. This was accomplished by displacing the truth-discourse of the oath: instead of the parties swearing an oath to the gods, it would be the judge who swore to uphold the law. The 'I judge' of the law became in a democracy the property of the free citizen who could make use of *logos parrhēsia* to persuade the demos of his truth. The politics of truth was thus problematized in thought as the ethical differentiation displayed by those who sought to govern the *poleis* by the practice of *parrhēsia*. Yet, at the same time, the problem of *parrhēsia* was, in Greek thought, situated between the problem of the constitutional (*politeia*) guarantee of the freedom to speak what one genuinely saw as being true and the constant problem of exercising power through a test of ability (*dunasteia*) in a political game of persuading others that one is actually speaking the truth. The socio-political limit of thought was thus governed by a principle of ethical differentiation where the limit of novel thought was constituted in the courage and persuasiveness of the individ-

ual truth-teller. However, there was a constant danger in the possibility that *parrhēsia* itself opens up for: the bad *parrhēsiast*, the demagogue who makes use of his freedom to speak for his own gains rather than for the good of the *poleis*. Incidentally, this was the very problem that sparked the process of thought around the end of the Peloponnesian war when it was no longer possible to tell the difference.

The third chapter explored how the politics of truth was displaced from a democratic setting to an autocratic setting, a politics of truth I termed *exhortation*. The cause of this historical rupture, I argued, was to be found in the actualization of the danger of the demagogue. At the time, this was problematized in thought as a result of the paradoxical demands for *isēgoria* and *eleutheria*. From Plato to Renaissance, the politics of truth was problematized in thought around the relationship between the philosophical counsellor and the king. Here, truth remained neither hidden, nor did it have to manifest itself through courage. Rather, truth resided in the good (*agathos*), and in the active relationship with an advisor (*sumbouleuo*), and through training (*paideia*), it was possible for the soul (*psūke*) to obtain knowledge of the truth. As the king was incapable of discovering the truth for himself (a continuation of the split between truth and power in the epistemological space delineated by *parrhēsia*), it was the relationship between the advisor and the king that was the attention of thought: together in a *homologie*, they would work towards obtaining the truth by confessing their thoughts. Nevertheless, the politics of truth that was elaborated around the concept of exhortation finds its two poles in Isocrates and the Socratic philosophers. I attempted to catch this tension between the two concepts of *protrepsis* and *paraenesis,* where the latter would appeal to tradition and the former would welcome the activity of thought.

This politics of truth was completely formalized in the literary genre of mirrors for princes: a genre with the essential thing being that the split between truth and power is maintained as the king can per definition not rule without someone to help him discover the truth about himself and what it means to be a king – a truth that God has hidden from him. The physicality of the mirror emphasises the divisional structure of the practice; it helps focus the problematisation on the soul of the king. Meanwhile, the concept of a naturally existing *divine right* (a elaboration and consequence of the notion of *agathos*) as the constitutional element came to dominate the thinking about the problem of political order, while the concept of *court society*, encapsulated in the image of the *rota fortuna*, focused around the chivalry, etiquette, and eloquence, came to define thought about the problem of the political game. These three problems were governed by a principle of virtue, where the socio-political limit of novel thought was established

as living up to a higher order of things. There was an ever-present danger of flattery (which concerned both the king and the advisor) which would plague thought for centuries, yet it did not become terminal before the Reformation.

The fourth chapter demonstrates how the politics of truth was problematized in thought through the concept of *public critique* as a response to the growing forces of superstition during the 16th and 17th centuries. As the practice of exhortation became increasingly fanatical, and kings became tyrannical, the model of the mirror for princes started to break down and constitute a practical problem, as was found during the Wars of Religion and the spread of Absolutism. Thus, the realization of the danger of flattery called the practice of exhortation into question. The problem then taken up by thought was that of the public critique, which it problematized as an antagonistic field where the true-discourse of *critique* established the grounds for action rather than providing advice. The relationship between truth and politics was not to be decided in the confrontation amongst the power-wielding citizens of the first rank, nor in an exhortation to the king, but among men debating the merit of argument on an equal basis provided by reason. Accordingly, the problem of political order was addressed through the concept of the *state*, an entity separate from society created by men, providing constitutional rights such as civil liberties and freedom of the press, while at the same time holding the right to infringe on these rights to keep order. At the same time, the problem *toleration* took on an increasingly important role in thought about the political game as religious movements diversified, and in the absence of immediate judgement, irreconcilability would have to be tolerated. The socio-political limit of novel thought was thus constituted around the principle of reason as the sole possession of man, which would guide thought on all three sets of problems. However, as reason has a fleeting nature, even when it attempts to set it own limits in public, a reoccurring theme in Early Modern and Modern thought was that it was prone to unreason. Thus, man always lived in the danger of tutelage and had to make use of reason to avoid it. The danger was critique itself because it would always have a tendency to develop into hyper-critique, which no longer relied on reason but solely on unruliness of uninformed opinion or blatant ideology.

In the fifth chapter, I attempted to show how from the end of the 19th century and up until the present, a new epistemological space of hyper-real politics of truth has emerged. It explores how the logic of factual reality of scientific government, which seemed the only way of saving public critique from itself and the dangers of mass-society, resulted in the overproduction of facts, effectively causing the emergence of

hyper-reality. I called this dynamic 'the catalyst of scientism'. This epistemological space is characterized by the complete transformation into the political milieu of hyper-reality where politics is enacted as more real than real. There is no real politics, only the mirage of it: the process of truth is ordered through the problem of simulation, where media and technology come to play a larger role in the production of truth. In a reality saturated with appearances, facts no longer matter: opinion-holders, a qualification that anyone and everyone may posses, therefore find it relatively easy to discard factual truth as just another opinion. Simultaneously, thought about political order becomes dominated by the problem of *silent majorities* (laws of statistical probability), visible only through big data. At the same time the problem of the spectacle takes up thought about the political game: only what can grab the attention of the masses will prevail in the politics of truth. Thus at the present, the politics of truth is problematized in thought as the relationship between a saturated reality of appearances, the changing desires of silent majorities, and the logicality of the spectacle. In this circular movement ordered by a principle of simulacrum, where the real is in the process of being replaced by its copy, there is no space for the difference of thought, only the positive mode of thought that affirms and produces more truth.

Nevertheless, it would be hard to deny that on the surface this seems an altogether implausible history – in no way, whatsoever, does history display this kind of inconsistency or disruption. Nevertheless, a history situated at the level of the unthought would not consist in an interpretation of factual events, but rather in an episodic series of logically coherent epistemological spaces. Which is not to say that flattery would not be a practical problem for existing political leaders, or that the relationship between the state and critique does not inform political knowledge today, or again that the question of which citizens have the right to freedom of speech are not questions that are taken up for reflection today. At the surface of things, all these politics of truth appear to be part of the present, even if they remain at the margins. Thought is sedimentary, which is why it is difficult to disentangle from the plethora of practices the origins or social forces at work in the present. Conversely, in so far as we consider the history of the politics of truth schematically, it consists in four historical ruptures between different epistemological spaces: first the politics of truth of the wise king would, because of his crooked judgements, be replaced by a democratic game of truth of the *parrhēsiast*; exhortation of the philosophical counsellor to the king would replace the *parrhēsiast* as he became a demagogue; as exhortation was unable to guard against

superstition and fanaticism, public critique would replace it; and as public critique by the forces of mass-society and scientism we arrive at hyper-real politics.

Overview: Epistemological Spaces of the Politics of Truth

Politics of Truth	**Wise King**	***Parrhēsia***	**Exhortation**	**Public Critique**	**Hyper-real Politics**
Historical emergence, ca.	---	6th Century BC.	5th Century BC.	16-17th Century	21th Century
Break	*Monarchos*	*Isēgoria/ Eleutheria*	Religious Wars/ Absolutism	Scientism/ Mass-society	---
Chapter	II	II	III	IV	V
Truth process	Oath/Ordeal	Persuasion	Confession	Criticism	Simulation
Point of Problem-atisation	---	Ethical Difference	Soul	Man	Appearance
Diagram	*Nōmos*	*Logos*	Doctor	Reason	Communication/Network
Danger	Crooked judgement	Demagogue	Flatterer	Superstition/Tutelage	Mass-society
Political Order	***Thēmos***	***Politeia***	**Divine Right**	**State**	**Silent Majority**
Source of Authority	Oath	*Isēgoria*	*Agathos*/God	The People	Cybernetic
Political Game	***Dikazein***	***Dunasteia***	**Court Society**	**Toleration**	**Spectacle**
Actor	Wise King	Free citizen	Counsellor	Critic	Anyone/ Everyone

[3] From this genealogical series, it is clear that the problem of the politics of truth is a reoccurring challenge that has to be met; as in the past so too today. Thus, for a nostalgic interpretation of this history, an age of wise kings or frank democratic truth-tellers might seem preferable to our present, but one that would have to omit the social forces that resulted in these constellations becoming problematic. Likewise, a triumphalist interpretation of historical progress, focused on the ability of thought to overcome its obstacles and slowly emancipate the politics of truth from all its harmful tendencies, would have a hard time reconciling the parts hyper-real politics that are completely antithetical to it. Both refuse to take the paradoxical nature of thought serious and thus both seem wholly inadequate to answer this challenge.

Throughout this thesis I have attempted to show how the politics of truth is historically constituted in a series of epistemological spaces shaped by the interplay of social forces; how a change in the constellation of social forces brings about a change in the politics of truth. Thus, if the wise king was displaced by the *parrhēsiast*, the *parrhēsiast* was displaced by the philosophical counsellor, the philosophical counsellor was displaced by the critic, and the critic was displaced by hyper-real politics, what social forces will be able to displace the problem of hyper-real politics, and *who* will thus once more be free to pose the question of the politics of truth? Any answer to such a question would have to grapple with the forces that have brought these ruptures about. In other words, erecting a new epistemological space is the essential task – thought needs to set new limits to what counts as true and false, while at the same time making room for the difference of thought. If the context of thought has always been prior thought, then in confronting the forces that propel it, thought must test its socio-political limit. In this thesis I have tried to excavate what we silently think as a first step towards freeing thought from the chains of prior thought.

As I bring this thesis to a close I start to wonder, can this be done within a hyper-real epistemological space? What becomes of the socio-political limits of novel thought when the only possibility left is factual true-discourse, slowly disappearing under the pressure of its own paradoxical nature? What possibility is there then to thinking differently? How much truth does life really need?

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