

“MARCHING TO THE BEAT OF A DIFFERENT DRUMMER”: THE CULTURE OF LIBERTY VS. THE CULTURE OF AUTHORITY

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Questions to keep in mind:

- why do so many people obey authority?
- what role does coercion play in enforcing obedience?
- what role does culture and political values play in making people obey willingly? (“the culture of obedience to authority”)
- is it the norm to obey and conform to authority?
- what makes some people challenge or reject authority? (“the culture of liberty”)
- how can we oppose a “culture of obedience”?
- how can we promote a "culture of liberty"?



[James Gillray, “Le coup de Maître” (1797).]

CHALLENGE TO ORTHODOXY I: “WHY SHOULD PEOPLE MARCH TO THE BEAT OF THE OFFICIAL DRUMMER?”

Film extract 1: Peter Weir’s film *Dead Poets Society* (1989) [2mins 15].

Henry David Thoreau in *Walden* (1854) - marching to the beat of a different drummer:

Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because **he hears a different drummer**. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality.

THE CULTURES OF TWO RIVALROUS GROUPS: THE RULERS VS. THE RULED

Political Aspects of Culture: Symbols, Images, Rituals, & Ceremonies

- often have hidden or unacknowledged) political or ideological content and meaning

I. The Rulers

- those members of the state who live off tax dollars & exercise the power to confiscate, regulate, imprison, & order some to their deaths
- kings, emperors, presidents, popes, generals, senators, MPs, judges, well-connected special interest groups (MIC, unions)
- rule by mixture of coercion (direct rule) & use of culture & ideology (indirect rule)



[Frontispiece to Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. (1651).]

Rulers & the Culture of Authority/Obedience

All rulers share certain common features. They need:

- to get power

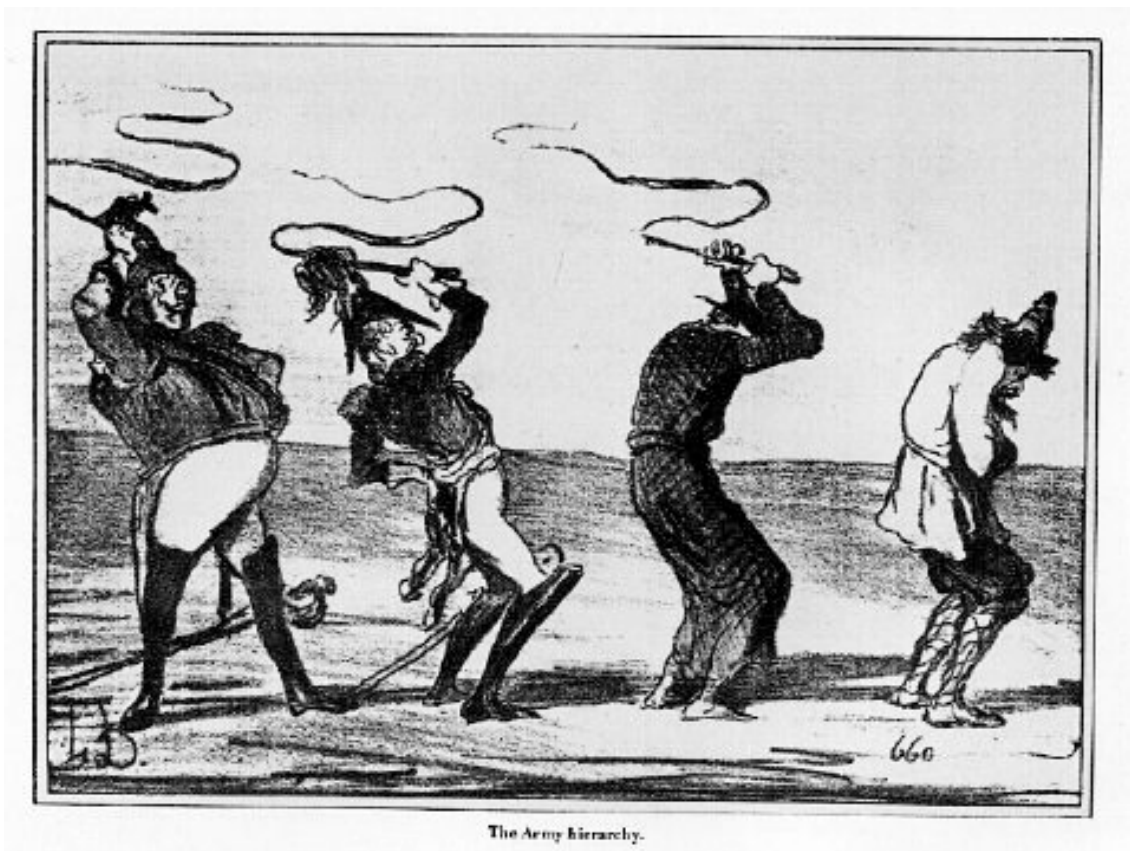
- to retain power
- to appear to be a legitimate power
- to be loved (or feared) by their subjects
- to keep opponents and dissidents under control
- to have compliant and obedient citizens and taxpayers (who will “obey and pay”)

All rulers resort to common strategies to maintain their rule:

- seek to legitimize and maintain a ruler in power
- use civic rituals to get public support
- erect statues and monuments in public spaces to honour the rulers
- legitimize & glorify the nation state & its wars
- demand sacrifice on the part of citizens
- create a uniform national culture to reduce costs of ruling
- use public media to show rulers in a flattering light

II. The Ruled

- those individuals who are taxed, regulated, imprisoned, and ordered to their deaths for the benefit of their rulers & their allies



[Honoré Daumier, “The Army Hierarchy” (1850s).]

The Ruled & The Culture of Obedience to Authority

- many accept the superiority & legitimacy of their rulers to rule them, tax them, regulate them, send them off to war

The Ruled & The Culture of Resistance to Authority

- many do not accept the superiority and legitimacy of their rulers to rule them, tax them, regulate them, send them off to war
- they protest, oppose, resist, mock, or undermine unjust authority & state power

THE THREE PILLARS OF AUTHORITY: GOD, KING, AND COUNTRY

- the legitimacy of the ruler or ruling institution (respect)
- the need for unquestioning obedience to that ruler or ruling institution (obedience)
- the justice of paying taxes, obeying the laws and regulations issued by the ruler, and serving in the army (compliance)

I. “God” (or “Altar” - the established Church)



General slogans:

- "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Paul's Epistle to Romans 8:28-31) - or "With God on our side" (Bob Dylan)
- "God for Harry! England and Saint *George!*" (Shakespeare, *Henry V*)
- "Gott mit uns" (God is with us) - Germany Army from 17thC
- "God Bless America"

State Emblems, Mottos, Coats of Arms

II. “King” (or “Throne” - Emperor, President)



[Official Portrait of Pres. G.H.W. Bush.]

General slogans:

- "For King and Country"
- “God save the King/Queen” (British national anthem)
- “Zu Befehl” (On your command) - unquestioning obedience to authority; response of soldiers in Prussian army to an order

Other examples:

- Official portraits of rulers
- Rulers heads of coins/currency
- Coronations and inaugurations
- Calls for public sacrifice
- Erecting statues of rulers in public places
- Celebrating or choosing the party leader
- State funerals of state leaders

- The Pomp and Ceremony of the Ruler
- Leaders in military uniform
- The Greater Powers of the Leader
- “God save the King/Queen”

III. The Culture of Authority: “Country” (or Nation, La Patrie, Fatherland, Das Volk, Homeland, Heimat)



[Artillery Monument, London (WWI).]

General slogans:

- “It is sweet and fitting to die for the Fatherland”
- “My country right or wrong” (Decatur)

Other examples:

- Propaganda posters
- Sacrifice for the nation (enlistment)
- Dying for one’s country
- Monuments for mourning the dead
- Public displays of military force
- Oaths of allegiance to country & leader
- Anthems & hymns to the country & leader
- “It is sweet and fitting to die for the Fatherland”

- Calls for public sacrifice
- National holidays with patriotic and military parades
- National anthems with warlike sentiments

CHALLENGE TO ORTHODOXY II: “IS IT SWEET AND FITTING TO DIE FOR THE FATHERLAND?”

Film extract 2: Lewis Milestone’s film *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) [6 mins 14]

“Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori” (Horace, Odes II.2)

It’s sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.
 Yet death chases after the soldier who runs,
 and it won’t spare the cowardly back
 or the limbs, of peace-loving young men.

Wilfred Owen’s powerful anti-war poem “Dulce et decorum est” (1917) (“the old lie”).

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, -
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,
 The old lie: Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori.

Film extract 3: Arthur Hiller, *The Americanization of Emily* (1964) [7 mins 10].

CHALLENGE TO ORTHODOXY III: HOW DO WE DISRUPT THE OFFICIAL DRUMBEAT TO OBEY AND CONFORM TO AUTHORITY?

Film extract 4: Volcker Schlöndorff, *The Tin Drum* (Die Blechtrommel) (1979). [6 mins]