

Raphael Falco

# Charisma and Myth

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Raphael Falco



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For Ani and Christoph

*fingebant simul credebantque*

Tacitus, *Annals*, 5(6).10

[they invented and at the same time believed]

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This book grew out of a lecture I gave in the Renaissance Reckonings series at the University of Maryland, College Park. The subject of the lecture was cultural genealogy, specifically the relationship of genealogical myth to the descent of cultural heritage. I spoke in the question-and-answer period quite airily about the dependence of genealogy on charisma and one of the graduate students, taking what appeared to her the logical next step, asked about the relationship of charisma to myth. The question took me by surprise and after I had fumbled out some sort of answer, the graduate student said she thought that maybe I would have to write a book on charisma and myth before I finished the book on cultural genealogy. She turned out to be right and I would here like to express my gratitude to that anonymous student for her foresight. I would like to thank Kent Cartwright and his colleagues Marshall Grossman and Ted Leinwand for inviting me to speak that evening.

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All my powers of expression and thoughts so sublime  
Could never do you justice in reason or in rhyme.

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# Introduction

I once read the obituary of an American general, who, home from the wars and languishing in retirement, applied to be a contestant on a quiz show. When he was chosen to appear on the show, he was asked, as were all contestants, to suggest the subject on which he wished to be quizzed. The general chose Greek myths, and was told to report to the studio in two months. His performance during the show was flawless. He answered every question comprehensively and without hesitation, winning the customary \$64,000 and probably a Maytag washing machine as well. When asked afterwards why he'd chosen Greek myths as his subject, the general replied, "Because they don't change."

Spoken like a true unbeliever. Only to someone outside a mythical tradition, someone excluded by choice or circumstance, distance or difference, do myths appear static. To believers, myths are always in flux—regardless of whether the believers have names for their myth systems as different as Christianity, aristocracy, Bolshevism, or Yamato spirit. Legend has it that the pre-Socratic philosopher Thales complained, "Everything is full of gods," by which he seems to have meant that it was impossible to formulate a system of rational thought amid the clutter of beliefs in otherworldly figures. We can draw the inference, therefore, that those same Greek myths that supplied the American general with an unchanging (if encyclopedic) body of data conducive to quick memorization, in fact troubled Thales for their protean incommensurateness in confrontation with a rational approach to life. Thales was surrounded by believers. The general had neither believers, nor belief, to hinder him.

There is nothing revelatory in this observation. Bronislaw Malinowski, living at the dawn of anthropological field work, argued vehemently in 1926 that "the limitation of the study of myth to the examination of texts has been fatal to a proper understanding of its nature. The forms of myth that come down to us from classical antiquity and from the ancient sacred books of the East and other similar sources have come down to us without the

context of living faith, without the possibility of obtaining comments from true believers, without the concomitant knowledge of the social organization, their practiced morals, and their popular customs—at least without the full information which the modern field-worker can easily obtain” (18). Yet, despite the enormous strides made in field work around the globe, the study of myth has retained a hothouse quality. When, many years after Malinowski, Clifford Geertz observed in *The Interpretation of Cultures* that “although culture exists in the trading post, the hill fort, or the sheep run, anthropology exists in the book, the article, the lecture, the museum display, or, sometimes nowadays, the film” (16), he might just as well have been referring to the study of myth. Anthropologists, scholars of religion, sociologists, even literary critics all acknowledge that myths have a living quality, but few have attempted to define *how* this living quality functions in social life.

I believe that this living quality can often be defined in terms of charismatic authority, yet the concept of myth as a charismatic group experience has received virtually no attention in the scholarly literature. I am sure, however, that only through an understanding of the transformations of charismatic groups can we satisfactorily account for what Malinowski calls “living faith.” Only the shared experience of a myth system gives it meaning and the most powerful form of group sharing is charismatic interdependence. It is the foundational argument of this book that myths are functions of group interaction. They may appear to have an isotropic existence as fables, prayers, hymns, fairy tales, folk ballads, holy writ, or catechism. They may appear too far-fetched to believe, and the protagonists of the mythopoetic imagination may seem too artificial to worship. But the quality that gives them life, that wrests them from an isotropic isolation of the kind Geertz warns against in pointing to books, articles, lectures, museum displays, and films, flourishes in the unique circumstances of charismatic group dynamic. In every example of a successful myth system, we find the crucial bond between charisma and myth. We can conclude, therefore, as the following chapters demonstrate, that myth systems will not function as successful and long-lasting social vehicles without a charismatic component.

The subject of charisma and myth deserves attention not only because the mythical imagination remains active in everyday life, but also because understanding how myths flourish and survive touches every aspect of intellectual endeavor—anthropology, sociology, religious studies, theology, history, and literary theory. Yet, curiously, the word “charisma” does not even appear in the indexes of such monumental recent works on myth as Lawrence Sullivan’s *Ianchu’s Dream* and William Doty’s *Mythography*. This is

not to say that anthropologists *must* write about charisma, or even that they should accept this sociological category of authority. But it seems odd that in a field so concerned with religious ecstasies, magic, ritual, priesthoods, social elites, definitions of the supernatural, and kinship relations, so little attention has been paid to charisma, if only because the word itself remains so much a part of current vocabulary. In 1977, Clifford Geertz published an article titled, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in which he applies notions of charismatic leadership first to Elizabethan England and then to Javan and Moroccan government (Ben-David and Clark 1977: 150–71). Despite Geertz's useful observations, anthropologists, including Geertz, did not extend studies of charisma in their work, nor does Geertz himself in "Centers, Kings, and Charisma" interrogate the relationship of myth to charismatic authority.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the relationship all but demands examination. Many myth systems survive in the same way that charismatic groups survive—through constant alteration and ineluctable compromise with economic interests and stable forms of authority. Max Weber, whose theory of charisma is the foundation of all studies of the subject, divides forms of authority into three categories: charismatic, traditional, and legal-bureaucratic, a set of "ideal types" that I will discuss below. As Weber and his many revisionists explain, charismatic authority begins as a revolutionary force, overturning the norms of everyday routine, but must eventually compromise with traditional and bureaucratic forms of authority to survive. The Christian Church and the various Muslim theocracies are good examples of this kind of compromise. Weber did not, however, explore the place of myth in the transformation of charismatic authority.

This, in essence, was the original aim of the present book: to establish the effect of myth on the transformations of charisma and, at the same time, to determine the relationship of myth production to the survival of charismatic movements. I found, however, that it was impossible to take as one-sided an approach as this and reach any conclusions. Myth does not *affect* charisma without itself *being affected*. Changes in charismatic status are mirrored in the development of the myths that symbolize, bring about, or otherwise contribute to those changes. This mirroring relationship at times seems to have dialectical properties and at times seems symbiotic. But, in either case—dialectical or symbiotic—it is impossible to theorize the effect of myth on the transformations of charisma without also theorizing about myth in this context.

In the vast critical literature on myth there is surprisingly little attention paid to the study of myth as a specifically group phenomenon—that is, in terms of how groups function in regard to myth rather than how narratives

develop and are structured. Even Karl Marx, whose interest in collective response is undeniable, was more interested in (and sympathetic to) the aesthetic component of myth systems and social organization. Like many social theorists of the nineteenth century, he regarded myth in terms of a dichotomy between the primitive and the present day. This absolute distinction didn't start to break down until the early twentieth century when anthropologists such as Malinowski wrote about myth and culture in existing societies—and trumpeted the role of the anthropologist as the only viable source for the accurate discernment of functioning myths. Yet, even then, despite widespread agreement regarding myth as a shared component of tribes or cultures, scholars continued to ignore the principles of social organization associated with the functioning of groups per se in favor of discussions of individual psychology, symbolic forms, aesthetics, and mythopoetic production.

The present book does not attempt to fill this gap, because, as I noted above, my chief aim is to explore the effect of myth on charismatic transformations. Whereas most mythographers work from a particular archive—Aztec myths, shamanism, incest taboos, the myth of the eternal return, and so forth—I have instead borrowed ruthlessly from different archives, and from writers as diverse (and perhaps irreconcilable) as Freud, Jung, Malinowski, Dumézil, Ernst Cassirer, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Mircea Eliade, Eleazar Melitinsky, Hans Blumenberg, Wendy Doniger, Paul Veyne, Robert Segal, Bruce Lincoln, and many others. Their research and fieldwork, indeed the archives that they identify and interpret, have supplied the basis for the theoretical claims I make. If I range widely in time periods, genres, languages, and ethnicities, it is only because previous work on myth has allowed me to do so; in other words, much of the spade work is not my own, and if the connections I have made among various myth systems and charismatic authority have any merit, then much credit must go to the researchers who preceded me. I hope that this book will give something back to them. My aspiration is to add a new dimension to the theory of charismatic authority, but I would be very pleased if this book also contributed something to the always growing encyclopedia of myth theory.

Although I have not worked with a specific archive, I have in fact tried to delimit, and even define, the myths under examination. Primarily I am concerned with those myths that best reflect *a shared experience of charismatically sustained discourse*. My concept of “discourse” encompasses both conventional verbal narrative and also other forms of *factio* (making, or manufacture) from the linguistic to the visual. Myths that are not charismatically sustained certainly exist, but for the most part they will be outside

the purview of this book. Thus, while Marxism-Leninism in certain hands functions as a myth, positivism does not, nor does deconstruction or a concept like “the myth of modern art” (cf. Apostolos-Cappadona 1996: 327ff.), which diffuses rather than helping to focus the meaning of the term, and makes it all the more difficult to identify the link with charisma. Italian Futurism, on the other hand, with its Manifestos and F. T. Marinetti’s charismatic leadership, is a likely candidate for a modernist myth, as, perhaps somewhat less categorically, are Tristan Tzara’s Dada movement and the subsequent Surrealist movement which included André Breton and Salvador Dalí. But the measure of these cultural phenomena as myths intertwined with charisma will be the extent to which their tenets or ideals are genuinely shared in an interdependent group structure, and, concomitantly, the extent to which that group structure is subject to the manipulations of entropy and order I will outline below. My focus is therefore not meant to be comprehensive in regard to the universe of myths. By the same token, however, it is not limited only to rare or obvious instances, such as the advent of messiahs or the crediting of oracles. Rather, my concentration on the group component of myth, and specifically on charismatic groups, reflects my belief that they offer the most complex and useful dynamics for understanding the social force of myth and the longevity of myth systems. The notion of “a shared experience of charismatically sustained discourse” helps us to isolate a ubiquitous, if not universal, mechanism of cultural authority.

As is clear even from a cursory examination of the scholarship on this subject, the search for a conclusive definition of myth continues today, if somewhat less sanguinely in regard to finding the Key to All Mythologies. Some scholars have rejected the effort outright—Wendy Doniger, playfully I think, has even suggested that “there is something Mickey Mouse about any attempt to define myth” (1996: 116). She offers what she calls her own “rather cumbersome definition of myth”: “a narrative in which a group finds, over an extended period of time, a shared meaning in certain questions about human life, to which the various proposed answers are usually unsatisfactory in one way or another” (1996: 112; cf. Doniger 1998: esp. 1–25). Although she suggests what the “certain questions” might be, in terms of charismatic authority the most significant part of her definition is her emphasis on a narrative whose *shared meaning* affects a group. In her many works Doniger has explored the variety of narratives, but she has not delved too deeply into how the sharing of a narrative is accomplished, or how a particular group experience is continually reconstituted. That is my project in a nutshell—to explain how certain narratives and certain other

forms of discourse are managed charismatically so that the groups sharing and experiencing those discourses are maintained as cohesive social units over extended periods of time.

We cannot easily dismiss the voluminous scholarship indexing and circumscribing definitions. Scores of writers, from Augustine to Nietzsche, from Plato to Jung to Hans Blumenberg, have tried their hand at unveiling the realities of mythical consciousness. Moreover, despite the failures of nineteenth-century attempts, many theorists continued throughout the twentieth century to seek a pithy *lex fabulae* that would explain and indeed govern the production of myths across the range of cultures. There is more disagreement than accord in the myriad definitions of myth, which, paradoxically, proved invaluable to me in the present study. The absence of a universal Key has revealed the need to explore the charismatic component that links so many myths. This book should answer several questions: Can charismatic authority survive without myth? Can myths, or myth systems, survive without some relation to the transformations of charisma? Is the interdependent relationship of charismatic authority and myth, where we find it, best described as dialectical or symbiotic?

Let me add as a codicil that, in seeking to answer these questions, I have made every effort to bear in mind Doniger's caution regarding universals. In her recent foreword to the reissue of Eliade's *Shamanism*, she notes, for example, that the "basic idea of what [Eliade] called (after Nietzsche) 'the eternal return' has become a truism in the study of religion and does, I think, apply to many mythologies, though not, as Eliade claimed, to all. His ideas about the alternation and interaction of cosmos and chaos, and cyclical/mythical time and linear/historical time, the sacred and profane, are similarly fruitful starting points for many, if not all, cultures" (Eliade 1992: xiii). Although I believe that all myths have a charismatic element somewhere in their development, and that the shared experience of charisma is necessary to the successful functioning, and the longevity, of a myth system, it would be reckless of me to call every possible myth a manifestation of charismatic authority. In fact, I regret that we are stuck with the word "myth" to describe the array of fictions, religious beliefs, ethnic or nationalistic prejudices, racial bigotries, political movements, and personality cults. For each one of these patently different categories of shared narrative, we should properly have a different name. The Basque language has no word for tree, just ways of describing trees, and, as is well known, the Inuit have no word for snow but scores of words to describe the variations and degrees of that substance they experience so intimately. Maybe it would be better if we took the same linguistic approach to myth. But for the time

being the word “myth” serves as a portmanteau expression meant to contain, and even define, utterly different versions of the dialectic between rationality and fiction in everyday life (as well as in past cultures). This is an unfortunate, but ineluctable, reality of the discourse on myth, both academic and popular. To cut down on confusion, I have tried to relate individual narratives to myth systems, and, moreover, to identify prominent examples of the dialectic between rationality and fiction where its survival depends on charismatic group experience.

### What is a Charismatic Group?

Trying to define charismatic groups in language at once delimiting, comprehensive, and satisfying to the legions of scholars who have engaged the subject can present a daunting prospect, almost enough to make me echo Cordelia and refuse to “heave my heart into my mouth.” But I have no royal patriarch looming over me, and, academic mordancy notwithstanding, I’m in little danger from the dragon’s wrath. The myriad definitions of charismatic authority and charismatic group formation we find expounded in the sociological literature have a logical point of origin in Max Weber, and the diversions from Weber are fairly easy to trace. Some of these diversions—or perhaps revisions is a better word—have led to distinct advancements in our understanding of charisma. Others have narrowed or distorted the concept. As with most definitions, those that relax limits too liberally tend to be weaker, while those that are too restrictive, hewing to a specious conservatism, leave little room for innovative variations.

Since myth is the subject at hand, it is important to remember that Weber secularized the concept of charisma in a revision of Rudolph Sohm’s use of the term in his *Kirchenrecht*<sup>2</sup>—in effect a history of a charismatic myth as it became systematized into a tradition. Sohm attached the notion of charisma to the *didaskaloi*, the traveling preachers of the gospel in the early centuries of Christianity. In this context, charisma retained the meaning assigned to it by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 12, where he coined the word “charism” to mean “a gift of grace.” Although there isn’t fast proof, it seems likely that Paul’s word “charism” is etymologically related to the Hebrew word “chrism,” meaning “an anointing,” which occurs several times in the Old Testament (as in the anointing of Saul, 1 Samuel 9:16 and 10:1). Paul introduced the notion of the charisms for ecclesiological reasons, determined to establish the limits of congregational authority. He wrote his letter to the Corinthians in response to a challenge to his authority as leader



of the burgeoning Christian movement and to chastise them for what he deemed pagan worship. His polemical purpose should be borne in mind, as should the exclusionary element of his mythicization. Paul's letter strove above all to curtail the rebellious voices at Corinth: his famous characterization of the charisms as functional properties of the Body of Christ was in fact a rebuke aimed at dissidents.

Paul created the myth of charismatic authority in a few sentences, efficiently silencing dissident voices by describing a shared group experience:

Now there are diversities of gifts (*diaireseis . . . charismaton*), but the same Spirit (*pneuma*).

And there are diversities of administrations (*diaireseis diakonion*), but the same Lord.

And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit.

To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. (1 Cor. 12:4-11)

Emphasizing a monotheistic message in the face of pagan rebelliousness, Paul divides the gifts of grace among the congregation. There is hierarchy masked as egalitarianism in his list, and individuality only in group participation. The passage maps out the foundational myth of Christian ecclesiology. Meanwhile, the gospel myth, which enfables the life of a single charismatic figure, is effectively revised by Paul's empowerment of *every participating member* as a charismatic. He explains it this way: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12); and then, after giving a brief anatomy lesson, he sums up, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12:27).

My purpose in discussing the Pauline origins of charismatic authority is to demonstrate that the concept began as a cog in a mythmaking process.

Regardless of Weber's secularizing taxonomies, which I will detail below, a palimpsest of religious myth remains visible at every juncture. Weber was demonstrably aware of this underlying current of Pauline mythology in all forms of charismatic authority, and he often highlights the divine myth lurking behind such secular manifestations of charisma as political leadership or royal genealogy. But one of the most important implications of Weber's theory is that charismatic authority is a consummately group experience. As Donald McIntosh observed, correctly I believe, "charisma is not so much a quality as an experience. The charismatic object or person is *experienced* as possessed by and transmitting an uncanny and compelling force" (McIntosh 1970: 902). This sense of a shared experience of charisma was implicit in Paul's message when he asked the Corinthians, "If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?" (1 Cor. 12:15). He rejected charismatic individuality in pursuit of an effective group dynamic. In our own pursuit of a satisfying definition of charismatic function, we should bear the Pauline text in mind. Too much emphasis on charisma as an individual gift fails to account for the interactions of charismatic authority in daily life. Such authority simply does not exist outside group experiences.

Like charisma, myth cannot be experienced on an individual basis. It demands the shared values and interdependent power structure of a participating group. As Paul makes clear in his myth of Christ, the deity comes into existence for human beings only when they participate as a group in the charismatic myth of bodily membership. In *A Pathway to the Holy Scripture* (1530), William Tyndale put it this way, dissecting the charismatic relationship: "whosoever excelleth in the gifts of grace let the same think that they be given him, as much to do his brother service as for his own self, and as much for the love which God hath for the weak as unto him unto whom God giveth such gifts" (Tyndale 2003: 45). Keeping in mind the Pauline hierarchy of the charisms, Tyndale adds a benevolent spin. He describes an ideal of reciprocity: whoever "excelleth in the gifts of grace" should first remember where they come from, then recognize that "God giveth such gifts" not only for the recipient's own good, but also so that the recipient can do his weaker "brother" service. Tyndale's description indicates that, in the Christian myth, the exercise of charismatic power brings an attendant responsibility to others and therefore requires dynamic interdependency between group members. Only then do the gifts of grace manifest themselves properly.

Weber speaks of this interdependency as a function of change, what he terms "a central *metanoia*," in group behavior. In the Greek New Testament,

the word *metanoia* is used to mean “repentance to salvation,” which is worth bearing in mind when we consider the Pauline background of Weber’s word for group members’ affirmation of a leader’s mission. He explains the unusual workings of this affirmation: “rationalization and rational organization revolutionize ‘from the outside,’ whereas charisma, if it has any special effects at all, manifests its revolutionary power from within, from a central *metanoia* of the followers’ attitudes” (Weber 1978: 2.1117). The existence of a group bond is indispensable to Weber’s concept of charismatic change, as are the antithetical concepts of rational organization and revolutionary power. Critics have objected that Weber’s notion of charisma as revolutionary and mission-driven unrealistically restricts the application of the concept in social circumstances.<sup>3</sup> These objections are valid (although it should be borne in mind that, before his premature death, Weber planned a more extensive study of charisma to supplement the chapters in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*). Indeed, if we are to understand myth as a charismatic manifestation, it will be impossible to confine ourselves to Weberian categories. But first I would like to review the Ur-text on which later scholars have based their revisions and addenda. In the field of charisma studies, to steal from Weber is, as the old saw goes, the equivalent of stealing the club of Hercules. Consequently, all subsequent scholarship has a distinctly Virgilian flavor—it revises Weber in the same way Virgil revised Homer. Scholars more or less respectfully extend Weber’s most suggestive, and underdeveloped, points of discussion, particularly in the area of charisma’s transformations after its original appearance in pure form.

As I mentioned above, Weber identifies three “pure types of authority” whose claims to legitimacy are based on traditional, legal-bureaucratic, or charismatic grounds (Weber 1978: 1.215ff.). If this sounds too schematic, it must be recognized that Weber isolated these pure forms of domination as what he termed “ideal types.” He acknowledged that ideal types could not last in pure form in social action, and he devotes much of his discussion of authority to the breakdown and transformations of the pure forms of domination. Both traditional and legal-bureaucratic authority are antipathetic to charismatic authority, although, as I have already indicated (and as Weber made clear) compromises between these opposing forces must be made in every society to preserve social order and leaders’ power. In a brief *tour d’horizon* at the beginning of his useful book, *Authority*, Bruce Lincoln describes the prevalent scholarly view regarding Weber’s ideal types: “there is the set of sociological discussions that involve a fairly conservative manipulation of the typology introduced by Max Weber, in which Weber’s subtlety and the more brooding, even ironic, qualities of his thought are mostly lost.

Two of the three categories Weber posited as ideal types are thus rapidly disqualified—traditional authority being treated as obsolete, and charismatic authority as dangerous—leaving legal-rational authority, the system of the modern bureaucratic state, as the only viable game in town” (1994: 1–2). Lincoln eschews the “fairly conservative manipulation” of Weber’s typology without quite dismissing the typology itself (indeed, he seems to suggest that there’s a good deal more to Weber, given his subtlety and brooding, than scholars are currently finding). In this regard—that is, more in the spirit of revision than dismissal—Lincoln discusses Weber’s definition of authority:

For Weber, authority is *Herrschaft* (“domination”) that has been legitimized, and results in the ability to issue commands that will be obeyed. I am inclined to think that such a model impoverishes our understanding of authority, and privileges the position of military officers and factory bosses, while obscuring the equally real (if less blunt) authority of others who do not deal in commands: poets, philosophers, scientists, etc. Weber seems to have toyed with a broader notion of authority and domination, but tossed it aside in the following passage: “A position ordinarily designated as ‘dominating’ can emerge from the social relations in a drawing room as well as in the market, from the rostrum of a lecture-hall as well as from the command post of a regiment, from an erotic or charitable relationship as well as from scholarly discussion or athletics. Such a broad definition would, however, render the term ‘domination’ scientifically useless.” (Lincoln 1994: 168; citing Weber 1978: 2.942–43)

Lincoln is certainly correct to regard “the ability to issue commands,” if it were the sole criterion of authority, as impoverishing to our understanding of authority. In Weber’s defense, however, it should be noted that he follows the passage cited above by explaining that the two contrasting forms of domination are “domination by a constellation of interests” (*Herrschaft kraft Interessenkonstellation*) and “domination by virtue of authority” (*Herrschaft kraft Autorität*) (1978: 2.943; 1972: 542/[604]). In the former, the ability to issue commands is by no means the definitive factor of domination. In the latter, as can be seen by the use of *both* the words “domination” and “authority” in the same phrase, there is obviously a difference between them in the schematic. Perhaps most important in Weber’s notion of domination, however, is his view of its relation to economic power: “Not every position of economic power . . . represents domination in our sense of the word. Nor does domination utilize in every case economic power for its foundation

and maintenance. But in the vast majority of cases, and indeed in the most important ones, this is just what happens in one way or another and often to such an extent that the mode of applying economic means for the purpose of maintaining domination, in turn, exercises a determining influence on the structure of domination" (1978: 2.942).

These observations on the interplay of economic power and domination are crucial to understanding not only that authority contains more than merely the ability to issue commands, but also to recognizing how myth, in Weber's words, "exercises a determining influence," in particular on the structure of charismatic authority. I will return to economic power below in the discussion of myth and authority. But, first, we should be clear on the much misunderstood concept of charismatic authority. Charisma, Weber explains, distinguishes itself in that "All *extraordinary* needs, i.e., those which *transcend* the sphere of economic routines, have always been satisfied in an entirely heterogeneous manner: on a *charismatic* basis" (Weber 1978: 2.1111; emphasis in original). He goes on to point out that throughout history charismatic figures have been "the bearers of specific gifts of body and mind that were considered 'supernatural' (in the sense that not everybody could have access to them)" (Weber 1978: 2.1112). We might immediately think of the Corinthians here, but Weber heads off that thought by quickly adding that "the term 'charisma' in this context must be used in a completely value-free sense" (Weber 1978: 2.1112). By "value-free" he clearly means without prejudicial application to one myth system or moral scheme over another. Philip Rieff and others, such as Carl Friedrich, object that Weber's sense of objectivity is basically flawed. For Rieff, Weber's ethical neutrality and objectivity mask "his one and only inner law . . . against faith" (Rieff 2007: 115). But even Rieff, whose argument is deeply invested in identifying the loss of spirituality in culture, "the Weberian theory of charisma constitutes a brilliant ambivalence toward the very possibility of the charismatic experience. Weber's 'recognition' theory emerges as a negation, a tremendous denial of charisma and a shadowing forth of the therapeutic—at worst, in our rationalizing social order, of 'charisma' squirted out of a canful of recognition-inducing techniques" (2007: 117).

Rieff's error is that he begs the question of value, and moreover misses the point of Weber's argument regarding belief and recognition in a charismatic group. Weber anticipates these problems, and, paradoxically, acknowledges belief at the same time that he struggles for "ethical neutrality." For instance, he dismisses the notion that the heroic ecstasies of Nordic berserks, Cuchulain, or Achilles were manic seizures, just as he rejects the idea that the ecstasies of the Shamans should be linked to "constitutional

epilepsy.” Further, he expresses contempt for “the kind of revelation found in the Holy Book of the Mormons; if we were to evaluate this revelation, we would perhaps be forced to call it a rank swindle.” “However,” he concludes, “sociology is not concerned with such value judgments. Important is that the head of the Mormons and those ‘heroes’ and ‘magicians’ proved their charisma in the eyes of their adherents” (Weber 1978: 2.1112).

This last statement underscores the group component of charismatic authority, and, more significantly, it allows us to glimpse the *charismatic* component of myth. Irish folk myth, Homeric Troy, and the Book of Mormon must be seen as comparable charismatic manifestations of group belief. They are myths available as living experience only to believers, because, patently as myths, they “transcend the sphere of economic routines” and must be satisfied “in an entirely heterogeneous manner: on a *charismatic* basis.” Leadership, belief, and collective participation come together *a fortiori* in an interdependent charismatic relationship:

Charisma is self-determined and sets its own limits. Its bearer seizes the task for which he is destined and demands that others obey and follow him by virtue of his mission. If those to whom he feels sent do not recognize him, his claim collapses; if they recognize it, he is their master as long as he “proves” himself. However, he does not derive his claims from the will of his followers, in the manner of an election; rather it is their *duty* to recognize his charisma. (Weber 1978: 2.1112–13)

This sense of duty manifests itself in the notion of a “central *metanoia*” or change in followers’ attitudes, revolutionizing from within. Edward Shils explains how this sense of duty to charismatic authority leads to the self-justification of charismatic groups:

The legitimacy of the norms enunciated by charismatic authority lies outside the norms practiced in the existing society. Although it is contained in the culture of the existing society, the source or the criterion of the legitimacy of charismatic authority occupies a position within that culture which, under the dominance of routine, is incompatible with the expansive aspirations of any charismatically asserted authority. (Shils 1982: 113)

The legitimacy of charismatic norms lies outside the norms of existing society because, as Weber says, “charisma is self-determined and sets its own limits.”

## Myth and Authority

Myth, too, is self-determining. It sets its own limits in confrontation with everyday routines, and survives as a group experience only through challenging those routines and expanding beyond them. Powerful, successful myth systems continue to thrive and to be widely shared by remaining at all times *in statu nascendi*, thereby superseding the confines of economic, political, and aesthetic structures. In this sense, all successful myths function charismatically, both as group experiences and in their development from the initial or revolutionary-transitional stages of magic, divinity, exceptional heroism, and vatic genius (to give only a few possibilities) through the compromises with other, more restraining forms of authority in the course of routinization.

Myth is not, however, in and of itself a form of authority. Rather, myth has both a contiguous and legitimizing relationship to certain types of authority, in particular those stemming from tradition and charisma. (Legal authority, apart from canon law and similar dogmatic codes, tends to marginalize the validation of myth systems through legislative practices and bureaucratization.)<sup>4</sup> Neither traditional nor charismatic authority could survive without the support of myths. Yet “mythical authority,” like poetic authority and erotic authority, functions primarily in the sphere of the symbolic imagination. The distinction is between *effective authority*, such as charisma and tradition, and *affective authority*, such as myth, the poetic, and the erotic. These are not absolute distinctions, and they should not be mistaken for simple binaries. But they are valuable as indexes of different realms of operation. Therefore, it might be permitted to say that myths have authority over other myths and other kinds of narratives, but that their chief function in social life is to serve in support of manifest power.

In distinguishing authority from persuasion, Lincoln observes that “the exercise of authority not only but often depends upon the use of nonverbal instruments and media: the whole theatrical array of gestures, demeanors, costumes, props, and stage devices through which one may impress or bamboozle an audience” (Lincoln 1994: 5). Myth systems contribute to this “theatrical array,” sometimes nonverbally and sometimes through alternative media. But the primary purpose of myth systems is to provide *justification* for the “gestures, demeanors, costumes, props, and stage devices” operative in different forms of authority. That said, the relationship of myth systems to the degrees and forms of authority is probably too complex and variable to allow for useful generalizations. Nevertheless, it is possible to discern patterns in this relationship.

I plan to confine myself chiefly to the intersection of myth and charismatic authority, but it will be necessary at the same time to consider myth's relationship to traditional authority. It is useful in this context to revive, at least provisionally, Weber's categories of authority. I don't agree with Lincoln's characterization of traditional authority as an "obsolete" category; there continues to be ample scholarship on the subject of tradition, some of it referring directly back to Weber. Nor do I think that the use of Weber's categories need be conservative. Indeed, the richness of *Economy and Society* alone encourages imaginative approaches to culture—perhaps, to echo Lincoln's complaint, more imaginative than have so far been forthcoming. To my mind, parsing the differences between the relationships of charismatic *and* traditional authority to the function of myth systems provides a valuable glimpse of cultural economy. Naturally, the ideal types break down in the course of compromise, in confrontation with changing social norms, and as a result of detailed analysis of particular situations. But they remain instrumentally potent, the planted foot of the compass.

Because charismatic authority is incompatible with the ideal type of traditional authority, even in the case of traditions that stem from charismatically developed movements, like the world's religions, the routinization that follows the original revolutionary phase tends to neutralize what Shils calls the "expansive aspirations of any charismatically asserted authority" (Shils 1982: 113). For Weber, authority is traditional "if legitimacy is claimed for it and believed in by virtue of age-old rules and powers" (1978: 1.226). He enumerates such criteria as personal loyalty, the impossibility for administrative rule or law to be enacted by legislation, and the importance of patrimonial recruitment. Rationally established hierarchies, fixed salaries, regularized training, and so on would be absent (Weber 1978: 1.227–29).

The place of myth in this scheme of authority is not so easily determined. Even within the limits of personal loyalty or patrimonialism, most traditional authority contains a charismatic component, sometimes in very large measure. This is because tradition and myth are usually interdependent entities, and because charisma contributes to myths at both a foundational and developmental level. As a result, the relationship between charisma and tradition becomes blurred. Indeed, Ernst Cassirer claimed that "mythical thought does not acknowledge any other or any higher authority" than tradition (Cassirer 1955a: 86; cf. Weber 1978: 1.241–54). This statement would support the notion that myth and tradition are interdependent. But it also clashes with Weber's and Shils's characterization of charismatic authority if we accept the proposition that "mythical thought" depends at least in part on a charismatic component. It may be that tradition and myth



are incompatible in the early stages of a myth's development—in particular that stage, common to most myths, that might be called a posture of resistance to tradition. Weber recognized this possibility, noting that, under the pure type of traditional authority, “when resistance occurs, it is directed against the master or his servant personally, the accusation being that he failed to observe the traditional limits of his power. Opposition is not directed against the system as such—it is a case of ‘traditionalist revolution’” (1978: 1.227). The important qualifying concept is that of the *limits of power*. Traditional authority, while based on personal loyalty and patrimonialism, is nevertheless legitimate only within firmly accepted boundaries which are themselves based on “age-old rules.” Whereas charisma exceeds all boundaries of everyday life, traditional authority is tested against these boundaries.

Where, then, does myth fit? In the final analysis, myth and tradition, and by extension charisma and tradition in the realm of myth, must develop in tandem in order to sustain the numinous force of their authority. We commonly use the terms “mythical tradition” and “traditional myths” (I already used the first term at the beginning of this chapter). But it is crucial that we understand the conflation underlying these terms in the context of charisma and group authority. In *The Invention of Tradition*, a book regarded as a benchmark in its field, Eric Hobsbawm noted that “inventing traditions . . . is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition” (1983: 4). But the mechanism of that process of formalization and ritualization has received less attention than it deserves, as Hobsbawm observes when he adds that “the actual process of creating such ritual and symbolic complexes has not been adequately studied by historians” (4). He might have included the members of other disciplines along with historians. That “actual process of creating . . . ritual and symbolic complexes” requires a closer examination of, above all, collective or group response to the authority of the past. Paramount to the study of group responses to the legitimation (and also the delegitimation) of traditional authority is the relationship of old myths to new myths, and of the revolutionary acts perpetrated by the administrators of the new myths. I would contend, moreover, that in most cases traditions are invented and reinvented on a charismatic basis, through the introduction of qualitative shifts in myth content to which the collective must respond. Still, it would be mistaken to overdetermine the boundaries when analyzing how these distinct forms of authority emerge. The intersection of myth, charisma, and tradition is never absolutely clear.

Where myth is concerned the term “pure” charisma may be a misnomer. It would probably be better to refer to “pure” charisma as “new” charisma.

This slight redefinition may offer a more satisfactory way to describe how myth systems function in relation to authority (a subject Weber does not consider). By his ideal types, Weber meant simply to distinguish the pure kind of charisma from later forms of charismatic authority which had become routinized and formalized like church institutions or aristocracies. But the schematic opposition of pure charisma to the other types of authority, especially traditional authority, has less analytic applicability when we add myth to the equation. Indeed, in analyzing myth systems, we expunge charisma from traditional authority at our own risk. This is because the very neglect that Hobsbawm noticed in regard to the creation of the ritual and symbolic complexes that make up traditions is due in large part to a neglect of the charismatic component of traditional authority and of the processes of mythicization required to transform and sustain that kind of authority. Thus it might be useful to make the distinction between the “age-old” charismatic components of traditional myths and the new charisma of emerging myths.

Shils explains that “traditions change because the circumstances to which they refer change. Traditions, to survive, must be fitting to the circumstances in which they operate and to which they are directed” (1981: 258). Because traditions change, because they adapt to survive, it is important to explore the means of change: how do the instruments and structures of traditional authority manage to retain their solidity, the element that gives them social value, while at the same time refitting themselves to new circumstances? Jan Assmann believes that tradition fluctuates between the extremes of memory and writing: “Traditions,” he maintains, “are normally not written. Where they are, it points to a break in tradition, or at the very least, a crisis” (2006: 63–64). Even if the polarities of memory and writing are exaggerated (as Assmann himself acknowledges), the notion of break or crisis is crucial to imagining how traditions change and refit themselves to new circumstances. Assmann’s concept of tradition is “the lived knowledge that is embodied in living subjects and that is passed on in active association with others, through teaching and, above all, through a nonverbal process of showing and imitating” (2006: 69). This concept irresistibly brings to mind the *didaskaloi* of the early Christian movement, as much as it does the pre-Torah Hebrews with whom Assmann is concerned. Moreover, the pattern by which traditions are broken and refashioned which Assmann conceives exemplifies the necessary entropy of charismatic participation not only in tradition, but in the myths that bolster that tradition: “The typical situation in which such [lived] knowledge is dredged up out of its implicit, nonverbal status and oral instruction and then articulated in

writing is the break with tradition that occurs when the chain of showing and imitating is broken and oral communication is interrupted" (2006: 69). For Assmann, it would seem, the break with tradition represented by writing, is a fatal interruption. But this cannot be right, at least not in such stark terms. The interruptions in a tradition transform the tradition, but the charismatic content of the myths surrounding such practices as teaching and imitating—the very mantic quality on which the tradition drew in its prenormative state—is in fact revitalized by the interruptions. The break, or better yet the breakdown (entropy), of past practices, while always authorizing itself on ancient sources, provides the tool of charismatic management to traditional leaders.

Richard Weiss and Gregory Grieve have recently pointed out that "traditions are *never* static, but always changing with historical circumstances" (2005: 3). They invoke Weber's definition of tradition as a form of authority, calling particular attention to the "agency of tradition." This notion of agency recalls Weber's contention, present in all his work on historical sociology, that "we are *cultural beings*, endowed with the capacity and the will to take a deliberate attitude toward the world and lend it *significance*" (Weber 1949: 81; emphasis in original).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Weber certainly understood that tradition, or at least *some* traditions, are in constant flux, and, in calling attention to the importance of personal loyalty in the propagation of traditional authority, he also recognized the significance of agency in its survival. But his chief concern was to establish an ideal structure in which traditional authority and legal-bureaucratic authority represent entities with relative stability when compared to charismatic authority. In his model, any changes to tradition would be the result of the repositioning of authority, brought on by any number of possible factors. Grieve's and Weiss's chief argument is fundamentally in accord with Weber's scheme, but they characterize the development of tradition in more systematic terminology. "Formulations of traditions and community," they explain, "affirm a synchronic bond between actors and extend that bond into the past, into a diachronic community. Thus, traditional action involves reverence towards past action, actors, practices and knowledge as holding a value that cannot be, or at least has not been, superseded" (2005: 3).<sup>6</sup> This last statement strongly reflects a Weberian approach to traditional authority. Yet the word "superseded" overstates the case, and fails to account for disruptions to the stasis of traditions that keep those same traditions alive. Indeed, traditions are continually being superseded, chiefly to redefine the ancient rules and to reassert the *limits* of legitimate authority by *redefining* them. Every day we witness these redefinitions, in the form, for example,

of additions (such as when new saints are added to the canon), or emendations (as when Pope Benedict XVI erased the concept of Limbo from Catholicism, denying its doctrinal basis), or deletions (as when, in 2006, the Chinese government all but removed Mao Zedong from high school textbooks). Each of these is a form of *destabilization*, simultaneously revising the old standards and relegitimizing the traditional authority currently in power.

According to Shils, “the bearers and adherents of charismatic authority . . . tend to think of their norms as legitimated by a source remote in time or timeless, remote in space or spaceless” (Shils 1982: 113). But this definition is not, after all, specific to charismatic authority. The norms of traditional authority also legitimate themselves by remote sources, both in time and in space. Weber remarks, for instance, “in the pure type of traditional authority it is impossible for law or administrative rule to be deliberately created by legislation. Rules which in fact are innovations can be legitimized only by the claim that they have been ‘valid of yore,’ but have only now been recognized by means of ‘Wisdom’” (1978: 1.227). Between Shils’s sources “remote in time or timeless” and Weber’s laws “valid of yore” there isn’t really much to choose. The difference is of degree, not kind, which again reminds us of the charismatic component, usually cast in *mythical* form, lurking at the edges of any change made manifest in traditional authority.

The same is true, of course, of charismatic authority, as would be expected in a more dynamic environment of power relations. Indeed, in the context of power relations, the dynamics of myth parallel those of the stages of authority. Thus, myth systems are most dynamic in situations dominated by charisma, somewhat less so in those dominated by tradition, and effectively petrified in legal-bureaucratic situations. Even in the last case, however, we find traces (and sometimes more than just traces) of myth systems. National treasuries issue currency and coinage engraved or cast with all manner of mythic symbolism, from the shining eye above the pyramid in the “Great Seal” of the American dollar bill (with its now pointless, but “valid of yore” Latin tags), to the spreading tree and the French Revolutionary motto (“Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité”) on one of the new Euro coins. These symbols, indisputably originating as charisma-bearing validation of national identity, have all but lost their force. Legal bureaucracy, in the form of currency regulation, banking laws, exchange rates, and so forth, shift the value of the currency from that of a charismatic symbol-bearer to something much more mundane. One need not be American or French, and need not believe in or even understand the symbols on the currencies to put them to their fullest use. The symbolism of the charismatic myths that

inspired the engravings is effaced from the productive value of the legal authority behind the currencies.<sup>7</sup>

When Weiss and Grieve define tradition as a “reverence towards past action, actors, practices and knowledge” they touch on one of the most overlooked aspects of traditional authority. For it is in the manifestations of reverence that we find the key to group dynamics, most often dynamics of a *charismatic* nature, in that groups tend to revere supernatural or extraordinary elements of a tradition.<sup>8</sup> Significantly, however, present-day topical occurrences frame these timeless norms, as Weiss and Grieve suggest when they refer to a “diachronic community” that extends into the past of a tradition. A comparison can be made to myth systems. J.-P. Vernant refers to the “diachronic dimension” of myth, that is, the adaptation of myth to a temporal perspective—what he terms “indications of historical depths” (Vernant 1988: 258). Historical depths mirror the remote legitimizing sources of myth systems, and, as with tradition, we can locate the evidence of human agency in the “diachronic dimension.”<sup>9</sup> Agency within a myth system, therefore, requires a balance of remote legitimizing sources and transformed status-values in the modern world.

The management of transformed status-values is a charismatic skill, and large myth systems thrive only when the charismatic managers—whether priests or politicians—successfully manipulate the remote legitimizing sources in conjunction with the transformation of present-day values. This pragmatic necessity of charismatic management might be seen as an expansion on the cognitive dimension implicit in Weber’s definition. Take, for instance, the Pope’s eradication of Limbo from Catholic tradition—I use the word “tradition” advisedly here, because the argument against Limbo made by the International Theological Commission at the Vatican was that Limbo had no doctrinal basis. In effect, the Commission, speaking for the Vatican, pitted doctrine against what has now been characterized as merely a theological tradition, even though that tradition had been assimilated into the larger, putatively scientific doctrine of the church over the course of many centuries. Such concepts as *limbus patrum* and *limbus infantium* not only held comfort for those concerned about their unbaptized children, but also carried the weight of patristic tradition. Although never fully associated with the infallible authority of the Catholic Church, the authority of such authors as Augustine (who rejected the notion) and Thomas Aquinas (who accepted it) seemed to lend dogmatic credence to Limbo. The details of the various arguments are less important than the existence of a body of literature, much of it learned theological casuistry, engaged in debating *limbus infantium* in particular. These texts are tantamount to

a tradition in and of themselves, and their weight has always carried over to the secular realm. References to Limbo are not at all uncommon in medieval and early modern poetry. Most memorably, perhaps, Dante created the idiosyncratic Limbo of the *Inferno*, peopling it with “virtuous heathens” such as Plato, Homer, and Virgil (not to mention Saladin and the Arabians Averroës and Avicenna). Even John Milton, a Protestant, refers to Limbo, although he calls it “The Paradise of Fools” (*Paradise Lost* 3.495–96). There was, in effect, a long tradition on the subject of Limbo, from Augustine’s harsh views, through Thomistic literature, to the Reformation where Calvinist doctrine reflected Augustinian views.

The Vatican’s intervention into the theological tradition of Limbo reveals what Vernant calls the diachronic dimension of myth irrupting as a transformed value in the realm of traditional authority. Assmann’s polarities might also be applicable here, insofar as the nonverbal, lived tradition breaks down or is brought to crisis by written articulation. But, more significantly, the Vatican’s intervention exemplifies the exercise of what Pierre Bourdieu calls “symbolic power”: “that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it” (Bourdieu 1991: 164). Bourdieu makes a distinction between myth and ideology—a distinction overly indebted, perhaps, to Marx’s theory of the “immigration of ideas”—by which he separates myth as “a collective and collectively appropriated product” from ideologies as serving “particular interests which they tend to present as universal interests, shared by the group as a whole” (1991: 167). This seems to me a distinction without a difference, especially when we encounter ideological manipulations that rely on myths of one kind or another to ensure the advancement of supposedly universal interests. Nevertheless, the pattern of sharing, which Bourdieu recognizes to be necessary both to myth and to ideology, underscores the collective component of discursive forms of symbolic power. That this collective component is often based on charismatic elements is inevitable insofar as myth systems—like ideologically spurred interest groups—survive and progress (or effect a posture of progress) under the auspices of divine inspiration, “age-old” validation, and so forth. Even the bonding necessary to form ideologically based collectives relies on such numinous abstractions as historical necessity and, more often than not, cults of personality among the leadership.

Bourdieu maintains, correctly I think, that “it is as structured and structuring instruments of communication and knowledge that ‘symbolic systems’ fulfill their political function, as instruments which help to ensure

that one class dominates another (symbolic violence) by bringing their own distinctive power to bear on the relations of power which underlie them and thus by contributing, in Weber's terms, to the 'domestication of the dominated'" (1991: 167). Myth is only one of several "symbolic systems" at work in cultural life, only one of the "structured and structuring instruments of communication and knowledge" available to those wielding authority. Yet myth retains a special place as a discursive instrument in society. Its protean nature affords figures in authority—or figures seeking authority—an instrument at once ripe for manipulation and simultaneously tailored to produce a shared experience in a ready-made collective. Myth's adaptability can make it as perilous as it is comforting to believers. Bourdieu points out the negative side: "the history of the transformation of myth into religion (ideology) cannot be separated from the history of the constitution of a body of specialized producers of religious rites and discourse, i.e., from the development of the *division of religious labour*, which is itself a dimension of the development of the division of social labour, and thus of the division into classes. This religious division leads, among other consequences, to members of the laity being *dispossessed* of the instruments of symbolic production" (1991: 168–69; emphasis in original).

Bourdieu's statement is provocative, but ultimately unsatisfying. He fails utterly (as did Marx, incidentally) to consider that "the transformation of myth into religion" is a collective, *charismatically managed* process. This means that it could not occur without some form of group cooperation (recall Weber's concept of *metanoia* in charismatic group formation). It is all well and good to say, from a distance and in the abstract, that such group cooperation is part of a con-game of "invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it" (see above); or even, following Weber, that the transformation of myth into religion is a prime case of the "domestication of the dominated." But the process by which this occurs should not be dismissed as a kind of automatic, impersonal social mechanism. It is, in fact, that same "actual process of creating . . . ritual and symbolic complexes" which Hobsbawm associates with tradition.

Nevertheless, we cannot let myth off the hook. We need, instead, to give a more microscopic accounting of the process of creating symbolic power. Two questions arise: do the transformations of myths always mirror an emerging economy of domination? and, if so, does the charismatic force inherent in the transformation of myths function as a handmaiden to domination? The answer is probably affirmative to both these questions.

Even on a small scale, shifts in myths (and ideologies as well, if we want to stick to the old Marxist distinction) serve to establish emerging economies of domination or to reestablish economies at the threshold of change. This phenomenon can be seen easily in politics and in such religious changes as the Limbo issue. It is also clear, however, in less obvious cases such as those occurring in the literary or visual arts. The Renaissance practice of *imitatio*, for example, which was borrowed from Seneca's idea of poetic imitation as a digestive process, allowed poets of the period to remythicize ancient poetic authority and apply the newly structured myth to their own emergent poetic economy. Thus, the myth of Horatian or Virgilian *auctoritas*, remote in time and taken as a stable entity, was invoked as a charismatic source to be adapted, manipulated, and finally made to fit the contemporary economy of poetic production. The pattern of this process is familiar: not only did the establishment of a new poetic economy afford possible political gains available in the form of aristocratic patronage and social advancement, but it also rose to domination (among modes of literary authority and in the school curriculum) with the handmaid's help of a new, charismatically managed myth. The validation of "age-old" traditional sources, combined with the simultaneous overturning (or "digesting") of those same sources in order to establish a present-day authority, requires the remythicizing of charismatic symbols. As Jesus said, in a somewhat different context, "I come not to overturn the Torah, but to fulfill it." But overturn it he did, simply by establishing a new economy of charismatic symbols—symbols which, inevitably, became instruments of domination, even to those believers (like Paul) who thrived in the One Body.

One might object that not all economies identified with particular myth systems emerge *charismatically*. I take the point. Yet there are compelling reasons to regard the relationship between emerging economies and myth systems as a charismatic process. First, economies that emerge in tandem with the justification provided by myth systems—again, whether the economies are political, religious, aesthetic, or erotic—depend on the satisfaction of extraordinary needs (those beyond the routine confinement of the established economy). Further, the emerging economy appears to know no boundaries: it is (at least in appearance) limitless in its possibilities, thanks in large part to the availability of irrational validating elements drawn from systematic past myths. Finally, the entire complex of myth, authority, economy, and domination functions in marked relationship to the shared experience of and the collective response to a promise of limitlessly expansive boundaries and heterogeneously satisfied needs.



## Myth and Dissipative Structures

It is a common misconception that stability assures belief in a myth system. But evidence reveals the opposite tendency. As will become evident throughout this book, not stability, but instability of a mild sort is the hallmark of ongoing charismatic myths. The assumption that charismatic myths are stable entities, which is true only for the unbelieving (viz. the game-show general), derives from the invidious concept of “primitive” religion or “primitive” myth. This concept implies a contrast with some more progressive form of religion or myth—in Weber the distinction is between traditional and rational—and inevitably leads to the mistaken conclusion that so-called primitive myth had a stability unfamiliar to the more abstract religious concepts of the great world religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. But, as Clifford Geertz has emphatically maintained, these assumptions deny the active, self-conscious component of religious practice:

As with all Weber’s polar contrasts . . . that between traditional and rational (the opposite of which is not irrational, but unrationalized), is as thoroughly blurred in fact as it is sharply drawn in theory. In particular, it must not be assumed that the religions of nonliterate peoples are wholly lacking in rationalized elements and those of literate ones rationalized through and through. Not only do many so-called primitive religions show the results of significant amounts of self-conscious criticism, but a popular religiosity of a traditional sort persists with great strength where religious thought has attained the highest reaches of philosophical sophistication. (Geertz 1973: 174–75)

Geertz calls attention correctly to the presence of self-conscious criticism in so-called primitive religions, as well as a kind of stable traditionalism in more philosophically sophisticated religions. Both of these observations support my argument regarding the necessity for *instability* in maintaining a myth system. Believers who participate in rigidly traditional religions disturb the status quo with self-criticism (to use Geertz’s term), while, concomitantly, believers participating in sophisticated and abstract religions like Protestantism or Judaism revert to a “popular religiosity” to keep their myth in a state of mild chaos. This latter phenomenon is visible across the globe in the flourishing fundamentalist movements, both Islamic and Christian Evangelical.

The management of instability, indeed the deliberate fostering of what Thomas Spence Smith calls dissipative structures, ensures the promulgation

of religious institutions, patriotic movements, revolutionary cults—all of which depend to a significant extent on myth for success and permanence. Smith takes the concept of dissipative structures from the physicist Ilya Prigogine, who uses it to describe unstable conditions in the thermodynamics of nonequilibrium systems. Applying the concept of dissipative structures to the formation of charismatic groups can be extremely productive, as Smith demonstrates. He argues for what he terms nonequilibrium functionalism, a form of systematic destabilization in which social organization depends on the generation of entropy and disorder, rather than order, to be successful. In this model, charismatic group cohesion stems from the manipulation of destabilizing conditions. Leaders who introduce and manage these destabilizing conditions ensure both the survival of the group and, concomitantly, their own continued domination (See Smith 1992: 110–15; 192–97). A famous example of this kind of destabilizing manipulation is Khrushchev’s “secret speech” in 1956 in which he repudiated Stalin’s cult of personality (which he also did in public at the XXII Communist Party Congress in 1961). His repudiation, less a revelation than an open expression of what others had thought for decades, threw the Party into turmoil regarding the myth of Communist superiority versus Western decadence. By simultaneously introducing and managing the turmoil, Khrushchev offered the tools to rescue the original, “pure” Marxist-Leninist myth and fostered his own ascendance as a charismatic leader.<sup>10</sup>

The interfacing (sybiotic/dialectical) relationship of charisma and myth produces a field of mirroring responses on both sides of the affective–effective divide. If, for instance, the charismatic symbols of a particular movement become static or ossified, it becomes necessary to dismantle the symbols to preserve the original charisma. This process is fraught with deceptions, but serves to propagate power as a product of a new set of charismatically managed symbols. Power, in this model, mirrors the transformation of charismatic myth. Yet, as Stathis Gourgouris suggests in discussing Walter Benjamin, myth can also serve as a challenge to sovereignty. Gourgouris speaks of “how a performative dialectics of myth can withstand the enveloping powers of ‘political theology’” (2003: 94). This is a provocative formulation, underscoring the value of improvisation—in this case of a performative nature—in both the management of charisma and the production of myths.

In order for myth systems to remain alive they must keep changing and adopting new forms to keep the group experiencing them slightly off balance. Hindu polytheism, for instance, incorporates the notion of imbalance into its creation myth. As Alain Daniélou observed, “Indian cosmology

envisages the appearance of the universe as a succession of intentions pictured as a desire, that is, a lack of balance, appearing in the causal continuum. This lack of balance gives rise to more and more elaborate forms of manifestation" (Daniélou 1994: 240). Paraphrasing the *Padma Purana* and the *Brahmanda Purana*, Daniélou describes a "vague desire-to-create" which in turn "gives rise to a particularized desire-to-act," which itself represents a state of "nonexistence-prior-to-existence" (240). He asks, pertinently, of this creation myth, "why the first impulse to create should ever appear in the Cosmic Being. So long as the three fundamental qualities (*guna*) remain in a state of balance there is no reason why such an impulse should ever arise. What is therefore the cause of the first lack of balance?" (241). Daniélou goes on to answer this question through an explication of the myth, pointing out that the lack of balance "has been attributed to latent traces of activity remaining from other creations" (241). His answer provides a theological justification for the original imbalance, and in this regard it is reminiscent of Christological explanations of the equally elusive, and similarly destabilizing, *parousía* of Jesus. But the significance of the original imbalance shouldn't be underestimated. The Hindu creation myth remains alive and charismatically viable in large measure because it initiates believers into a state of cosmic instability. As the Cosmic Being shifts from prior-to-existence to desire-to-act, the myth system shifts and adapts. In this manner the system functions in a charismatic relationship with religious adherents.

Myths that stop changing become meaningless. Smith contends that the survival of "charismatic circles" depends on "entropy production and on the scavenging of entropy" (1992: 189). This notion can be applied as well to the circle of myths, which continue to thrive only as a result of entropy production (or the scavenging of entropy by the managers of particular myths or myth systems). If we are willing to accept that changes in myths mirror, and sometimes bring about, sociocultural change, then we should bear in mind Smith's argument that "sociocultural change ultimately depends on embedded processes that produce, amplify, and spread destabilizing positive feedback" (1992: 188). Myths that fail to produce destabilizing feedback expire. In effect, they are demythologized, like the Greek myths to Judeo-Christian or Muslim society, or the Chinese myths to Western culture. The conviction that a myth belongs to a particular culture—the conviction, in other words, that produces belief and refuses to accept myths as false—only survives if the value and promise of the myth continue to function charismatically. The only way that this can happen is if the myths are able, continually and through entropy production, to adopt

new formulations, to shift emphases, and to keep believers in a state of mild chaos in relation to variations of a perceived original core. Although myths never exist in a “pure” state, the perception of an original charismatic truth on the part of believers provides the standard on which later improvisations are based. All Christian evangelical movements, for example, from the seventeenth-century Quakers and Diggers to twentieth-century television preachers, rely on a fundamental myth of biblical truth onto which they graft topical interpretations. These improvisatory changes made to the supposedly pure version of the myth keep members of particular sects in a state of constant expectation, shifting the authority of the original charisma to a present-day charismatic authority. Depending on the circumstance, the original myth can be improvised to justify war, regicide, racial segregation, polygamy, polygenesis, or an anti-birth-control policy. The multiplicity of Christian sects is well known, as is their extraordinary diversity. Yet all depend on a single myth, which, in principle, has only one central charismatic figure—Jesus Christ—whose authority is *lent* to local figures. Every sect and denomination, therefore, borrows from that original charismatic source, producing its own proof of charismatic endowment, from papal infallibility to snake handling demonstrations. Moreover, every sect and denomination exists as a separate charismatic group, and each continues to thrive only because it regularly alters the contours of the original Christian myth. The alterations may be large or minute, tailored to socio-political or economic shifts, or intramural theological revisions, but in all cases the aim is to carve out a separate group and preserve its cohesion for as long as possible.

Take the early Protestant idea of a personal god. Paul’s deceptive concept of the charismatic group as leaderless was adopted from 1 Corinthians by Protestant reformers in the sixteenth century and applied to the equally misleading notion of a personal god. The parallel is inherent in the Pauline exhortation that to become a member of the Body one must accept that individual gifts are meaningless in isolation from their function as parts of the whole. According to the injunctions set forth in 1 Corinthians, access to the Christian god results solely from group participation. Therefore, the notion of a *personal* god is misleading. No Christian experience can evade the group component of sharing in the Body of Christ. The reformed Protestant myth authorizes itself in a polemical stance against the intercessors of episcopal Catholicism. But its promise of “individuation to god” cannot really be fulfilled in the context of the charismatic myth on which it depends because the myth depends on group participation in the Corpus Christi. Consequently, we should see in the reformed position a dissipative

intervention, at once destabilizing the myth and reinforcing its paradoxical foundation.

### The Course of a Particular

Although it is difficult to plumb the thoughts of individual participants in myth systems, even when we have written testimonies from them, it would be a mistake to ignore the existence of degrees of belief. All myths are added and revised by skepticism, mechanical ritual, and new concepts. Weber recognized this and contended that “in spite of vast differences, ‘ideas’ have essentially the same psychological roots whether they are religious, artistic, ethical, scientific or whatever else. The decisive difference . . . is not inherent in the *creator* of ideas or ‘works,’ or in his inner experience; rather, the difference is rooted in the manner in which the ruled and led experience and internalize these ideas” (1978: 2.1116). If we translate the notion of “ideas” to the mythical sphere, we can formulate a basic proposition. That is, while some may believe less strongly in particular myths, or take a more “rational” approach, the important attribute of group participation in the myth remains the evidence of how the charismatic material is experienced and internalized. If, as Weber says, “charismatic belief revolutionizes men ‘from within’ and shapes material and social conditions according to its revolutionary will” (1978: 2.1116), then the degrees of belief will reveal themselves in the various levels of participation and engagement we encounter.

Because the signal characteristic of charismatic authority is its ability to change and adapt to new circumstances, even the most apparently hide-bound traditions, such as those based on sacred written texts, reveal a positively Protean quality in their transformations. As enemies, geography, governments, and populations change, charismatic myth systems realign themselves, at once synchronized with and set against the prevailing superstructure. They change to survive, but not merely as all elements of culture modernize to remain functional. Indeed, charismatic myth systems often do the opposite—they deliberately resist the modern, embracing a nostalgia for origins and lost purity. These myth systems, and the charismatic leaders who administer them, effect these changes to keep their believers engaged in the self-determined limits of the movement. They legitimate themselves by means of the change, and concomitantly the followers follow *because* of the changes.

The chapters of the book provide examples of charismatic transformations in myth systems, while also analyzing a number of the most influential approaches to myth of the last century and their relation to charismatic authority. As we will see throughout the following pages, and as has long been established, belief in the charismatic origins of myths is not really in doubt. From hero myths to sacrificial rituals to soteriological legends, the presence of an authoritative, divinely inspired “charism” invariably enables the practice of fabling. But the means by which those charismatic origins flourish and become institutionalized in particular cultures (and not in others) deserves attention. I argue that the means in question is the same as that of any charismatic transformation: the group of believers in a particular set of myths is subject to the same freedoms and constraints as members of any charismatically constituted group. Therefore, in order for the group to thrive, the myths must reflect the same interplay of entropy and order that is necessary for the survival of any charismatic group. In this way—by regarding myth systems as group experiences—we can satisfactorily account for the vagaries of authority where myths are concerned. As syncretic as myth systems are, they nevertheless remain restricted to particular groups who experience the myths as personal, charismatic, and authoritative. In fact, only members of the group take the myths seriously. Nonmembers—those who have no shared experience of the group *metanoia*—see only fiction (or lies) in mythical content.

We should never delude ourselves into thinking that it is the content *per se* of myths that persuades. It is, rather, the sharing of charismatic endowment that nourishes a myth system. Although this may seem obvious at first glance, little research has been done on the subject. Nevertheless, such concepts as sacredness, purity, genealogy, and historical necessity can be utterly meaningless without an attendant understanding of charismatic group participation. For instance, as we’ll see later, genealogy is little more than a “lie of descent,” entirely dependent on the delusion that a charismatic essence can be inherited from generation to generation. Similarly, the insistence on sacred truth or religious purity depends above all on the *shared* experience of charismatic endowment as administered by institutional leaders. In every example of so-called belief, we encounter not unsailable truth or even unbreakable faith, but rather inextricable involvement in charismatic social function. This kind of involvement thrives and flourishes only when the institutional leaders keep the myth systems in flux. Only by that means can the myth system survive. Therefore, it is charisma, not belief, which constitutes the prime mover in the continuity of

myth systems. For believers—or, more accurately, participants—the constant flux of myths, the dependency resulting from the administration of dissipative structures, causes an emotional bond that is absolutely inaccessible to those outside the group. Nonbelievers might complain that the *content* of a myth is too stupid to believe, while, in actuality, the function of that myth depends more on charismatic manipulation than on static content. Indeed, the content only seems static to those outside the group—to group members the content is always in a state of mild entropy, always on the verge of breakdown and change. Belief cannot exist outside the charismatic group experience. Group function alone produces belief, not the other way around.

## Chapter 1

### From *Barbaros* to *Mythos*

One of the oldest and most vexed debates on myth has its origin in the thesis that culture progresses from *mythos* to *logos*. This thesis, though largely discredited in scholarly circles, still rears its head from time to time, and, regrettably, continues to remain entrenched in the popular imagination. Like the equally vexed debate of primitiveness versus cultural and religious progress, the notion of a continuum from a state of myth to a state of rationality has the attraction of simultaneously establishing historical linearity and flattering the present day. But there is little evidence to support a linear thesis. On the contrary, most of the evidence supports an opposing thesis, one in which the relationship of *mythos* to *logos* reflects interdependence rather than progress. The most satisfactory description of a myth would give it a liminal status, in which the administrators of the myth system—evangelists, cadre leaders, aristocratic heirs, haruspices, warlords—borrow simultaneously from *mythos* and *logos* to fashion and refashion the array of myths on which they depend.

A more accurate way to measure the development of culture than the *mythos* to *logos* paradigm is to chart the progress of populations from a purportedly *barbaros* status to a safe state of *mythos*. In effect, this would be to chart a movement from outside to inside. This outside/inside polarity, though never absolute in reality, reflects the pattern by which myths form and control the narrative of the civilizing process. The Greek word *barbaros* appears as early as Homer, where it means “foreign” or “non-Greek.” Only after the Persian war did it come to have the meaning we associate with “barbarian” or “barbarous,” such as “rude,” “uncultured,” and so forth. The derivation of *barbaros* is not known, although some scholars think it is meant to ridicule of the sound of non-Greek languages. In any case, it is the original meaning of the word that is interesting when placed in opposition to *mythos* because alienation and exclusion are fundamental stipulations of *mythos*. From the codification of fairy tales to the fealty oaths of courtly knights, the narratives of myth create



conditions of alienation and exclusion, and, simultaneously, are brought into being by these conditions. The myth of progress from *mythos* to *logos* is merely another example of the alienation of a population considered *barbaros*. In the Christian west the *mythos* to *logos* narrative may be the most powerful of *barbaros*-to-*mythos* myths, but that is in part because the *logos* of the narrative became another name for the Christian god (John 1:1: *En archē en o logos, kai o logos en pros ton theon, kai theos en o logos* ["In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"]). In pre-Christian discourse, however, the relationship between *mythos* and *logos* was considerably more blurred.

Bruce Lincoln has shown that even the accepted definition of *mythos* should be revised. Beginning his discussion with Hesiod, Lincoln observes that "many Greeks found the juxtaposition of *mytheomai* to *legein* the most comprehensible and most effective way to draw a multivalent contrast between true speech and deception (or at least ambiguity); the straight and the crooked; also between that which is superficial and ornamented on the one hand and that which is blunt, but accurate, on the other; yet again, between the play of poetry and the seriousness of legal struggle" (Lincoln 1999: 4). Lincoln concludes that "to the modern eye, the terms in this equation seem reversed, for contrary to our expectations, it is *mytheomai* (the speech of *mythos*) that is here associated with truth (*alēthea*), while *legein* (the speech of *logos*) is associated with lies, masquerade, and dissimulation" (1999: 4). This early notion of *mythos* as true speech enforces the inside/outside construction of a social sphere that moves deliberately toward myth as an escape from *barbaros*. The place of *legein* in the process is as a facilitator of this movement, a not always reliable linguistic seducer (or seductress). Lincoln reflects that "the most ancient texts consistently use the term *logos* to mark a speech of women, the weak, the young, and the shrewd, a speech that tends to be soft, delightful, charming, and alluring, but one that can also deceive and mislead" (1999: 10). Such speech is easily adapted, not to myth per se, but to the narrative that surrounds and sustains myth, what we might call the management of myth. Perhaps for this reason, the great master-myths of the world religions that replaced the Greek and Roman pantheons tend to feature soft-spoken, almost effeminate leaders—the persecuted and marginalized, whose shrewdness inheres in the fact that being inside their myth brings salvation. Literature is obsessed with this flexibility of *logos*, which in Greek literature can emerge as *mētis* (cunning), Odysseus's notorious quality. Modernity has its own versions of figures, if less noble, at least as wily as Odysseus, from Sancho Panza to Shakespeare's Autolycus to Mark Twain's Jim to Elmer Gantry. Improvisators abound

because the relationship of *logos* to *mythos* is not only one of truth to fiction, but rather one of the means by which myth can sustain its truth-value for a select group.

Lincoln's observations, and the operation of *logos* as a possible mythmaking instrument, support Hans Blumenberg's invaluable contributions to the study of myth. In his *Work on Myth* (*Arbeit am Mythos*), Blumenberg says that myth, despite appearances to the contrary, is itself a form of rationality, "one of the modes of accomplishment of logos" (Blumenberg 1990: 27; cf. 12, 31). He also calls myth, with a descriptive flourish, "a high-carat piece of logos." This phrase has a striking resonance with the notion of synergy in charismatic systems and the necessity for a rational administration of dissipative structures in a charismatic group.<sup>1</sup> Every charismatic myth system requires a wide array of "high-carat piece[s] of logos" to accomplish its ends.<sup>2</sup> The incest taboos of the Trobriand Islanders, the laws of *kashruth*, Muslim *pardah*, Christian Lenten restrictions, and even something as apparently secular as the Marine Corps motto ("Semper Fidelis") all conflate the numinous power of shared charismatic endowment with highly rationalized fabling. Adherents of different charismatic belief systems continue to participate in those systems precisely because the rational element provides a structure within which they can trust that their conduct gives them the manifest power to transcend everyday routine and maintain select status in society.

This sense of select status is, however, double-edged. While it provides a structure of belonging, it also requires, as Bourdieu noted, complicity with the exercise of symbolic power—a power usually, and predictably, deployed to exclude and dominate outsiders. Moreover, charismatic belief systems, like all charismatic groups, institutionalize an antipathy to the individual. Paul enables this antipathy with his metaphor of the body parts: "For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it not therefore of the body? . . . If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? . . . And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body?" (1 Cor. 12:14-15, 17, 19-20). Pauline group membership requires submerging individual attributes in the programmatic, albeit divine, mission of the "one body." Inclusion in the group consists of *both* the submersion of unique attributes into the mission *and* the belief that that submersion confers select status in society. The irony is almost palpable: the more profound the submergence into the one body, the more select, and unique, a person feels himself or herself to be in the wider social sphere. The survival of the group

depends on trust in this charismatically maintained mission, which in turn serves to enforce and eventually institutionalize the stipulated antipathy to individualized traits. Consequently, we can conclude that belief, in conjunction with the myths that propagate a feeling of select status, are coterminous in groups similar to Paul's charismatic church.

There are many such groups. They are not, however, necessarily religious, nor, as we have come to expect from news reports, are these groups necessarily ideological extremists. Weber was substantially right to secularize the notion of charismatic authority; and, even if his categories of charisma are porous—or, as Rieff maintains, too rigid in their “nineteenth-century critical distinction between taboo and avoidance behavior” (11)—he was also right to recognize that the same spiritual fervor that moved the early charismatic movements also moves other groups, even if the fervor is not precisely religious. Rieff is probably wrong, therefore, to lament the loss of charismatic authority as a spiritual guide in present-day life. It may be that religious conduits for charisma have less appeal than at earlier periods in history (though one fears a golden-age theory lurking here), but other conduits of charismatic authority invest myth systems unconnected to conventional religious practice. These conduits remain exceedingly strong and have little to do with Rieff's notion of “spray-on charisma,” for which he has so much scorn. To rephrase Thales, there are charismas everywhere. And they remain as vibrant and replete as any in the past.

This is not to say, however, that other forms of charisma do not exist, and that by biblical standards they seem to have less binding force. These other forms do indeed exist, but their weakness (if it is that) springs not from a general lack of spiritually powerful forms. It results instead from a failure to create a state of *barbaros* through a charismatically sustained narrative, a form of *logos* that mythicizes a particular group's exclusionary status.

Charismatically sustained narratives can occur over time through the reworking of old myths and the introduction of new myths into an active system. Reworkings such as these usually reflect cultural shifts. Doty for instance has reflected that “it would be a fascinating cross-cultural study to correlate the types of origin myths with the types of political systems being developed in these societies and to observe how the mythic stories served to recapitulate, or to reinforce, social stratification” (Doty 2000: 141). In this formulation, myth follows developments in the social sphere, “recapitulates” them. But this is only half the story. Myth has more than a reactive role in social organization, origin myths included, insofar as they trace and install a charismatic source as a form of *auctoritas*. Indeed, even origin myths represent reworkings of old myths. The charismatically sustained discourse

that accompanies them can foster changes in culture as much as, if not more than, that discourse serves as a recapitulation of those changes. Because myth systems are by no means simply recapitulations or reinforcements of social development, they should be recognized as active, initiating forces in the determination of the economic, religious, and even military contours of society. Charisma has a prominent role in this active fostering process. The capacity of these myth systems to change depends in large measure on the management of the charismatic imperatives of group experience. The most enduring myths, which usually have a charismatic basis, produce social change at the same time that they themselves are in the midst of continual transformation. To be sure, the dissipative structure in which charismatic myth systems function best serves as a model (and an encouragement) for social action. There may be a reactive element as well in the relationship of myth to the socio-political-economic sphere, but the active force of myth on social organization is more pronounced.

Mircea Eliade once said that all myths are fundamentally origin myths. One might counter that most myths are transformation myths, obsessed with the emergence of new forms from older ones, and in the process destabilizing whatever the current myth structure might be. Again, the three chief world religions come to mind: Christ, Mohammed, and the Buddha (especially the last two) are deified because of what they become in the corresponding myths, how they are transformed from a human state to a divine state. Of course, every transformation is itself a new origin, which may be Eliade's point. But I would emphasize that it is not so much an etiological as a revisionary impulse that drives the mythical imagination. This difference should be a reminder that most cultural self-definition is more concerned with connecting beginnings to endings than with isolating beginnings in a metaphysical, an ontological, or a historical sense. Moreover, the etiological connections often depend on a form of genealogy, which is a consummately charismatic form of myth.

Cassirer calls myth a "conceptual language" (*Begriffssprache*), the only one in which the world of becoming can be expressed (1955b: 2: 2-3; 1923: 2: 4). Blumenberg hones this definition when he notes that "one of the functions of myth is to convert numinous indefiniteness into nominal definiteness and to make what is uncanny familiar and addressable" (Blumenberg: 25). Charismatic authority, as we have seen, has both a "numinous indefiniteness" and a "nominal definiteness"—it is both god and temple, history and *sabots*—and it is patently the responsibility of charismatic leaders to make their uncanniness, or the uncanny element of their mission, familiar and addressable to group members. This is more than merely an accidental

parallel: myth and charisma function in a demonstrably similar manner. The experience of myth, particularly in terms of group responses, intersects and often mirrors the experience of charismatic authority.

Consequently, we can say that a group of believers in a particular set of myths is subject to the same freedoms and constraints as members of any charismatically constituted group. The significance of this analogy should not be underestimated because, if we acknowledge the analogy, then we can begin to see how myths develop their exclusionary character and also how they interact symbiotically and dialectically with charismatic authority. Charismatic groups are, per force, exclusionary: individual empowerment depends on submergence in the group culture. The sense of privilege, and even prestige, comes only with membership, and indeed both privilege and prestige rely on a consciousness of unique, insider status which most often defines itself against prevailing norms of society. Even when active revolution does not furnish a charismatic group with its mission, a shared sense of exceptional status inheres in, and guarantees, membership privilege. In virtually all social circumstances and cultural encounters, such privilege must protect its uniqueness by establishing (and eventually institutionalizing) provisions for excluding nonmembers.

Myth systems mimic this exclusionary process, in part because of the overlap between charismatic groups and mythmaking—the establishment of insider, privilege-protecting provisions is accomplished by the propagation of myths idealizing particular charismatic missions (such as covenants or the master-race)—and in part because myth systems depend on charismatic origins and could not operate *systematically* if they didn't have a significant group component. The charismatic elements of a myth system's group component are easy to identify. They can be militant, devotional, erotic, or prophetic, but they are inflexibly exclusionary, restricted only to believers. An infidel is so named not simply because she is untrue or faithless, and maybe not even primarily for that reason. She is an infidel because she is not a group member. There is no test of belief prior to group membership. There cannot be, because one cannot believe—that is, participate in the myth of charismatic endowment, whether from Allah or Mao—until one is already a member of the group.<sup>3</sup> It is literally preposterous (back-to-front) to label a group of unbelievers “infidels”—without faith—unless the members of the faithless group first pledged their faith and then lapsed. Otherwise such a label is meaningless, serving only the ulterior purpose of confirming the exclusionary character of the “faithful” (probably charismatic) group.

This pattern, in which charismatic authority binds groups against outsiders *prior* to the advent of belief, helps explain the exclusionary nature of

myth. We tend, mistakenly I think, to see belief as the producer of myth and group construction. We infer a causal continuum leading from belief to the infrastructures supporting it—sacred texts, icons, taboos, offerings, marriage laws, and so forth. This continuum mirrors the false progression from *mythos* to *logos*, with a notion of causality added. But a different causal relationship is more likely. In most cases, belief is the product of group construction, not the initiator, and its bolstering myths and rituals emerge (and change) as a function of sustaining the longevity of the original charismatic endowment.<sup>4</sup>

The progression to belief cements the exclusionary character of myths, which emerges as a consequence of followers' recognition of their duty to their leader and their group. When leaders mythicize their mission—as they must to keep the mission alive past its initial revolutionary moments—the myths they create about their own exceptional powers serve as prototypes for the myths that are required to sustain group cohesion. Narratives link the founding myth to its various ramifications. Take, for example, the legend of St. Francis, a charismatically sustained discourse that continues to influence behavior in the present day. Franciscan friars wear a thick white rope belt because, coexisting with the unrationalized founding *mythos* of St. Francis's charisma, is the highly rationalized set of criteria necessary to sustain imitation of Francis in the everyday world. These criteria appear as written dogma and also as a continuing narrative of the select status of belonging within a *mythos*. Both dogma and narrative serve to institutionalize Franciscan charisma and to build a priestly order. The criteria of inclusion cover rules for devotion, deportment, diet, work, and costume, all of which testify to the cooperation of *mythos* and *logos* in the propagation of the original myth. The white rope belt worn by the friars should therefore be seen as, simultaneously, a petrified symbol of a defunct charismatic movement (based on the personal charisma of Francis of Assisi) and living symbolic proof of the continuity (and routinization) of charismatic power. No one believes in the rope belt per se, except as a symbol of the movement.

### Afflicted Minorities

One of the most powerful means of establishing select status and confirming the exclusionary character of a particular group emerges in the myth of the afflicted minority. This myth, which is pervasive in ethnic narratives, demonstrates in the clearest way imaginable the division of *mythos* from *barbaros*, compounding the exclusion of one group—those within the

protection of the myth—with the menace represented by those on the outside. Recently, for instance, in North Dakota, the local American Indians strenuously objected to a hockey team's logo of an Indian brave wearing eagle feathers. The logo decorates floors, rugs, and the hockey rink. According to Winnebago myth, the eagle feather is sacred and should never touch the ground, let alone be trampled over by crowds of hockey fans. As one member of the tribe remarked, "It's like if you put a cross on a shot glass. What they're doing is sacrilegious" (Borzi 2005: D1). The sense of affliction felt by the Winnebago tribe member is fundamental to the cementing of a group bound together by a myth system. Most participants in myth systems identify themselves as members of afflicted minorities, or, less often, afflicted majorities. This holds true, *mutatis mutandis*, whether we are talking about the itinerant charismatics transmitting the *teletai* of Greek mystery cults (cf. Burkert 1987: 32–33), the early Christian sects struggling within the *ekklesia*, the Reformation martyrs, or the nineteenth-century Communists. Aristocrats, trade unionists (like those who lionized Joe Hill), Israelis, Palestinians, Serbs, Hutu, Tutsi—all, on both sides of political issues and often in flagrant contradiction of the numerical facts, resort to a posture of afflicted status to build group cohesion.

For example, while the last sentence of *The Communist Manifesto* is extremely well-known—"Working men of all countries, unite!"—the first, which is more famous in Europe, perhaps gives a better idea of how Marx exploited the notion of an afflicted minority in establishing the myth of historical inevitability that transformed the twentieth century. "A spectre is haunting Europe," he said, "the spectre of Communism" (Marx 1954: 11). This familiar sentence, in the much-debated Samuel Moore translation, is a translation of "Ein Gespenst geht um in Europa—das Gespenst des Kommunismus" (Marx and Engels 1970: 41). I will confine myself to the Moore version, in large measure because Engels himself had a part in it and wrote the preface for its publication in 1888 (cf. Marx 1954: 10). As Terrell Carver remarks, the "English *Manifesto* simply is the *Manifesto* for English readers," and the effect of the English metaphors seem to give a good indication of Marx's rhetorical intentions.<sup>5</sup> A first-time reader of this sentence, therefore, could not be faulted for leaping to the conclusion that Marx is here engaged in a rudimentary form of mythmaking. He has created a "spectre" (*Ein Gespenst*)—a ghost, presumably, or a shadowy presence like Old Hamlet—to give image and pathos to a political idea. He quickly extends the metaphor (or at least his English translator does): "All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre; Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French radicals and

German police-spies" (Marx 1954: 11). The German version is not quite as explicit with its metaphors, but the implication is more or less the same.<sup>6</sup> Thus, one might wish to accuse Marx (and Engels) of *aestheticizing* Communism as early as 1848, a serious allegation against the great demystifiers. But the allegation would be a waste of time. For Marx anticipates it, and by the end of the brief opening section of the *Manifesto* he has proven that in fact his use of the word "spectre" was deliberate, a set-up (and a send-up) of the entire European population that has been listening to demonizing rumors. "It is high time," he intones, "that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism with a Manifesto of the party itself" (Marx 1954: 11–12).<sup>7</sup>

Ludovico Silva compares the authority of prose in Marx to that of verse in the hands of a great poet (Silva 1975: 101). The verbal manipulation of the last statement quoted above testifies to this authority. It is impressive because it identifies European Communists as an afflicted minority, and, as a consequence of their afflicted status, represents them as an already-organized and cohesive group. Significantly, Marx uses demythology to establish the exclusionary nature of the group. Whereas he begins the section announcing the "spectre" that haunts Europe, he ends by pointing out that the spectre is in truth a "fairy tale" (*Märchen*). He ridicules the idea he began with, at once calling it a kind of child's myth and setting the stage for the introduction of a new shared consciousness. In Marx's new myth of Communism, the deluded believers in fairy tales become the oppressive majority while the heretofore persecuted Communist diaspora all at once becomes a cohesive, mission-driven minority. It makes little difference now that the *Manifesto* was in fact a little late to contribute to the revolutionary activity of 1848, and that it had more force later. (The first edition, in German, came out in January 1848 and a French translation appeared in June of the same year; the first English translation, by Helen Macfarlane, appeared in 1850.) What seems important is that any reader could feel himself or herself part of an afflicted minority, especially before the advent of Communist governments. And even then, the vast populations of the USSR and China could face the world as afflicted minorities constantly under threat from world capitalism. This is not the place to argue the truth value of the political and economic claims, but simply to note the continuing advantage, from the point of view of group manipulation, of a posture of afflicted minority status.

*Pace* Cassirer, in his statement regarding mythical thought and traditional authority, belief flourishes when myth systems (through their



administrators) persuade group members that they are separate from the majority and part of a privileged, persecuted minority. The sense of privilege most often comes into being as resistance to the existing norms of society, in a posture of revolutionary opposition, charismatic mission, or even traditionalist resistance. Inevitably a mythical narrative is born to sustain the sense of privilege—and of persecution as well. Ironically, as the myth becomes more established, the revolutionary opposition is transformed into a more stable form of authority. In regard to charismatic authority, Weber termed this kind of transformation from a pure, mission-driven form to a weaker official form routinization. But routinization rarely expunges the original myth. Even when we encounter the most routinized myths which have become ensconced in societies as abiding social norms, we often find at their hearts a narrative of persecution and “afflicted minority” status.

Longstanding charismatic traditions have been built on exactly that kind of mythical narrative. In Matthew 10, Jesus sets the tone for all of the Christian history of martyrdom, making it a virtual tenet of belief in his charismatic authority that his disciples be persecuted.

Behold I send you forth, as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. . . . And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another. (Matt. 10:16-17; 22-23)

Jesus tells his disciples that they will always be persecuted, with the implication that if they are not persecuted they fail to achieve legitimacy in the revolutionary movement (a failure which would also threaten the legitimacy of Jesus' charismatic claim). This criterion for legitimacy—that followers or group members must be afflicted, persecuted, and martyred to remain in the fold—reveals in this case a kind of transformed value-status, what might be termed a charismatic remythification. The Old Testament Hebrews, defined at least in part by their persecutions at the hands of better-armed and demographically superior enemies, are exemplars of afflicted-minority status. Jesus (or the writer of Matthew) extends the Israelite tradition of afflicted status, but with enough of a difference to create a dissipative situation in regard to the stable old myth. Instead of an ethnic/religious privilege available to all by virtue of birth into the appropriate tribes, Jesus makes the afflicted status *a matter of choice*. He disrupts the

Hebrew covenant myth of genealogically privileged or “chosen” status and transforms the original value of that privilege through a charismatically driven mission. Only by embracing the revised myth can the new believers simultaneously link themselves to the ancient Hebrew tradition and gain legitimacy in the embryonic Christian movement. The central tenet of this movement is salvationistic, fashioned as the fulfillment of the Hebrew messianic promise and therefore representing another value whose status is transformed.<sup>8</sup>

We see a similar deployment of afflicted minority status in the Qur’an, which repeatedly returns to the opposition of Jews and Christians (known as “People of the Book”), singling out the followers of *islam* as at once persecuted and privileged:

Some of the People of the Book would dearly love to lead you [believers] astray, but they only lead themselves astray, though they do not realize it. People of the Book, why do you deny God’s revelations when you can see they are true? People of the Book, why do you mix truth with falsehood? Why do you hide the truth when you recognize it? (Qur’an 3:69-71)

For both the ancient Hebrews and the Muslims, the dynamic is charismatic, depending on a supernatural or exceptional leader (or successive leaders) to provide for the extraordinary needs of the group. Moreover, the group sustains its legitimacy by promulgating the myth of its own afflicted minority status—even when recognized as one of the great world religions and, as in the case of the Muslims, dominating enormous geographical regions and establishing successful theocracies. One of the reasons the backlash against terrorism and the World Trade Center attacks has been such a valuable rallying point in Muslim communities is that the myth of being afflicted is *already* foundational to their charismatic group dynamic. The Qur’an may profess to honor all prophets from Abraham to Jesus, but it also asks, “Say, ‘People of the Book, why do you turn the believers away from God’s path and try to make it crooked, when you yourselves [should be] witnesses to the [truth]? God is not heedless of anything you do’” (Qur’an 3:98-99). Modern confirmation of persecution retrenches the original charismatic myth of the divine Prophet oppressed and afflicted in the numinous epochs of the Muslim scriptures. Legitimacy for contemporary behavior then means affiliation with the charismatic symbols manifest in the ancient record, a tropic group response to a dynamic myth.

This phenomenon is by no means confined to the Muslim religion. Christian fundamentalist cult leaders such as David Koresh license their

authority on their persecuted status. Their followers live in an atmosphere of continual entropy production in relation to the institutional myth of Christianity, at once borrowing from the legitimate tradition and realigning themselves in the charismatic context of an afflicted status that has divine legitimacy that *supersedes* the institutionalized tradition. The Reformation martyrologies, such as John Foxe's popular *Acts and Monuments*, relied heavily on this form of realigned charismatic legitimacy, confirming a link to the divine past through present persecution. Foxe's large and much-revised text began with instructive chapters on the notorious persecutions of the early church, the early Christians sacrificed and tortured to satisfy Roman whim providing continuity and genealogical affiliation for Queen Mary's excesses. The astounding success of *The Book of Martyrs*, as Foxe's book was called, emphasizes that as long as the myth of afflicted status remains fluid and manipulable by new teachers and prophets, the group dynamic retains a tropic character in relation to the myth system.

The myth of afflicted status also binds ethnic groups charismatically. Ethnicity is a complex subject, rife with conflicting theories of the genetic, geographical, and environmental-cultural factors that separate one group from another. Nevertheless—that is, despite the anthropological, scientific (and pseudo-scientific) explanations available—one need not look far to find that many ethnic groups pay homage to ancient or relatively remote myths of afflicted status to justify current attitudes toward outsiders. This justification serves as a unique bond, charismatically inspired but sustained in everyday life either through religious practice or politics, and, at the best of times, can serve productive (as opposed to destructive) purposes. More often, however—and the endless conflicts in the Middle East bear witness to this—ethnic bonding in concert with afflicted minority status leads to exclusivity, belligerence, and even genocidal consequences. The so-called Serbian revolution in the former Yugoslavia furnishes a recent example. In Bosnia and Croatia, the Serbs considered themselves an afflicted minority in what they saw as their own Slav homeland (as they defined it), and sought revenge for wrongs done to them as a group in the distant past. Their justification for the purging of people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds (mostly Muslims) from supposedly Serbian lands was based on hereditary claims, at least in theory. In practice, as in most ethnic conflict, racism and religious bigotry were masked by the reestablished legitimacy of an ancient charismatic authority. The obvious volatility of the myth of past afflictions allowed political leaders and warlords to manipulate the charismatic symbols and forge a nationalist ethos. Again, however, the violence that resulted was not merely a consequence of charismatic group

dynamics, nor for that matter only a response to afflicted minority status. A good deal of planning went into the genocidal attacks, planning that, for all its myth-inspired justifications, depended on pragmatic, routine, politicized aims.

Nevertheless, in public speeches and in the very formation of an ethnically delimited state, the Serbian movement revealed a characteristic relationship between charisma and myth in deploying an afflicted minority grudge to chronic local problems of land occupation, rulership, religious freedom, and employment disparity. Slobodan Milošević fired up nationalistic fervor by evoking the spirit of Prince Lazar and the fourteenth-century Battle of Kosovo, a notorious touchstone of Serbian emotion (it will be remembered that Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo on the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo in 1914, setting off the First World War). "The confused Serbian masses," Slaven Letica points out, "whose confusion arose out of the crisis of communism and the end of Titoism, needed a new authoritarian leader; they did not want democratic reforms, but rather the ideological *status quo*" (Letica 1996: 103). Milošević exploited the confusion through the manipulation of Serbian myth, cementing a charismatic leadership position. The breakdown of communist authority in Yugoslavia provided a continual threat of entropy, allowing Milošević simultaneously to appear as the savior of ethnic integrity in increasingly dissipative social structures and as a "strong man" authoritarian personality. In 1986 the now notorious "Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art," which "eventually became a kind of sacred scripture of the Serb-as-eternal-victim version of history," offered a "nihilistic (victim-oriented) vision of Serbia's past and present in which Serbs are seen as the perpetual losers" (Letica 1996: 102). This "victim-oriented vision" fueled the notion of an afflicted minority, raised to mythical proportions by association with ancient oppression by the Ottoman Turks and the communist regime. Serbian epic poetry had always sung of the Serbs imprisoned in an alien kingdom, and now the *guslars* (street balladeers), national poets and painters, and intellectuals underwrote the myth of afflicted "victim-oriented status" and supported the ethnocentric war-mongering of Milošević.<sup>9</sup>

The myth of persecution bound the Serbs as a group, just as Marx bound the early communists. According to the 1986 Memorandum, the "integrity of the Serb people and its culture" was the crucial question of Serbian survival (Malcolm 1996: 207; see Judah 1997: 68–69). "Integrity" is a charismatic quality, equivalent in numinous value to such concepts as "prestige" and "honor." As a call to action, the ideal of Serb integrity promised to supersede the storied atomization of the population and the alienation of

land. Serbs became interdependent participants in a myth system that functioned charismatically in tandem with (and in support of) the military and legal-governmental authorities. It would be mistaken to try to weigh the importance of the Serbian myth as inspiration for ethnic cleansing and other abuses—too many other factors, from political motivation to simple jealousy, contributed to the disastrous outcome. Yet it would also be wrong to deny the charismatic force of the myth of afflicted Serb minority status in the fomentation of Milošević's authoritarian revolution.<sup>10</sup>

A comparative study of a myth as pervasive as that of afflicted minority status would show, I am sure, that it develops as a charismatic experience and is therefore subject to the halts and starts, the remythicizations, and the routinizations of any charismatic group experience. This is not to suggest that all such myths are the same, or that the circumstances of afflicted minority status can be reduced or universalized (cf. Doniger 1996: 109–110). But in most cases the intersection of an afflicted minority myth with charisma occurs on two levels. The charismatic elements of the myth itself are subject to the manipulations of a leadership cadre that adapts the remote and timeless components of the myth to present-day circumstances, as occurred in Serbia. At the same time, followers in whom the myth has been inculcated must be deployed. This requires a somewhat different form of charismatic authority, precisely, the manipulation of the dissipative structure created by the adaptation of the ancient myth to present-day circumstances. Highly rationalized political planning probably contributes as much, if not more, to the mobilization of afflicted-status groups, but there is almost invariably a strong relationship between myth and charisma in this sort of social action.<sup>11</sup>

### Literary Charisma and Mythical Literacy

Here is William Tyndale, also from his 1530 *Pathway to the Holy Scripture*: “The Jews seek righteousness in their ceremonies which God gave unto them not for to justify but to describe and paint Christ unto them: of which Jews testifieth Paul saying, how that they have affection to God but not after knowledge, for they go about to stablish their own justice, and are not obedient to the justice or righteousness that cometh of God, which is the forgiveness of sin in Christ's blood unto all that repent and believe” (38). Not only does Tyndale justify the exclusionary character of the Christian myth, he also marks the transmission of charismatic authority from the Hebrew Bible and Jewish “ceremonies” to the “forgiveness of sin in Christ's blood”

that comes to everyone who repents and believes. The practices and hence the beliefs that inform the Christian charismatic group *replace* those of the Jews. Even as Tyndale acknowledges the charismatic origins of Jewish myth, he appropriates the Hebrew God, thereby transferring the authority of the earlier experience to the New Testament. Both myths, as Tyndale's passage shows, require the participation of group members and both survive in separate interdependent charismatic relationships with the same God.

The replacement or substitution we find in Tyndale relies for its social significance on the transmission of what we might call literary charisma. Yet to experience this charismatic transmission, one must have the capacity to decode the literary text in whatever form it takes. This capacity grows not only from linguistic fluency but also, more importantly, from a fluency or literacy in the myth system. Most myth systems contain a literary component, whether in the form of the oral tales Malinowski reports from the Trobriand Islands, the works of Marx and Lenin, or the Yahwist's Genesis. Mythical literacy therefore becomes the important issue. *Logos*, as a form of mythmaking, ties the mythical narrative to the charismatically bound group. Moreover, the exclusion of those unable to decode the myth, those who are for all intents and purposes mythically illiterate, delineates a field of outsiders. We have seen how such a field of outsiders is often derided as *barbaros* and considered a threat to the those self-consciously part of the myth system. The relationship of *barbaros* to *mythos* is thus mediated by *logos*: rather than a progression from uncivilized to civilized, the mythical narratives of charismatic groups reveal an interchange, a parallel development, with *logos* as the facilitator of an exclusionary status.

Obviously, it takes more than reading *Das Kapital* or the Akebah legend, and certainly more than standing round listening to a Trobriander holding forth of an evening, to experience the charismatic dynamic of any one of these very different myth systems. And literary charisma is by no means the "free gift" Paul talks about in his Epistle to the Romans (5:15). Experiencing it costs individuality, which is why anthropologists remain, to rephrase Geertz, strangers at "the trading post, the hill fort, or the sheep run" (1973: 16). Only membership, coupled with belief in the invariably misleading promise of continuity, guarantee literacy in a tradition of myths.<sup>12</sup> When the upheavals to continuity begin, it is the capacity among group members to adjust that confirms the fluent character of their mythical literacy as well as their status as fully paid-up members of the charismatic body.

A more complex example than Tyndale comes from Chinese culture. Hegel once declared that "China . . . [lies] outside the world's history."<sup>13</sup>

To our ear today, this sounds like an utterly vacuous, not to say bigoted, remark. Yet in an ironic way (which is almost certainly unintentional) Hegel's statement might seem valid if "the world's history" were seen to consist of the fabricated discontinuities so dear to Eurocentric thinking. Chinese culture has always sought to represent itself as a continuum which, in its essence, is undisturbed by any form of discontinuity. As Frederick Mote observes, when Chou conquered Shang (*ca.* 1111 BCE), "it succeeded eagerly to all the pretensions that went with control of the center of the world's single culture area. Chou aspired to moral and political legitimacy in that successor role rather than to the role of an alien conqueror. It had no self-doubt in assuming it, and in its cultural propaganda stressed the common antecedents of the two states as heirs to a highly mythologized antiquity that had spawned both their dynastic lines."<sup>14</sup> Chou and Shang were linguistically close, as Mote points out, and therefore are not perfectly analogous to Greece and Rome. Yet Republican Rome, in conquering Greece, also conquered the (western) world's cultural center, and Rome, like Chou, aspired to moral, political, and especially cultural legitimacy in confrontation with Greek achievements. But whereas Chou mythology emphasized common antecedents, Roman mythology, according to the authors of *Religions of Rome*, "was inevitably a complicated amalgam: it included adaptations of borrowings from Greek myth as well as 'native' Italic traditions" (Beard, North, Price 1998: 1.172). As Virgil's national epic, the *Aeneid*, makes dramatically clear, the Romans saw themselves as descendants of the Trojans, deliberately eschewing common origins and perhaps even challenging the legitimacy of Greek hegemony. It is true the Romans shared some Greek gods and Greek creation myths—though not so much the Panhellenic myths of place (*cf.* Beard, North, Price 1998: 1.173)—but their own foundational myths of genealogical descent tended to evade Greek civilization. The celebrated Hellenization of Roman intellectual culture was continually undermined by ambivalence regarding Greece, as is indicated in many Roman cultural practices, not least the symbolic institution of Trojan origins.

In contrast, Chinese intellectuals always strove for, and enacted in their works, a myth of seamless cultural continuity, despite internal disputes among the literati and disruptive invasions from outside, including centuries-long dynastic occupations. This contrast with the west is especially noteworthy when we recall the emphasis on literary education in Chinese culture. "For twelve centuries," according to Weber, who wrote before the Communist takeover, "social rank in China has been determined more by qualification for office than by wealth. This qualification, in turn, has been

determined by education, and especially by examinations. China has made literary education the yardstick of social prestige in the most exclusive fashion, far more exclusively than did Europe during the period of the humanists. . . . Literati have been the bearers of progress toward a rational administration and [the bearers] of all ‘intelligence’” (Weber 1951: 107). Political vicissitudes and dynastic upheavals notwithstanding, the Chinese embraced a cultural continuum which was sustained largely by literary command of ancient texts. As Wen Fong puts it, “China was traditionally united more by its cultural identity than by political cohesiveness” (Fong and Wyatt 1996: 28).

Of course, linguistic continuity had a unique advantage in Chinese literary culture. Chinese written language is not phonetic, and consequently the literary language was not at the mercy of dialectal differences but retained a supra-demotic status.<sup>15</sup> The written language served to bind the country together over long periods of social change, despite the proliferation of dialects. It should be recalled that China has over 300 minorities and that it was ruled by the Mongols for a century and by the Manchus for almost three (267 years). From the time of the Zhou conquest (11th century BCE) to the end of the Qing dynasty (1911) is a period of more than 3,000 years. Yet, despite discrepancies among literary men regarding, for instance, the predominance of Confucianism or Daoism, there remained an extraordinary continuity of culture across the millennia.<sup>16</sup>

When we speak of continuity in the Chinese context we must emphasize the intellectual consciousness of cultural continuity, and the shared notion of culture. In the sixth century BCE Confucius spoke of *ssu-wen*, “our culture” or “our civilization” (with definite overtones of “our literary culture”). He was referring to the legacy of the first Chou king and perhaps also to the writings of the ancients which he edited as the Classics. Confucius considered himself the bearer of culture (*wen*), and its preserver for future generations. Here is Peter K. Bol’s translation of *Analects* 9.5:

When under siege in K’uang, the Master said, “With King Wen dead, is Culture [*wen*] not here with me? Had Heaven intended that This Culture of Ours [*ssu-wen*] should perish, those who died later would not have been able to participate in This Culture of Ours.” (Bol 1992: 1)

Because of Confucius’s stature, both his sense of mission and of the mandate to pass on *ssu-wen* to future generations became an institution of culture. Thus Bol’s translation emphasizes the collective possession of culture as integral to the concept, supporting Weber’s observation that the



Chinese literati were “the decisive exponents of the unity of culture” (Weber 1951: 107). Many civilizations mythicize their cultural unity, indeed define themselves and their moral ideals in terms of unity, tradition (continuity), collective possession of charisma-bearing (often sacred) texts, and collective participation in the rituals and experiences recorded in those texts. Many civilizations also exhibit a collective consciousness of particular ideas, a more or less philosophical identity as emblematic of cultural unity. But what distinguishes the Chinese, in addition to the exceptional longevity of their tradition, is the centrality of literary culture to the collective identity. Weber noted that “even in the oldest traditions the ancient scriptures were considered magical objects, and the men conversant with them were considered holders of magical charisma” (Weber 1951: 109), and this kind of charisma undergirds the cultural myth of *ssu-wen*. Even under siege in K’uang [Kuang] the charismatic nature of the Master’s *cultural* or perhaps *literary* mission is prominent, confirmed by his confidence that “Heaven” [*t’ien*] has already protected “This Culture of Ours,” of which he is the bearer, and that therefore neither he nor (literary) culture need fear the men of K’uang.

The prominence of literary charisma in Chinese culture is particularly interesting in the context of Mao Zedong’s revolutionary ideals. Mao inherited an intellectual culture whose charismatic aura had the force of perennial wisdom. Not only did both the Mongols and the Manchus conform to this charisma-bearing collective wisdom, adopting their conquered subjects’ language, literary heritage, philosophy, and even religion, but even into the twentieth century the Confucian ideal of *ssu-wen* held sway. To imagine an equivalent in the West boggles the mind, even if we were to confine ourselves to western Mediterranean countries. It would mean imagining a virtually seamless continuity of texts, language, religious beliefs, sacred books, poetic forms, literary-critical criteria, rhetorical style, and philosophy in the successive cultures of—conservatively speaking—Greece, Troy, Rome, Byzantium, medieval Islamic Spain, Renaissance Spain, medieval Italy and France, the Renaissance Italian city-states, early modern France and England, revolutionary and republican France, unified Italy, fascist Italy and Spain, and so forth. It is inconceivable that all the different Mediterranean cultures could have shared a single written language as well as an agreed-upon literary canon: what literary examination would have satisfied all these cultures over all this time? Even Latin, the intellectual *lingua franca* for 500 years, seems a paltry thing in comparison to Chinese written language. Latin not only did not bind Roman culture together, but it eventually became the supreme symbol of Roman dispersion: a dead

language. And, appearances to the contrary, a dead language is an utterly different linguistic phenomenon from a living nonphonetic language.

Yet Mao managed to appropriate the lock-step notion of Chinese cultural continuity and redirect it toward revolutionary communism. An act of appropriation so controversial can hardly be called “mild chaos.” Nevertheless, contrary to what one would expect, Mao cannily avoided a patent rejection of the aesthetic and intellectual ideals that had for so long constituted the bedrock of Chinese tradition. As we see in *Quotations from Chairman Mao* (advertised as “the famous ‘Little Red Book’ that has formed and molded the minds of 800 million Chinese citizens—one-fifth of the world’s population”), a compromise between traditional charismatic myth and charismatic novelty—a clear moment of synergistic charisma—permitted Mao to effect a transmission of ancient literary charisma in much the same way that Tyndale transmits Old Testament charisma to Protestant interpretation of the New Testament. The passages I quote here come from “Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art” (May 1942):

What we demand is the unity of politics and art, the unity of content and form, the unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection of artistic form. Works of art which lack artistic quality have no force, however progressive they are politically. Therefore, we oppose both works of art with a wrong political viewpoint and the tendency towards the “poster and slogan style” which is correct in political viewpoint but lacking in artistic power. On questions of literature and art we must carry on a struggle on two fronts. (1972: 179–80)

Mao inherits his theme, the relationship of political and artistic criteria, from Marxist-Leninist discourse. But the contrast with the Russian model is striking. One need only recall Lenin’s denouncement of Mayakovsky and his screeds against Futurism (“Can’t we find reliable *anti-futurists*?” Lenin 1969: 678). The constant harping on “decadent” art under Stalin reflects the difference between regularizing an already heterogeneous aesthetic culture and, in the Chinese case, bringing a managed heterogeneity to a long (if charismatic) homogeneity in literary and artistic culture. There’s little question that Mao recognized the complete saturation of Chinese culture in the Confucian myth of *ssu-wen*, and that he also acknowledged the literary basis of its reach. His genius was to shift the charisma-bearing elements from collective Confucianism to collective communism, substituting a new charismatic form of bonding with the antiquated and exclusionary myth. As he explains earlier in the *Quotations*, communism succeeds

only when progressive leadership demonstrates the interdependent relationship of the vanguard and the mass: "Communists must never separate themselves from the majority of the people or neglect them by leading only a few progressive contingents in an isolated and rash advance, but must take care to forge close links between the progressive elements and the broad masses. This is what is meant by thinking in terms of the majority" (Mao 1972: 163). One could almost imagine sending this same message to the errant members of the early church at Corinth. Mao's sense of danger in an isolated advance by the few echoes (unintentionally) the Pauline admonishment of the Corinthians who saw themselves as more advanced than the Apostle, and therefore, by Paul's definition, members who eschewed the very body they presumed to lead. Paul is as much a communist as Mao is a Pauline Christian: the difference between them is found not in their characterization of the myth of an interdependent charismatic body so much as in the source of the charisma they proselytize. Paul's *pneuma* becomes, in Marxism-Leninism, the now-familiar myth of historical necessity.

For Mao, however, even the exigencies of historical necessity had to merge appropriately with Chinese intellectual tradition—ironically, the compromise Mao recommends in the *Quotations* has a Confucian tenor. The synergistic force of his message comes through clearly when, as in the passage indented above, he emphasizes the importance of "artistic quality" in conjunction with "political viewpoint." As an example of charismatic management, his simultaneous dismissal of art with the wrong political viewpoint and of the sloganeering style of art is brilliant, at once overturning Confucian *and* Leninist aesthetic principles. He creates in this single stroke a kind of vacuum in charismatic conditions, introducing the dissipative structure for which his intervention seems a solution. In relation to principles of art and literature, he redirects group participation from the ancient charismatic tradition toward membership in a new egalitarian vanguard. Like his discussion of the majority, his description of the new charismatic body also has a Pauline character:

Letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is the policy for promoting the progress of the arts and the sciences and a flourishing socialist culture in our land. Different forms and styles in art should develop freely. We think it is harmful to the growth of art and science if administrative measures are used to impose one particular style of art or school of thought and to ban another. Questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences should be settled through free discussion in artistic and scientific circles and through practical work in these fields. (Mao 1972: 180)

This famous passage comes from a speech Mao made in 1956 (published in 1957 as *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People*). Within a month of the speech the permission to let “a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend” became Maoist policy. The policy was not welcomed in all quarters, however, and, ironically, resulted in the punishment of intellectuals by the bureaucracy they had been encouraged to criticize. Whether this result was an unforeseen political development or had been part of Mao’s plan from the start—that is, to root out nonconformist elements by encouraging free expression—remains unclear. Given the China we know, it is difficult not to suspect the latter, despite the charismatic management of conflicting forces in the “hundred flowers” speech. Perhaps predictably, the Little Red Book served more as inspiration than as a pragmatic handbook. Censorship has plagued Chinese culture since the takeover, and the notion of “a hundred flowers” blossoming freely would be laughable if not for the dire punishments that sometimes accompany infractions against the authoritarian edicts regarding proper conduct by artists, writers, and the press—especially since the appallingly misnamed Cultural Revolution. But these sad developments belong to other categories of charismatic evolution. The promises of the *Quotations* remain expertly crafted in regard to the fomenting of the kind of dissipative structure that demands the problem-solving effects of charismatic compromise. Indeed, the success of Mao’s new myth needs little proof beyond that of the ongoing reverence for him in China today, despite his well-attested despotism and his ultimate disregard for the putative freedoms of a “flourishing socialist culture” laid down in his famous book.<sup>17</sup>

## Variants and Discrepancies

Let me make an abrupt transition to a Futurist future without a past. If all believers and all doctrinal literature disappeared from the earth (as has happened with Greek and Roman religion), and if only the Bible were left, what would happen when we came across the following verses? Would we label them discrepancies or something different, a supporting fiction perhaps? The verses come from an old folk song called “The Cherry Tree Carol”:

When Joseph was an old man  
An old man was he  
He married Virgin Mary  
The queen of Galilee

Joseph and Mary  
 Walked through an orchard green  
 There were berries and cherries  
 As thick as might be seen

And Mary spoke to Joseph  
 So meek and so mild  
 "Joseph gather me some cherries  
 For I am with child"

And Joseph flew in anger  
 In anger flew he,  
 "Let the father of the baby  
 Gather cherries for thee"

Then up spoke baby Jesus  
 From in Mary's womb,  
 "Bend down the tallest tree  
 That my mother might have some"

And bent down the tallest branch  
 Till it touched Mary's hand,  
 Cried she, "Oh, look thou, Joseph,  
 I have cherries by command."

The content of the song has little basis in Christian scripture, except the Evangelists' acknowledgment that Joseph grumbled a bit at first on learning that his virgin betrothed was pregnant. No miracle of the cherry tree has been recorded. So, in this respect, "The Cherry Tree Carol" is at once an addendum and a revision. What it adds about the baby Jesus somewhat revises his humanity if we are literal about the human acquisition of speech. But the "Carol" remains firmly within the Christological tradition, confirming Mary's virginity, Joseph's proverbially misplaced anger, and the baby Jesus' status as a god (or demi-god, before his crucifixion). This is an interesting phenomenon of myth. Inventing supplementary fictions to support a myth, far from separating the inventor from the doctrinal mainstream, instead reaffirms his or her membership in the charismatic tradition.

Variants represent opportunities for the augmentation and transformation of myths (cf. Vernant 1988: 251–52). They are the keys to understanding how myths, and by extension myth systems, evolve. In institutionalized settings, under conditions where myths have become overrationalized or routinization has taken firm hold, variants introduce a sufficient degree of

mild chaos, or entropy production, to initiate a realignment of belief, and, concomitantly, of the group experience of the myth. Although it is difficult to trace the origins of discrepancies and variants, we should be careful not to regard them as *post hoc*. On the contrary, I would argue that many of the variants scholars have recorded as forms of errors began as deliberate attempts by priests, prophets, cult leaders, or dynastic moguls to grasp power by redirecting the charismatic elements of particular myths and taking personal possession of the transformed value system. Mao's revolutionary embodiment of Confucian values attests to this form of redirected charisma.

Every mythical tradition feeds on its variants and discrepancies, drawing from them the nourishment to continue. We often cannot restore the context of a particular variant or reconfigure the status of a myth prior to its changes. But the cardinal rule of group dynamics suggests that what we now view as discrepancies in myths in their time injected new meaning into a stagnating tradition. As Robert Garland points out regarding Greek religion, "The Athenian pantheon, like every other Greek pantheon, was in a state of permanent flux. New cults came into being while old cults waned" (Garland 1992: 1). The idea of "permanent flux" signals the importance of dissipative circumstances in the fostering of religious participation and belief. Garland goes on to note that the "introduction of a new cult . . . served to promote the interests of aspiring political leaders," and that, at the same time, "Charismatic religious figures of the kind who pioneered the introduction of new cults were suspected of venality throughout Greek history," since many of the charismatic figures depended on charitable gifts to live (Garland 1992: 7, 5). The question of *cui bono* easily arises here, in the conflation of the charismatic innovation of cults and the usefulness of those cults to political economy. Indeed, it might be said that the dependence of myth systems on charismatic authority is ineluctably corrupting. Moreover, to profit from charisma in power or lucre without sharing out among charismatic followers would sow distrust and affect the delicate balance of group *metanoia*. But astute charismatic leaders tend to manage accusations of corruption as attacks from outside the group—or as treacherous deviations from within, which amounts to the same thing. They instantly create a dissipative crisis (and xenophobic threat), which leads almost without exception to the demonization of one group by another and the reformation of the exclusionary ideal. Power corrupts, and charismatic power corrupts *charismatically*.

Garland adds this remarkable observation: "It was the responsibility of the god to signal his readiness to be incorporated into the community by

commissioning a private individual to speak on his behalf rather in the manner of a proxenos was delegated to look after the interests of foreigners in any city-state. ). This he did, most conveniently perhaps, by means of an epiphany" (Garland 1992: 14). The "epiphany" empowers the cultic leader, who then charismatically administers the god's worship in the community, at once binding the group and establishing himself as a source to the divinity. According to Garland, epiphanies were not uncommon in ancient Greece and "enjoyed widespread belief" (1992: 14). This is an important point because the more epiphanies there are—and the more they are believed—the more apparent "variants" will occur in connection with certain myths.

Although Garland is discussing ancient Greece, we can see similarities between his examples and living myths, like Christianity. We are no strangers to epiphanies in the Christian myth. Many sects follow leaders who claim to have had a vision of a deity, from the angel Mormoni to the Virgin of Guadalupe. Each of these epiphanies, or visions, causes an eruption of chaos in a sect or religion—some mild, some, like Mormonism, not so mild. As a result, the managers of the epiphanic material (if not the one who received the epiphany) are charged with altering the tradition enough to absorb the charismatic innovation. Variants, therefore, might well conceal a history of charismatic group dynamism.

Uncovering that history, by destabilizing traditional thought, reinforces the vitality of the charismatic movement and contributes to its survival. For example, the proliferating questions raised by Old and New Testament scholarship serve not to debunk a miracle or settle a kinship relation for good, but to enforce the mythical tradition as viable—and inject new meaning into what could be perceived as stagnating. Thus, establishing that the Gospels were probably not written by the Apostles, or at least not in their entirety, is not meant to devalue the perceived holiness of Jesus Christ, but rather to ramify the deistic myth. The same cannot be said for scholarly forays into Greek or Roman myth. From our vantage point, variants in these myths—as, for instance, the origin of Hephaestus's lameness or the attitude of Eurydice when Orpheus looks backward (expanded upon so remarkably in Virgil's *Georgics*)—appear as a source of confusion, baffling rather than enlightening in terms of the survival of a tradition. But, in fact, only the historian of myth sees the variants as awkward; only a nonparticipant in the myth system's group function attempts a linear appreciation of a tradition's development. In reality, myth systems develop in a counter-linear manner, by fits and starts introducing destabilizing elements that realign the interdependent members of the charismatic group. "Discrepancy" is therefore a

misnomer, a negative assessment made *ex post facto*, while “variant” should be another word for proof of a living tradition. The apparent errors of fact that anthropologists report or that we discover as we pore over the old mouse-eaten records of history represent the components of a living system *in statu mutandi*.

Numerous myth systems build the concept of variance directly into their origin myths. The Hebrew Bible does this in its very first chapters. Genesis opens with two distinctly different versions of human creation in Genesis 1:27 (verse 26 in the AV) and Genesis 2:7. Here is Robert Alter’s recent translation of the passages:

And God created the human in his image,  
in the image of God He created him,  
male and female He created them. (Gen. 1:27)

then the LORD God fashioned the human, humus from the soil, and  
blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living  
creature. (Gen. 2:7) (Alter 2004: 19, 21)

As biblical scholarship has shown, the two passages come from different pens. The first is by the author known as P, or the Priestly writer, and the second by J, the Yahwist. The biblical compositors’ placement of the two versions in sequence has led to considerable speculation on whether the second contradicts the first or simply expands on it. No definitive answer is forthcoming, as should be expected. The obvious difference between the creation myths is that, in the first, God creates the human “in his image,” and in the second he patently does not. Commenting on the second, the Yahwistic text, Harold Bloom has remarked:

Yahweh, unlike the rival creator-gods of the ancient Near East, does not stand in front of a potter’s wheel. Instead, he picks up the moistened clay and molds it in his hands, rather like a solitary child making a mud pie or building clay houses near water. We are in the hard Judean spring, and not in the grand harvest festival of the Priestly first chapter of Genesis. (Rosenberg and Bloom: 1990: 175–76)

In addition to the first appearance of an anthropomorphic god in the J version, Genesis 2:7 introduces a radical contradiction of the Priestly account in what Bloom refers to as a mud-pie creation. Rather than being made in the image of God, humans are made from the humus, the soil.



A reasonable inference would be that the former promises a connection to the universe while the latter, scandalously, does not.

Doctrinal rationale as old as the composers Septuagint has subsumed this radical contradiction in the now-familiar convention that the Yahwistic version simply represents an expansion on the Priestly version. But the likelihood of this is doubtful given the circumstances of the texts' composition. Moreover, if we are complacent about accepting the conventional explanation, we tend to undervalue the destabilizing importance of establishing a charismatic myth system with variance at its core. It is crucial to recognize, therefore, that even the conventional reading, combining the P and J versions of the origin myth, constitutes a variance in and of itself, harnessing a destabilizing remythification of the creation story to doctrinal rationale. The institutionalizing of both Judaism and Christianity depended, and continues to depend, on fashioning a *new* variation on the variances offered by Genesis. Not only does this new variation allow both religions to establish the basis for a charismatic exclusivity for believers, but it also incorporates the notion of fusion itself as pertinent to sacred reality. As the Evangelical mission of the New Testament makes abundantly clear, fusion is the watchword: only through a divinely authorized type of fusion can Jesus be said at once to fulfill the Torah (in his own words) and to reinvent the human relationship to God.

Fusion sometimes appears as a bifurcation, as in many origin myths comparable to the Genesis myth. Roman culture had two parallel foundation myths, neither canceling the other, as if belief were not a matter of either/or but of both/and. In legend, preserved in literary form, both Aeneas and Romulus founded Rome. This apparent conflict in the history of Rome, like other such conflicts, spurs a hermeneutic impulse in mythographers. It becomes possible to rationalize nuances that make this founding contradiction palatable. The rationalizations, born of fusion, are of the sort that allow Christians to remythify Genesis. Thus the legend accrues hermeneutic detail, to wit, Aeneas arrived in Latium and established the beachhead there, while Romulus actually set down *his* roots amid the Capitoline Hills. To be sure, this rationalized answer to a perplexing conflict evades the questions of priority and, perhaps, veracity. But the fusion affords a means to remythify the origin legend—not only in a single instance, but continually, because once fusion and remythification are legitimized, all the leaders of a tradition, from priests to poets, have license to increase the hermeneutic play nominally for the sake of clarification.

Invariably this form of clarification leads to augmentation of the charismatic basis of the myth. In the relationship between the Gospel of John and

the synoptic gospels we find a different kind of remythicization, a fusion conscious of itself as a form of deviation. John transforms what Justin Martyr called the *Memoirs of the Apostles*, the purportedly historical legends, into a spiritual truth. His gospel is a reinterpretation that vitalizes the myth by changing it. But John introduces a form of hermeneutic chaos into the myth established by the synoptic gospels. The relationship of his remythicization to the synoptic gospels has provided the foundation for countless doctrinal reinvigorations of the Christian myth.

Remythicizations and the transformed value-status of established myths, traditions, political movements, or aesthetic pieties constitute forms of deviation. Not all deviations are charismatic, however, nor should we try to interpret every transformed value as an intervention of charismatic authority. Yet in many cases—one might be tempted to say a preponderance of cases—we find that efforts at deviation proceed charismatically, tapping into divine sources of *auctoritas* while at the same time deliberately fostering a dissipative relationship with existing authority. In this manner the deviationist group (and particularly its leaders) form a bond based on retooled values, regardless of whether those values derive from mythical narrative, “age-old” custom, ritual, or, say, accepted poetic practice. Moreover—and this is an important fact to bear in mind—the deviations from normative practice need not be irrational or faith-and-magic based (as in religious deviations, which are often disparaged as mere cults). The transformation of values through deviation is a function of entropy production, and it usually results in a dissipative structure in need of leadership administration. I follow Smith in suggesting that the most likely form of leadership authority to administer the dissipative structure of a deviant situation would be charismatic, at least at the beginning. But, as we have seen, charismatic authority does not preclude rational argument. On the contrary, leaders must appeal to whatever needs their group has, while at the same time giving the impression of limitless boundaries and an antipathy to business-as-usual.

Political arguments come readily to mind. For instance, in 1921 the Russian Communist Party was still on fire with revolution, still in chaos, an exemplary dissipative structure. But the Party was also on the cusp of routinization, and Lenin, among other revolutionary leaders, deliberately restricted the limits of group freedom (as did Paul in Corinth) to establish criteria of legitimacy for his—or the Party’s—changing form of authority. As Paul developed an ecclesiology in his letter to the Corinthians (as well as in those to the Romans and Ephesians), Lenin began to develop an ideology (or, better yet, an ideoclasy, which systematically encourages

dissipative conditions). Lenin even uses the kind of language we associate with religious exhortation, as in this passage from the prolixly titled “Preliminary Draft Resolution of the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party on the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation of Our Party”: “A deviation is not yet a full-blown trend. A deviation is something that can be rectified. People have somewhat strayed or are beginning to stray from the path, but can still be put right. That, in my opinion, is what the Russian word *uklon* means. It emphasizes that there is nothing final in it as yet, and that the matter can be easily rectified; it shows a desire to sound a warning and to raise the question on principle in all its scope” (Marx, Engels, Lenin 1972: 333). So, by announcing that the anarcho-syndicalists have strayed from the path, Lenin characterizes them as egregious, suggesting not a cohesive movement but a few errant sheep. Moreover—and this reveals Lenin’s intuition for mythmaking, supported by his personal charismatic authority—he *creates* the very idea of a well-defined path *avant le fait* by identifying those who deviated from it. This is a form of *petitio principii* buried in a metaphor. “We are a party fighting in acute difficulties,” he goes on; “We must say to ourselves: if our unity is to be more solid, we must condemn a definite deviation. Since it has come to light, it should be brought out and discussed. If a comprehensive discussion is necessary, let us have it, by all means. . . . But a theoretical discussion is one thing, and the Party’s political line—a political struggle—is another. We are not a debating society” (Marx, Engels, Lenin 1972: 333). His word “unity,” which crops up several times, is irresistibly reminiscent of Paul’s unity of the One Body—and at the same time of Paul’s strict rules for becoming a member. Both movements—Pauline Christianity and Leninist revolution—are characteristic of the advent of routinization in confrontation with resistant groups. And even if Lenin’s approach is less overtly mythopoetic, both he and Paul can be seen to manipulate a dissipative situation to foster *metanoia* among followers. Paul, an obvious charismatic figure, invents and distributes the charisms among loyal group members. Lenin disguises the charismatic nature of his mission behind a pragmatic approach to revolutionary success. It is easy enough in these examples to see a relationship between charismatic authority and mythmaking, even though, as is well known, Marxism-Leninism sought to expunge myths like Christianity from political consciousness. Most interesting in the comparison are the similar early warning signs of regulation and routinization, evident above all in the manner in which both Paul and Lenin seek to stifle deviation in the ranks with highly rationalized arguments.

Yet such powerful resistance to deviation as Paul's and Lenin's indicates, in turn, the power of deviation to transform myth, and indeed to remythicize a tradition. Charismatic authority can play an important role in this kind of remythicization insofar as it operates most successfully in an atmosphere of dissipation, the very atmosphere fostered by deviation. For this reason, as I argued earlier, deviations should be seen as the means of transforming myth systems, and discrepancies the palimpsest of those transformations.

## Chapter 2

# Myth and Routinization

Many years ago, when I was in graduate school, I was walking through the East Village in New York City with a good friend. As we crossed Cooper Square, he glanced down and noticed the international anarchists' symbol written in the cement of the sidewalk.



Laughing, he said, “Wrong, fellas, it isn’t supposed to be written in *concrete*.” He meant that anarchism, and especially the anarchism symbolized by a letter A breaking through a circle, should not take on the permanence associated with something carved in stone. Anarchism, by its very definition, should remain in flux, a revolutionary movement resisting coercion. My friend was joking, but his point is a good one. The anarchist who had stumbled across a bit of wet cement and drawn the symbol that later became permanent on the sidewalk had missed the point of his or her movement. But we really can’t blame the anarchist for this error. The opportunistic *graffito*—actually more of a *sgraffito* technique, a decorative scratching—reflects the status of all symbolic representations, from flags to runes to crosses. Once movements develop symbols to mythicize themselves, those symbols, by definition, must become petrified in order to insure the permanence and unity of the movement (e.g., the thousand-year-Reich or “one nation under God”). Leaders deploy the symbols to legitimate themselves and to raise among followers a sense of stability and continuity. This symbolic legitimation is particularly important in charismatic myth systems

because the leaders must sustain the vitality of the myth by introducing and managing dissipative elements—disruptions, cultic breaks, discrepancies—creating a tension between the everyday function of the myth system and the static symbolic representation of its own (often revolutionary) origins.

The more stable the symbols of the charismatic myth the greater the tension, or contradiction, between the symbols and the original character of the movement. Dissipative structures are odd bedfellows for permanent symbolic representations. Yet permanence is the watchword of charismatic myth systems once they make the transition from revolutionary origins to institutional status. Thus, for example, the Russian October Revolution of 1917 was transformed into a permanent rallying point for the revolutionary myth, a stable symbol of an original (and supposedly ongoing) victory. Inevitably, as the movement gained legitimate authority, the hammer and sickle and the sheaves of workers' wheat, once icons of resistance and violent class upheaval, devolved into petrified symbols of the status quo. Nevertheless, in theory at least, those who accepted the myth of "continuing revolution" automatically (and retroactively) belonged to a revolutionary vanguard for as long as the myth continued to reflect what Malinowski called "the context of living faith," even if there no longer was an active vanguard of resistance associated with the symbols of the revolution which were displayed on every flag, medal, and youth poster. Indeed, the symbols promised entry to a closed circle of progressivism even when they were regularly wielded by a repressive authoritarian government. This irony was well-known in state communist regimes.

The relationship of charismatic authority to myth comes into relief in this obvious interdependence of the petrified symbol and the continually evolving, dissipative structure of a group of believers. Recognizing the apparent conflict between the stability of a symbol and the unstable nature of its cause is crucial to understanding how charismatic myth systems preserve themselves and continue to enthrall followers—often in concert with such deadening forces as bureaucracy and self-imposed legal restrictions. As charismatic movements age, the symbols of their revolutionary origins become more and more important, in large measure because memories of idealized moments must be more firmly fixed as rallying points if the movement is to survive under the auspices of its original charismatic authority.

Charisma and myth meet at this juncture. Charismatic movements embrace the language and symbolization of myth to establish themselves as permanent forces in society. They mythicize their beginnings, their leaders, their signal achievements, and their goals, and they weave a careful narrative to support the newly established symbols of their permanence.

Followers—whether religious believers or gang members—rally to the symbols and repeat a ritualized form of the narrative myth as inspiration, or as a rejuvenation of the *metanoia* required to sustain the group endeavor. They do this willingly, because, as Weber points out, “the desire to transform charisma and charismatic blessing from a unique, transitory gift of grace of extraordinary times and persons into a permanent possession of everyday life . . . is desired usually by the master, always by his disciples, and most of all by his charismatic subjects” (1978: 2.1121). The importance of myth at this juncture of transformation grows in direct proportion to the urgency attached to fixing a transitory charismatic blessing into a permanent possession, such as a church, a regime, a genealogical line, or even a school of influence such as that stemming from Marsilio Ficino’s Neo-Platonism.

This is not, of course, the only juncture of charisma and myth, although in terms of routinization it is the most significant. In previous chapters I discussed the similarity between charismatic movements and myth systems, and I want to emphasize that routinization affects what I have been referring to as charismatic myth systems just as it does charismatic movements. Indeed, the two are inextricably linked in many cases in that the myth systems grow out of charismatic movements. While at times it is helpful to disentangle charismatic movements and myth systems, for the most part such disentanglement is misleading. Even if we can establish priority between the advent of charismatic authority and the beginnings of mythical discourse surrounding that authority, I’m not sure there would be much value in it. For the sake of this chapter, however, because I want to concentrate on the phenomenon of routinization, questions of priority are sure to come up. As I noted earlier, only under long-routinized conditions do such petrified symbols as the Thanksgiving turkey or the Christian cross emerge as part of a living myth, implying a clear sense of progression from original charismatic movement to routinized mythical discourse. But this certainly isn’t the whole story. As is well known, myths and multiple fictions accompanied (and plagued) the founding of the early Christian church. These myths could not be called a myth system, but in many cases they evolved into the systematic narrative on which the church continues to ground itself. As a result, the question of priority remains blurred. Suffice it to say that, in regard to routinization, whereas myths may accompany a charismatic movement from the start, and may in fact themselves be charismatically formed, myth systems seem to ride into the breach left by the fading force of an original charisma.

## Charismas in Concrete

The last chapter explored the role of charismatic authority in the initiation of myth systems and the exclusionary character of belief. This chapter extends that exploration by demonstrating how, as discussed earlier regarding the Russian revolution, charismatic movements mythicize their own symbols of charisma, upheaval, and revolt in the necessary establishment of civic authority and economic stability. These symbols become emblematic of stasis, the very condition they were invented to confront. This paradox of establishing stable symbols that allude to a form of upheaval, such as a revolutionary movement or an overturned pantheon, occurs when charismatic authority begins to become diluted and, to use Weber's terminology, there is a "routinization" of the revolutionary aspects of the movement. As Weber explains:

When the tide that lifted a charismatically led group out of everyday life flows back into the channels of workaday routines, at least the "pure" form of charismatic domination will wane and turn into an "institution"; it is either mechanized, as it were, or imperceptibly displaced by other structures, or fused with them in the most diverse forms, so that it becomes a mere component of a concrete historical structure. (1978: 2.1121)

As we will see, a similar process of institutionalization unfolds as myth systems mature. Most important in this passage, however, is Weber's demoralizing view that charisma, once it is "mechanized" or "displaced by other structures" becomes a "*mere* component" of concrete historical structures already in place (my emphasis). Actually, there's nothing "mere" about this process—a process described as "continuity formation" (Schluchter 1989: 232)—and charisma can manifest itself in extremely effective ways after it has begun to restructure its mission and remythicize itself following the initial burst of pure revelatory or revolutionary action.

Weber of course recognized the importance of restructuring, as is evident from his introduction of such categories as office charisma and hereditary domination. But for the most part he framed routinization in utterly deflating terms:

In every case charisma is . . . exposed to the conditions of everyday life and to the powers dominating it, especially to the economic interests. The turning point is always reached when charismatic followers and



disciples become privileged table companions . . . and subsequently fief-holders, priests, state officials, party officials, officers, secretaries, editors and publishers, all of whom want to live off the charismatic movement, or when they become employees, teachers and others with a vested occupational interest, or holders of benefices and of patrimonial offices. The charismatically dominated masses, in turn, become tax-paying subjects, dues-paying members of a church, sect, party, or club (*Verein*), soldiers who are systematically impressed, drilled and disciplined, or law-abiding “citizens.” Even though the apostle admonishes the followers to maintain the purity of the spirit, the charismatic message inevitably becomes dogma, doctrine, theory, reglement, law or petrified tradition. (1978: 2.1121–22)

Well, maybe. In Weber’s description it would seem that all charismatic life is snuffed out as the disciples become “table companions.” But, as has often been argued since Weber wrote, charisma can indeed survive, if not exactly intact, then in still magnetic forms, in the transformed states it achieves as routinization occurs. It isn’t all as dark as Weber indicates when he describes the decline of charismatically dominated masses or the deterioration of religious prophecy into “dogma, doctrine, theory, reglement, law or petrified tradition.” In fact, paradoxically, Weber acknowledged that under the pressure of necessity charisma would have to merge with tradition, despite their basic antagonism as two of his three ideal types of legitimate domination (*Herrschaft*). And this acknowledgement on his part might be seen as a shibboleth, opening the way for the wide speculation regarding what Edward Shils called the “dispersion” of charisma in routinized institutional structures.

Still—that is, even if Weber somewhat concedes that charisma might survive in “mechanized” structures—routinization probably remains the most vexed concept in his description of charismatic transformation. Schweitzer, for example, resists seeing the term as an umbrella expression under which to gather all versions of charismatic organization. While he doesn’t deny the threat to leadership of diluted charismatic share, he makes an important distinction between the forms of organization often categorized, reductively in his view, as routinization. “Instead of a uniformly alien relationship between charisma and organization *per se*,” he remarks, speaking about what he terms “charismatic giants” of the twentieth century, “there developed one conflict between organizational and charismatic leaders, and another between bureaucracy and charismatic apparatus. But there was also a supportive relationship between a leader and his

apparatus" (Schweitzer 1984: 130). Schweitzer's distinction between the different kinds of conflict is valuable, particularly in recognizing the crucial element of human agency necessary for that "supportive relationship" in the management of a charismatic system as it is transformed into an organizational apparatus. Schweitzer of course has a somewhat tendentious reason for making these distinctions. He sees synergistic charisma—his own category of charismatic transformation—as, at once, an alternative to the Weberian extremes and also an apt description of the breakdown between organization and charisma.

In synergistic charisma, the problem is not that of avoiding bureaucracy or perishing. It is the task of the leader to build up an effective charismatic apparatus for accomplishing two different purposes. One is to turn this apparatus into the leadership corps of a political party. The other is to superimpose the apparatus upon the regular bureaucracy as soon as the leader comes to power. While the tension between the two types of organization remains alive, a separation of functions or a division of labor develops that enables the leader to control both party and state for the sake of implementing his policies and realizing his mission. (1984: 130)<sup>1</sup>

Schweitzer's concern in this passage is entirely with political authority, although his description of synergistic charisma in government leadership could just as fruitfully be applied to charismatic religious organizations or to academic institutions of the sort described by William Clark. He isolates what he calls "the tension between the two types of organization," but this is simply another way of pointing to the field in which, theoretically, a wide array of charismatic management techniques might be practiced. Wolfgang Schluchter more accurately refers to this tension, or this field, as "the dialectic of charisma and bureaucratization," a dialectic that he considers limited as a tool for describing developmental history without further recourse to a theory of "depersonalization" (Schluchter 1981: 53). We will explore depersonalization below. For the present, however, suffice it to say that, in terms of the developmental history of charisma, most significant is that as the executive branches of governments grew stronger during the twentieth century, "the relative significance of routinized charisma fell, while a new avenue opened up for the phenomenal growth of synergistic charisma. This new kind of leadership in itself gave rise to a positive interlinkage between charisma, ideology, and organization" (Schweitzer 1984: 131).

This is a good point. Charisma and bureaucratization should not be overpolarized. It is not an either/or situation, namely, charismatic authority

or death by bureaucracy. Other theorists of charisma and routinization have made similar suggestions. Edward Shils comes to mind above all, and it's worth quoting a long passage from *The Constitution of Society* which is germane not only to a comparison with Schweitzer, but also to any consideration of how and where myth fits into the charismatic scheme.

The distinction between the extraordinary, the creative, the innovative, on the one side, and the ordinary, the routine, the recurrently reproduced, is not merely a distinction between infrequent and frequent actions, or between actions generated by "great" personalities and those which are the result of the anonymous adherence to roles and rules. It is supported implicitly in Weber's scheme of analysis by a distinction between an intense and immediate contact with what the actors involved believe to be ultimate values or events, and a more attenuated, more mediated contact with such values or events through the functioning of established institutions. Weber regarded the former as the locus of the charismatic, which he seems to have believed to be intrinsically alien to the latter. *I do not think the matter is as clear-cut as Weber apparently thought. It seems to me that an attenuated, mediated, institutionalized charismatic propensity is present in the routine functioning of society.* (Shils 1982: 120; emphasis mine)

Shils doesn't manufacture a new kind of charisma, as Schweitzer does, although he strikes to the heart of Weber's analysis by attempting to define the mechanics of charismatic redistribution after the first blush of charismatic movements. Quite reasonably, he points out that "there is, in society, a widespread disposition to attribute charismatic properties to ordinary secular roles, institutions, symbols, and strata or aggregates of persons." "Charisma," he concludes, "not only disrupts social order; it also maintains or conserves it" (1982: 120). Though Shils made this last point some time ago, its possible ramifications have rarely been developed. One might speculate that Thomas Spence Smith's thesis of disequilibrium functionalism grows out of Shils's idea of the charismatic conservation of social order. But for the most part scholars have neglected to explore the precise and practical methods by which charismatic properties, to use Shils's phrase, might be attributed to such a wide range of social phenomena.

This is not meant as an indictment by any means, more an acknowledgment of a gap in the scholarly literature. I've already called attention to the absence of literature on charisma and myth and I think that it is in analyzing routinization that that absence is felt most sharply. If charisma

functions within the institutions of society, as part and parcel of apparently rationalized structures, then it would have to be naturalized or made consistent with all that is anti-upheaval, antirevolutionary, and antidisruption. Roland Barthes has suggested that myth serves just such a function in regard to history: "What the world supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined, even if this goes back quite a while, by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a *natural* image of this reality" (Barthes 1972: 142; emphasis in original). Barthes, writing in an overt neo-Marxist mode, sees myth as a "conjuring trick" of bourgeois ideology: "the world enters language as a dialectical relation between activities, between human actions; it comes out of myth as a harmonious display of essences" (1972: 142). And again, more specifically: "Myth does not deny things, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact" (1972: 143). Barthes is more polemical than usual in this section of his book, insisting that the "conjuring trick" proves that myth is what he terms "depoliticized speech," which seems to mean that, even when we are speaking of political myths, myth desensitizes us to the reality of the political, where the political describes "the whole of human relations in their real, social structure, in their power of making the world" (1972: 143).<sup>2</sup>

There are many weaknesses in Barthes' definition of myth, not least of which is the absence of human agency in the so-called purification of history. The idea that "the world" gives something to myth and that, in turn, "myth" gives something back to the world is simply too vague and too impersonal. It reflects a not uncommon sort of Marxist animism of abstract concepts—a mythicizing practice in its own right. (Much could also be made of Barthes' personal charisma in relation to his manipulation of myth theory, a manipulation that has had a disproportionate influence on literary criticism, for example.) Myth for Barthes, like ideology for Marx, has a life of its own apart from the ability of what Weber terms "cultural beings" to make deliberate choices and change their environment. This is a significant weakness as far as I'm concerned, as my discussion of the management of charismatic myth by priests, gang leaders, and others has demonstrated. But, *mutatis mutandis*, it might nonetheless be useful to apply aspects of Barthes' critique to the relationship of charisma and myth as it develops in the course of routinization. Indeed, we might well say that it is through a kind of "conjuring trick" that charismatic properties are attributed, in Shils formulation, "to ordinary secular roles, institutions, symbols, and strata or aggregates of persons" (see above). This conjuring trick is the

transformation of revolutionary, personal charisma into stable charismatic myths. Barthes claims that myth, in its whitewashing of history, creates an image of purity and innocence, a naturalized image of the past and a “harmonious display of essences.” In the course of routinization charismatic myths aspire to similar ends. They require a kind of purification and innocence to retain (or retrieve) an image of the original revolutionary movement in the face of structural rationalization. Barthes’ conjuring trick is as necessary as routinization itself, both to preserving the charismatic force of the myth and to conserving the social order *charismatically*, as Shils suggests.

But we need to ask: Is it important to link the negative connotation of the term “conjuring trick” to the establishment of charismatic myths? Alas, the answer to this question is undoubtedly “yes.” Yes, the transformation of an original, personal charismatic blessing into a myth system that includes such apparently stable elements as symbols and sacred texts qualifies as a conjuring trick. And yes—more importantly—behind every conjuring trick is a conjurer. Globules of charisma don’t float from place to place, settling like manna in the icons, symbols, or slogans of certain “blessed” institutions. Charismatic authority, like charismatic qualities themselves, must be managed, controlled, and, as it gradually becomes routinized and perilously diluted, transformed into a mythical-symbolic structure that can preserve the original charisma while maintaining the existing power structure of the charismatic group. Charisma remains, even in the throes of routinization, a consummately shared experience. The authority of charismatically imbued symbols, therefore, only exists insofar as those symbols represent an *interdependent relationship* with a group. The management of the group might well depend on keeping its relationship to the symbols in a state of disequilibrium, a state usually achieved by small transmutations of the charismatic myth both to fit current needs and to keep the group slightly off balance. This is the conjurer’s art, the sleight-of-hand that masks the shifts and redistribution of power while instituting a mythical structure in which group members have a share.

Both synergistic charisma and attenuated, “mediated” institutional charisma must partake of the conjurer’s art—indeed, the mediation is the art. Both variations of charisma retaxonomize the Weberian category of routinization, adding nuance to such forms as office charisma and hereditary charisma, while at the same time exposing the need for an administrative element in charismatic development. Moreover, notions, on the one hand, of “interlinkage” among charisma, ideology, and organization, and, on the other hand, of what Shils calls the “dispersed focus” of charisma in an institutional setting, lead ineluctably to a discussion of the mythicization

of charismatic authority.<sup>3</sup> Let's return for a moment to Schweitzer's second "task" of the leader, from the passage quoted above, which is "to superimpose [an effective charismatic apparatus] upon the regular bureaucracy." This is a provocative statement in terms of charisma and myth, raising two immediate questions: *How* does one "superimpose" a charismatic apparatus?; and, What exactly *is* a charismatic apparatus? My response to the first question would be that one can only superimpose a charismatic apparatus through the deployment of myth, precisely the *remythicization* of the charismatic movement's origins. My response to the second would be more complicated, and probably more tentative since the term isn't mine to begin with. But, for the sake of argument, I'd say that a charismatic apparatus would have to come into being as a result or condition of routinization, and that, roughly speaking, it would consist of a mixture of symbols, narrative, and administration, all directed toward the identical end of fashioning an enduring charismatic authority from a relatively ephemeral movement. And I would add that the narrative function so important to such an enterprise would be much indebted to the specifically creative force of charisma in its early stages. Such a narrative function, both as a support for the symbolic architecture—including tradition, incidentally, which is supposedly the arch-enemy of charisma—and as a means of instilling and controlling disruption, would rise in a charismatic system to the level of what Malinowski refers to as "living myth."

Indeed, we can see the contours of such a living myth, as well as a plausible example of a charismatic apparatus, in William Clark's recent study of academic charisma in "the Germanies." Primarily, Clark's aim is to show, as he puts it, "the great charisma of office in a traditional society" (2006: 37). But he extends Weber's notion of office charisma to a more general concept of what he calls "traditional charisma" (which I believe is his own coinage). His aim is "to illuminate the charisma embodied in the traditional university and, more importantly, the charisma preserved or newly created by the research university" (2006: 17). Quoting M. Norton Wise, Clark characterizes the means of preserving and creating charisma in a phrase very close to Spence Smith's disequilibrium functionalism: "like modern capitalism, the research university achieved an amazing 'dynamic equilibrium' (M. Norton Wise) by the cultivation of charismatic figures within a broader sphere of rationalization" (17). With "dynamic equilibrium"—or, as Clark rephrases it, "dynamic stability"—the traditional university came to embody charisma, obviously achieving a balance of revolutionary, antiroutine forces and the staid structures of the existing academic system. Clark points out, however, that the traditional university "abhorred charismatic individuals. Charisma functioned on the whole to uphold and validate the tradition,

and thus realized itself largely as routinized or crystallized charisma, vested in clothing, chairs, books, offices, titles, and the like . . . curricula did not change much, at least officially. When charismatic individuals appeared such as William of Ockham or René Descartes, who assailed the curriculum, its sacred nature as a canon became manifest” (17).

Clearly the university system described by Clark could be called a charismatic apparatus, and just as clearly its systematic institution of charismatic authority, manifested variously in everything from professorial chairs to academic dress, would depend on the continual reemphasis of the myth of its own sacred *auctoritas*. The scholastic canon became the embodiment of charisma, and “to assail it and succeed made one a hero of knowledge, founder of a new canon” (17). As Clark goes on:

The traditional university usually reacted decidedly hostilely to prophets or heroes who departed from the script, that is, the canon. The juridico-ecclesiastical regime . . . instantiated charisma. Academic degrees, such as the doctor of medicine, academic titles, such as professor of history, and academic offices, such as dean of the Law Faculty, conveyed charisma to their bearers in a framework on the model of clerical orders and chivalrous knighthood. (2006: 18)

The conveying of charisma from a “juridico-ecclesiastical regime” should give us pause. We seem to be experiencing a through-the-looking-glass moment as the definitively anticharismatic institutional authority deploys charisma *to sustain its own hegemony*. This is a signal example, not only of Clark’s traditional charisma, but also, undeniably, of synergistic charisma. Even more significant, however, is that the “instantiation” of such charisma leads to a collective authority. Here’s Clark’s conclusion:

In short, as vested in clothing, books, furniture, titles, and so on, charisma at the traditional university served to uphold authority by sanctifying traditions and differentiating academics as a group from other groups in society. The traditional university resisted the charismatic individual for the sake of the charismatic collective. And when an Ockham or a Descartes appeared on the scene, the effects mirrored those of successful prophets or revolutionaries. The strength of the modern research university consists in its ability to rationalize and routinize such prophecy and revolution, to make equilibrium dynamic. (2006: 18)

We could as easily reverse the last phrase and say that to rationalize and routinize prophecy and revolution requires the ability to stabilize

disequilibrium. But we would want to add that it isn't merely a matter of absorbing prophecy and revolution, but also, from time to time, of fostering the very disruption the system (or the system's leaders) appear to stabilize. This is not Clark's point, but my own. Only through the deliberate introduction and management of disruption will the charismatic collective remain bound, and therefore continue to thrive.

Clark does not raise the question of myth in his discussion, nor, certainly, is he obliged to do so.<sup>4</sup> But once again we are left wondering by precisely what means unrationalized charismatic values are made to fit in and indeed sustain a traditional structure. It is not only how charisma becomes "crystallized" in routines, but also—and maybe more valuably for this study—how it *remains* crystallized without being utterly absorbed into the everyday, the bureaucratic, the antiheroic. And it is here, I believe, that we must consider the function of myth—living myth, that is. The enduring propagation of crystallized charisma requires the accompaniment of a myth fluid and powerful enough to adapt to everything from changing regimes to crushing repetitive practice. Only a myth, administered with the same eye for disequilibrium functionalism as that displayed by a charismatic figure, can sustain charismatic values in later, systematized stages.

At least in part, as Schweitzer points out, this process of charismatic transformation involves tension between a bureaucratic organization and a charismatic organization. He claims, suggestively, that a "separation of functions or a division of labor" *develops* as soon as a leader comes to power. Schweitzer is speaking of the situation of a new political leader confronted with a bureaucratic structure already in place. But his point can be applied more widely, as is the case with Clark's comparison of the relationship between the juridico-ecclesiastically established canon and the revolutionary intervention of intellectual heroes like Descartes or Ockham. In both types of confrontation it is critical to diagram as closely as possible the development of charisma in its later stages. The temptation to regard this development as somehow evolutionary, or even natural, can be difficult to resist—especially in the face of such established structures as a centuries-old university system or a hereditary throne. But we should never completely lose sight of leadership roles in any kind of charismatic management situation, including and above all in the arena of charismatic myth systems. Even when the leadership is traditional, regimented, and immensely powerful, there must be a leader or series of leaders who break through the routine if only to keep the myth alive. Systems cannot survive without agents and myth systems fail without remythicization. For this process of remythicization to succeed in the long term some form of charismatic leadership is required. It can be formalized in priesthoods or kingships, and perhaps as



a “crystallization” shared among a plurality (as among Clark’s professorate). Despite appearances to the contrary, however, such as the deceptive appearance of an evolutionary development from pure charisma to institutional charisma, a creatively managed myth system must be in place for *any* form of charisma to flourish in a routinized condition (and this includes “crystallized” charisma, which, for all intents and purposes, is simply another kind of late-stage charismatic authority).

We should therefore test this conclusion: that is, that we can confidently infer from the notion of development that the transformation of charismatic authority from pure or personal charisma to a more routinized version of that authority requires a degree of management. Schweitzer implies as much by setting out the leader’s tasks. But, like most other theorists of charisma, he neglects to acknowledge, let alone delineate, the specific characteristics of charismatic management, and particularly the vital importance of mythicizing the leader’s mission as a means of fulfilling the needs of followers as the movement transforms itself. Yet it hardly needs proof that myths of personal charisma, of revolution, of upheaval become the very fabric of routinized movements. Indeed, routinized movements can only survive as collectives through a process of charismatic mythopoeisis. The myths they produce invariably reflect the leader’s personal power and the origins of the mission. Such myths are transformed into, *inter alia*, ritualized objects of worship, the “sacred canon” of the Clark’s German professorate, the *homoeousia* of the Christian father and son, the uniqueness of the Dalai Lama, ecclesiastical offices, political movements (such as Martin Luther King’s), even Latin tags, and sacred songs. Supported or not by divinely sanctioned texts, the charismatic-mythopoetic imagination drives and fashions the *re*-development of leadership as personal charisma wanes, and in consequence reaffirms the *metanoia* of followers. As Clark’s discussion of the university indicates, the distribution and instantiation of charismatic disequilibrium require a constantly redeveloping myth of leadership, a myth that—“sacred canon” notwithstanding—will have the creative force to absorb the new prophets of the curriculum.

But with mythopoesis comes agency. There is no such thing as the automatic or evolutionary development of a charismatic movement. Mythmaking requires a human imagination both to fashion and refashion the narrative, as well as to insure that the narrative (even when it is merely a reenforcement of ritual or object worship) creates an interdependent relationship with followers. As I’ve tried to emphasize, the management of charismatic myths, like the management of charismatic movements themselves, requires the mild chaos or control of dissipative structures,

introduced and subsequently manipulated by charismatic leaders. The creation and manipulation of myths—and *only the creation and manipulation of myths*—can assure the continuation of a movement. This fact should remind us that Weber saw charisma itself as a “the specifically creative revolutionary force of history,” which, “instead of reverence for customs that are ancient and hence sacred . . . enforces the inner subjection to the unprecedented and absolutely unique and therefore Divine” (1978: 1117). Schluchter takes this passage as critically significant in beginning to understand the developmental history of charisma. “It is decisive,” he says, “that charisma is a *creatively* revolutionary force, not just a revolutionary one. As such it appeared for the last time as the charisma of Reason” (1981: 54 and 54n54; emphasis in original). Schluchter then quotes the end of the following passage from Weber where he links the “Rights of Man,” civil rights, and a host of “basic” rights to charismatic authority:

All of these rights find their ultimate justification in the belief of the Enlightenment in the workings of individual reason which, if unimpeded, would result in the at least relatively best of all worlds, by virtue of Divine providence and because the individual is best qualified to know his own interests. This charismatic glorification of “Reason,” which found characteristic expression in its apotheosis of Robespierre, is the last form that charisma has adopted in its fateful historical course. (1978: 2.1209)<sup>5</sup>

*Charismatic glorification*—this is a suggestive phrase, especially when applied to an abstract concept like “Reason.” The word “glorification” translates Weber’s word *Verklärung*, which is derived from the German verb *verklären*, meaning “to make bright or radiant” and also “to transfigure.” There’s nothing wrong with translating *Verklärung* as “glorification,” but perhaps, with an eye toward the relationship of charisma to myth, it would be worth considering the notion—or the act—of transfiguration. Wouldn’t such an act require a mythological foundation? And, moreover, if that transfiguration reached its apotheosis in Robespierre, can’t we also ask how there can be an apotheosis—literally, a change to divine status—without a supporting mythological structure?

### Depersonalization of Myth

If charismatic myth systems live or die by the process of routinization, as I’ve suggested, then key to the process is the concept of depersonalization,

what Weber termed *Entpersönlichung* when speaking of “pure” or “personal” charisma. (He also sometimes used the term *Versachlichung*, literally, “the turning into a thing,” “*eine Sache*”). As the charismatic mission becomes depersonalized and part of daily life, belief inheres in the systematic mythical structure that the group shares. “Depersonalization occurred,” Schluchter says, interpreting Weber, “when the establishment of the continuity of charisma, its transposition into the institutional, was realized not by the transmission of charisma from the charismatic qualities of the original person to other persons, but by its transfer to social structures” (1989: 232). My argument is, in a nutshell, that the “transfer to social structures” requires a myth of the original charismatic mission to sustain continuity. Because the processes that transform charisma tend toward stabilizing a volatile, personally driven movement, they must simultaneously embody the lineaments of (apparently) permanent structure and the promise of a charismatic bond. Myth acts as the solvent between these two otherwise antagonistic forces, and depersonalization is at the heart of the mythicization process. “Depersonalization and limitation very often retain the principle of mission in a modified form,” according to Schluchter, who adds: “This implies, however, that the transformation of genuine charisma can result in either an everyday or extraordinary lasting social form (*Dauergebilde*). In other words, the resulting structurally stable social form can be either a traditional or a legal one or, on the other hand, a personal charismatic or institutional charismatic one” (Schluchter 1989: 403). Schluchter suggests that “hereditary and office charisma are the outstanding examples of the latter” (403), meaning of institutional charismatic structure.

These last examples are of particular significance for this study. Both hereditary charisma and office charisma must deploy myths, and the symbols and rituals attached to myths, to survive as institutions. Weber said that the “most frequent case of a depersonalization of charisma is the belief in its transferability through blood ties” (1978: 2.1136). The charges on armorial crests are designed as symbols of ancestral charisma confirming the genealogical myth that a charismatic essence can descend in the blood from epoch to epoch. Indeed the original myths themselves are depersonalized to be made to fit an institutional structure—in this case blood aristocracy—and to survive the generations intact. Weber of course used the term depersonalization to refer to the transformation of one of his “ideal types” of legitimate authority whereas I am appropriating the term to apply to myth. But it shouldn’t be such a stretch to imagine an ideal type of myth or myth system that mirrors charismatic authority, an ideal type of “pure” myth that is subject, like “pure” charismatic domination, to waning and then

turning into an institution. It isn't difficult to imagine this ideal type of myth, forged in pure and revolutionary social upheaval and, as time passed, compelled to suffer the kind of displacement in which original (charismatically imbued) forms merge with what Weber calls "concrete historical structures" to produce a new and more permanent kind of authority. Like transformed charismatic authority, this newly developing mythical authority would include not only the economic rationalization necessary to sustain its functionaries, but also a means of tapping the original charismatic source of the myth in order to continue to foster belief and loyalty among followers.

It would be a mistake, moreover, to suppose that charismatic myths come into being only after charismatic movements are established. As I've mentioned before, there is a dialectical, even symbiotic relationship between myth and charisma, and it seems pointless to me to try to establish priority. Another way of saying this is that *all* charisma has mythical properties from its very inception. Some charismas have a religious cast, others a political cast, and still others, such as that of Achilles, a military or heroic cast. But all are based in shared experiences of extraordinary gifts of grace whose recognition and continuation depend on the immediate mythicization of charismatic authority. To say that myths have a charismatic origin, therefore, is a tautology, since charismatic authority itself is a creation of the mythical imagination. So there is no contradiction in the fact that myth and charisma have inextricable origins and that myth acts as a solvent in the transmission of charismatic mission to institutional structure.

As the charismatic group collectively transforms the transitory gift into a permanent possession, both leaders and members must first establish and then embrace the group's myths. This is a crucial step in the process of routinization, a step that, curiously, the literature on charisma fails to treat. In fact, Schluchter sees a distinct division between the mythological and the institutional in the developmental pattern of charisma. First, however, it should be noted that he characterizes myth in strictly evolutionary terms, terms which have been largely discredited: "Myth," he maintains, "safeguards the unity of the world by means of classifications in such a way that paired concepts, which describe the different spheres of reality, can substitute for one another. Myth also interprets natural event and human action in terms of a single scheme of time and causality" (1981: 50). Opposed to myth in this scheme are theodicies and anthropodicies, which represent the next step in human forms of belief. Theodicy purportedly replaces the monism of myth with the dualism of metaphysical religion which distinguishes "between nature and human action and between the time horizons

of a transitory and eternal order. They no longer narrate the origin of a social order simply by means of exemplary stories. Rather, they link the origin to a revelation, which tends to be amenable to ‘rational proof’” (1981: 50). This is a narrow view of myth, and Schluchter seems unaware that in order to “link the origin [of social order] to a revelation” a narrative is necessary and that that narrative will be a myth. Moreover, the argument that myth is not “amenable to ‘rational proof,’” which is the implication of Schluchter’s remarks, does not stand up. As Blumenberg says, myth is itself a form of rationality, a “high-carat piece of logos.”<sup>6</sup>

It might seem that I’m setting up Schluchter’s views on myth as a paper tiger since I disagree with his basic premise. But that isn’t my intention at all. My reason for focusing on Schluchter, in addition to his stature as a Weberian, is that in fact he is one of the very few critics in the field to discuss myth in conjunction with charisma.<sup>7</sup> He says, for instance, “the quality of grace depends . . . on whether a mission was formulated within a mythological, a theocentric or an anthropocentric world view and whether the proving ground is otherworldly or inner-worldly” (1981: 123–24). He then makes a point of critical significance. Noting that Weber distinguishes magical charisma from religious charisma, Schluchter associates magical charisma with myth and insists that charisma can develop beyond the monistic “mythological” world view “only when the idea of god has arisen” (1981: 124). And by “god” he means here the god of salvationistic religions: “Only within the framework of a dualist world view, in which actions and norms are differentiated, can charisma be anchored in the mission, on the one hand, and in the welfare of the missionary targets on the other. *As long as a mythological world view prevails, the carrier of charisma is the mission*” (Schluchter 1981: 124; my emphasis). The assumption in this passage is that, while myth and charisma coincide under the “mythological world view,” myth somehow disappears as charisma develops, routinizes, and becomes increasingly depersonalized. Indeed, according to Schluchter, it is the very fact that myth disappears—that there is a demythologization of world view—that permits the development of charisma. “When theocentric dualism has emerged,” he concludes, “the mission can be separated from the carrier. If the carrier fails to prove himself, this does not necessarily affect the mission. In other words, the mission is stabilized against the carrier. This, religious charisma is a new stage compared with magical charisma” (1981: 124).

I won’t comment on Schluchter’s notion of collective of world views. As should be obvious by now, I’m not inclined to see myth in such simple evolutionary terms and I am highly skeptical of theories of demythology.

But I would like to note nonetheless how Schluchter's remarks complement my argument regarding the juncture of myth and charismatic authority as charisma begins to change. I fully agree that the later stages of charisma both separate the mission from the carrier and stabilize it. This mission needn't occur only in the context of so-called mythological world views or theocentric ones. On the contrary, *all* charismatic missions reflect the same stages, and while there may be a coincidence of carrier and mission in earlier stages, there is *always* a mythological component to the second and later stages. Precisely, remythification fosters stabilization through routinization and depersonalization. The myth of the mission is itself depersonalized to sustain the continuity of the original charisma, albeit in different form.

Yet it is an inescapable fact that there cannot be routinized charismatic groups without self-sustaining myths. Indeed, the mythicization of charisma and its redirection as a permanent fixture in society are the basis of all tradition and ritual, whether religious, political, or otherwise socio-cultural (such as literature and the arts). The process can take various forms, but common elements insure that charismatic content is remembered: symbols of the original, "pure," revolutionary charisma take root; certain texts or objects are deemed sacred; hierarchical blood lines (and the power accruing to them) are established; the apotheosis or canonization of founders and honored figures occurs, petrifying a charismatic blessing; rites are inculcated as proof of an ongoing link to grace; and special conduct, such as asceticism or virtuosity, attains an ethical value that can qualify a person for higher office or institutionalized prestige. Each of these steps requires the articulation of a mythical narrative, an articulation which underlies and determines the conduct of the institutionalized charismatic authority. The forms of articulation vary widely and might not even be recognized as contiguous with myth, especially as the myth system becomes increasingly depersonalized. For instance, while it is easy to see how the laws of royal succession support a myth of charismatic descent through divinely selected blood, it is considerably more difficult to discern the contiguity of myth in doctrines and dogmas. Weber (as I quoted him earlier) saw charismatic purity "petrified" in dogma or tradition. And Jung claimed that dogma was the death of symbols, the outward sign of the loss of the spirit. Indeed, both assessments are reasonable. One would be hard-pressed to argue that, for example, Christian canon law is not impenetrably dense, legalistic to a suffocating degree. But the laws articulated in the codices, however remote they may seem from divine irruptions in daily life, nevertheless confirm and legitimate the myth of an ongoing, depersonalized charismatic force—a

force at once institutionally supported and also permanently accessible to the *communitas fidelium*.

Still, the charisma of canon law may be difficult to see, particularly when the charisms themselves have such a concrete ecclesiological role between "Institution" and "Constitution" in the modern Catholic church (cf. Gerosa 2002: 38–39). One might object that a depersonalization of myth so exiguous loses its extraordinariness. Fair enough. But the literal depersonalizing of mortals has accompanied the creation of sacred myth systems in the West, fostering such phenomena as animism, euhemerism, transfiguration of Jesus, and the canonization of saints and martyrs. In his discussion of animism in *Totem and Taboo*, Freud traces the evolution of the idea of a soul, describing a kind of depersonalization or *Versachlichung*: "primitive peoples believe that human individuals are inhabited by similar spirits. These souls which live in human beings can leave that habitation and migrate into other human beings; they are the vehicle of mental activities and are to a certain extent independent of their bodies." No surprises so far, except of course that the belief in the transmigration of souls (*metempsychosis*) is not confined to "primitive peoples." The Renaissance Neo-Platonists expressed hearty belief in the same idea. But Freud's conclusion is particularly relevant to depersonalization. "Originally," he says, "souls were pictured as very similar to persons and only in the course of a long development have they lost their material characteristics and become to a high degree 'spiritualized'" (Freud 1950: 76). Although in Freud's account, the loss of "material characteristics" does not necessarily coincide with the capacity to share the spiritualized person, it stands to reason that such sharing would be much facilitated by a depersonalization of human characteristics. The group participation in the divine spirit would be broader as the material personhood faded.

We see exactly such a pattern in euhemerism, the ancient idea that gods evolved from human beings. While euhemerism has enjoyed several vogues, both in antiquity and among early Christian authors, very little is known about Euhemerus himself.<sup>8</sup> A Greek speaker, he wrote in the late fourth century BCE. Reference to his work, none of which survives, appears in an array of writers from Callimachus to Cicero to Lactantius, Anrobius, and Clement of Alexandria. Euhemerus wrote a geographical (utopian) novel called *Hiera Anagraphē* ("Sacred Record" or, more suggestively, "Sacred Scripture"), which was supposedly translated by the Latin poet Ennius (though nothing of the translation survives either). The novel is written from the quasi-autobiographical standpoint of a voyager who visits an imaginary island where he finds a temple to Zeus Tryphylian in which there

stands a golden column erected by Zeus himself and inscribed with his greatest deeds. Euhemerus concludes from the inscription that “the gods of mythology were at first men, who were divinized *post mortem* in recognition of the eminent service they had rendered to humanity” (Bonnefoy 1991: 666).<sup>9</sup> As Jean Pépin notes, Euhemerus’s theory of the gods coincided with the rise of the cults of sovereigns in the Hellenistic period, as well as (according to Athanasius) the divinization of pharaohs through the Ptolemaic era (Bonnefoy 1991: 666, 667–68). This link to real-world rulership clearly delineates the charismatic advantage of expunging the “person” in creating the god: a ruler commands the awe and obedience of his temporal subjects; a god is worshiped by an extended group without temporal limits. Euhemerism represents a palpable depersonalization of heroes and human heroic myth—that is, the taking away of the human qualities. Whether the hero is the one-time human Zeus or Alexander, the removal of personal attributes in the process of apotheosis makes the figure’s charismatic authority available to a larger group. Holiness and sanctification preserve an erstwhile “personal” charisma. Through belief in that holiness—or, if, following Paul Veyne, belief is the wrong word to describe the Greek participation in religion—then through some form of cult membership that honors it, followers can share in the original charismatic authority on a sustained basis (cf. Veyne 1988: esp. 41–57).

Euhemerism was appealing to patristic writers for obvious reasons: it “proved” that there had never been any true divinity in the pagan gods. Clement of Alexandria in his *Protreptikos* (*Exhortation to the Heathen*), which includes a scathing attack on the “absurdity and impiety of the heathen mysteries,” asks why Euhemerus of Agrigentum and others of like mind should be called Atheists: “I cannot help wondering how Euhemerus of Agrigentum, and Nicanor of Cyprus, and Diagoras, and Hippo of Melos, and besides these, that Cyrenian of the name of Theodorus, and numbers of others, who lived a sober life, and had a clearer insight than the rest of the world into the prevailing error respecting those gods, were called Atheists; for if they did not arrive at the knowledge of the truth, they certainly suspected the error of the common opinion; which suspicion is no insignificant seed, and becomes the germ of true wisdom” (1983: 177). The “clearer insight” that these forward-looking men had was that the gods were human. Clement’s virtually evangelical aim in this chapter of the *Protreptikos* is to repersonalize the charismatic authority vested in the Hellenic gods. In so doing he expects to demonstrate that the divine spark itself is lacking, that the charismatic appearance of, for example, Corybantic cults, the worship of Aphrodite (whom he calls a prostitute, as demonstrated by the offering



of money at her ritual ceremonies), and the honoring of Hercules as a god (“Hercules was known by Homer himself as only a mortal man” [1983: 179]), all stem from a fatal misunderstanding. His proof is the “synonymy” of the gods (cf. Bonnefoy 1991: 668)—which again, he offers in the most scathing tone—that is, that there isn’t one Jupiter, but three, not one Athena, but five, and so forth:

And now, how many Apollos are there? They are numberless, mortal men, all helpers of their fellow-men, who similarly with those already mentioned have been so called. And what were I to mention the many Asclepiuses, or all the Mercuries that are reckoned up, or the Vulcans of fable? Shall I not appear extravagant, deluging your ears with these numerous names?

At any rate, the native countries of your gods and their arts and lives, and besides especially their sepulchres, demonstrate them to have been mortal men. (Clement 1983: 179)

Ironically, Clement reduces the charismatic uniqueness of the gods by multiplying their functions, spreading it out among “mortal men, all helpers of their fellow-men.” The result is that a depersonalized charismatic myth is debunked, then replaced, at least in Clement’s Christian polemic, by a patently uncharismatic group of “helpers.”

Christian beatification and canonization follow a pattern of depersonalization not unlike euhemerism, with the similar result of producing worshiper cults and tutelary deities. With this form of sanctification, too, holiness accompanies depersonalization and indeed increases as personal charisma wanes. The innumerable *Vitae* of the saints attest to this paradoxical phenomenon of charismatic depersonalization. The narratives and legends of saints’ lives not only fit into the institutional structure of the prevalent charismatic myth, but also preserve the emblems of personal charisma in relatively stable forms—they are “relatively stable” because saints can be decanonized or otherwise shifted by hierophants creating charismatic change through the introduction of a dissipative situation. The linguistic contribution to this process of canonization is crucial. The enfabling of saints’ lives, the transformation of charismatic individuals into depersonalized figures with quasi-permanent mythical status, depends on a sophisticated sphere of reception. This is true of all myths, of course, not merely of sanctification. But beatification and canonization bring into sharp relief the mythicization process that accompanies the depersonalization of charisma. In Catholic practice, from the *nulla osta* issued by the Holy See

through the documentation of virtues required for beatification, a series of narratives transforms the candidate's life into a public property. In fact, canonization—which would follow beatification—results in a status entitling the “Blessed” to public worship. The expansion from individual charismatic figure (with a local following) to public saint only occurs as a function of depersonalization—the holier the figure becomes, the less of his or her personal charisma remains.

Because we assume, at least for the sake of argument, that Zeus and Apollo were never “real” beings, the depersonalization of their myths has a somewhat different cast from the depersonalization of, say, the myth of the man Jesus (who rises, transfigured, from the dead) or, even more solidly, the myth of modern-day figures like Hitler and Mao whose mythicization is so important to maintaining political ascendancy. Most studies of the routinization of charisma concentrate on contemporary figures precisely for the reason that these figures are human beings whose “personal” charismatic authority can be measured as it becomes increasingly diluted by organizational demands. But, as I've already noted, most of these studies neglect the role of myth in the transition from a personal charismatic claim to routinized conditions. Regardless of whether we term those new conditions “synergistic charisma” (Schweitzer) or “charismatic dispersion” (Shils), the transition to a systematic charismatic organization could not occur without a series of mythicizations and remythicizations.

Indeed, we can be more specific: any and all charismas when seeking to distribute personal authority with a minimum of dilution must mythicize their own movement. This fact leads to what should be an obvious conclusion but tends to be obscured by prejudice about myth and misleading definitions of it as primitive, alien, and occurring only in unenlightened societies. The conclusion is that the difference between the survival of, say, the cult of Zeus Tryphylion, and the survival of socio-political movements, let alone contemporary religions, is all but illusory. All versions of routinization are “depersonalized,” even when no actual person is involved. Critical to depersonalization, however, is the method by which the personal charismatic claim is rationalized as a myth. Whether the claim is made by Marian worshippers or by the Prophet Mohammed—or by a literary character like Milton's Satan—its rationalization must institute a symbolic architecture imbued with a stable charismatic aura, while at the same time producing a systematic myth which is not quite as stable, so that priests or priestesses, political leaders, and so forth can foster the mild chaos that allows them to manipulate their following and keep the myth alive. Depersonalization is vital to myth systems because only through its advent do the stable structure

of symbols and the dissipative structure of narrative meet with enough force to inspire and sustain conviction, while expanding the reach of the local charismatic figure.

## Symbol and Routine

Routinization and depersonalization strangle the most significant qualities of “living myth” because of their need to produce symbols. Malinowski’s most famous discovery about primitive cultures was that symbolism had little importance for the function of myth:

From my own study of living myths among savages, I should say that primitive man has to a very limited extent the purely artistic or scientific interest in nature; there is but little room for symbolism in his ideas and tales; and myth, in fact, is not an idle rhapsody, not an aimless out-pouring of vain imaginings, but a hard-working, extremely important cultural force. (1954: 97)

It is unfortunate that Malinowski equates symbolism, negatively, with a “purely artistic or scientific interest in nature,” but in fact he is engaged in refuting an ensconced contemporary theory that insisted on interpreting myth as naturalistic and explanatory. As Carl Kerényi noted long ago, Malinowski’s “denial of [myth’s] symbolical character consists in the absolutely correct recognition that, for its carriers, the myth expresses in a primary and direct fashion precisely what it relates—something that happened in primordial times” (Jung and Kerényi [1941] 1969: 5). There’s great truth in this notion of myth as an expression of something that happened in the past. And the term “carriers” should remind us of Wendy Doniger’s description of myth as a narrative in which a group finds a “shared meaning” (which is something quite different from an explanation) (Doniger 1996: 112). But we should emend Kerényi’s word “primordial,” or put it under erasure—that is, use it and cancel it out at the same time. There isn’t really any time limit on myth’s ability to express the past, even when that expression has the deliberate effect of making the recent past *seem* primordial to give it legitimation. Nevertheless, more often than not the basis of legitimation resides in an association with a past authority, usually, I would argue, with a *charismatic* origin. Thus, such concepts as *auctoritas* among first the ancient Romans and then the Renaissance humanists drew on a quasi-divine access to Mars, Minerva, or the Muses.

The application of *auctoritas* to poets, for example, legitimated Renaissance verse by linking it in style and refinement to Greek and Roman antecedents, at the same time establishing an utterly manufactured genealogy based on the charisma of a “primordial” authority. Similarly, Machiavelli’s famous use of the concept of *virtú* drew on an ideal of strength and public authority appropriated from—and therefore legitimated by—the ancient ideal of strength and Roman-ness, *romanitas*.

Kerényi concludes that myth is “the re-arising of a primordial reality in narrative form” (1969: 6). This is a felicitous way to describe mythopoesis, and when he links the “carriers of myth” to the notion of a “re-arising” of “primordial reality” he is also providing a felicitous description of the parallel between myth and routinized charismatic groups. The carriers or bearers of charismatic authority remythicize their mission in order to make it continuous. In doing so they invariably summon a “re-arising,” if not of “primordial reality” per se, then of an original moment in which everyday routines were transcended, as Weber put it, and extraordinary needs were satisfied “in an entirely heterogeneous manner” (1978: 2.1111). As the inescapable stranglehold of routinization begins to suffocate charismatic movements they must reinvent themselves on an ongoing basis by reviving and, indeed, petrifying memories of their prophetic or revolutionary irruptions into the social and political plane.

Consequently, we find the dynamic socio-political conditions of sedition, exile, religious rejection, radicalism, and fanatical nationalism symbolized by such imperturbably stable icons as the Christian cross, the Thanksgiving turkey, the Confederate flag, or Hitler’s swastika. Each of these iconic representations originates in a revolutionary movement (or a reactionary revolt), a charismatic and chaotic moment in the establishment of stable administration. The disorder of the early Christian church, the Pilgrim rejection of religious oppression, the secession of the South in the American Civil War, Hitler’s rise to political power—each one of these characteristically unstable origins eventually commemorated itself with a petrified symbol meant to represent its own permanence. The process leading from disorder to permanent symbolization can be gradual or relatively instantaneous (as with the swastika and the Nazi flag in 1920, which within a few years went from being a symbol of struggle for the marginal National-Socialist Party to representing the dictatorship’s stability and Hitler’s promise of a thousand-year Reich). But the result is always the same: an early charismatic upheaval lives on in an iconic symbol and simultaneously represents both the original charismatic authority and also the routinized authority of the everyday continuation of the movement.

In *Mein Kampf*, Adolph Hitler provides a model of this process of mythicization in his description of how he established the Nationalist-Socialist flag. He leads up to the discussion of the flag by first heralding the advent of the “monitor troops,” which he calls, in an epithet he apparently disseminated among them, “a combat group determined to go to any length.” First he unabashedly declaims, “And how this youth had longed for such a slogan!,” and he then proceeds to outline the pragmatic tenets of his charismatic revolution: “it became clear that the revolution had been possible thanks only to the disastrous bourgeois leadership of our people. . . . How many times the eyes of my lads glittered when I explained to them the necessity of their mission and assured them over and over again that all the wisdom on this earth remains without success if force does not enter into its service, guarding it and protecting it; that the gentle Goddess of Peace can walk only by the side of the God of War” (1999: 490–91). His explanation, replete with rationale for the use of force, is crucial for the sense of mission he claims to have imparted to the youths whose fists silenced dissent at party meetings in 1920. “And how these lads did fight!” says Hitler with pride: “Like a swarm of hornets they swooped down on the disturbers of our meetings, without regard for their superior power, no matter how great it might be, without regard for wounds and bloody victims, filled entirely with the one great thought of creating a free path for the holy mission of our movement” (1971: 491).

Hitler’s language, from the glittering eyes of the youths to the “holy” mission, could hardly be more conducive to analysis in terms of charismatic authority—indeed he even pits his new version of military service against the “calcified sense of old, ossified officials serving the *dead authority* of a *dead state*” (1971: 491; emphasis in original). Significantly, Hitler juxtaposes the section on monitor troops with his description of establishing the flag. The rhetorical manipulation reflects, or even recapitulates, Hitler’s constant reminder to the reader of his memoir that he guided and molded, fashioned and formed the flag in tandem with the movement itself (and with a little help from a dentist from Starnberg).<sup>10</sup> Every stage in the development of this consummate emblem of Nazism reveals how Hitler must cement the ideal of his revolutionary force in a symbol at once permanent and inspirational. He explains his motives this way:

The organization of our monitor troop clarified a very important question. Up till then the movement possessed no party insignia and no party flag. The absence of such symbols not only had momentary disadvantages, but was intolerable for the future. The disadvantages consisted

above all in the fact that the party comrades lacked any outward sign of their common bond, while it was unbearable for the future to dispense with a sign which possessed the character of a symbol of the movement and could as such be opposed to the International. (1971: 492)

*The character of a symbol of the movement:* with these words Hitler sums up the conflict inherent in attempting to stabilize in a symbol the notion of social upheaval and missionary revolt. *Mein Kampf* was written after the fact, from 1924–1926, and Hitler's reconstruction of 1920 is undoubtedly shaded by hindsight and silently improved. But, even so, we should note the attention Hitler claims he paid at the time to the future of his party by recognizing the value of insignia and a party flag, which by the 1930s would become part and parcel of what Walter Benjamin once referred to as “the recent esotericism which signally informs German fascism” (2002: 18). On one hand, in utilitarian terms, Hitler wanted a flag to oppose the Communists' International, literally to be waved in their faces. In symbolic terms, on the other hand, he wanted a set of *Urbilder*, “primal images” derived from and representing the uprising, the charismatic bond, and the supposedly justified violence of the early movement.<sup>11</sup> In this regard, as a primal image, the swastika was an interesting choice. At once an ancient symbol of life, sun, and life-sustaining power, the swastika had also been used in the nineteenth century by nationalist German groups because of its supposedly Aryan origins in Indian lore.

From a utilitarian political standpoint, Hitler's symbol—at least according to Hitler—was meant to combine revolution and mesmeric magic. Ironically, he cites as his inspiration a Marxist rally at the Royal Palace and the Lustgarten after World War I: “a sea of red flags, red scarves, and red flowers gave to this demonstration . . . an aspect that was gigantic from the purely external point of view. I myself could feel and understand how easily the man of the people succumbs to the suggestive magic of a spectacle so grandiose in effect” (1971: 492). Even as an outsider—an unbeliever, as alien to the Marxist belief system perhaps as the general was to ancient Greek myth—Hitler recognizes the “suggestive magic” of the sea of symbols. The charismatic charge he feels in the color red is the result of a mythicization of the Communist mission to overturn the present order, a conflation of some kind of pure force (repeatedly whipped to frenzy by cadre leaders) and its imaginative representation in flags, scarves, and flowers. The red of the revolution is also a symbol of ongoing stability under a new form of government, a new social structure, and new leadership whose authority draws on an original charismatic blessing.

Hitler wouldn't have thought in Weberian terms, of course.<sup>12</sup> Yet his sense of mission in regard to establishing the appropriate flag for his movement, along with his special sense of duty, reflect with surprising fidelity Weber's description of a charismatic figure. This is clear, for example, in his statement to the court that tried him for the failed coup of 1923 which landed him in jail (where he wrote *Mein Kampf*): "The man who is born to be a dictator is not compelled, he wills it. He is not driven forward, but drives himself. There is nothing immodest about this. . . . The man who feels called upon to govern a people has no right to say: If you want me or summon me, I will cooperate. No, it is his duty to step forward" (quoted in Schweitzer 1984: 46). The point was to provide an "outward sign" of the "common bond," a bond which was the basis of the *metanoia* necessary for the ongoing vitality of Hitler's undeniable charismatic authority.

Breathlessly, Hitler recounts the flag's unveiling: "In midsummer of 1920 the new flag came before the public for the first time. It was excellently suited to our new movement. It was young and new, like the movement itself. No one had seen it before; it had the effect of a burning torch" (1971: 496). He adds, with emphasis in the original text, "*And a symbol it really is!*" (1971: 496). The irony in this last statement is fascinating: the very youth and novelty of the National Socialist movement are petrified as they adopt a symbol of the movement's original charisma. It was only a matter of time, as in all such symbolizations of charismatic authority, before the stasis of the institution replaced the fluidity of the activist revolution, before the rigid Nazi military machine replaced the spontaneous freedom of the monitor troops. Indeed, perhaps the ultimate routinization of Hitler's symbol can be seen in the annual dedication of the "blood flag" commemorating the sixteen martyrs of the abortive 1923 *coup*. "Each year," Schweitzer notes, "Hitler touched the blood flag as he dedicated the flags of regional party or of affiliate organizations. The consecrated flag was to be kept as a relic at the respective headquarters. Hitler and his consorts marched every year through the streets of Munich, reenacting the abortive revolt of 1923" (1984: 81). Nothing could be less alive than a reenactment, its very reality a testimony to the distance between then and now. And, although many of the Nazis, the Nordacists in particular, rejected folkish mysticism and the myths associated with it, Hitler's participation in the annual reenactments should be seen as a form of somatic myth, remythicization raised to ritual.

The Nazis' attitude toward myth is a vexed topic, too complex to explore fully here. But the basic contradictions in their posture reveal characteristic methods of the remythicization of charismatic material. Most interesting, however—though perhaps predictable—is the clash of overt mythicizing

and a conviction that the myths themselves are myth-free. For instance, David Pan contends that the Nazis rejected myth altogether. Paraphrasing Lawrence Birken, he says, "Alfred Rosenberg rejected traditional myths and Adolf Hitler never accepted even the idea of myth but rather spoke the language of modern rationality and Enlightenment" (Pan 2000: 42). Pan adds that the "*anti*-mythic perspective of the Nazis becomes obvious in a comparison of fascist with alternative ideas of myth" (42), and by alternative ideas he is referring to exiled left-wing thinkers such as Carl Epstein, Ernst Bloch, and even Thomas Mann. But Pan's contention seems highly unlikely. At best we might say that there was a conflict between the "scientific" approach to race and the overt embrace of nationalist myth per se. Although it may be true that, in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler expressed contempt for "*deutschvölkisch* wandering scholars . . . [who] rave about old Germanic heroism, about dim prehistory, stone axes, spear and shield," he also embraced what Bernard Mees refers to as "national antiquity-enthusing cultural figures" and certainly approved the retrenchment of the old Germanic symbols (Mees 2004: 255). The Thule Society was a thriving enterprise under Nazism, as were other trappings of *Germanentum* and *Germanenschwärmerei* (cf. Mees 2004: 255–56; Field 1977: 525).<sup>13</sup> Fundamental ethnic myths became institutionalized: for example, the Social Darwinism of "natural aristocracy," as well as such legal innovations as the *Reichserbhofgesetz* of 1933, which made it law that "Peasant-owned farms above a certain size could only be inherited intact, so that peasants would be bound to their land—the 'blood' tied to the 'soil'" (Müller 2007: 201). Indeed, Richard Walter Darré's *Blut und Boden* ("Blood and Soil") propaganda, which led to a complete overhaul of the agrarian system, stemmed from—and overtly professed—a highly mythicized link between the peasants and the land. The glorification of the *Bundschuh* (medieval peasant revolts) with specific attention to the Peasants War of 1525 created a myth of afflicted minority status which was woven into the very fabric of the Nazi charismatic revolution.

None of these attitudes can be called a rejection of myth. The conflict between myth and rationality, however, between a reactivated revolutionary past and a supposedly myth-free present (as in Hitler's contempt for the antiquarians), undoubtedly fueled precisely the sort of dissipative situation that the leaders needed in order to keep their followers in a state of anticipation. As John Kenneth Galbraith long ago observed—indeed he made his observations in 1939, at the height of Nazi power—"In the dynamic inner structure of Nazi politics, Hitler's lieutenants achieve position and hold prestige by the strength of their personal following and by the



importance of the organizations, the finances, and the tasks of ‘revolution’ of which they are in control” (Galbraith 1939: 468). Galbraith is using the terms of charismatic authority—“dynamic inner structure,” “prestige,” “strength of their personal following”—and he goes on to note that Darré was among the most successful of these lieutenants. The Blood and Soil campaign, an unimpeachable case of remythicized charismatic authority, perhaps bridged the gap between an overt embrace of myths like the Wotan legend and a rationalized philosophy of justified domination. But it would be facile to dismiss this remythicization as merely one more example of corrupt ideology masked by a master discourse—or master myth—as rationality and modern political progress. The master myth (which included, but was greater than merely the myth of the master race) had patently overt qualities and even strains credulity as a “high-carat piece of logos.” On one hand, the Nazis might have tried to present their myths as products of enlightened rationale, but they also, on the other hand, publicly embraced mythicizations to sustain their dominance. Rosenberg himself provides an example from his influential *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* (*The Myth of the Twentieth Century*), the book which furnished the Nazis with a theoretical grounding for their racist excesses. “Race is the image of the soul,” he insisted: “The entire racial property is an intrinsic value without relationship to material worshippers who apprehend only discrete events in time and space without experiencing these events as the greatest and most profound of all secrets. Racial history is therefore simultaneously natural history and soul mystique” (first published 1930; 1993, 4–5). To a modern ear, this certainly sounds like a bit of self-serving mythopoeisis. The “material worshippers,” incidentally, are Marxists and Jews, but almost more interesting is Rosenberg’s apparent blindness to the mythical properties of the notion of “soul mystique.”

He goes on with an even more elaborate mythicization. After discussing the possibility that the lost continent of Atlantis contained a “creative” northern race, Rosenberg weaves a supposedly rational historical justification for a “prehistoric Nordic cultural center.”

We have long since been forced to abandon the theory of an *identical* origin of myths, art, and religious forms among all peoples. . . . The solar myth, with all its ramifications, did not arise spontaneously as “a stage of general development,” but was born where the appearance of the sun must have been a cosmic event of profoundest significance, that is, in the far North. Only there would the year be sharply divided into two halves, and only there would the sun represent a certainty in man’s innermost

being of the life-renewing, primal creative substance of the world. And so today the long derived hypotheses which, without postulating an actual submerged Atlantic continent, we may call "Atlantis," swarms of warriors once fanned out in obedience to the ever-renewed and incarnate Nordic longing for the distance to conquer and space to shape. (1993, 5-6; emphasis in original)

One of the most interesting aspects of the passage is the place of myth in Rosenberg's explanation. Myth is at once a primitive manifestation of ancient cultures and a legitimate source for current German militarism ("distance to conquer and space to shape"). This kind of sleight-of-hand is not uncommon in the application of myth as a justification for conduct (although we don't always find the notion of myth so expressly articulated—once again, it is impossible to see such notions as a rejection of myth). The creation of a new myth, overturning or revising old myths, is an ongoing process (in this case, we would call the process reactionary, though Rosenberg and Hitler of course saw it as revolutionary). The notorious symbols of Hitler's Reich are now impossible to forget. Perhaps less often remembered, however, is the fact that those symbols—the swastika, the runes, and so forth—had a Janus-like import, representing at once a permanent authority and also the revolutionary instability of a myth being created.

Not to regard as a form of mythicization Rosenberg's elaborate linking of the solar myth to the Nordic warrior impulse requires more than obtuseness: it requires something akin to belief. And belief it was. Yet, to the extent that the Nazis embraced myth *per se*, as they seem to have done, they are somewhat unique. Most cultural movements and most myth systems contain what might be termed an "anti-mythic clause" or the overt conceit that they are myth-free. To call a belief system a myth, where a myth is a fiction or a throwback to primitivism, is, in virtually all dogmatics and in many taboo cultures, a profound heresy. Sometimes the acknowledgment of myth in modern discourse is dismissed simply as superstition, other times as cultural regression or intellectual imperialism (as in the criticism of Cubist and Expressionist artists). But this tendency is part and parcel of Enlightenment thought, as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno explained, with corrosive bitterness, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (they make even the gloomy Max Weber seem hopeful by comparison). Esther Oluffa Pedersen summarizes: Horkheimer and Adorno "argue that Enlightenment and myth are dialectically intertwined so that the barbarism of the modern world lies inherent as negative possibilities in the development of not only the Greek

myth (Odysseus as climax of the Greek mythos) but also the logos of the Enlightenment (with Francis Bacon's view of nature as paradigmatic)" (2008: 207). To understand this brief overview, it is necessary to see how Horkheimer and Adorno characterize myth itself. Here is a key passage from the beginning of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*:

At the turning points of Western civilization, from the transition to Olympian religion up to the Renaissance, Reformation, and bourgeois atheism, whenever new nations and classes more firmly repressed myth, the fear of uncomprehended, threatening nature, the consequence of its very materialization and objectification, was reduced to animistic superstition, and the subjugation of nature was made the absolute purpose of life within and without. (1993 [1944]: 31–32)

Familiar as this description of Enlightenment thought might be, it is actually a naïve view of myth, reducing it to coincidence with nature (which is also reduced to a kind of disorderly, irrational sensuality). Horkheimer and Adorno miss a crucial concept: new nations, classes, and other much smaller groups resist and repress myth not merely (or not at all) because they fear some vague "uncomprehended, threatening nature." Rather—and this fact is vital to understanding the relationship of myth to the routinization of charisma—they repress *their own mythicization*, regardless of whether that mythicization tends toward nature or not.

Nations, classes, religions, and other self-consciously exclusive groups are reluctant to see their movements as dependent on mythic structures or to describe themselves as believers in mythical narrative. But this reluctance springs not from a fear of being linked with nature. Indeed, in my view Horkheimer and Adorno have got it inside out. Virtually all groups narratively bound by myth embrace their beliefs precisely because those beliefs are manifestations of nature. They associate enlightenment and nature as their due even when—or especially when—reason and rationality are the hallmarks of their mythic narrative. Being accused of superstition isn't what threatens groups sustained by myth—though that epithet, accurately hurled, can be damaging—but the recognition that they might be bound by a *constructed* narrative rather than a natural truth. From Medieval Scholasticism to Nazi eugenics, from ascetic Buddhism to the Winnebago's indignation about the feather on the hockey rink, it is the radical link between nature and enlightened everyday thought and progress that fosters group cohesion and sustains the myth system. Routinization plays a significant role in this process because, as we have seen, the heady early

days of all movements soon give way to a need for stability. And, moreover, the symbols necessary to a routinized charismatic claim are critical to sustaining the balance between an essential (if quondam) revolutionary truth and the ongoing stability through which domination is exercised—the very domination Horkheimer and Adorno (and Bourdieu, it will be remembered from the last chapter) see as the inevitable by-product of the enlightened collective in society. As *Dialectic of Enlightenment* puts it, with a typically cryptic flourish: “The essence of enlightenment is the alternative whose ineradicability is that of domination. Men have always had to choose between their subjection to nature or the subjection of nature to the Self. With the extension of the bourgeois commodity economy, the dark horizon of myth is illumined by the sun of calculating reason, beneath whose cold rays the seed of the barbarism grows to fruition. Under the pressure of domination human labor has always led away from myth—but under domination always returns to the jurisdiction of myth” (1993 [1944]: 32). This passage clearly separates mythos and logos, reason and “the dark horizon of myth,” a separation which, as we saw earlier, doesn’t bear up under scrutiny (especially in connection with ancient Greek usage, as Bruce Lincoln demonstrates). But we shouldn’t throw the baby out with the bath water. I think the “ineradicable” dialectic can be seen as a parallel for the functional relationship of charismatic routinization to myth, a plausible model for the interdependence of mythos and logos in building and sustaining a narrative sufficiently strong to bind a group charismatically for a long time. Both domination and myth are key elements of routinization, and, seen in the context of charismatic “share,” do in fact combine in what Edward Shils refers to as the dispersion of charismatic authority.

Nevertheless, despite their sense of the “jurisdiction” of myth, Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s concept of domination is weakened by the conventionality of the basic concept of myth revealed in their discussion. It all comes down to the discreteness of their categories, or the extremes of their polarization. The polarization they see between the darkness of myth and the illumination of reason only confirms Enlightenment prejudices associating myth with barbarism. Despite their efforts to explain the relationship of myth to reason as a dialectic, their stark polarization of the individual and the collective in terms of domination lacks the kind of nuance we find everywhere between leaders and followers. In other words, *myth and domination are not inevitable alternatives*. On the contrary, myth and domination are simultaneous actions in collectives; they coexist, and indeed each is necessary to the other. They are interdependent, just as groups and leaders are interdependent in charismatic groups. Horkheimer

and Adorno contend that "Through the countless agencies of mass production and its culture the conventionalized modes of behavior are impressed on the individual as the only natural, respectable, and rational ones. He defines himself only as a thing, as a static element, as success or failure. His yard-stick is self-preservation, successful or unsuccessful approximation to the objectivity of his function and the models established for it. Everything else, idea and crime, suffers the force of the collective, which monitors it from the classroom to the trade union. But even the threatening collective belongs only to the deceptive surface, beneath which are concealed the powers which manipulate it as the instrument of power" (1993: 28). It is unfortunate that *Dialectic of Enlightenment* provides no examples of its claims. It would be much more satisfying a philosophical essay if Horkheimer and Adorno had parsed an actual "threatening" collective and identified the concealed powers manipulating it—unless of course they're referring to all of society, all the time, in which case the notion of collective becomes fuzzy, since in my view no single collective binds society.

It can be conceded, however, that, as Horkheimer and Adorno assert, certain conventionalized modes of behavior are impressed on individuals by the "agencies" of mass production, and that moreover these modes of behavior are made to seem the *only* "natural, respectable, and rational ones." This is a familiar point, well-argued and akin to the Marxist idea of how ideology functions. But it is here, in the relationship between collective modes of behavior and the manipulations of authorities that we find a crucial relationship between myth and charisma, and especially between the routinization of charisma and the mythic narrative that threatens to suppress individualism. Yet we should be careful not to see routinization and domination as coterminous. Routinization may constitute one method by which authorities suppress individual agency and thereby install the collective as an undifferentiated "force," but even routinization should not be seen as monolithic. Horkheimer and Adorno, like many neo-Marxist thinkers, tend to see a monolithic structure where in fact we would be better served to recognize the efficacy of dissipative structures on the manipulation of what they call the "deceptive surface." Indeed, it is in this deceptive surface that the narrative of myth is woven.

Horkheimer and Adorno are certainly aware of the many versions of this kind of narrative myth. Writing during the war, during the reign of what they term the "brazen Fascists," they uncover in all corners of society the reversal of progress which accompanies enlightenment.<sup>14</sup> For instance, in their long, excoriating attack on the culture industry, they note that "The National Socialists knew that the wireless gave shape to their cause just

as the printing press did to the Reformation. The metaphysical charisma of the Führer invented by the sociology of religion has finally turned out to be no more than the omnipresence of his speeches on the radio, which are a demoniacal parody of the omnipresence of the divine spirit" (159). "Metaphysical charisma" is their own term, not a Weberian category, and it isn't a concept they develop. As far as I can tell, they simply mean "pure" charisma, an original divine gift of grace, which was manifest by the Führer in his radio speeches. (Similar observations were made of Franklin Roosevelt's radio presence.)

Later in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, we encounter this more comprehensive explanation: "The purpose of the Fascist formula, the ritual discipline, the uniforms, and the whole apparatus, which is at first sight irrational, is to allow mimetic behavior. The carefully thought out symbols (which are proper in every counterrevolutionary movement), the skulls and disguises, the barbaric drum beats, the monotonous repetition of words and gestures, are simply the organized imitation of magic practices, the mimesis of mimesis. The leader with his contorted face and the charisma of approaching hysteria take command" (185). They seem to be conflating the rationality of mimetic behavior (the mimesis of mimesis) with the "charisma of approaching hysteria," the latter of which suggests the kind of wild irrationality of dervishes before battle. The conflation is what is important, of course, in understanding routinization, and Horkheimer and Adorno identify the "carefully thought out symbols" as critical to organizing the movement (which they appropriately term counterrevolutionary despite Hitler's repeated insistence on National Socialism's revolutionary character). The notion that the Nazi symbols (once again, Benjamin's "esotericism") are deliberately organized in order to imitate magic practices and that they represent imitation already at one remove is consistent with my point throughout this section: symbols are the Odyssean scar of routinization. They reveal (and simultaneously conceal) the conflation of a charismatic movement's irrational origins and its formulaic administration. Although charismatic administration is not itself static even when it manifests apparently rigid structural elements, we can nevertheless generalize about the leading authorities' deployment of symbols, a deployment which invariably tends toward suppressing dissent, maintaining the sense of mission, and above all extending ascendancy privilege.

Key is the deployment of symbols. In a passage not unrelated to my discussion of symbols and group self-representation, David Harvey notes that "Symbolic orderings of space and time provide a framework for experience through which we learn who or what we are in society" (1990: 214).

He then quotes Bourdieu, perhaps unadvisedly: "The reason why submission to the collective rhythms is so rigorously demanded is that the temporal forms or the spatial structures structure not only the groups representation of the world but the group itself, which orders itself in accordance with this representation" (Bourdieu 1977: 163; Harvey 1990: 214). I hear a slightly jarring contradiction between Harvey's generous, *Verstehen*-style statement that symbolic orderings provide an "experience through which we learn who and what we are in society" and the mystified constraint of Bourdieu's conceit regarding "submission to the collective rhythms." Nevertheless, both authors identify a social phenomenon that has considerable significance to the development of charismatic myth systems. They recognize that groups (and perhaps individuals, too, at least as part of groups) experience symbols and "spatial structures" as building-blocks of self-definition. Just so, the "symbolic orderings" of a routinized charismatic myth represent a group's self-representation—in tandem with the representation of itself to itself, which isn't the same thing—rather than merely constituting a set of display icons or flags by which the group announces its presence in the world.

The Nazis have been accused of being the most transparent perpetrators of the instrumentalization of myth, while at the same time representing the perfect example of the inseparability of myth and ideology. For most people, to recognize the Nazi symbols is to reject the ideological structure and, theoretically, to debunk the myth. One would suppose that charisma couldn't survive such transparency. Yet the afterlife of charismatic symbols can be long, as can be seen among such fringe elements as neo-Nazi skinheads, and even motorcycle gangs wearing Nazi helmets and insignia where Hitler's devices have been revived—but only as devices. It would be a mistake to suppose that the original force of the charismatic myth survives as if preserved in amber. Without the architecture of skilled routinization the symbols might represent new movements, but they can never alone retrench a charismatic myth system. As Robert Paxton points out, for instance, "The adolescent skinheads who flaunt the swastika today in parts of Europe seem so alien and marginal that they constitute a law-and-order problem (serious though that may be) rather than a recurrence of authentic mass-based fascism, astutely decked out in the patriotic emblems of their own countries" (Paxton 1998: 3). The swastika and other emblematic devices have lost their organizational force as fascist symbols. Their meaning has shifted charismatically to delineate yet one more exclusive group—but, again, without the architecture of routinization that accompanied the symbols in the first place.

It is easy enough to doubt the efficacy of such efforts as neo-Nazis flourishing swastikas. But, in all likelihood, if we were to investigate the motorcycle gangs closely, and perhaps even the skinhead bands, we would find that they think of their Nazi symbols as considerably more than mere display. We would probably find that on some level the newly coded symbols have taken a role in a system of charismatic development—a system replete with a leadership cadre managing the symbolic architecture as part of a dissipative structure. And, moreover, we might also find that gang members rejected the notion that their symbols were in fact mythicizations. The myth of being myth-free, in other words, knows no caste. Everywhere we look we find the same polarization between charismatic mystery/myth and the notion that some areas of society are myth-free. In addition, the hunger to retrench lost (or deliberately abandoned) mysteries seems alive and well throughout the culture—well apart, that is, from the offensive minority on the fringe. For instance, among conservative Catholics, there has recently been a movement to bring back the Latin mass, despite the fact that few members of present congregations would understand a word of it. Hidden at the heart of such efforts to revive or retrench mysteries is the need to preserve a pure charismatic transcendence, to transform even (or especially) otherwise incomprehensible symbols into sources of inspiration which would bond followers.

Horkheimer and Adorno wanted to believe that this polarization resulted in the dialectic that forced enlightenment (or Enlightenment) to implicate itself in some form of domination. But the difficulty for charismatic myth systems, even when they see and represent themselves as myth-free (like the Christian church), is not so much the threat of domination but the threat that cohesion—of which domination is certainly part and parcel—will fail. The routinization of charismatic myth systems depends on the continued belief in the symbols of its transcendent origins. The extenuation of routinized symbols over time, however, can cause an exiguity of charismatic forces, a weakening of belief, and, ironically (if Enlightenment is the goal), a hunger for the kind of domination that would restore cohesion.<sup>15</sup> As Weber warns, “every charisma is on the road from a turbulently emotional life that knows no economic rationality to a slow death by suffocation under the weight of material interests: every hour of its existence brings it nearer to this end” (1978: 2.1120). I would suggest, *as in charisma, so in myth*. If we define the living quality of myth as a voluntarily shared group experience, and if we analyze that experience as a manifestation of charismatic dynamic, then Weber’s ominous statement holds true as much for incipient myth systems as for “pure” charisma, and even more so for routinized myth



systems suffocated by traditional constraints (like Catholicism) or immobilized by time and distance (like Nazism). Indeed, as Weber said, “Every transcending of routines of everyday life releases charismatic forces, and every extraordinary ability creates charismatic beliefs, which are subsequently weakened again by everyday life” (1978: 2.1134).<sup>16</sup>

## What are Charismatic Beliefs?

In a famous self-deprecatory remark Weber claimed that he was “religiously unmusical,” that he had no ear for the experience of religion despite his obvious understanding of its sociological impact. Perhaps Weber was comparing himself to his friend Georg Simmel, who had a virtuoso’s ear for religious experience. In any case, many of Weber’s later readers disagreed with him, asserting that his humility was misplaced and that he couldn’t have written such works as *The Sociology of Religion* or *The Protestant Ethic* without a deep appreciation of religious feeling—in other words, a good ear for religion.

Yet even if Weber was religiously more musical than he claimed, he had, as far as I can tell, a poor ear for myth. He proves as much by his uncharacteristic neglect in investigating such a provocative term as “charismatic beliefs” (*charismatischen Glauben*), or linking such beliefs to the mythical imagination so necessary for the promulgation of group religion.<sup>17</sup> It might be that he considered the study of myth a separate discipline with little crossover value for his own studies of religion. But more likely he simply shared the nineteenth-century prejudice that myth belonged to primitive societies. He tended to link mythological and cosmogonic knowledge and to relegate both to magicians as the guardians of such knowledge in ancient societies. Contemporary studies of myth hardly make an appearance in his work. In *Economy and Society*, where he develops his theory of charisma, he doesn’t mention either Bachofen or Frazer and he criticizes Max Müller for mistaking rationalized thinking for evolutionary development in religion. I quote a lengthy passage, one in which Weber in fact begs the question of dissipative structures and remythicization:

the differentiation among jurisdictions of the various gods is intersected by the practice of religious attachment to a particularly reliable god, or courtesy to a particular god who happens to be invoked. He is then treated as functionally universal; thus all kinds of functions are attributed

to him, even functions which have been assigned previously to other deities. This is the “henotheism” which Max Müller erroneously assumed to constitute a special stage of evolution. In the attainment of primacy by a particular god, purely rational factors have often played an important role. Wherever a considerable measure of constancy in regard to certain prescriptions became clearly evident—most often in the case of stereotyped and fixed religious rites—and where this was recognized by rationalized religious thought, then those deities that evinced the greatest regularity in their behavior, namely the gods of heaven and the stars, had a chance to achieve primacy. (1978: 1.416–17)

Weber is arguing not so much against myth as for agency and rationalized choice in the development of pantheons. His recognition that “purely rational factors” play an important role in the transformation of a myth anticipates Blumenberg’s thesis regarding myth as a “high-carat piece of logos”—although I think Weber might have regarded myth and logos as more discrete categories than Blumenberg. Nevertheless, his idea that “highly rationalized religious thought” is instrumental in producing the reassignment of functions, universality, and divine primacy among deities, underscores the importance of conscious manipulation of charismatic material for the maintenance of a myth system.

It is odd, therefore, considering Weber’s acute sense of the manager class in economic theory, that he seems to ignore the management of the myth system that permits the reassignment of functions among deities. In the passage above, he is describing a consummately dissipative structure, a shifting and striving among deities whose jurisdictions he claims “are as fluid as those of the officials of patrimonial regimes” (1978: 1.416). But deities don’t shift and strive in a vacuum—indeed, deities themselves, since they are human creations, have no agency of their own. They exist in dynamic circumstances, replete with *both* the release of charismatic forces and the mild entropy introduced and managed by priests leading constituencies of worshippers. The maintenance of the myth system depends on this dynamic remaining fluid at all times.

Although it may be heresy to suggest this, Weber’s analysis of charismatic authority is poorer for its lack of understanding regarding the importance of myth to routinizing charisma and to sustaining a charismatic movement through its various stages of depersonalization. Weber’s notion of charismatic beliefs is a case in point. As I said earlier, he did not investigate the category of belief (*Glaube*) in terms of mythical narrative, not even when,

as his description of the bureaucratic institution of theological religion shows, he all but reveals the need for a sustaining set of dissipative structures and an architectonic *fabula* to hold them together:

In a church organized as an institution, it works out in practice that the requirement of *fides explicita* [explicit, personal recognition of dogmas] is limited to priests, preachers, and theologians, all of whom have been trained in dogmatics. Such an aristocracy of those trained and knowledgeable in dogmatics arises within every religion that has been systematized into a theology. These persons presently claim, in different degrees and with varying measures of success, that they are the real carriers of the religion. (1978: 1.566)

What should interest us about this statement is the means by which priests, preachers, and theologians make their claim to be the carriers of religion. Like bearers of charisma when their charismatic claim becomes routinized, those who “carry” religion must depend on symbols of the original connection to godhead and fit those symbols into a working narrative to sustain their leadership ascendancy on a day to day basis. Not even the deadening strictures of bureaucracy can entirely eliminate this necessity to integrate a mythical narrative into a belief system. Catholic and Protestant episcopacies, for instance, rely on an overarching myth of office charisma to continue to exert authority, while Muslim theocratic regimes subject civil bureaucratic agency to the edicts of ayatollahs, who, as consummate “carriers of the religion,” are endowed with special knowledge to pass judgment. In both cases, the select group whom Weber calls an “aristocracy of those trained in dogmatics” must rely on a finely woven web of myths to support its charismatic claim.

But where, or when, in this relationship between a web of myths and a new charismatic claim, do charismatic beliefs emerge? Similarly, how is the emergence of charismatic beliefs threatened by everyday life, by, for example, the exigencies of governance or economic need? The seeds of routinization lie in the answer to this second question, as does the justification for reducing a movement’s revolutionary aims to a set of static symbols.

In his *Reflections on Violence* (first published as a book in 1908), Georges Sorel deploys the term “myth” in a way that seems to engage both the notion of charismatic belief and, simultaneously, the threat of routinization, the latter brought on by intellectual theorizing. “A myth,” he says, “cannot be refuted since it is, at bottom, identical to the convictions of a group,

being the expression of these convictions in the language of movement” (Sorel 1999: 29). Sorel is speaking particularly of revolutionary violence in the context of a general strike by the proletariat (which was a genuine threat and familiar tool of anarcho-syndicalism in the first third of the twentieth century).<sup>18</sup> His adversarial approach targets socialists who use the notion of utopia to analyze away the power of the revolutionary myths.

The revolutionary myths which exist at the present time are almost pure; they allow us to understand the activity, the sentiments and the ideas of the masses as they prepare themselves to enter on a decisive struggle; they are not descriptions of things but expressions of a will to act. *A utopia is, on the contrary, an intellectual product*; it is the work of theorists who, after observing and discussing the facts, seek to establish a model to which they can compare existing societies in order to estimate the amount of good and evil they contain . . . Whilst contemporary myths lead men to prepare themselves for a combat which will destroy the existing state of things, the effect of utopias has always been to direct men’s minds towards reforms which can be brought about by patching up the system. (Sorel 1999: 28–29; emphasis mine)

The struggle for Sorel is between the need for myths among a combat-ready proletariat and the deflation of the mythical imagination by socialists afraid to overthrow the old order. Moreover, whereas myths “cannot be refuted” because they are identical to the convictions of a group, “it is possible to refute [a utopia] by showing that the economic system on which it has been made to rest is incompatible with the necessary conditions of modern production” (29).

Sorel’s distinction between myth and utopia can be instructive in the realm of charismatic belief. He repudiates what he terms “liberal political economy” as “a utopia free from any element of myth” (1999: 29), thus at once rejecting utopian intellectualization and suggesting the possibility of combining utopia and myth—which is precisely what he does. “The history of French democracy,” he continues, “offers us a very remarkable combination of utopias and myths” (1999: 29). He is referring to “the theories that inspired the authors of our first constitutions” and the value they possess “of an ideal on which legislators, magistrates and administrators should constantly fix their eyes” (29). That ideal represents a utopian vision to Sorel, but one which could only survive in conjunction with myth: “With these utopias were mixed myths which represented the struggle against the *ancien régime*; as long as the myths survived, all the refutations of liberal

utopias could produce no effect; the myth safe-guarded the utopia with which it was mixed" (29).

At least in part, myths seem to have a prophylactic function for Sorel—protection, perhaps, against the routinization he sees stemming from the “intellectual products” of liberal culture. Beyond that prophylactic function, however, myths have a capacity to preserve all that is vital about the revolutionary ideal. In this latter respect especially, the Sorelian notion of myth offers a plausible example of how charismatic beliefs emerge and might be sustained. The utopia that Sorel sees myths as preserving has a charismatic quality, and acceptance of the myths by the proletariat constitutes embracing charismatic belief:

As long as there are no myths accepted by the masses, one may go on talking of revolts indefinitely without ever provoking any revolutionary movement; this is what gives such importance to the general strike and renders it so odious to socialists who are afraid of revolution. . . . One of the chief means employed by them [to cast ridicule on the idea of a general strike] is to represent it as a utopia; this is easy enough, as there are very few myths which are perfectly free of any utopian element. (Sorel 1999: 28)

This is at once a disarmingly frank and brilliantly destabilizing approach. He admits to a sort of venial sin of utopianism in that all myths contain a utopian element. But he challenges the received wisdom that myths are *ipso facto* harmful because they contain that utopian element. Indeed, he upends such a contention, vigorously held by his socialist antagonists, and insists that myths and myths alone can foster revolution, and, as he explains one page later, this is because myths safe-guard the right kind of utopia.

This is a clear example of literary charisma, a deliberate introduction of mild chaos to the discursive status quo. Sorel disturbs the prevailing version of socialism, positioning his text, and his version of violence, in direct confrontation with both the intellectual utopias of his time and Marxist dogma, as this long quotation demonstrates:

Socialism has always inspired fear because of the enormous element of the unknown which it contains; people feel that a transformation of this kind would permit of no turning back. The utopians used all their literary art in the endeavour to lull anxiety by pictures of the future so enchanting than all fear might be banished; but the more they accumulated fine promises, the more did thoughtful people suspect traps—and in this they

were not completely mistaken, for the utopians would have led the world to disasters, tyranny and stupidity if they had been listened to.

Marx was firmly convinced that the social revolution of which he spoke would constitute an *irrevocable transformation* and that it would mark an absolute separation between two historical eras; he often returned to this idea whilst Engels endeavoured to show, by means of images that were sometimes a little grandiose, how economic emancipation would be the point of departure of an era of having no relationship with the past. Rejecting all utopias, these two founders renounced all the resources by which their predecessors had rendered the prospect of a great revolution less intimidating; but however strong the impressions which they employed might have been, the effects which they produced are still very inferior to those produced by the evocation of the general strike. This conception makes it impossible not to see that a kind of irresistible wave will pass over the old civilization. (Sorel 1999: 129–30; emphasis in original)<sup>19</sup>

Sorel in effect destabilizes routinized revolutionary principles that reject utopian thinking by retrenching the myth of utopia itself. In the terms I've been using throughout this book, Sorel deliberately introduces a dissipative structure into the charismatic revolutionary movement, with the aim, no doubt, of using his ideal of myth to reorganize the movement and redirect the proletariat's focus toward a new charismatic bond. If, as Sorel maintains, a myth is identical to a group conviction or set of convictions, then it is fair to conclude that there is a coincidence between charisma, as the binding force of groups, and myth.

It should be added, however, that *all* symbols associated with charismatic systems are *a fortiori* utopian. There would be little point in a symbol that didn't promise or commemorate a utopian ideal, often, indeed, a charismatic utopia such as a revolution or a sacred event. If, however, as Sorel suggests, utopias are always an intellectual product, "the work of theorists," then they are also emblematic of the stages of routinization with which leaders, governments, religions and traditions preserve charismatic beliefs against the constant weakening of everyday life. Symbols represent just one manifestation of this drive to preserve charismatic belief. Others, such as ritual and the sacralization of texts, supply further support for the notion that myth and conviction must converge for a movement to survive beyond its original inspired moment. Sorel doesn't explore the survival of a movement in much detail, and of course he wrote years before Weber had

developed his theory of charismatic groups. Yet, in reading Sorel today, it is nearly impossible not to experience a kind of theoretical back-formation and graft charismatic group theory to his conclusions about the role of myth, as a cultural entity synonymous with conviction, in whipping a movement into action.

Sorel's vision of a general strike is modeled only on the highest principles of heroism—he cites Greek military victories—and characterized by the proletariat's selflessness in victory.

Socialists must be convinced that the work to which they are devoting themselves is *serious, formidable, and sublime work*; it is only on this condition that they will be able to bear the innumerable sacrifices imposed on them by a propaganda which can produce neither honours, profits nor even immediate intellectual satisfaction. Even if the only result of the idea of the general strike was to make the socialist conception more heroic, it should on that account alone be looked upon as having an incalculable value. (1999: 130; emphasis in original)

This is a description that begs the question of charismatic belief. Sorel is calling for an ascetic socialism, replete with “innumerable sacrifices” and infused with glorious notions of “sublime work” without reward. Asceticism is a charismatic virtue, and the “incalculable value” Sorel places on the heroism of the general strike undergirds his thesis regarding myth as a form of conviction. Yet he qualifies his enthusiasm by noting that the heroicizing alone of the socialist conception could be more valuable than the strike itself. Philippe Riviale has suggested that, for Sorel, “myth . . . is first and foremost *heroic*, in such a way that that the revolution is first and foremost an affair of representation, before being effective; it can only be effective if the heroic tension is intact” (Riviale 2003: 67; emphasis in original).<sup>20</sup> At base, then, when myth and representation coincide, conviction emerges—and from conviction, charismatic belief, inextricable from the function of revolutionary myth.

If, as Sorel maintains, a myth is identical to a group conviction or set of convictions, then it is fair to conclude that there is a coincidence between charisma, as the binding force of groups, and myth. Such an identity of charisma and myth gives each one added strength, but also makes them vulnerable in their interdependence. Here again we should acknowledge that the relationship of myth to charisma is sometimes dialectical and sometimes symbiotic.

Still, the trappings of violent revolution are not the *sine qua non* of charismatic belief. Indeed, to Weber's way of thinking, "every extraordinary ability creates charismatic beliefs" in the context of released charismatic forces. Douglas Madsen and Peter Snow in *The Charismatic Bond* define charisma as an "influence relationship marked by asymmetry, directness, and, for the follower, great passion" (1991: 5). Although they consider the interdependence of leaders and followers to be of less significance than I do—"the following does provide the all-important empowering responses . . . but its other influence on the leader is muted" (5)—they identify passion as indispensable to the relationship. Their definition of "great passion," the third of their necessary elements, reads like a tentative description of charismatic belief: "Great passion is a little more difficult to define. It is much more than the feeling an audience associates with 'popular' public figures—although the term charisma is often (and almost always, wrongly) applied to such figures. Indeed, it is much more than any of us have ever experienced in dealing with leaders of one kind or another. Great passion means the intense devotion to and extraordinary reverence for the leader. Of the three defining elements, it obviously is this which is most distinctive of charisma" (Madsen and Snow 1991: 5). In this definition, with which I concur, Barack Obama does not qualify as a charismatic figure to the nation, despite the insistence of virtually all branches of the media to label him so. Obama does not inspire great passion in every voter—indeed, it would be patently incorrect to call voters a following. But the sense of hope Obama provided during the 2008 election, even the apparent passion he inspired in his supporters in their rejection of John McCain and Sarah Palin (his opponents) did not grow out of forces released by a figure transcending everyday routines and, except perhaps in fanatical cases, did not result in the kind of "intense devotion and extraordinary reverence" that Madsen and Snow are talking about. After all, Obama, for all his rhetorical charm, never bucked the system to the slightest degree: he remained a U.S. Senator, he insisted on his Christianity (like every other American candidate), and he threatened no radical economic or social upheavals. His race was the only radical feature of his campaign (and even that seemed somewhat overblown in a country that had already had an African-American Secretary of State, a Supreme Court Justice, and various cabinet ministers). Despite his campaign promise to renew Washington from the outside (a very common promise both by politicians and charismatic leaders), he in fact overturned nothing genuinely structural, and had no plans to do so. Consequently, his abilities, however impressive on the campaign trail, created no charismatic beliefs and, above all, no myth that, in Sorelian



terms, was coterminous with the convictions of his followers. His campaign movement—even if it was driven by a fiction of charismatic allure—could never inspire the kind of reverence we associate with true charismatic movements. (This, incidentally, is probably a good thing in politics. We’ve seen the destructive effects of the opposite. But, still, we should recognize the difference between popularity and charismatic interdependence.)

Of course, this is not to say that political leaders are never charismatic, or never have large followings driven by great passion. On the contrary, Mao clearly had such a following (and he cultivated his image to maintain his movement *as* a charismatic movement). In a far different way, the gay activist Harvey Milk, who became the first openly homosexual man to hold major office in the United States, clearly disrupted the status quo and transcended the boundaries of everyday routine. A recent film about Milk, starring the magnetic Sean Penn, capitalized on Milk’s charismatic appeal, and in fact built the narration of his rise to prominence in terms of a charismatic myth. While Milk’s following, like Obama’s, probably doesn’t rise to the level of reverential charismatic bond, his election to city supervisor and his success with legislation supporting the gay movement in the late 1970s transformed him into a figure of remarkable popularity. He had a loyal following, certainly, though his group operated within a highly rationalized political structure. Nevertheless, his achievements would have had to be excellent examples of the management of dissipative structures, as Milk and his associates continually broke down the traditional alliances among different civic constituencies and reformed or refashioned constituencies that included homosexuals. Milk’s assassination in 1979 released a burst of forces by which his followers could maintain the reform movement he had helped to originate. As this movement grew, it became necessary to routinize its origins as a charismatic revolution and the assassination itself—which was in fact not at all a crucifixion but instead a bizarre pathological outburst by a crazed political opponent—was instantly transformed into martyrdom and deployed as an organizing tool. Under the auspices of martyrdom, with its inherent allusion to transcendent sacrifice (not to mention divine connection), charismatic belief was able to flourish.

Milk’s career as a gay activist had undeniable revolutionary content, as well as a secularly salvationistic drive for which his followers could feel, in Madsen’s and Snow’s words, “intense devotion” (if not, perhaps, “extraordinary reverence”). Not only in the cauldron of anti-homosexual hatred and evangelical Christian anathematizing, but also in the more complacent arenas of the political landscape, Milk had the unlikely ability to disrupt a

deep-seated traditional prejudice that had remained all but unchanged despite the great civil rights revolutions of Martin Luther King's movement. The famous Stonewall riots in Greenwich Village in 1969, while energizing gays and lesbians, hardly affected the bulk of the population. Tolerance of homosexuality was extremely slow in coming. To be sure, *intolerance* grew in many quarters as legal restrictions against homosexual conduct or homosexual school teachers appeared on election ballots—the sort of backlash that would have been impossible to conceive where civil rights for blacks was concerned (no one besides the Ku Klux Klan ever seriously proposed reinstituting Jim Crow laws, for instance). In such an atmosphere of oppression, a leader who successfully resisted the laws as well as undermining the customary practice (of excluding gays *qua* gays from civic participation) would undoubtedly be seen as having salvationistic charisma. Excitement about his achievements, his representative spokesmanship, and the promise of future gains would release charismatic beliefs in a relatively circumscribed following. Perhaps most visibly among his activist peers because he actually sought and won a powerful office in the “System,” Milk represented a constituency that was more than merely a group of voters (though he had a range of voters too). His chief constituency consisted of *believers*, those who believed not only in a civil rights cause, but also—and more significantly—in Milk himself as a reflection of their own personas and as a demonstrated leader.<sup>21</sup>

But neither Harvey Milk nor any other gay activist of his time succeeded in establishing a charismatic movement that lasted. Despite the rallying to causes, the marches, the AIDS ribbons, and the continual ballot initiatives, no routinized movement emerged. Gay rights never experienced a depersonalization of a charismatic myth along the lines of King's movement. The petrified symbols of that movement—from the statues of King himself to the ubiquitous streets and schools named for him—though not exactly the same as hammers-and-sickles, nonetheless remind us of the revolutionary quality of the civil rights movement even as they are absorbed into the daily routine of the community. The iconic status of his “I have a dream” speech, the refrain of which is inscribed on coins and under countless portraits, freezes a moment of extraordinary upheaval in order to preserve its charismatic value for the future. This is precisely the kind of depersonalization of myth lacking in the gay movement.

So maybe my friend shouldn't have ridiculed the anarchist who saw in the A-in-a-circle a permanence worthy of being set in concrete. Maybe we have to acknowledge the almost counterintuitive notion, suggested by Weber,

that routinization appeals to followers and believers, and that they support the transformation of charismatic authority from its early stages. And perhaps this desire isn't so counterintuitive after all: it represents a human need, a hunger even, to make charismatic beliefs a permanent part of daily life. Certainly this need makes believers vulnerable to the manipulation of dissipative structures by the administrators of charismatic myths. But, as we will see especially where ritual is concerned, the hunger for permanence among believers also shores up the fragments of a charismatic movement against its own ruin.

## Chapter 3

# Authority and Archetypes

In his *Defense of Poetry*, a concise amalgam of contemporary theories and personal flourishes, the English poet Philip Sidney describes poetry as *architectonikē*, what he terms the “mistress-knowledge” ([1595]1966: 29). But despite the fact that the word *architectonikē* shares the root *archē* (Greek for “origin”) with “archetype,” Sidney is not referring to anything primordial, instinctive, or buried deep in the collective memory, which tends to be how we regard the notion of the archetypal. I want to emphasize this: Sidney’s vision of an architectonic function for poetry rejects the passivity often associated with the term “archetype.” But this isn’t to say that poetry has a historical, or historicizing, function. On the contrary, Sidney disdains historians precisely because they are unable to create widely shared figures and values, precisely because their *technē* is not architectonic enough for creativity. Historians are “laden with old mouse-eaten records,” and, worse, they’re chained to the “bare *Was*”: “Many times [the historian] must tell events whereof he can yield no cause; or, if he do, it must be poetically” (30, 36). To tell events *poetically*—this, Sidney says, is the only way historians can escape the past and enlarge the particularity of the *Was* into something of universal, enduring value.

Sidney’s rejection of historians is telling. He makes it abundantly clear that only through the agency of the poetic imagination can the particularity of past events and individuals be raised to archetypal proportions:

the skill of each artificer standeth in that *idea* or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself. And that the poet hath that *idea* is manifest, by delivering them forth in such excellency as he had imagined them. Which delivering forth also is not wholly imaginative, as we are wont to say by them that build castles in the air; but so far substantially it worketh, not only to make a Cyrus, which had been but a particular excellency as nature might have done, but to bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make

many Cyruses, if they will learn aright why and how that maker made him.  
(1966: 24)

Sidney begins in this passage by explaining that an “artificer’s” skill exists in the Idea or “fore-conceit” of a work. This is, as Jan Van Dorsten points out, a “fundamentally Platonic argument,” in which the poet essentially imagines or invents an idea (or Ideal) that supersedes the work itself (1966: 82n). Such an idea might be seen as analogous to the idea of an archetype held instinctively in the collective memory because it is beyond, and superior to, the “particular excellency” of nature’s ability to create. It exists, in other words, outside the diachronic plane, almost as an ontological entity—except, of course, that it is *made* (with a deliberate glance at the Greek *poiein*, “to make”). Sidney’s example of this supersession of natural particularity is Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, a celebrated Hellenistic poem about the founder of the Persian empire, a poem used for centuries as a model of princely conduct. His point is simple, but revealing in the context of archetypes: the *Cyropaedia* trumps nature because nature can only create *one* Cyrus, while Xenophon has bestowed many Cyruses on the world by fashioning one who is a model for readers’ behavior—“if,” that is, “they will learn aright why and how that maker made him.”

At this juncture one might object by asking, is Sidney’s Cyrus, or more properly Xenophon’s, in fact an archetype? Indeed, are exemplary figures meant to be archetypal, and, if so, are they bearers of charisma, which is really the concern of this study? The answer, I think, is “both/and.” If we can believe Xenophon’s poem and other sources, Cyrus was himself certainly a charismatic leader. And it should go without saying that the great general *in his time* elicited an interdependent group response characterized by the *metanoia* necessary to sustain charismatic rulership (with all that that might mean in regard to routinization, depersonalization, and the extraction of symbolic structures). Presumably all heroic figures accomplished these charismatic feats in life. But, as Sidney so polemically puts it, nature has strict limits. After all, age can wither and custom stale even the most extraordinary historical figures (except of course those converted to divinity, as euhemerism suggests). Only the poet can preserve the charismatic aura; only the poet can protract the group experience by distilling the moral extract and lasting *ethos*—the charismatic qualities themselves. The dissemination of those qualities is tantamount to extending the original charismatic authority and expanding the group experience.

But of course Sidney's is a pre-Romantic model of the poet. We are now less inclined to believe that the poet's work can supersede nature—or, for that matter, that anything exists beyond the boundaries of nature. Yet it's impossible to deny that exemplary figures like Cyrus, literary and otherwise, closely resemble archetypes and capitalize on archetypal myth. As Doty observes in describing Jungian mythography, "there is a certain numinosity about archetypal images," and he adds that the archetype is "essentially transpersonal and transhistorical" (2000: 200). This numinous quality—which Cyrus possesses and the *Cyropaedia* disseminates—when framed and diverted to maintain a collective, is irresistibly reminiscent of charismatic authority. As I noted in the last chapter, the survival of transpersonal numinosity as it affects a group or collective depends on the ongoing participation of members. The only way to guarantee such participation is to remythicize the *origins* of the numinous authority—a process that occurs, in charismatic myth systems, in tandem with routinization. Unquestionably this is a narrative process, and for that reason charismatic mythopoesis plays a crucial role in the preservation of movements, religions, pirate realms, tribal chieftaincies, and so forth. But we must be clear: charismatic mythopoesis is not coterminous with poetry, though poetry and other forms of literary fiction might be deployed in the charismatic process.

Although Sidney's sense of "poesy's" architectonic function might not coincide with current notions of the archetypal function in myth, it is nevertheless provocative in prescribing a mythopoetic means of preserving a charismatic *ethos*. I think poetry does more than that alone, even epic poetry, but it's easy enough to see how Sidney's prescription would be highly suggestive in the context of this book. And, more importantly, I hope that Sidney's gentle provocation will make it obvious why the concept of the archetype would interest me as a juncture of myth and charisma.

Largely because of Jung's vast popularity, the question of archetypes remains critical to understanding twentieth-century myth theory. Jung and Mircea Eliade, the two theorists I treat in this chapter, have linked archetypes to myth in very different ways. Others, such as Erich Neumann, Wendy Doniger, and Joseph Campbell (to name only a few), have extended their work. This chapter is neither a comprehensive summary nor an exhaustive survey of Jung and Eliade on the subject of archetypes. It is meant, rather, as an exploration to determine whether these two utterly different applications of the concept of archetypes, and their cousins "exemplary figures and paradigms," should rightly be termed charismatic phenomena, and,

if so, how the mechanisms of charismatic myth systems—depersonalization, routinization, and remythicization—contribute to their survival.

## Jung and the Unconscious Collective

Most prominent by a long chalk among theorists of the archetype is C. G. Jung, the renowned Swiss psychiatrist who began as an associate of Freud and later became his opponent. Jung has justifiably been called the most influential mythologist of the twentieth century, and, as Steven Walker points out, his many, sometimes baffling remarks on myth “resist facile summary or reduction” (Walker 2002: xi). The last thing I want is to appear reductive about myth (except, of course, in the sense that reductionism means comparing myth across disciplines).

In the preface to his work on the Christian Trinity, Jung remarked, “Faith is a charisma not granted to all; instead, man has the gift of thought, which can strive after the highest things” (1984: 6). He is here using the word “charisma” in its strict Pauline sense, as a gift of grace portioned out in different kinds and measures to the congregation. Jung does not, however, link charisma itself to myth. On the contrary, he seems to accept the myth of Pauline charisma without a glance at the Weberian, secularized version of the concept. But in the same paragraph he makes a statement that (perhaps unintentionally) supports the view of myth systems I have outlined up to this point. “The fact that a dogma,” he says, “is on the one hand believed and on the other hand is an object of thought is proof of its vitality” (1984: 6). In somewhat different language I have expressed the same sentiment in regard to myth. The fact that a myth—not a dogma—is at once believed and *made* the subject of new thought, forces change and sustains its vitality. Jung clearly recognizes the importance to a myth system—and what is a dogma but the routinization of an original charismatic myth—of new critical approaches. And in this context we should bear in mind that the word “critical” derives from the Greek *krinein*, which is also the root of our words “crisis” and “certain.” To use a redundancy, charisma and charismatic myth (like the Trinity) thrive in the “crisis of criticism,” a fact Jung seems to understand.

Nevertheless, despite this promising intuition on his part, Jung’s views on myth are problematic from the perspective of charismatic authority. His concepts of collective unconscious and archetype as “primordial image” both fail to meet the criteria I have set throughout this book for charismatic myth, unless we reduce charisma to a sheer welling-up of numinous energy

rather than an activation of the *corpus agens*. The Jungian collective unconscious, the realm of his archetypes, contains no precept of agency. It is in fact defined by its nonparticipatory status—or perhaps *pre*-participatory would be the better word. The entire idea is reminiscent of something Gilbert Murray once observed in regard to ancient Greek religion. Quoting Konrad Theodor Preuss, a well-known German scholar and author of the influential textbook *Voelkerkunde*, Murray half-agrees with the idea that a sort of *homo vacuus* existed in the impossibly misty past:

The progress of Greek religion falls naturally into three stages, all of them historically important. First there is the primitive *Euêtheia* or Age of Ignorance, before Zeus came to trouble men's minds, a stage to which our anthropologists and explorers have found parallels in every part of the world. Dr. Preuss applies to it the charming word "Urdummheit", or "Primal Stupidity." (Murray 1925: 16)

As long ago as this remark appeared, and as close as it comes to the prejudicial notion of "*vom mythos zum logos*," against which Blumenberg and others object, Preuss's *Urdummeit* or Primal Stupidity (which was developed against theories of an ur-monotheism) has an uncomfortable parallel in Jung's collective unconscious.<sup>1</sup> If the archetypes represent the advent of Zeus in Murray's chronology, then the collective unconscious represents the Age of Ignorance.

Jung shades the definition of the collective unconscious in various ways as he tries to characterize its relationship to archetypes. But, for the most part, he sees it as a precondition to human subjectivity. In one of his most extended characterizations of this relationship, he claims that it is "the necessary and needful reaction from the collective unconscious [to] express itself in archetypally formed ideas" (1969: 21). This sounds like a thesis statement and he follows it with a long, alternately metaphorical and abstract description of the "meeting" between the formation of archetypal ideas and state of being known as collective unconsciousness:

The meeting with oneself is, at first, the meeting with one's own shadow. The shadow is a tight passage, a narrow door, whose painful constriction no one is spared who goes down to the deep well. But one must learn to know oneself in order to know who one is. For what comes to the door is, surprisingly enough, a boundless expanse full of unprecedented uncertainty, with apparently no inside and no outside, no here and no there, no mine and no thine, no good and no bad. It is the world of water, where



all life floats in suspension; where the realm of the sympathetic system, the soul of everything living, begins; where I am indivisibly this *and* that; where I experience the other in myself and the other-than-myself experiences me. (1969: 21–22; emphasis in original)

This is a metaphorical soup: a “tight passage,” a “narrow door,” the “deep well,” and the “world of water” all stirred together in an indivisibility of other and self. The mutuality of this Other/Self relationship might catch our eye in terms of charismatic group experience, except that, as Jung insists, the experience reveals a thoroughgoing absence of agency. Even St. Paul’s “body of Christ” congregation, in which no one part could exist without reference to the whole, exhibits more agency among individual members. “No,” Jung informs us, “the collective unconscious is anything but an incapsulated personal system; it is sheer objectivity, as wide as the world and open to all the world” (1969: 22). This is puzzling at first, until Jung explains that “there [in the collective unconscious] I am the object of every subject, in complete reversal of my ordinary consciousness, where I am always the subject that has an object. There I am utterly one with the world, so much a part of it that I forget all too easily who I really am” (1969: 22).

Jung’s deceptively opaque language prompts the question of whether the collective unconscious can be classed as a group experience at all. The experience of the self in Jung’s description seems to fall short of mimicking the experience of a group chiefly because the self in this situation lacks any compulsion to interdependence. There is no evidence whatever of participation—which is why I referred above to the nonparticipatory element in Jung’s theory and somewhat mischievously dubbed Jung’s collective unconscious an unconscious collective. But it isn’t all mischievousness. The salient element of any collective is sharing—what Weber refers to as *kleros*, a share, when differentiating laity from “clergy”—and the capacity to share cannot be unconscious. Jung distinguishes between what he terms the “personal unconscious” and the “collective unconscious”: “I have chosen the term ‘collective,’” he says, “because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has content and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is . . . identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us” (1969: 3–4). The problem here is that Jung opposes individual with universal and makes “collective” the alternate form of the latter. But, as can be seen by his notion of the “suprapersonal” substrate common to all humans,

no personal agency contributes to the formation of the collective. As such, the Jungian collective remains inimical to charismatic authority and the participatory element we must associate with the collective experience of charismatic myth.

I don't mean merely to object to Jung's semantics. The point of my criticism is that, once Jung turns to the archetypes represented in the collective unconscious, he is referring to entities with a charismatic content. And herein lies the fallacy: any content shared *charismatically* requires *a fortiori* a conscious effort on the part of members of the collective. The very authority of an archetype resides, as Sidney tells us, in its architectonic ability to be shared out. Steven Walker has pointed out that Jung didn't start out using the term "archetype," but rather *urtümliches Bild*, which means "primordial image" and which he borrowed from Jacob Burckhardt (Walker 2002: 3). When he settled on "archetype" he offered several references and etymological bases: "'Archetype' is an explanatory paraphrase of the Platonic εἶδος. For our purposes this term is apposite and helpful, because it tells us that so far as the collective unconscious contents are concerned we are dealing with archaic or—I would say—primordial types, that is with universal images that have existed since the remotest times" (1969: 4–5).

Repeatedly in his writing, Jung points out that these universal, primordial images are *inherited* from the "remotest times." The inheritance, however, is not socially overt, but instinctual, and it stretches beyond mere images to the archetypes themselves at an early stage (that is, before they are projected onto everyday material). Joseph Henderson quotes—but disagrees with—R. F. Hobson's 1961 review of Jung's *The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, where Hobson questions the propriety even of referring to the archetypes, as Jung does, the names of mother, child, trickster, or even rebirth. According to Henderson, Hobson claims that "These names imply a particular matter of content (in other words cultural artefact), and it might be that we shall have to evolve abstract formal methods of representation such as are used in mathematics or mathematical logic to do justice to the energies involved" (Henderson 1991: 432). Henderson's disagreement with this idea of abstracting the archetypes into mathematical formulae reveals the extent to which Jung, and the most convinced Jungians, regard the archetypes as irreducible forms of nature, all but equivalent to genetic material:

the more familiar objects represented in the cultural unconscious are what they are and need not be reduced to anything else. Jung's criterion for archetypal representation that "the fantasy image must not have been

acquired through education, tradition, language, or indirectly via religious ideas” is impossible to substantiate if it is purely archetypal, but if we refer to the cultural psyche, the traditional artefacts have their appropriate place as containers of a priori fantasy material. (Henderson 1991: 432)

The term “cultural unconscious” is Henderson’s coinage, a post-Jungian revision to the Jungian lexicon. It adds a subtle layer to the standard Jungian hermeneutic, which was divided between the personal and the archetypal—the individual and the collective unconscious. But I don’t see how, despite the promising word “culture,” Henderson’s notion of a cultural unconscious gets us any farther along toward an active group function in the construction of mythic archetypes if the so-called “cultural psyche” still contains “the traditional artefacts” of “a priori fantasy material.”<sup>2</sup>

From the perspective of charismatic myth, in which “traditional artefacts” and archetypal images, if not serial reactions to social upheaval, are at best fashioned and believed in at once, the notion of “a priori fantasy material” is invalid (and also irrelevant). As Tacitus says, in the epigraph I used for this book, *fingebant simul credebantque* [“they invented and at the same time believed”]. I cannot help but exercise Tacitean skepticism about the too-convenient “cultural unconscious.” And I suppose I am a Lockean in regard to mythic images, whether we call them archetypes or traditional artefacts or something else entirely—that is, I am inclined to believe in a *tabula rasa fabulorum* in the realm of charismatically initiated myth systems (which means virtually all myth systems).

The seeds of my skepticism, where Jung is concerned, lie in his concept of collective experience. He refers to “collective unconscious contents” as archetypes, categorizing presumably numinous “universal” images as forms of collective experience. But experiencing these archetypes, by Jung’s lights, demands nothing of the experiencer. In fact, one need not even be human to experience the archetypes. Walker quotes what he calls “probably the most vivid illustration of [Jung’s] theory of archetypes as containing latent images of instinct” (Walker 2002: 3). The quotation is drawn from Jung’s *The Undiscovered Self* (1958) and links the primordial image to instinct: “If we could look inside the psyche of a yucca moth . . . we would find in it a pattern of ideas, of a numinous or fascinating character, which not only compel the moth to carry out its fertilizing activity on the yucca plant, but help it ‘recognize’ the total situation” (Jung: 1958: 69; cf. Walker 2002: 3–4). These are dangerous waters. Likening the human instinct to respond to archetypes to that of another species—the yucca moth!—leads to the

false analogy between social and instinctive compulsion. I mentioned above that Jung's collective unconscious lacked a compulsion to interdependence, by which I meant a *conscious* sense of urgency and need in choosing to participate in such a way as to receive a share of the "numinous and fascinating" primordial image. No such choice exists, as far as we can know, for the yucca moth. Therefore, nothing akin to charisma can thrive in the yucca moth community, even if we were to recognize certain similarities between the way a yucca moth society functions and ours.

As far as the moth's ability to "recognize" the total situation," little can be said, except to note that there is no total situation without a mythic structure to supply it. Totality is itself a myth, and mythic structures depend on narratives which the moth community, driven solely by instinct, in likelihood does not possess. But Jung was well aware of this difference. His aim in finding parallels between animal and human instinct, and extending the parallels to his theory of the archetypal image, was largely to illustrate the distinction between the biological and the psychological. In a letter he wrote in 1954, Jung made an attempt to clarify his terminology:

The concept generally misunderstood is that of the *archetype*, which covers certain biological facts and is not a hypostatized idea at all. The "archetype" is practically synonymous with the biological concept of the *behaviour pattern*. But as the latter designates external phenomena chiefly, I have chosen the term "archetype" for "psychic pattern." (Jung, *Letters* 1973, 1975: 2.151; emphasis in original)

This statement has surprising ramifications if we apply it to myth, especially if we apply it to myth fostered and sustained by charisma. The division between "behaviour pattern" and "psychic pattern" collapses—or should collapse—in a charismatically successful experience. Further, it may be that in declaring that the archetype is not a "hypostatized idea" Jung means simply that it isn't an abstraction or a reification. But it shouldn't escape our notice—as it didn't escape Jung's—that the most common meaning of hypostasis in Christian culture referred to the separation of the Trinity: transcendent one; *nous*; and *logos*. Later in the letter, offering his credentials as a physician and psychiatrist, he asserts "No one would assume that the biological pattern is a philosophical assumption like the Platonic idea or a Gnostic hypostasis. The same is true of the archetype. Its autonomy is an *observable fact* and not a philosophical hypostasis" (Jung, *Letters* 1973, 1975: 2.152; emphasis in original). Strong words indeed, and somewhat suspicious. The attempt to strip the archetype of any numinous (or possibly

charismatic) foundations, making it “practically synonymous” with biological patterns, does more to raise skepticism than to allay it.

According to Walker, the term “archetype” in the Jungian lexicon is a bit of a misnomer for “archetypal image,” in large measure because “*archetype* designates an unconscious and unrepresentable element of the instinctual structure of the human psyche,” while “the more proper term to use for one of the pictures of an archetype that the human mind is capable of representing is *archetypal image*” (2002: 4; emphasis in original). Walker complains that Jung and his followers tend to use these two terms interchangeably, causing confusion. In fact, the confusion leads to a difficulty in identifying charismatic elements in myths. Walker goes on to say that “From the treasure house of archetypal images are drawn the elements, the *archetypal motifs*, of mythology. Whether represented visually, dramatically, musically, or verbally, these motifs are usually found linked in a sequence, which we call a *myth*. Myths are thus not purely spontaneous products of the psyche; they are *culturally elaborated*” (2002: 4). I don’t see how Jung, or any other mythologist, could disagree with this last statement. That myths are culturally elaborated is universally accepted. The real question is where does nature leave off and culture begin in the formulation of myth.

Jung’s archetypes complicate this already complicated question. Walker suggests an ascending tripartite scheme to solve the problem—archetype to archetypal image to archetypal motif. But he does not address the place of social authority in this ascending scheme. If the archetype is merely a biological function, it can have no actualized social authority, and therefore offers little to the study of charismatic myth. Susan Rowland takes a somewhat different tack. Adding a few key terms, she maintains that in Jungian thought “the unconscious contains inherited potential structures called archetypes” (Rowland 2002: 29). Her key term is “potential,” which she uses to characterize the collective element of archetypal inheritance: “I have referred to archetypes very carefully as ‘potential structures’ and ‘substances,’” she says, “because there is a common misconception that Jung’s archetypes are inherited images. This is not true. An archetype is an inborn *potential* for a certain sort of image” (Rowland 2002: 29). This clarification is helpful, although like many readings of Jung’s many explanations of the archetypes it seems to revise the Master as it proceeds. Rowland concludes with a nod to environmental influence: “What an actual mental image will look like will not only depend upon the collective unconscious. Archetypal images also reflect the conscious experiences of the person as a subject in history, culture and time” (2002: 29).

Rowland’s revision is a relief from Jung himself, who rarely offers as explicit a link between the collective unconscious and the shaping factors

of “history, culture and time.”<sup>3</sup> In a 1957 interview with Richard I. Evans, Jung was asked to elaborate on his statement that Freud’s Oedipus situation was an example of the archetype. His response was fascinating:

Well, you know what a behavior pattern is. The way in which, say a weaver bird builds his nest. That is an inherited form in him which he will apply. . . . And man, of course, has an inherited scheme of functioning too. His liver, his heart, all his organs, and his brain will always function in a certain way, each following its pattern. You would have great difficulty in seeing it because we cannot compare it with anything. . . . Yet it is quite certain that man is born with a certain way of functioning, a certain pattern of behavior, and that is expressed in the form of archetypal images. (McGuire and Hull 1977: 292)

We can see what Walker is getting at in regard to the promiscuous use of “archetype” and “archetypal image.” For if the human liver, heart, and other organs function *as expressions of* archetypal images, then the very notion of the archetype loses all value as an instrument of culture. Jung maintains that archetypes are instinctual manifestations, but liver function isn’t even what I’d call instinctual. It’s automatic. And the gap between automatic liver function and, say, Mormonism seems impossibly wide.

Really I should stop here. If Jung’s archetypes are no more than instinctual or, worse, automatic functions, then charismatic authority cannot play a part. *However*—and this adds a significant confusion—Jung went on in the same interview to say this:

the way in which a man should behave is given by an archetype. That is why primitives tell the stories they do. A great deal of education goes through the storytelling. They call a palaver of the young men and two older men *perform* before the eyes of the younger all the things they should not do. . . . Another way is to *tell* them of all the things they should not do, like the decalogue—“Thou shalt not.” And that is always supported by mythological tales. (McGuire and Hull 1977: 292–93; emphasis in original)

As the poet says, things ought to get interesting right about now. Jung’s quick step from instinctual archetype to mythological tale needs some explaining. One might almost accuse him of sleight-of-hand. Is the bridge between archetype and performance the mythic narrative? How else could storytelling be an integral part of the experience? Similarly, how is the

archetype linked to the charismatic numinosity of the Decalogue *except* through myth?

As if in answer to my questions, Jung cited in the interview the “several thousand saints” of the Catholic Church, who “serve as models”: “They have their legends and that is Christian mythology.” He then instanced Greece—“there was Theseus, there was Heracles, models of fine men, of gentlemen, you know, and they teach us how to behave. They are archetypes of behavior” (McGuire and Hull 1977: 293). Apart from the dubious choices of Theseus (who abandoned Ariadne on Sestos) and Heracles (who killed his lyre-teacher Linus, went mad, killed his children and maybe his first wife Megara, raped and murdered and so forth), the transformation of archetypes into exemplary figures has astounding ramifications. In a few short sentences Jung has traveled from automatic liver-functions-like instincts to architectonically valid models of behavior akin to Xenophon’s Cyrus.

The missing link between instinct and exemplary figures remains vague in Jungian thought, in large measure because the archetype—or *mythologem* or *archetypal image*, names Jung also uses for the archetype—is said to express itself in symbols and mythical narratives. The capacity to give expression is difficult to reconcile with mere instinctual function. Moreover, as Robert Segal has noted, Jung was “staunchly committed to independent invention as the origin of myth,” as opposed to those who saw myth as a result of cultural diffusion (Segal 1998: 12). This fact only adds to the confusion, not because myth must be a product of diffusion but because invention doesn’t jibe with the notion of primordial images. In a 1937 letter (written in English) to Swami Devatmananda, Jung wrote:

It is exceedingly difficult to explain the nature of the archetype to somebody who does not know about the empirical material we are dealing with in psychology. The only parallel I can point to outside the psychological field is *the so-called mythological motif in myths, legends, folklore, and religions*. If you study such a motif you will find that it is by no means outright, but a living structure representing something that could be called an image. Inasmuch as legends, etc. are transmitted by tradition, *the archetypes are consciously acquired*, but inasmuch as archetypes are found in the mind of the insane as well as in normal dreams quite outside all tradition, *archetypes appear also to be contents of the collective unconscious* and their existence in the individual mind can only be explained by inheritance. (Jung, *Letters* 1973, 1975: 1.226; emphasis mine)

Jung wants to have it both ways, or so it would seem from this letter. I’ve highlighted several phrases which should particularly get our attention.

First, the double whammy of a “mythological motif in myths” seems to protect the archetypes themselves from their narrative iterations, suggesting a kind of *homo faber abscontitus*—or, as the saying goes, “pay-no-attention-to-the-man-behind-the-curtain.” Further, the possibility that the archetypes are “consciously acquired” and transmitted by tradition surely introduces a form of agency into the equation. And finally, it is impossible to accept Jung’s contradictory remark, supposedly based on empirical material, that because the “insane” have access to the same archetypes, the archetypes must be “contents of the collective unconscious.” How, one might ask, did these “insane” people manage to live in the world “outside all tradition”? Jung is here inventing a myth of his own, I’d venture to say, and at the same time denying the environmental constituents of all psychological abnormality.<sup>4</sup>

The editors of the *Letters* rightly point out that later in his life Jung “expanded the concept of the archetype considerably.” They explain in a footnote that “He distinguished sharply between the irrepresentable, transcendental archetype *per se* and its visible manifestation in consciousness as the archetypal image or symbol” (Jung, *Letters* 1973, 1975: 1.226n1). Although it’s a relief to know that Jung distinguished between the archetype *per se*, which he saw as an *a priori* element of the psyche, and the visible manifestation of the archetype, it isn’t actually much help to have the concept bifurcated in this way. Indeed, Jung’s awareness of the difference between these two meanings or functions of the archetype only seems to heighten the contradiction. The dilemma remains: we are torn between seeing archetypes as entities unconnected to human agency—that is, as primordial images universally inherited (but not exactly shared in a participatory way)—and archetypes visible as manifest inventions.

## Charisma and the Constellated Archetype

Jung’s way out of the dilemma is to speak of the spontaneity of “constellated archetypes.” Most important is his shift from personal to group behavior:

if it is a question of a general incompatibility or an otherwise injurious condition productive of neuroses in relatively large numbers of individuals, then we must assume the presence of *constellated archetypes*. Since neuroses are in most cases not just private concerns, but *social* phenomena, we must assume that archetypes are constellated in these cases too. (Jung 1969: 47)



I emphasized “constellated archetypes” and Jung emphasized “social.” Both italicizations are significant. Suddenly the private, shadow-world of the primordial image has become a genuinely *shared* experience of the archetypal motif through the process of projected constellation. Although Jung characterizes the constellated archetype as evidence of group neurosis, we should, as far as possible, afford his examples a more value-free analysis. His choice of examples, however, is quite telling:

The archetype corresponding to the situation is activated, and as a result those explosive and dangerous forces hidden in the archetype come into action, frequently with unpredictable consequences. There is no lunacy people under the domination of an archetype will not fall a prey to. (Jung 1969: 47–48)

“Lunacy” notwithstanding, this description sounds exceedingly close to or at least compatible with a description of a charismatic movement, replete with the *metanoia* of a group response to an archetypal leadership figure. And, sure enough, Jung cites, *primus inter pares*, the Nazis and the esoteric Nazi symbols we discussed in the last chapter:

If thirty years ago anyone had dared to predict that our psychological development was tending toward a revival of the medieval persecution of the Jews, that Europe would again tremble before the Roman fasces and the tramp of legions, that people would once more give the Roman salute, as two thousand years ago, and that instead of the Christian Cross an archaic swastika would lure onward millions of warriors ready for death—why, that man would have been hooted at as a mystical fool. (Jung 1969: 48)

In fact, as many scholars have suggested, Weber, in defining charismatic authority and its transformations, had very nearly predicted the “psychological development” that disposed Germany to Nazism.<sup>5</sup> But Jung doesn’t seem to have known Weber’s work. Quoting Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, he concludes by saying that “The man of the past who lived in a world of ‘représentations collectives’ has risen again into very visible and painfully real life, and this not only in a few unbalanced individuals but in many millions of people” (Jung 1969: 48).

Now, at last, we are getting closer to finding in Jungian thought evidence of charismatic realizations of numinous authority. Lévy-Bruhl, whose influence on Jung is well-attested, is a good place to start. In the very first

paragraph of *How Natives Think*, Lévy-Bruhl points out that the existence of collective representations (*représentations collectives*) “does not depend upon the individual; not that they imply a collective unity distinct from the individuals composing the social group, but because they present themselves in aspects which cannot be accounted for by considering individuals merely as such” (Lévy-Bruhl 1926: 13). The same can be said for charismatic groups. The collective has unity but that unity cannot exist in privation from individual membership. That was the point of St. Paul’s charisms—the eye might be an eye, ontologically speaking, but it cannot function as an eye without belonging to the body. Although Jung, in the paragraph above, confines himself to its negative consequences, the notion of the constellated archetype fulfills the criteria needed as grounding for a shared group response. This is not to say that charisma hasn’t had predominantly negative consequences in the twentieth century. One need only read the tables of contents of sociology books on charismatic authority: dictators, reactionary/revolutionary tyrants, and religious theocracies tend to receive the most attention. But, as I’ve tried to emphasize throughout this book, myth systems establish and sustain themselves almost universally in relation to the transformation and management of their charismatic content. The constellation of archetypes is no exception. Jung might call it lunacy, but invariably, if a charismatic movement is to survive the initial burst of what he calls “those explosive and dangerous forces hidden in the archetype,” then a clear pattern of routinization and remythicization must emerge.

In contrast to the unconscious collective, Jung’s constellated archetypes indicate a *corpus agens* fully engaged in the social world, though never, of course, divorced from the inner psychological world. This kind of bilateral engagement leads naturally to what Thomas Singer and Samuel Kimbles, expanding on Jung’s writing on Nazism, call cultural or group complexes. Michael Gellert, summarizing an essay by Kimbles, notes that the author “observes ‘collective shadow processes’ in history, explaining how an ‘initial traumatic cultural complex is preserved across generations by an *unconscious-to-unconscious communication dynamic* that continues to structure both collective and personal events’. Descendants of Nazi perpetrators, Palestinian and Israeli youths, and American blacks seeking reparation for slavery, are examples of people suffering from traumas generationally removed but kept alive as cultural complexes” (Gellert 2007: 377; my emphasis). Let me be as clear as possible here: there’s no such thing as an “unconscious-to-unconscious communication dynamic.” Full stop. The very form of dynamic here described occurs only as a remythicization of an

original charismatic eruption into everyday routine. As Weber succinctly puts it, “Charisma . . . *may* effect a subjective or *internal* reorientation born out of suffering, conflicts, or enthusiasm. It may then result in a radical alteration of the central attitudes and directions of action with a completely new orientation of all attitudes toward the problems of the ‘world’” (Weber 1978: 1.245; emphasis in original). By Weber’s more latitudinous standard of collective dynamism, suffering is only one of several possible bonds. Therefore I resist reducing such an eruption to a trauma, as Kimbles does, since it would not necessarily be fashioned either from dream material or as a consequence of a shocking or painful experience. That descendants of particular closely bound groups—groups, incidentally, that share ethnic or revolutionary myths and have *already* been routinized—should prove we are definitely not witnessing an unconscious genealogical phenomenon. On the contrary, like all genealogies, the various descents of Nazi idealism, Palestinian chauvinism, Israeli biblical right, and so forth are patently charismatic phenomena. They are characterized, not by some sort of somatic inheritance, but by conscious attempts to assert a historico-mythical claim to pure, original charismas (as evidenced by the Bosnian Serbs’ claim to ethnic primacy over Muslims or the legitimacy of the *Werkzeuge* in the Amana religious sect).<sup>6</sup>

To be honest, I find it difficult to fathom why, after all the work done on charismatic authority and its psychological effect on group behavior, we should at this late date encounter theories of exceptional collective dynamism that altogether ignore charisma. But maybe that’s just my particular prejudice rearing its head. For Jung, such exceptional collective dynamism results from a spontaneous inner compulsion. In the same conversation I quoted above, Jung speaks of the archetype of the ford in the river, which he calls a “whole situation.”

You have to cross the ford, you are in the water, there is an ambush, or there is a water animal, say a crocodile or something like that. There is danger and something is going to happen, and the question is how you escape. Now this is a whole situation that makes an archetype. And that archetype now has a *suggestive effect* upon you. For instance, you get into a situation, you don’t know what the situation is. *Suddenly you are seized by an emotion or a spell*, and you behave in a certain way you have not foreseen at all. You do something quite strange to yourself. (McGuire and Hull 1977: 293; my emphasis)

Jung’s hypothetical situation has many parallels but it is particularly reminiscent of charismatic behavior. Above all socially manifest “dynamisms,”

pure charisma most closely matches Jung's idea of suddenly being "seized by an emotion or a spell." Weber is explicit on the subject:

For the present purposes it will be necessary to treat a variety of different types as being endowed with charisma. . . . It includes the state of a "berserk" whose spells of maniac passion have, apparently wrongly, sometimes been attributed to the use of drugs. In medieval Byzantium a group of these men endowed with the charisma of fighting frenzy was maintained as a kind of weapon. It includes the "shaman," the magician who in the pure type has to be subject to epileptoid seizures as a means of falling into trances. Another type is Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, who may have been a very sophisticated swindler (although this cannot be definitely established). Finally it includes the type of *littérateur*, such as Kurt Eisner, who is overwhelmed by his own demagogic success. (Weber 1978: 1.242)<sup>7</sup>

We might add to this list Pentecostal worshipers, Nazarites, "virtuosi," dervishes, and spiritual diviners (the same offenders Dante places in the eighth circle of the *Inferno*). My point is simply that such seizures of emotion most often constitute charismatic episodes. Such things as mathematic genius and the *furor poeticus* also fall into this category. According to Weber, "The mathematical imagination of a Weierstrass, for instance, is 'intuition' in exactly the same sense as that of any artist, prophet—or demagogue . . . all these kinds of ideas—including artistic intuition—have in common that to objectivate themselves, to prove their reality, they must signify a grasp on the demand of the 'work' or, if you prefer, *a being seized by them*; they are not merely a subjective feeling or experience" (Weber: 1978: 2.1116).

Let's return to Jung's example of the ford archetype. Answering the question of whether suddenly being "seized by an emotion or spell" resulted in spontaneous behavior, he answered, "Quite spontaneous, and that is done through the archetype that is constellated" (McGuire and Hull 1977: 293). He then tells the story of the "spontaneous" murder of the Swiss King Albrecht, citing the murderers as examples of men moved by the constellated ford archetype:

We have a famous case in our Swiss history of King Albrecht, who was murdered at the ford of the Reuss not very far from Zurich. His murderers were riding behind him for the whole stretch from Zurich to the Reuss, and they deliberated and couldn't agree whether they wanted to kill the king or not. And the moment the king rode into the ford Johannes Parricida, the father murderer, shouted, "Why do we let that"—and used

a swearword—"live on!" And they killed him. Because this was the moment they were seized, this was the right moment. (McGuire and Hull 1977: 293–94)

This excellent snippet of history is completely infused with charismatic group conduct. The obviousness of a leadership paradigm, coupled with the dissipative situation of assassination and the immediacy of ambush, spurs the murderers to act. To award causality, as Jung does, chiefly to the ford archetype misses the point even of his own example. Granted, it is impossible to know what actually went on in the minds of Johannes Parricida (John the Parricide) and his cohort. But we would be remiss, I think, if we were to deny the charismatic organization of the "whole situation" Jung describes. In explicating the difference between "intuition" and "rationalism," Weber points out that "The decisive difference . . . is not inherent in the *creator* of ideas or of 'works,' or in his inner experience; rather, the difference is rooted in the manner in which the ruled and led experience and internalize these ideas" (Weber 1978: 2.1116). In this view—which is the view that supports an analysis in terms of charismatic authority—Jung has the process backwards. The murderers murder because they internalize the idea of following Johannes into the ford, *not* because the idea of the ford spurs them on. Charisma, it will be remembered, revolutionizes from within, as a result of a *metanoia*, a group response to a leader figure. Johannes' call-to-arms, "Why do we let that [expletive] live on!," organizes the dissipative forces already in play, in this case the deliberations and disagreements regarding the murder which plagued the murderers on the stretch of road from Zurich.

There is an even crisper moment of emotional seizure acting as an organizing charismatic factor in John Milton's play *Samson Agonistes*. The Nazarite Samson, a charismatically endowed figure, has been shorn and imprisoned and now, "eyeless in Gaza," works as a slave for the Philistines. Yet, gradually, his extraordinary strength is returning unbeknownst to his captors. On the day of the Feast of Dagon, the Philistine god, a Philistine Officer comes to Samson with orders to dress up and perform for the gathered enemy in their temple. Samson, with misplaced pride, refuses, complaining that they already have "ev'ry sort/Of gymnastic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,/Jugglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics" (*Samson Agonistes*, ll.1323–25). When the Officer leaves, Samson asks the Chorus why he should "abuse this consecrated gift/Of strength, again returning with my hair" (1354–55). The gift, a charism, has already been sorely abused, as everyone who knows the Samson story is well aware. Milton is determined

to set things right, but to do so by reuniting Samson with the source of his power. Reasoning that he cannot be constrained to obey the Philistine commands—"commands are no constraints" (1372)—Samson observes that "If I obey them,/I do it freely" (1372–73), citing God's dispensation to use him or anyone else "at idolatrous rites/For some important cause" (1378–79). Then, all of a sudden Samson is seized: "Be of good courage," he tells the Chorus,

I begin to feel  
Some rousing motions in me which dispose  
To something extraordinary my thoughts. (1381–83)

For "rousing motions" read "powerful emotions." This scene in *Samson Agonistes* resonates beautifully with Jung's notion of being suddenly seized by an emotion or a spell. But there is a significant difference between Milton and Jung. In Milton, the "rousing motions" accompany a *conscious deliberation*, a free choosing, which cements the value of the charismatic blessing. For Samson's charisma can survive *only* as a measure of group survival—a fact Jung's individual psychology evades even when analyzing numinous collective phenomena. In Milton's play, Samson's conscious decision to dress in livery and enter the Temple of Dagon, an otherwise heretical act, disrupts the equilibrium of his charismatic following, the following he so poorly served through his tenure as a judge of Israel. His death, however, when he pulls down the temple and kills the entire Philistine host, simultaneously destabilizes his Danite tribe and reorganizes it around his newly fashioned myth. Thus his father, Manoa, can say at the end of the play that he will bring the body home:

there I will build him  
A monument, and plant it round with shade  
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,  
With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled  
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song. (1933–37)

So, in the legends and "sweet lyric" poetry, the mythicization begins. To which end, as Manoa rejoices,

Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,  
And from his memory inflame their breasts  
To matchless valor, and adventures high. (1738–40)

This last passage might well be an echo of Sidney's prescription for producing an imitable model. Samson becomes an idealized figure, his charismatic myth promulgated by legend and song, making "many Samsons," to use Sidney's phrase, by superseding the excellency of nature with the archetectonic variety of mythopoeia.

The legend of Samson, despite Samson's negative and indeed felonious qualities, ultimately sets in amber an idealized soteriological portrait (in some typologies he is even seen as an antetype of Christ). But we should not forget that Jung continually voiced concern that, under the pressure of sudden emotion or spells, "explosive and dangerous forces hidden in the archetype come into action." He describes these forces as part of "shadow processes" that cause such havoc, especially in group behavior. Samson, as the perfect blend of dangerous forces and divine guidance in a freely choosing *corpus agens*, eventually reemerges after his death as an ideal model of aspirational behavior. But Milton also offers the opposite kind of model, as if, *avant le fait*, he were responding directly to Jung's concerns. In *Paradise Lost*, Satan represents the distortion of the deliberative figure, choosing the wrong path and thereby becoming a paradigm of "explosive and dangerous forces." He may fill the criteria of archetypal image, or the mythologem of evil; and he may command a willing horde of followers apparently sharing a charismatic bond with him. But his charisma will always be preempted by his exclusion from divine blessing. The equation is simple: if charisma is a gift of grace, then Satan can never have it.

But we cannot deny the existence of Satan's paradigmatic status on the basis of an equation. Jung's shadow forces permeate the culture and clearly foster charismatic myths (in the value-free sense). From Goth paraphernalia to Heavy Metal music to the Hell's Angels, the deployment of highly orchestrated symbols of the shadow forces has produced a virtual industry of "evil" archetypes. "Suggestive effect" is Jung's term for the instinctive compulsion that humans experience in regard to archetypal images—in fact, the "suggestive effect" marks the closest Jung ever comes to separating his archetypes from passivity and allowing us to infer some form of agency in the individual mind "seized by an emotion or by a spell." And his darker archetypes, those presumably manifest by the shadow processes, seem to accentuate the agency only hinted at in the notion of instinctive compulsion.

In the first chapter I quoted Lenin's use of the term *uklon*, which he defined as a form of deviation which was not yet a full-blown trend. In Milton's Satan, the exemplar of "definite deviation" *sans pareil*, we find the same kind of deliberate manipulation engaged in by Lenin, Paul, and

countless others. This is not a value-judgment: Lenin's long-term goals have virtually nothing in common with Satan's in *Paradise Lost*. Moreover, as I pointed out, technically speaking Satan can never have charisma because he can never be the recipient of a gift of divine grace. Only in Weber's value-free sense can we speak of Satan's charisma as a group leader. His manipulation of the fallen angels, in collusion with his aide-de-camp Beelzebub, offers a model of charismatic administration. Whether we consider the myth of the fallen angels Milton's or Christianity's, or a combination of both, the representation in *Paradise Lost* provides a clear picture of Satan's constant power to instill mild chaos and manage the entropy in his doomed host. Milton, of course, does not leave that power to Satan alone—that would be presumptuous in the Christian myth. Rather, the entropy that Satan appears to manage is continually trumped by the permanent entropy ordered by God: the fallen angels, Satan included, keep falling, keep dissipating, as the poem progresses, and indeed for all time. This is a foundation of the Miltonic myth. As Satan appears to manage the chaos and manipulate his troops through ever more destabilizing strategies, all the fallen angels continue to experience a unique form of entropy that is unmanageable and immune to the delusions of triumph Satan professes. Yet, even within these hopeless constraints, the fictional Satan establishes something like symbols of his permanent movement in the continually changing circumstances of his plight. He manages to depersonalize his anticharisma (if we can call it that) and create what he and his followers seem to agree is a new archetype. Through identification with that archetype of deviation Satan and his fallen angels live out a charismatic myth, replete with always already decaying charismatic beliefs.

Jung often tried to reconcile himself to the dark satanic machinations of humankind, which he saw, not as group behavior, but in terms of the individual psyche. Late in his life, for instance, in an informal conversation with A. I. Allenby, Jung told the story that "he once met a distinguished man, a Quaker, who could not imagine that he had ever done anything wrong in his life. 'And do you know what happened to his children?' Jung asked. 'The son became a thief, and the daughter a prostitute. Because the father would not take on his shadow, his share of the imperfection of human nature, his children were compelled to live out the dark side which he had ignored'" (McGuire and Hull 1977: 158). Putting aside the temptation to analyze the Jungian aspects of *Star Wars*, with its "dark side" and archetypal figures like Darth Vader and the Arthurian Obi-Wan Kenobi, let me call attention to the error, if we analyze in terms of charismatic myth, of Jung's little exemplum. It's quite simple. In the story, Jung regards "Quaker" as a



stable entity, which is a false assumption. It hardly needs rehearsing that Quakers are a sect highly dependent on charismatic inspiration, that they boast a shifting hierarchy in their churches, an improvisatory approach to manifest blessing, and, typically, a this-worldly asceticism. Jung's polarization of right and wrong, therefore, is actually a projection of his bifurcation of the light and dark side which has no basis whatever in the means by which Quaker religionists would establish truth-claims. Jung is too busy fitting his story to the stencil of his dark/light paradigm to see the obvious: the "distinguished man" is a bad Quaker, not because he would not take on his dark side, but because (probably) he allowed the fluid Quaker approach to charismatic religious authority to become petrified and therefore, for all intents and purposes, to cease to function as what Malinowski called a "living myth."

### Mircea Eliade's Distillation of Charisma

I will turn now to Mircea Eliade's use of the term "archetype," which, as will be evident, is, as Milton says, "different though in kind the same." In *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, long a benchmark text among students of myth and religion, Eliade called attention to "the fusion of the individual into an archetypal category" in the mentality of "archaic man" ([1954; 1959]1991: 47).<sup>8</sup> Eliade explained this fusion as the result of "the antihistorical character of popular memory, the inability of the collective memory to retain historical events and individuals except insofar as it transforms them into archetypes—that is, insofar as it annuls all their historical and personal peculiarities" (1991: 46). I don't want to take Eliade's statements out of context. We should remember that he is discussing the archaic defense against "all the novelty and irreversibility which history entails" (48). But, despite his too clear-cut division between archaic and modern humanity, Eliade's thesis on the origin of (and need for) archetypes is useful in thinking about how charismatic authority relates to archetypal authority. "The memory of the collectivity is anhistorical," says Eliade:

We wish to say no more than that . . . the memory of historical events is modified, after two or three centuries, in such a way that it can enter into the mold of the archaic mentality, which cannot accept what is individual and preserves only what is exemplary. This reduction of events to categories and of individuals to archetypes, carried out by the consciousness of the popular strata in Europe almost down to our day, is performed in

conformity with archaic ontology. We might say that popular memory restores to the historical personage of modern times its meaning as imitator of the archetype and reproducer of archetypal gestures—a meaning of which the members of archaic societies have always been, and continue to be, conscious. (1991: 44)

The removal of personal characteristics, the “reduction” to archetypes, preserves the essence of an individual or an event. And, presumably, the archetype becomes a kind of commodity which can be disseminated in one way or another. Moreover, the “reduction of events to categories and of individuals to archetypes”—even if it is done “in conformity with archaic ontology”—represents a phenomenological irruption in the development of the social order. As we will see in more detail below, this irruption, a word Eliade himself sometimes uses to describe “hierophany” or the breakthrough of the sacred into everyday existence, fosters individual engagement in the reworking and extension of the charismatic material at the core of the archetype (Cf. Gill 2006: 22). This is ironic, of course, because the compulsion to create archetypes—at least according to Eliade—comes from the inability and refusal of the “archaic mentality” to accept “what is individual.” From the point of view of charismatic management, this engagement should provoke a key question. We have an obligation to ask who exactly or what group, “after three or four centuries,” modifies the memory of historical events and imprints them (presumably with some aim at making them permanent) on the collective memory. This process—again, from the perspective of managing a charismatic force of some kind—necessarily involves more than simply social inevitability or passive cultural evolution.

The process of “archetypizing,” as Eliade himself made clear, is also a far cry from Jung’s depth psychology and the latent forms of myth he construes in the collective consciousness. In the preface to the 1959 edition of *The Myth of Eternal Return*, Eliade emphasized that he was using “archetype” in what he termed a “pre-Jungian sense” (1991: xv), by which he meant that archetypes were essentially the same as “exemplary models” and “paradigms.” He uses these terms, he says, “in order to emphasize a particular fact”:

namely, that for the man of the traditional and archaic societies, the models for his institutions and the norms for his various categories of behavior are believed to have been “revealed” at the beginning of time, that, consequently, *they are regarded as having a superhuman and “transcendental” origin.* (1991: xiv; emphasis mine)

This last clause, understood with reference to exemplary models and paradigms, underscores the relevance of Eliade's version of the archetype to the study of charismatic myth. Archetypes, exemplary models, or paradigms regarded as transcendental and therefore as sacred manifestations in the everyday world are by definition charismatic. Not only do they have the numinous quality which we associate with charismatic figures, but they wield an authority which operates beyond the norms of daily life, in a supernatural sphere. Though Eliade nowhere mentions charisma in connection with the archetypes, his language uncannily echoes Weber's description of charismatic authority:

All *extraordinary* needs, i.e., those which *transcend* the sphere of everyday economic routines, have always been satisfied in an entirely heterogeneous manner: on a *charismatic* basis. The further we go back in history, the more strongly does this statement hold. It means the following: that the "natural" leaders in moments of distress—whether psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, or political—were neither appointed officeholders nor "professionals" in the present-day sense . . . but rather bearers of specific gifts of body and mind that were considered "supernatural" (in the sense that not everybody could have access to them). (Weber 1978: 2.1111–12; emphasis in original)

Weber is talking about leadership figures in this passage and it is fair to ask whether we can transpose his observations to archetypes, which are in many cases inanimate models according to Eliade's thesis. I think we can make this transposition, and indeed should, if only to acknowledge the role archetypes play in fulfilling extraordinary needs on a charismatic basis. Archetypes might not function in exactly the same way as charismatic figures, but as paradigmatic entities their role in organizing extraordinary needs at the social level parallels that of charismatic movements. As Eliade says in *Eternal Return*, "for archaic man, reality is a function of the imitation of a celestial archetype" (1991: 5; cf. Gill 2006: 26). We might add: not only for "archaic man," but also for all groups defining themselves in relation to a central figure whose very presence conveys a transcendental connection or an authority legitimized by divine blessing. The imitation of archetypes, which for Eliade is fundamental to *homo religiosus*, only makes sense as a group experience. I say this because, as we saw with Pauline Christianity and with other ethno-religious groups, individuality is anathema to the religious bond.

This-worldly promise of holiness—or of salvation after the advent of salvationistic religion—depends on an assured connection to other-worldly

power, which one achieves through *participation* as a proof of belief. Two aspects of this participation are important. First, it must represent a disruption in the social sphere (again, “irruption” comes to mind, but I’m thinking along more pragmatic lines). Second, the order is critical. That is, group function precedes belief. Therefore, charismatic group bond *causes* the imitation of archetypes, while both belief in the archetypes as manifestations of the sacred and what Eliade calls “reality” both follow in the wake of the charismatic experience. Acknowledging the order of belief in this way confirms that the charismatic function lies at the root of archetypal myths, which in turn means that we can interpret these myths through the lens of their dynamism and their dependence on well-managed dissipative circumstances for survival. As critics have often noted, Eliade’s conception of the archetypes seems to mix mystical Platonism with Augustine’s concept of the *idea principalis*, resulting in a highly personalized metaphysics of myth (cf. Gill 2006: 25–27). Eliade sometimes suggests that archetypes are preexisting forms, part of an “archaic ontology.” Other times he’s less clear about this, especially when he uses the term “prototype” interchangeably with archetype, as in “Marriage and the collective orgy echo mythical prototypes; they are repeated because they were consecrated in the beginning (‘in those days,’ *in illo tempore, ab origine*) by gods, ancestors, or heroes” (1991: 4, and *passim*).<sup>9</sup> The expression *in illo tempore* is one of Eliade’s favorites for characterizing the origins of the archetypes in the distant and mystical past, “the age of origins and sacred experience narrated in myth, which exists prior to and apart from linear historical time (connoting therefore what religion usually calls ‘eternity’),” as Glen Robert Gill observes (Gill 2006: 25).

For the most part Eliade’s archetypes, like Jung’s, have the problematic status of *a priori* entities in the mind. According to Robert Baird, who considers Eliade’s an “essential-intuitional” theory of religion (as opposed to “functional”), when Eliade suggests “modern man is poorer because his cosmos has been desacralized . . . a shift has been effected—a shift that is made possible only because an ontological basis has already been posited” (Baird 1971: 87). This observation should remind us that Jung took the opposite approach. For him, the gods and the sacred were lost in the abyss of primitive ignorance: “This is a new problem,” he opines. “All ages before us have believed in gods in some form or other. Only an unparalleled impoverishment of symbolism could enable us to rediscover the gods as psychic factors, that is, as archetypes of the unconscious” (Jung 1969: 23). Apart from the ontological status of the archetypes, Jung sees no ontological basis for the sacred. In contrast, as Baird observes, “Eliade is not dealing

merely with what men have held to be sacred, but with the structures of the sacred. . . . Not only are the hierophanies which [Eliade] describes hierophanies for those involved, but they are *in fact* hierophanies . . . an ontology has been posited from the start" (Baird 1971: 87; emphasis in original; partly quoted in Gill 2006: 27). Because we want to link archetypes to charismatic function, it goes without saying that archetypes can only exist "for those involved." They are, by definition, only archetypes *because* of those involved. We can see this fact in such archetypal constructions as nature, or Nature, and the gods and (more commonly) goddesses that come to represent it, such as the Roman Magna Mater, known also as Meter or Cybele.

Gill makes the astute point concerning the archetypes that "Eliade's Platonism . . . also attributes agency to the sacred" (2006: 28). That would make Eliade's idea of archetypal myth the exact inverse of mine. For, despite Eliade's occasional vacillation on the agency of the sacred, to analyze archetypal myth in terms of charisma means that archetypes cannot, at one and the same time, be caused by group participation and be extant, preformed, and permanent fixtures in the collective consciousness—not even in that of archaic cultures. Archetypes have no *a priori* being if we associate them with charismatic disruption, as I think we must, nor can they form as permanent fixtures in the collective consciousness. Just as group participation creates belief, collectives form archetypes, not the other way around. Moreover, like all charismatic myths—and by extension all charismatic beliefs—the authority and longevity of archetypes are constantly threatened by the choking off of the charismatic forces that originally appeared to disrupt and transcend this-worldly patterns with the promise of other-worldly bonds.<sup>10</sup>

We should discern in archetypes the same patterns of routinization and depersonalization that emerge in the development of charismatic authority. Symbols, beliefs, group response, and hierocratic administration should in large part mirror what we have already seen in other forms of charismatic myth. And, accordingly, we should regard archetypes as group experiences, characterized, *mutatis mutandis*, by an interdependence of leader and follower, model and imitator, priest and worshiper. This interdependence can take many forms, and the group/archetype relationship might refer as readily to worship as to imitation of a model, sacrifice, or ecstatic possession. Regarding archaic societies, Eliade contends that "Living in conformity with the archetypes amounted to respecting the 'law,' since the law was only a primordial hierophany, the revelation *in illo tempore* of the norms of existence, a disclosure by a divinity or a mystical being" (1991: 95). Eliade's

statement strongly suggests a charismatic origin for law, and moreover, a patent multi-causality that embraces not only a numinous origin but also the impingement and hierarchization of social factors. These factors are too numerous to name since they would differ in every example of "conformity with the archetypes." But it goes without saying that hewing to the archetype engages a form of this-worldly participation in charismatic function, a function itself dependent on continual (and often intentionally initiated) shifts in a dissipative social structure. In secular terms, the word "archetype" would conjure up something besides eternity, something more like *auctoritas*, a force of authority legitimized by a far-reaching connection to the past. For this reason Weber called attention to blood lines as the most common type of charismatic legitimization over long periods of time.

World aristocracy has always capitalized on the integration of secular and sacred legitimization from which subject peoples were expected to derive a range of archetypes and paradigmatic exemplars, such as those of ideal rulership, of divinely sanctioned descent, of natural lawgiving, and of sacred auspices. Many of these archetypes are reflected in fictional portrayals, and many, growing out of the *speculum principum* tradition, reveal themselves as negative examples. I realize I might be distorting Eliade's idea of the archetype by adducing the figure whose sacred entitlement has waned or somehow been diverted, but these figures too contain patently archetypal elements. The secularization of hierophancy leads ineluctably to a negative or *negated* exemplariness. And this in turn produces an archetype to evade. Adam and Eve most readily come to mind in this category. Despite losing their sacred blessing, the promise of immortality, they remain archetypal or prototypical figures whose conduct paradoxically enforces the law of obedience they broke. Taboo-breaking is a necessary component of any ordered society, and Adam and Eve set the standard for this component. Thanks to their act, and by the negative imitation of their example, followers of Judeo-Christian religion are able to conform to the law. Consequently, we can conclude that Adam and Eve retain their hierophantic authority even in disgrace, which, in the biblical myth, configures them as negative archetypes.

Fictions often exploit the ambiguity of the negative archetype. Earlier I mentioned Milton's Satan in connection with Jung's "shadow processes." But Satan is not a negative archetype in the same sense as, say, Adam and Eve (although Milton, always a bit tricky in *Paradise Lost*, tempts the reader to mistake the two kinds of model). Imitation of Satan leads one astray. On the contrary, imitation of negative archetypes derived from the Eliadean model have a more ambiguous status. In the tragedy *Richard II*, for instance,

Shakespeare dramatizes the story of usurped kingship, contrasting the archetype of royal entitlement with the negative version of that entitlement. It would be a disservice to the play to overpolarize these positive and negative elements, but it is nonetheless worth noting how Shakespeare uses the integration—or disintegration—of charismatic forces, both secular and sacred, in reckoning with Richard as an archetypal figure. The play never resolves the ambivalence between the two archetypal poles. Throughout the play valences shift and reset, presenting the reader (or audience) with a Richard who is the negative exemplar of the *roi fainéant* and at the same time an archetype of the charismatically entitled ruler. Richard gives expression to the latter when he says,

Not all the water in the rough rude sea  
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;  
The breath of worldly men cannot depose  
The deputy elected by the Lord. (3.2.54–57)

He is invoking his *chrism*, or sacred anointment, as king, but his declaration comes in the face of his cousin Bolingbroke's eventually successful usurpation of the throne. Richard accedes to the usurpation in a strange deposition scene in which he at first sounds defiant, giving in evidence of his entitlement the hierophantic or divine authority accorded to the *vicarius dei*. But his concluding speech in the scene reflects a much more ambiguous attitude. He begins by saying, "My crown I am, but still my griefs are mine" (4.1.190), splitting his archetypal body politic from his human self—a self now converted to a negative archetype. The irony of the deposition, however, is that only Richard can depose Richard, only a king has the power to depose a king—or so we infer from Richard's speech. He goes on, "Now, mark me how I will undo myself":

With mine own tears I wash away my balm,  
With mine own hands I give away my crown,  
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,  
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths;  
All pomp and majesty I do forswear. (4.1.202, 207–11)

The irony of this moment in the play captures the agonistic relationship that exists when archetypes confront each other. Eliade never mentions this possibility for some reason, but it seems to me that, inevitably, we would find a struggle among archetypes in the realm of charismatic endowment,

regardless of whether that endowment results from or causes hierophantic irruption in the world. Richard II is a barometer of just such a struggle, in all his complexity as a tragic figure still managing to demonstrate a capacity to manipulate the dissipative circumstance of his deposition and turn it into—and remythicize it as—a moment of archetypal charismatic authority.<sup>11</sup>

## Exemplary Figures

*Richard II* dramatizes the charismatic process resulting in the transformation of individuals and historical events into exemplary structures or figures. This process functions as a mode of routinization, and, under many circumstances, depersonalization. The numinous quality of the *original* individual is transferred to the symbolic numinosity of the archetype or exemplar. Through this process of transformation the individualistic “pure” charisma of the still-human moment reemerges as a permanent form of charismatic authority. Ironically, in the development of archetypes or exemplary figures, the strength of the charismatic force actually grows as depersonalization occurs. Thus, Eliade can say, “There is no religious form that does not try to get as close as possible to its true archetype . . . to rid itself of ‘historical’ accretions and deposits. Every goddess tends to become a Great Goddess, taking to herself all the attributes and functions that belong to the archetypal Great Goddess” (*Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 462; cited in Allen 1998: 81).

Let me take another example from Shakespeare’s period, Elizabeth I (who was queen of England when Sidney was writing about Xenophon’s Cyrus). In representations of Elizabeth we find no negative archetypes like those associated with Richard II, despite the intersection of archetype, charisma, and national myth. Elizabeth was regarded simultaneously as an archetypal goddess and an institutional ruler, guardian of custom and law, and transcendent symbol of peace. To prove the sacred origins of the Tudor line, heralds traced Elizabeth’s genealogy all the way back, through Troy, to Eden (such lengthy and equally absurd genealogies were common fare among the European aristocracies of the Renaissance). Scores of poets honored her as Astraea, “the goddess of justice and one of the deities who presided over the unspoiled world at the beginning of time” (Stump and Felch 2009: 600). In the myth of the three ages—gold, silver, and bronze—Astraea departs “*in illo tempore*” from the earth when humans become too greedy and violent. Her return signals the return of the golden age,



as George Peele declares in his pageant, *Descensus Astraeae* ([1591] Stump and Felch 2009: 601–602):

Astrea, daughter of the immortal Jove,  
Great Jove, defender of this ancient town,  
Descended of the Trojan Brutus' line,  
Offspring of that courageous conquering king,  
Whose pure renown hath pierced the world's large ears  
In golden scrolls, rolling about the heavens,  
Celestial sacred nymph, that tends her flock  
With watchful eyes and keeps this fount of peace. (14–20)

In these early lines of the pageant Peele establishes Elizabeth's Trojan pedigree, her "celestial" sacredness (a poetic redundancy), and the advent of peace under her rulership. This is a reference to the Elizabethan Settlement, and Peele is here giving credit to Elizabeth (as Astraea) for tending her flock with watchful eyes. The intersection of primordial, mythical time with the inference of historical time enforces the argument that archetypal figures function on a charismatic plane, in interdependent relationship with a group of believers or imitators. Peele goes on:

Long may she live, long may she govern us  
In peace triumphant, fortunate in wars,  
Our fair Astrea, our Pandora fair  
Our fair Eliza, or Zabeta fair;  
Sweet Cynthia's darling, beauteous Cypria's peer;  
As dear to England and true English hearts  
As Pompey to the citizens of Rome;  
As merciful as Caesar in his might;  
As mighty as the Macedonian king,  
Or Trojan Hector, terror of the Greeks.  
Goddess, live long, whose honors we advance,  
Strengthen thy neighbors, propagate thine own.  
Guide well thy helm; lay thine anointed hand  
To build the temple of triumphant Truth,  
That while thy subjects draw their peace from thee,  
Thy friends with aid of arms may succored be. (38–53)

The descent from "Trojan Brutus' line" leads us through Troy to Rome and finally to "the temple of triumphant Truth," with a swipe at the

much-despised Greeks who didn't heed Pandora's warning. Elizabeth has an "anointed hand"—the Septuagint's "chrism" comes to mind—and Peele urges her to establish her temple like the Hebrew king Solomon. Her archetypal credentials are impeccable.

Harking back to even before Elizabeth, the nineteenth-century poet Joel Barlow provides another example of the creation of an exemplary figure. This is fiction, like Shakespeare's play (to compare small things to great), but with the express intention of "archetypizing" Christopher Columbus. Thus, in Barlow's *Columbiad* (1809), we find an exemplary figure, Christopher Columbus, inextricably linked to the inspiration of an archetype. The "invocation to Freedom" and the first stanzas of the poem make the case:

I sing the Mariner who first unfurl'd  
 An eastern banner o'er the western world,  
 And taught mankind where future empires lay  
 In these fair confines of descending day;  
 Who sway'd a moment, with vicarious power,  
 Iberia's sceptre on the new found shore,  
 Then saw the paths his virtuous steps had trod  
 Pursued by avarice and defiled with blood,  
 The tribes he foster'd with paternal toil  
 Snatch'd from his hand, and slaughter'd for their spoil.

Slaves, kings, adventurers, envious of his name,  
 Enjoy'd his labours and purloin'd his fame,  
 And gave the Viceroy, from his high seat hurl'd.  
 Chains for a crown, a prison for a world  
 Long overwhelm'd in woes, and sickening there,  
 He met the slow still march of black despair,  
 Sought the last refuge from his hopeless doom,  
 And wish'd from thankless men a peaceful tomb:  
 Till vision'd ages, opening on his eyes,  
 Cheer'd his sad soul, and bade new nations rise;  
 He saw the Atlantic heaven with light o'ercast,  
 And Freedom crown his glorious work at last.

Almighty Freedom! give my venturous song  
 The force, the charm that to thy voice belong;  
 Tis thine to shape my course, to light my way,  
 To nerve my country with the patriot lay,

To teach all men where all their interest lies,  
 How rulers may be just and nations wise:  
 Strong in thy strength I bend no suppliant knee,  
 Invoke no miracle, no Muse but thee.  
 (Barlow 1809; no line numbers)

Barlow's invocation narrates a short outline of the corruption visited upon Columbus's virtuous exploits. Columbus himself is above reproach, an exemplar, who watched helplessly as "The tribes he foster's with paternal toil" are slaughtered and enslaved. But that was in the savage sixteenth century. The present has brought freedom to the Atlantic "heaven" that was "o'ercast" in Columbus's time. Barlow's revolutionary zeal (which conveniently ignores the native population of North America) then invokes not a Muse in the traditional sense, but a charismatically revolutionary archetype—"Almighty Freedom."

The transformation, and indeed *translatio*, of Columbian charisma, involves, first, the depersonalization of the explorer in such a way that the fruits of what he taught humankind—"taught mankind where future empires lay"—can be petrified and fashioned into an iconic ideal to be shared among all nations. Second, the archetypal *spirit*, which Barlow deems "Freedom," is translated to another country and altogether another kind of struggle. This translation would be impossible without the transformation of charisma into a routinized state and its subsequent deployment in a mythic structure. Finally, for good measure, Barlow invokes Milton: he calls for Almighty Freedom, his Muse, to "give my venturous song/The force, the charm that to thy voice belong." In *Paradise Lost*, in the immemorial first invocation, Milton calls on his Muse this way:

I thence

Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,  
 That with no middle flight intends to soar  
 Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues  
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme. (*Paradise Lost*, ll. 12–16)

The echo of Milton's famous lines in Barlow's invocation is undeniable. For Barlow's part, he kills two birds with one stone. In creating of Columbus the man and explorer a depersonalized charismatic paradigm of freedom and revolution, he identifies his inspiration with the archetypal epic poet of the English language.

I see both Peele's Elizabeth and Barlow's Columbus as archetypes in the sense of paradigmatic figures, but I don't want to distort Eliade's use of the term "archetype" too much—particularly because, as Douglas Allen has pointed out, Eliade used the term in only a few of his works, albeit several of the most influential. Eliade meant for the archetypes to exist only in "that time," *in illo tempore*, and to influence behavior through the ritual repetition of acts associated with their sacred intervention in the world. Allen notes, moreover, that Eliade tried to distinguish his use of the term from that of Jung (whose works he came to after having first used the term), but that "nevertheless, there are Jungian-sounding passages in which he writes of atemporal, ahistorical, archetypal, 'primordial,' 'imprinted,' symbolic and mythic structures that persist in the unconscious" (Allen 1998:162–63). As I noted above, no amount of assertion can reorder the fact that charismatic group participation causes belief, and that therefore the shared experience of the sacred, manifest as a disruptive crease in daily existence, produces and sustains the archetype—not the other way around. Allen explains that Eliade uses the term archetype in two senses: a primary sense to indicate "essential structures and meanings, exemplary models and paradigms," and a secondary sense in which profane time, duration, and history are abolished (1998: 163; see Eliade 1954: 34–35). (It is the second sense to which Eliade is referring above). Much has been said to criticize the essentialism of Eliade's archetypes, and I don't intend to enter the lists. The influence of charisma on myth precludes an essentialist concept of authority, even when that authority resembles an archetypal hierophany in the Eliadean sense. There can be no preexisting essence of charismatic authority, despite what St. Paul would have us believe. As we have seen repeatedly, charisma is the product of social dynamism linked to particular circumstances at particular times.

Of course, charismatic figures would not seem extraordinary if they didn't project an aura of holiness or of something represented as holiness, such as prestige or fame. The charismatic mission, no matter how secularized, remains emphatically a shared enterprise whose original model derived from the early Christian *didaskaloi*, the cultic preachers who spread the word in the wake of the Apostle. In fact, we don't need to look beyond the self-named Apostle himself, who opens his canonical letters with the reminder that he was "called to be an apostle of Jesus." Paul's vocation is both a charismatic and an archetypal manifestation of the sacred. Paul self-consciously reduces himself to an archetype, remythicizing the details of his own individuality so that they can be subsumed by his transhistorical,

supernatural connection, and, above all, can be shared among the new and exclusive class of believers. Eliade ties this sharing to the Christian sense of time, of the *eschaton*:

In Christianity . . . the evangelical tradition itself implies that βασιλεια τοῦ Θεοῦ is already present “among” (ἐντός) those who believe, and that hence the *illud tempus* is eternally of the present and accessible to anyone, at any moment, through *metanoia*. . . . [F]or him who shares in this eternal *nunc* of the reign of God, history ceases as totally as it does for the man of the archaic cultures, who abolishes it periodically. (1954: 129; emphases in original)

In this passage Eliade all but expressly links charismatic organization to archetypal function in archaic cultures. Like the hierophany manifest in the archetype, the eternal “now” of the Christian god is accessible through *metanoia*, the same word Weber (consciously) chose to describe group members’ participation in the manifestation of charismatic authority. Moreover—and of signal importance—history ceases for the Christian believer through a process of *sharing*. Consequently, insofar as Eliade himself compares the abolishing of history in the charismatic Christian community to that in archaic cultures, it seems appropriate to theorize a parallel between charismatic myth and archetypes.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, of course, but we find strong support for the parallel in the fact that both charismatic myth and Eliadean archetypes must compromise with antagonistic forces to survive. The price of sacred manifestation is a compromise with time in the same way that the price of charismatic survival is a compromise with tradition and economic rationality. According to Eliade, “The forms and means of manifestation of the sacred vary from one people to another and from one civilisation to another. But there remains always this paradoxical—that is, incomprehensible—fact that it is the *sacred* that is manifesting, and thereby *limiting* itself and ceasing to be *absolute*” (1960: 125). The compromise here is clear: worldly manifestation constitutes a sacrifice of sacredness—or at least of the appearance of sacredness (a distinction worth bearing in mind). In Christian religion, for instance, because Jesus was an earthly manifestation of *logos*, the absoluteness of his sacred being was delimited by the constraints of human embodiment (even perfect human embodiment). Eliade points out that “we tend to forget that God himself was accepting limitation and historicisation by incarnating Jesus Christ. This, let us repeat it, is the great mystery, the *mysterium tremendum*: the fact that the sacred accepted

self-limitation. Jesus Christ spoke Aramaic; he did not speak Sanskrit or Chinese. He had accepted limitation by life and by history. Although he continued to be God, he was no longer the all-powerful" (1960: 125). In fact, in regard to Jesus' human limitations, it required a theological effort to restore his all-powerful and absolute sacredness, specifically, the Nicene doctrine of *homoousia* (which, it will be recalled, asserted the sameness of the Christian god and his son).

It is not clear to me whether Eliade is treating the Christian myth in the same way he treats archaic myth or myths of eastern cultures. Something in his tone implies a more credulous attitude toward the narrative of the Jesus myth than he would use with, say, the myths surrounding the "historical Buddha" (who was a human being).<sup>12</sup> But I have nothing beyond an impression to go on, and, in any case, his observation can be usefully deployed. The "paradox of manifestation," if I can call it that, has great resonance with the development of charismatic myth systems. To turn again to fictional narrative, here is Milton's rendering of the scene in heaven when the Son of God agrees to become "manifest" as a mortal human being. God is speaking about his plans for "man" after the Fall:

man disobeying,  
Disloyal breaks his fealty, and sins  
Against the high supremacy of Heav'n,  
Affecting Godhead, and so losing all,  
To expiate his treason hath naught left,  
But to destruction sacred and devote,  
He with his whole posterity must die,  
Die he or Justice must; unless for him  
Some other able, and as willing pay  
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.  
Say Heav'nly powers, where shall we find such love,  
Which of ye will be mortal to redeem  
Man's mortal crime, and just th' unjust to save,  
Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear? (*Paradise Lost*, 3.203–15)

The key question, from the perspective of divine manifestation, is "Which of ye will be mortal?," which God addresses to the host of angels. Obviously, whichever angel spirit can "willing pay" the cost of "death for death" must also sacrifice its absolute sacredness in condescending to live and die among the fallen human subjects. But it must also be noted that the *charismatic* content remains intact, if altered, as the god becomes human.

Needless to say, in *Paradise Lost* none of the angels offers to give up the heavenly life: “the Heav’nly choir stood mute” (3.217), which adds narrative force to the Son’s actions. To be sure, “all mankind/Must have been lost, adjudged to death and Hell” had not the Son volunteered. “Behold me then,” he says to his Father,

me for him, life for life  
I offer, on me let thine anger fall;  
Account me man; I for his sake will leave  
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee  
Freely put off, and for him lastly die  
Well pleased, on me let Death wreck all his rage. (3.236–41)

This passage is a good dramatization of the paradox of manifestation. The phrase “Account me man” anticipates the *kenosis* of Christ—that is, the emptying-out of his divinity, which is followed by his abasement and humiliation as a man—while the rest of the Son’s dialogue adumbrates the *felix culpa* of Christian myth by which, through the sufferings of the “second Adam,” human posterity will be saved. Milton is keen to demonstrate both the heroism and the painful sacrifice of all-powerful sacredness necessary to become manifest on earth.<sup>13</sup> I don’t want to get tangled up in the question of whether Jesus of Nazareth was a demi-god. It seems enough to show that the myth of his manifestation—in Milton’s poem as well as in scores of other narrative versions—captures the earliest stage of charismatic development, the sacrifice of the pure connection to some form of supernatural force for the sake of a *shared* experience of that charismatic authority. We know that the Son retains his sacred connection, and therefore his charisma, because he tells us as much in reminding the Father that he really hasn’t much to fear from Death:

Under his gloomy power I shall not long  
Lie vanquished; thou has giv’n me to possess  
Life in myself forever, by thee I live,  
Though now to Death I yield, and am his due. (3.242–45)

We couldn’t ask for a better example of the paradoxical manifestation of divinity than this. The Son will die, but, having formerly been given everlasting life, will not “Lie vanquished” for long. He is simultaneously mortal and divine, yet in his earthly manifestation he must sacrifice the divinity he keeps in his back pocket: “Thou wilt not leave me in that loathsome grave,”

he says portentously to his Father, "But I shall rise victorious, and subdue / My vanquisher" (3.247, 250–51).

One might ask, as a number of critics have, how we are to measure a sacrifice of godhead that in fact is not entirely a sacrifice at all. But that is a complicated problem while my aim is simply to show the parallel between sacred manifestation and charismatic organization—precisely, that it is impossible to be a purely sacred entity in the social order, just as it is impossible to remain in a stable state of pure charisma. Both the manifestation of sacredness and the routinization of charisma require the building of a mythical narrative that will sustain followers' belief in the presence of sacredness or extraordinary (and divinely blessed) authority among them.

Allen speaks of the "dialectical tension and movement" of the paradox of manifestation. He describes it as "the process by which the sacred 'historicalizes' and 'limits' itself, which is at the same time that process by which a historical, temporal, natural, and limited thing embodies and reveals that which is transhistorical, eternal, supernatural, and absolute" (1998: 80). The undeniable similarity of this process to that of charismatic transformation helps to justify linking the charismatic content of archetypes with the development of charismatic myth systems. If manifestations of the sacred limit it, so the physical engagement in a charismatic mission—in fact, its very definition in the world—limits the pure and "absolute" form of the charisma.<sup>14</sup> This phenomenon accounts for the functioning paradox of most myths, archaic and modern, religious and secular. The exclusiveness of belief binding a particular cult, group, sacred figure, pantheon, or text emerges from the ability of charismatic leaders to manage the ever-present threat represented by the dialectic, the threat that the *manifestation* of the supernatural authority rather than the supernatural authority itself is all there is. The historical, the present-time, and the everyday (Weber's *Alltag*) would then overwhelm whatever was deemed sacred or charismatic, and the mythic structure would collapse almost before it had been established.

I hope this makes my position clear. Specifically, if we want to talk about archetypes, then we have to talk about them as charismatically managed entities rather than as preexisting forms, which is by and large Eliade's position (and here we see the grounds for confusing his archetypes with Jung's). This is not to say that charismatic figures don't represent themselves as Eliadean archetypes, claiming to tap into a sacred or supernatural source for their authority. Summarizing Eliade's understanding of myth, Allen quotes one of his journals: "Religious people tend 'periodically toward archetypes, toward "pure" states; hence the tendency to return to the first moment, to the repetition of that which was *at the beginning*. So long as the



“simplifying”, “archetypizing”, function of *returns*, *repetitions*, and *rebeginnings* is not understood, we will not understand how religious experience and the continuity of divine forms are possible” (Allen 1998: 81; emphasis in original). We could almost plug in the words “charismatic groups” for “religious people” and identify precisely the same tendency of group members to yearn for earlier, purer states of charisma as the forces of economic routine crush the disruptive beginnings of the movement or mission. What Eliade sees as the characteristic “archetypizing” of religion could double as the remythicizing compulsion in charismatic groups as they become routinized. As Émile Durkheim observed nearly a century ago in regard to totemic belief, “While in principle the cult derives from the beliefs, it also affects them; the myth is often modeled on the rite in order to explain it, especially when the meaning is not, or is no longer, apparent” ([1912] 2001: 87). This modeling of myth on rite as the origin of the belief fades mirrors the creation of charismatic symbolism through a process of remythicization. But the lesson of Durkheim’s statement is the *interdependence* of myth and rite: in terms of charisma and myth, we find just such an interdependence in the relationship of the group to its leader, and, significantly, also in the relationship of the remythicized charismatic symbols to the original manifestation of the sacred in a particular figure.

So, are Eliade’s archetypes manifestations of charismatic authority? Do they satisfy group needs on a heterogeneous basis while implying leadership of some kind? Indeed, do people participate in archetypes at all, and if so, can we recognize in that participation a share in sacred (or mission-driven) authority? To answer these questions we have to accept—or infer—a thesis Eliade certainly never voices (and might well have found objectionable). The thesis is this: that the “archetypizing function” results from a process of distillation akin to the processes of depersonalization and remythicization in charismatic organizations. In the last chapter, in connection with euhemerism and beatification for example, we saw how the depersonalization of charismatic figures helped to insure the survival of myth systems. If, as I’d like to suggest, we can locate both charismatic content and the seeds of group experience in archetypes, then this prescription for survival should lead us to recognize the extent to which the production of archetypes through depersonalization resembles the development of a charismatic movement. Eliade’s description of the “fusion of the individual into an archetypal category” strongly resembles the stripping away of the “person” that fosters routinization. Personal charisma and local charismatic authority—and the precise history of those figures and events—might disappear as the myth of charismatic attributes is disseminated among a

larger group of followers, worshipers, or subjects who never had access to the original charismatic presence and never experienced the original charisma before it was depersonalized. Nonetheless, the fundamental premise of charismatic depersonalization, and by extension charismatic myth as a routinized system, is that groups experience an *interdependent* relationship with the depersonalized figure or dehistoricized event (as in the case of the emotion generated by the Serb's link to Prince Lazar and the fourteenth-century Battle of Kosovo or in the creation of iconic events such as D-Day and 9/11). This is what Durkheim is getting at when he speaks of the interchange between myth and rite as time passes and memory fades.

Pace Eliade, archetypes must survive in the same way—and that goes even for the *notion* of “pre-existing” archetypal categories. Interdependent relationships with archetypal figures rely entirely on the form of their elaboration. The gods are in the details. Eliade acknowledges this inevitability when he notes that archetypes figure forth in narratives and also when discussing their “impersonal” characteristics, the latter term reminding us of how the archetypes distill charisma in the same manner as all depersonalization—for example, Xenophon's fashioning of a dehistoricized Cyrus as a model for all time (cf. Eliade 1954: 47). But the distillation of charisma in narrative form implies a systematic management of myth, along with an ongoing interdependence between that manager—shaman, augur, Pope, or rebel general—and a group of believers or participants in the myth. Unfortunately, Eliade's theory of archetypes never brings this implication forward, although, as we have seen, there is a strong resemblance between the manifestation of the sacred in archetypal form and the routinization of charismatic authority. Archetypes, for Eliade at least, seem to fall midway between agency and utter passivity. Addressing the function of rites, for instance, he speaks of “archetypal action” as the means by which primitive cultures abolished time: “We shall see that, as the rite always consists in the repetition of an archetypal action performed *in illo tempore* (before ‘history’ began) by ancestors or by gods, man is trying, by means of the hierarchy, to give ‘being’ to even his most ordinary and insignificant acts. By its repetition, the act coincides with its archetype, and time is abolished” (1958: 32).

I want to avoid reductionism here by switching too facilely from primitive religion to charismatic myth, but Eliade's observation is difficult *not* to apply to the transformations that result in remythicization. The repetition of an archetypal action preserves an original revelation in daily life in the same way that a remythicized action or symbol preserves the spirit of a routinized

charismatic claim. Time is indeed abolished by routinization—that's essentially the point of routinizing a charismatic movement. If time, or history, were allowed to exist, the inevitable erosion of the original charisma would deflate the force of the movement and leave followers without a bond. Only the remythicization can stave off the creeping in of the everyday and the decay of charismatic beliefs, which are often fueled by summoning a power *in illo tempore* to which a remythicized charismatic element gives group members access.

A rather extreme example of this kind of decay recently occurred in the Congo when one of the most exceptional rebel armies suddenly dissolved. According to Jeffrey Gettleman, reporting in the *New York Times*, at virtually the instant General Laurent Nkunda was captured, his army, his archetypal warrior status, and his routinized charismatic claim vanished:

Few ever doubted the charismatic pull General Nkunda had over his men. He was a true believer, with a messianic conviction that he had been put on this earth to protect fellow Tutsis in Congo from being slaughtered as they were in Rwanda in 1994. He was tall and thin, with a commanding presence and hints of elegance.

He had built one of the best-organized, best-trained bush armies in Africa. His soldiers always carried their rifles pointing down and kept their uniforms incongruously spotless, even though they marched through a world of mud.

But all that acclaimed discipline, which had helped the rebels to rout the Congolese government troops just about every time they faced off, seems to have vanished as fast as its leader. (Gettleman 2009: 10)

So, time, no longer abolished by charismatic routinization, returned to General Nkunda's army. The soldiers no longer lived suspended in the messianic myth by which they lived their lives, pursuing their mission with ascetic discipline, locked into a charismatic bond. Usually, of course, the return to a demythicized state takes longer, or stumbles over power-hungry disciples who try to impose a refashioned charismatic structure after the demise or disappearance of the original leader. But the spectacle of General Nkunda's spotlessly clean army putting down their arms the instant he was captured offers a rare view of the decay of charismatic beliefs.

The spectacle, the success, and even the downfall of General Nkunda testify to the invaluable purpose archetypes continue to play in the social imagination—not only as analytic terms, but as functioning cogs in the mythmaking machine. Exemplary figures—whether created or (somehow)

chthonic—retain a central place in helping us to understand how charismatic authority inheres in and often fuels myth systems. But we must be careful not to allow too much overlap between the poetic fashioning of a morally extractable model and the primordial, intuitive, and patently passive archetype of most myth studies. The active role played by the poet in fashioning an exemplary or archetypal figure categorically divides the poetic exemplar or archetype from one in which the technique of manufacture is well concealed. In the theories we have examined, archetypes exist outside history, as collectively shared motifs, held *sine ira ac studio*. The same formula would not apply to Sidney's Cyrus or Barlow's Columbus. Although myth and poetry—which, again, are often impossible to separate, as the Hebrew Bible makes abundantly clear—both offer exemplary figures, there is a significant difference between the kinds of representation. Take Sidney's theory. Sidney transfers the management of the charismatic material—the life of Cyrus—from the automatic denuding of historical details that occurs in the collective memory to the conscious depersonalization of the “maker's” work. The poet, through mythopoesis, fashions a kind of charismatic archetype. And Sidney believes further that the poet's calling can be likened to a prophet's (he uses the Roman word *vates*) in the dissemination of idealized forms or exemplars.<sup>15</sup>

Yet, despite the significant differences between an archetype in Eliade's sense and an exemplary figure in Sidney's, there is also a remarkable similarity. Mythopoesis and charismatic management link these otherwise disparate concepts. Whether we are talking about literature or the plastic arts on one hand, or, on the other hand, about civic and religious governance, the creation of shared myths and the management of the dissipative structures that sustain those myths both fall to human leaders. For Sidney it is the charismatically endowed vatic poet. For Eliade, it is the priest, the Lycurgus, the Vestal. To live “in conformity with the archetypes,” as Eliade puts it, only tells half the story. The hierophantic charisma that supports the archetypes must be managed in its depersonalized state. This task is taken up by an array of authorities at all levels of society—some benefit from lineal ties to the archetypal *auctoritas*, some perform their duties as officers of the divine revelation, some even act as berserkers or Nazarites, inheritors of a *furor divinus* that gives them the authority to murder and destroy (poets, too, experience a *furor divinus* or *furor poeticus* when inspired by the Muses). But *all* of these figures survive by means of introducing and managing constant shifts and alterations of the myth systems attached to the archetype—aristocracy, church, warrior code, even poetic authority. They are, in this respect, comparable to the poet who alters the life of Cyrus, depersonalizing it for wider

dissemination while maintaining an artificial distance from the charismatic source and the value-added instrument meant for emulation.

But I don't want to strain the point. Sidney's poet shares some attributes with priests and prophets, but it would be a mistake to force the comparison. Neither Eliade nor anyone else using the term "archetype" suggests a clear interdependent relationship between form and actor. The reason we find no such suggestion is that, as far as I can see, no one conforms to an archetype *per se*, at least not consciously, because the archetype in and of itself has no social function. Instead, one would conform to law, custom, military discipline, and ritual as representative manifestations of the archetype. Thus, while the hierophantic truth about, say, the Greek goddess Meter might contain a trace of the primordial message, cult worshipers would respond to the systematic elaboration of the religious practices. These practices need not be part of a larger *ekklesia*—as Burkert reminds us, "no religious organization outside Judaism . . . developed such a system, least of all the mysteries with their exclusiveness, their individualism, and their dependence on private wealth" (1987: 52)—but these practices would be systematic nonetheless, at least to the extent that they would bind worshipers in a charismatic exclusivity (and, incidentally, Burkert is right to see no contradiction between exclusiveness and individualism in this, a charismatic, context).

But where does this leave the relationship of charisma and myth? In a sense we might say nothing has changed. Archetypes are simply an amplification of the argument that myth and charisma share much in the creation, development, and sustaining of their authority. Archetypes differ in their passivity (at least in the prevalent theories of archetypes), but to say that is to state the obvious. We must consider the extent to which archetypes are themselves charismatic myths, or in Jung's case, highly systematized charismatic elaborations. We should bear in mind the amplificatory value of the archetype, while recognizing that archetypes, too, derive their function and garner their authority through processes similar to those of charismatic myths. The notion that archetypes exist in a prehistorical, preconscious primordiality is undoubtedly false. They too are fashioned, and they too reflect the dissipative improvisation of their managers—or, indeed, of their Makers (in the Renaissance sense, from the Greek *poesis*, "to make"). This fact simply should not be denied. Even archetypes of the void, of chaos, of pure fear and violence must be seen as products emanating from *homo faber*, not the reverse—just as the collective unconscious should be recognized as a managed myth.

Hans Blumenberg, whose notions about myth as a “high-carat piece of logos” I discussed earlier, suggests it is possible to isolate a poetic mechanism that effects the reworking of old material in new myths. This is the principle of remythicization to which I have referred throughout the book, but the poetic mechanism also gives us a peek into the formulation of narratives *ab origine*. Thus, rather than there being a preexisting pattern of primordial images shared among the collective, it is the poetic mechanism that fosters archetypes and the authority they generate. Blumenberg observes that “myth permits one to take a stand outside history not only as an onlooker but also as one who can enjoy the use of its oldest properties. In myth, the mythologist’s imagination narrates its own history, the cosmogony by which it emerged from chaos with the aid of Eros. This is why there can be a ‘new myth’ whenever the poetic imagination comes to itself and this, its own story, becomes its subject” (Blumenberg 1990: 61–62). The narration of the mythologist’s own history constitutes the rationalization of charismatic elements, such as how a rationalized history emerged from chaos. The new myth converts the inchoate, charismatic force to new function and use. “Precisely,” says Blumenberg, “to transform the original emotional tension of ‘savage error’ into distance, to elaborate it as something concretely perceptible, is part of the function of rites and myth” (62).

Transformation and distancing, elaboration and revised perception—these are the tools of the high priests of dissipative structures. Wield these tools skillfully and you command and preserve charismatic myths.

### “Cui bono?”

At this point we might appropriately ask of Eliade’s archetypes, *cui bono?*, and although I usually regard that question as too reductive in charismatic studies, it is certainly worth asking here. It is incumbent on us to consider the question of who benefits from all charismatic manifestations. If Eliade’s archetypes represent a *nonparticipatory collective memory*, as they seem to do at times, then we have to be skeptical, not only about the assertion of a “tranhistorical” element in the collective (which is confusing enough), but above all about the notion of an unmanaged, putatively free-floating numinosity shared on a universal scale. As we have seen in analyzing early-stage charisma, numinosity carries its own particular authority, deriving, for example, from a divine blessing, an oracular pronouncement, or a heroic deed deemed supernatural. Collectives that rely on such numinosity are

*a fortiori* charismatic collectives, and therefore must form in tandem with the management of the myth of that extraordinary original power. It is precisely the sense of “numinosity,” of supernatural auspices, that satisfies needs on what Weber calls a heterogeneous basis and influences followers to enter into an interdependent relationship with leaders. And it is easy enough to see who benefits from such charismatic relationships: both leaders and followers benefit—but only in tandem.

It is much more difficult to see who benefits from a system of archetypes, if “system” is even the right word for a set of preexisting forms. For Jung, whose archetypes are individually held, irreducible, and yet part of a collective unconscious, the question of systematic competence seems almost irrelevant. Similarly, Eliade’s solution to the question of system is to refer to the archetypes as part of an archaic ontology. But this is somewhat unsatisfying, given their close connection to myth, particularly if we accept Eliade’s formula that the archetypes refer to hierophantic revelations *in illo tempore*. The notion of a prehistoric time paradoxically introduces a diachronic element that is impossible to ignore except as a form of history. Jung too speaks of primitive culture, and bafflingly refers to the archetypes as originating way back when, as if they aren’t exactly permanent but were formed so long ago that their formation hardly matters. But neither of these notions of archetypes could exist without the poetic mechanism. And, in that context, a reminder is in order: we must always bear in mind that charisma is a *creative* force, continually in flux. The conviction that something is transhistorical, along with belief in or repetitive conformity to archetypes, should consequently be seen as resulting from charismatic creativity.

In his study of the idea of “pre-history” in early modern England, Arthur Ferguson cites Eliade and applies his version of archetypes to a discussion of euhemerism. “As Mircea Eliade has pointed out,” he begins, “the collective memory of archaic peoples can retain historical concepts only as they are transformed into archetypes that escape the strictures of historical time and live on in the infinite recurrence of ritual” (1993: 14). Once again the “collective memory” takes on a nonparticipatory quality, but Ferguson is right to attach the “strictures of historical time” to ritual recurrence. Neither he nor Eliade, however, addresses the phenomenological roots of the archetypes, literally the historical element that would constrict the collective memory of archaic peoples if they could comprehend it. After all, even prehistory is historical, inarguably a diachronic irruption in a synchronic plane. Otherwise the divine revelation that pierces everyday routine in the incomprehen-

sibly distant past would have no foil, nor would the exemplary figures of the euhemeristic tradition. But Ferguson claims that euhemerism created archetypes: "the euhemerizing process was capable of creating just such archetypes [that escape the strictures of historical time and live on in the infinite recurrence of ritual] rather than commemorating specific human beings. As archetypal figures, the pagan deities, like the figures of Christian typology, transcend historical time" (14).

This assertion is perfectly true in the terms laid out by Eliade. Euhemerism and Christian typology did in fact create figures that seemed to transcend historical time. But seeming is not being, and it is of paramount importance to recognize that the creation of such transcendent figures is the work of charismatic mythopoesis. *This means that the work of sustaining the authority of an archetype is tantamount to managing a charismatic myth.* I cannot overemphasize this point. In Eliade, the archetypes constitute a kind of back-formation, exhibiting the false impression of temporal priority so as to lend authority to the creation of deities, laws, customs, and so forth. They also have a *collective* quality that supersedes local authority. This is also true of euhemerism. The "euhemerizing process," as Ferguson terms it, might be seen as a subset of the archetypizing process Eliade mentions in his journal. Cast as stable, even eternal, entities—not *processes* at all, if the truth be told—both processes are in fact unstable and devolutionary, deliberately preserving an original power or blessedness in constantly shifting iterations of dissipative structures.

It may be for this reason, namely that Eliade saw archetypes as stable entities rather than as processes, that he for the most part rejected the idea of myth in modern life. Even if he grants that certain kinds of collective "participation," such as that associated with national flags, might qualify as myth, he shies away from seeing a definite continuity between archaic and modern society. "For," he notes, "if certain 'participations' in myths and collective symbols still survive in the modern world, they are far from filling the central part played by the myth in traditional societies; in comparison with these, our modern world seems destitute of myths" (1960: 24). What Eliade is rejecting is as much the content of myth as the method. And I think his thesis is weak precisely at this point, precisely where archetypes, exemplary figures, and paradigms meet the improvisatory needs of myth—heterogeneous needs best met "on a *charismatic basis*," to quote the salient Weberian phrase.<sup>16</sup>

Ernst Cassirer recognized both the impossibility of consigning myth only to the past, and, more importantly, the instability and *disequilibrium*



necessary to sustain myth in the modern world. Cassirer's entire paragraph is relevant:

Myth is, in fact, not only a transient but a permanent element in human culture. Man is not exclusively a rational animal, he is and remains a mythical animal. Myth is part and parcel of human nature. We may apply to it the saying of Horace: *Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret*. We cannot entirely suppress or expel it; it always recurs in a new shape. If we wish to express this fact in a philosophical language, we could say, with Hegel, that in all fields of human culture and human activity, in language, religion, poetry, and art, myth always is present as *aufgehobenes Moment*. It is not destroyed or annihilated; it has only changed its form. But this very change is of paramount importance. The organism of human culture does not eliminate the mythical elements root and branch, but it learns to control them. It develops new constructive powers of logical and scientific thought, new ethical forces and new creative energies of artistic imagination. By the appearance of these new forces myth is not entirely vanquished, but it is counter-balanced and brought under control. It is true that this equilibrium is rather a labile than a static equilibrium; it is not firmly established but liable to all sorts of disturbances. (Cassirer 1979: 246)

I can offer no better testimony than Cassirer's for the view that myth is always in flux, always "labile" rather than static, and never vanquished by new forces. This fluctuation characterizes the charismatic process. The new forces of change, which Cassirer acknowledges to be of "paramount importance," either come into being as a direct result of charismatic management of myth systems or, if they are of foreign origin, are quickly absorbed and deployed in the functioning dissipative structure. Rites and rituals, as the next chapter shows, help to authorize the forces of change. Charisma inheres in ritual in the same way that energy transforms matter.

## Chapter 4

# Charisma and Ritual

E. R. Dodds once said, “History no doubt repeats itself: but it is only ritual that repeats itself *exactly*” (Dodds 1963: xxvii). But, at the risk of contradicting a voice as powerful as Dodds’s, I would qualify his statement with the reminder that seeming is not being. Ritual might seem to repeat itself exactly, must indeed *claim* to repeat itself exactly. In order to survive, however, and to continue to represent a particular tradition, ritual embraces change and disequilibrium in the same way that Ernst Cassirer described when talking about myth. The inflexible criterion of ritual is that it should always continue to assure its participants that they belong to an exclusive group and that they are tied, through shared repetitive practices, to some form of supernatural force or unique secular mission. Ritual punctuates and also reflects the mythic narrative that tells the story of a group’s connection to other-worldly authority, while at the same time confirming their this-worldly bond to each other.

At the heart of ritual practice, therefore, we find charisma, both as a form of divine or extraordinary *auctoritas*, and also as a methodology. On one hand, metaphorically, charisma is to ritual what voicings are to jazz. On the other hand, more literally, charismatic organization structures the ritual process. Thus, the process by which ritual affixes believers and practitioners into exclusive groups depends for its protean energy—not to mention its frequent link to divine sources—on the same deployment and management of dissipative structures as charismatic myth systems. For this reason, I say that ritual *reflects* the mythic narrative which it also serves to punctuate and advance. Joseph Campbell observed of traditional systems that “the authorized mythological forms are presented in rites to which the individual is expected to respond with an experience of commitment and belief” (Campbell 1997: 186). All well and good. “But,” as Campbell asks, “suppose [the individual] fails to do so? Suppose the entire inheritance of mythological, theological, and philosophical forms fails to wake in him any authentic response of this kind?” (1997: 186). Under the circumstances of such

a failure, into the breach of unresponsiveness, some form of creative revision of the rites must occur. And it is here, again, that we should recall that charisma is first of all a creative force in social life, exactly the kind of revolutionary energy that would provide a new charge to a petrified tradition. Campbell, a great proponent of the creative element in mythology, says that rather than faking belief, "The authentic creative way . . . which I would term the way of art as opposed to religion, is . . . to reverse [the] authoritative order. . . . Not the forms first and then the experience, but the experience first and then the forms!" (1997: 186).

Campbell's exclamation echoes something I have emphasized already, namely, that the experience of group participation happens (or is made to happen) in *advance* of belief and the ritual process. The key to such group participation is the charismatic bond, whether that bond is fostered by priests or individuals reauthorizing the traditional order in creative ways. In either case the result will be a group experience. This is obvious where a priest is concerned, perhaps less so when we use the word "individual." But an individual cannot reauthorize, or in Campbell's terms, "reverse the authoritative order," without remaining in a dialectical relationship with that order. In other words, reinventing tradition doesn't exempt you from the tradition, but, rather, reaffirms your connection to a traditional group, albeit in what might well be a revolutionary overturning of extant values, rites, symbols, lineages, even language.

In *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare dramatizes this sort of revolutionary reversal in a traditional pastoral scene of sheep-shearing. On a theoretical level, he problematizes the very idea of reversing the authoritative order, but in doing so he reveals the kind of relationship that serves first to threaten, then to restore and confirm charismatic beliefs. Toward the end of the play, at the site of the annual feast, Florizel, a Bohemian prince, falls in love with Perdita, who has been raised by a rustic to believe she is a shepherdess. Perdita is hardly a shepherdess, however. She is instead the royal princess of Sicilia who was spirited from home as a baby, a fact only the old rustic is aware of during the scene. Florizel, calling himself Doricles (to conceal his royal identity) charms Perdita and easily turns her head. She of course falls in love with him—although, to her credit, she recognizes the charisma of high lineage in him despite the disguise, and deems herself an unworthy mate. The two significant cruxes to the scene occur when Florizel's father, Polixenes, king of Bohemia, arrives in disguise to observe the sheep-shearing (a not incongruous meeting of royalty and rusticity in early modern pastoral). Before realizing that his son Florizel is pursuing a

lowly shepherd girl, Polixenes enters playfully into what Stephen Orgel calls a “characteristically inconclusive debate” with Perdita on the topic of hybridizing flowers (Shakespeare 2008: 172n87–103):

*Perdita.*                                the fairest flowers o’th’season  
Are our carnations and streaked gillyvors,  
Which some call nature’s bastards; of that kind  
Our rustic garden’s barren, and I care not  
To get slips of them.

*Polixenes.*                                Wherefore, gentle maiden,  
Do you neglect them?

*Perdita.*                                For I have heard it said  
There is an art which in their piedness shares  
With great creating nature.

*Polixenes.*                                Say there be,  
Yet nature is made better by no mean  
But nature makes that mean; so over that art  
Which you say adds to nature, is an art  
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry  
A gentler scion to the wildest stock,  
And make conceive a bark of baser kind  
By bud of nobler race. This is an art  
Which does mend nature—change it rather—but  
The art itself is nature. (4.4.85–97)

Suggestive double meanings abound in this passage, many of them allowing the reader / audience to entertain the notion of a “great creating” reordering of traditional authority. Such phrases as “gentle maid” used for a shepherdess who is really a princess; or “we marry / A gentler scion to the wildest stock” which foreshadows the very conflict Polixenes objects to when he realizes that his son wants to marry Perdita; or simply linking the “bark of baser kind” with the “bud of nobler race.” In this exchange, Polixenes is happy to say that nature trumps art because the art is itself nature.

He soon sings a different tune, however, and we see, as if in cross-sectioned diagram, how different forms of charismatic authority reenforce a tradition (or traditions, if we include the sheep-shearing with the royal succession). Polixenes watches his son dance with Perdita, recognizes him, but remains in disguise while he questions him. Florizel insists that he will marry Perdita on the spot, without telling his father, even though

Polixenes has established that he has a father who “should hold some counsel/In this business” (4.4.406–407). Then Polixenes removes his disguise, revealing simultaneously his own identity and his son’s, and proceeds to upend his own argument regarding the marriage of a “gentler scion.”

*Polixenes.*      (*To Florizel*) For thee, fond boy,  
                   If I may ever know thou dost but sigh  
                   That thou no more shalt see this knack—as never  
                   I mean thou shall—we’ll bar thee from succession,  
                   Not hold thee of our blood, no, not our kin,  
                   Far’r than Deucalion off. (4.4.423–28)

Polixenes is in high dudgeon. He has already threatened to execute the rustic as a traitor for not breaking up the love affair (a sentence he commutes); and he has promised to ruin Perdita’s enchantress’ looks: “I’ll have thy beauty scratched with briars and made/More homely than thy state” (4.4.422–23). But his most profound anger is directed at Florizel, who, he says, is “too base/To be acknowledged, thou a sceptre’s heir,/That thus affects a sheep-hook!” (4.4.215–17). The entire episode turns on the disruption of the genealogical succession, a charismatic myth ritualized (and confirmed) in the union of people of supposedly equal blood.

The genius of Shakespeare’s scene is that as the disruptions multiply, the reader/audience remains in the know, recognizing that Florizel and Perdita are in fact of equal blood, that Polixenes has nothing to worry about, and that as long as Florizel persists, Perdita will be *restored* to her proper place in the genealogical hierarchy. Florizel’s persistence takes the form of creative rebellion against the authoritative order, a disruption within the disruption of the traditional sheep-shearing festival. After his father has banished him from the succession, and also declared him, “but for our honour therein,” unworthy even of Perdita because of his trickery, Florizel asserts his independence from the hidebound tradition of royal succession.

*Florizel.*            I cannot fail but by  
                   The violation of my faith, and then  
                   Let nature crush the sides o’th’ earth together,  
                   And mar the seeds within. Lift up thy looks.  
                   From my succession wipe me, father; I  
                   Am heir to my affection. (4.4.473–78)

This is a pronouncedly charismatic moment in the play. Citing his faith as his guide, with missionary zeal he steps forward as a creative revolutionary force. He commands Perdita to "Lift up her looks," while at the same time he renounces his succession to the throne. He becomes a new kind of heir, "heir to his affection," charismatically restructuring the tradition of hereditary itself. Under the circumstances of mistaken identity and scrambled lineage claims, Florizel's renunciation is gloriously ironic. By claiming himself "heir to [his] affection," he in fact affirms his personal "honour," because Perdita is of royal stock. From charismatic disruption, restored tradition—supported by the charismatic myth of blood lines—emerges. As the seasonal ritual proceeds, during which ordinary routine (and even laws) are suspended, Florizel *appears* to break through the bindings of his class. Yet, finally, he does not "reverse the authoritative order" so much as create a place for himself in dialectical relationship with that order.

Charisma imbues ritual with numinousness and the glue of bonding, but is also antagonistic to it. What Weber calls the "specifically creative force" of charisma will always keep ritual practices in a labile state, and, *ipso facto*, will seem to be counteracting the purpose of repeating an act "exactly." But ritual, like myth systems themselves, would degenerate into mere cultural compulsions if not for the creative disequilibrium injected into them by the charismatic process. I use this term "charismatic process" advisedly in this context, bearing in mind Victor Turner's influential work on the ritual process in Ndembu society. Just as Turner speaks of the processural element in ritual, so we will have to acknowledge a processural charismatic force as a contributing element to ritual. But the charismatic process does not copy the ritual process in all its aspects. On the contrary, charisma contests, contradicts, and revises ritual because its authority garners its power from change and transformation.

Not unlike in the routinization process, this power grows from a radical attempt to remythicize the authority of ritual or to reinvest ritualized symbols with an original charismatic numinosity. The reason for this similarity is that ritual is itself a highly routinized set of charismatically imbued practices. The difference between routinization and ritual is more one of degree than of kind. Indeed, it is one of the chief aims of this chapter to show that the charismatic element of ritual not only keeps the rituals themselves alive, but also makes the ritual process a slave to the changing heterogeneous needs of participating groups. Ritual, as we will see, is the counterpart of routinization.

## Rise Up to Play

Weber uses the term “relatively rational behavior” (*relativ rationales Handeln*) to explain how apparently irrational belief in otherworldly intervention is tempered by the relative rationality of repetitive practices. The concept of relatively rational behavior supplies the foundation for my analysis of ritual. While ritualistic practices appear to be totally irrational, their value as components of charismatically organized institutions contains a powerful rationale: those who experience group membership believe that practicing the ritual will provide them with a share in the charismatic endowment. Each individual ritual, with its accompanying rationale—from rosary beads to the chicken-slaughtering of the *Santeria* religion to May Day parades—only makes sense to members of the particular charismatic group or charismatically organized institution in question. To anyone outside the group such ritual practices are irrational, sometimes sacrilegious, and often offensive. Those on the inside adhere to norms of conduct guided and delimited by group membership. Those on the outside—even within the same culture—seek to demythologize the ideals of their adversaries and thereby to demonize alien groups and their myths.

A familiar example of this phenomenon is Exodus 32, in which the Israelites lose patience waiting for Moses to return from the top of Mount Sinai and say to Aaron “Rise up, make us gods that will go before us” (32:1). As Robert Alter points out in a footnote to his translation (which I use throughout this section unless otherwise indicated), “the people have not liberated themselves from polytheistic notions” (Alter 2004: 293n). The tendentiousness of the Pentateuch on the subject of monotheism is hardly a critical revelation, but it is nonetheless worth observing how quickly (almost *avant le fait*) the writer of Exodus has Yahweh jump on and demonize the abhorning ritual.

Even before Moses arrives and flies into a rage, the language of the passage indicts the rebellious group. Hearing their plea, Aaron responds immediately with a set of plans:

And Aaron said to them, “Take off the golden rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” And all the people took off the golden rings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he took them from their hand and he fashioned it a mold and made it into a molten calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.” And Aaron saw, and he built an altar before it, and Aaron called out and said,

"Tomorrow is a festival to the LORD." And they rose up early on the next day, and they offered up burnt offerings and brought forward communion sacrifices, and the people came back from eating and drinking, and they rose up to play. (Exodus 32:2-6)

The negative implications of choosing to make ritual offerings to the wrong gods resonates in the very word "play" (Hebrew *letsaheq*), which, as Alter points out, "suggests revelry and in some contexts sexual play or license."<sup>1</sup> The implication of bacchanalian excess reveals the normative perspective of the writer: the passage demonizes the ritual practices of members of a group (however newly formed) whose actions fail to meet the relatively rational criteria of the supposedly truth-bearing charismatic authority of Mosaic leadership.

In terms of critical taxonomy, therefore, it is useful to refer to rituals as relatively rational behavior, and, moreover, to recognize how significant it is to their various rationales that practitioners belong to a charismatically organized group. Those outside the group are invariably dismissed as irrational, and more times than not, as in Exodus, demonized as threats both to group security and to the promulgation of truth. The golden calf itself constitutes at once a source of ritual for a "new" religion derived from old gods, and a definite deviation—Lenin's *uklon*—from the emerging state religion. (Quaintly, in his own defense, Aaron claims to the fearsome Moses that the golden calf came out of the fire on its own accord after he flung in the gold.) If we understand the worship of the new golden idol as a form of ritual, and therefore of relatively rational behavior delimiting the sheer emotion of the episode, then Moses' response when he gets to the camp reveals a fascinating reorientation of charismatic forces. The passage almost seems backward, for Moses first introduces a ritual, and then a violent purge—that is, first a relatively rational penitence, and *then* a dissipative chaos which he will resolve charismatically.

As Moses is approaching the camp, Joshua, on watch halfway between the camp and the mountain, thinks he hears "A sound of war in the camp" (32:18). But this turns out to be wrong, as Moses, to his horror, quickly ascertains:

And it happened when he drew near the camp that he saw the calf and the dancing, and Moses's wrath flared, and he flung the tablets from his hand and smashed them at the bottom of the mountain. And he took the calf they had made and burned it in fire and ground it fine and scattered it over the water and made the Israelites drink it. (32:19-20)



The totemic element here is unmistakable, but the drinking of the burnt and scattered idol has a punitive rather than affirming or celebratory function. Nonetheless, the drinking must be seen as ritualistic, a precondition of charismatic reorganization. As Everett Fox points out, Moses' action "is the equivalent to making the Israelites 'eat their words'" (Fox 1990: 413) (He notes further that the three verbs in the sentence also appear in an Ugaritic text describing the goddess Anat's destruction of the god Mot). Forcing people to eat their words qualifies, in the context of the biblical passage, as relatively rational behavior, in part because the totemic act is always (like myth itself) a "high-carat piece of logos," and in part because the apparently irrational punishment prepares the way for Moses' reestablishment of his own charismatic mission.

Curiously, however, *after* forcing the Israelites to participate in the totemic imbibing of the golden calf, he kills them off in large numbers. It is as though (as in so much of the Hebrew bible) we should be reading the gap and the inconsistency with attention to something beyond the straightforward narrative, which doesn't really make sense. Moses reestablishes his charismatic authority first by gathering his own tribe (the Levites) around him. Then, with ruthless (Gideon-like) generalship he orders a purge of the other tribes, commanding the Levite men to arm themselves and "cross over and back from gate to gate in the camp and each man kill his brother and each man his fellow and each man his kin" (32:27). This command instantiates Moses' charismatic management. By means of violent strife, Moses has introduced a chaotically dissipative structure which he alone can resolve. But why wait until after he had (apparently) organized the tribes well enough to drink the totemic water? The justification is not entirely clear, except perhaps that the totemic punishment didn't work. After the Israelites drink, and after Aaron's lame excuse, the Exodus writer informs us "Moses saw the people, that it was let loose, for Aaron had let them loose as a shameful thing to their adversaries" (32:25). This verse continues to puzzle commentators, so I won't attempt to untangle it, except to note that the "shameful thing" seems to refer pejoratively to the orgiastic rites engendered by worship of the wrong gods.

From the point of view of charisma and ritual, the lesson of the golden calf episode is clear. Two opposing sets of relatively rational behavior, couched in rituals patently imbued with charismatic divinity, appear at loggerheads. But, because Moses (as Yahweh's chosen leader) has a mission to expunge polytheistic ritual and belief, he must reinitiate the deviant tribe members. Consequently, he substitutes a ritual punishment all his

own. He demonizes the group alien to Yahwistic religion, and in fact physically purges the ranks of the offenders. The civil chaos he introduces, he himself resolves, establishing his charismatic claim at the same time that he confirms the probity of his (and Yahweh's) brand of relatively rational behavior. The Hebrew word for "let loose," as in the passage above—"Aaron had let them loose"—is *paru'a*, "to unbind." This refers ostensibly, and negatively, to their licentious (probably sexual) behavior. But the behavior is only licentious, and they are only unbound, if we accept that being bound means being part of Moses' charismatic group.

In *Psychology and Western Religion*, in a discussion of the advent of the trinitarian conception in Christianity, Jung makes several observations germane to the episode of the golden calf insofar as the worship of the idol seeks to reinstate a previous polytheistic tradition. "It goes without saying," Jung reminds us, "that any conscious borrowing from the existing mystery traditions would have hampered the god's renewal and rebirth" (Jung 1984: 32). He is talking about the Christian subsumption of the ancient mysteries that already contained a trinitarian conception of the life-process. But his point is applicable to the moment in Yahwistic religion when the ancient polytheistic traditions must be purged. The comparison to the Christian renewal is inevitable. As Jung explains, "It had to be an entirely unprejudiced revelation which, quite unrelated to anything else, and if possible without preconception of any kind, would usher into the world a new *δρῶμενον* and a new cult-legend. Only at a comparatively later date did people notice the striking parallels with the legend of Dionysus, which they declared to be the work of the devil" (Jung 1984: 32). The latter sentence, regarding Dionysus, refers specifically to the Christian myth, although we cannot help but notice the Dionysian elements of the orgiastic idol-worship Moses extinguishes. The former sentence could as well fit the conditions surrounding the Decalogue: the events on Mount Sinai signal the ushering in of a "new *δρῶμενον*," or utterly new course, along with the new "cult-legend" that accompanies it. The Yahweh myth is reborn, and, consequently, Moses' charismatic leadership must follow suit. His act of smashing the tablets, his destruction and dissemination of the golden calf, and his directive to the Levites, all combine to eradicate the polytheistic mysteries. The reborn Israelite tradition relies less on remythicization than on the myth of demythology, the stripping away of charismatic content from the ancient (and familiar) mysteries that are reenacted in the forging and worshipping of the golden calf.

## Orgy and Order

The curious juxtaposition in Exodus of licentious behavior and mass killing indicates both the similarity of offense and punishment in terms of excess, and also, at the same time, an ambivalence between utter unbinding and utter privation in orgiastic manifestations. On both sides of the equation we find charismatic input. Charisma in its pure form, as well as charismatic authority in a more advanced state, make crucial contributions to the balance between excess and privation in ritualistic behavior. In connection with the golden calf episode, for example, Alter points out that the tribe of Levi, whom Moses recruits to do the killing, later became the sacerdotal tribe, the priestly managers of Yahwistic charisma—a fact the Exodus writer certainly would have known and experienced, which suggests an awareness of the charismatic ritual element being already present mythopoetically in the representation of the “necessary astringent” of killing those who were complicit in the orgiastic worship (Alter 2004: 498). The “strapping on” of the swords, despite the use of a different Hebrew verb, might well call to mind its metaphorical opposite, *paru’a*, “to unbind.” This too indicates a mythopoetic awareness of ritual conduct managed charismatically. What appears to us as an uncontrolled massacre should perhaps be seen as a ritual polarization of orgiastic behavior where *both* forms of excess, rather than being seen as evidence of total abandon, should probably be termed relatively rational conduct managed by authorized charismatic leaders. Even Aaron, who comes across as a reluctant bumbler in his conversations with Moses (another reluctant bumbler, or stammerer), nevertheless produces among the impatient Israelites a kind of *metanoia* in which the mass of people turn toward him and demonstrate charismatic belief in their ancient gods and in Aaron as their leader/priest.

The broken taboo—which ironically is not yet the prime taboo since the Israelites are unaware of the Decalogue—becomes a necessity to the charismatic organization of Moses’ mission and a boost to his power. Ritual could not survive without its abrogation built in. For this reason, we witness in all cultures such practices as Mardi Gras juxtaposed with Lent, or Corybantic excess juxtaposed in the Meter cult with ritual castration, or Hindu dervishes in ecstatic release before performing assassinations. Purgation rites, privation ceremonies (such as male adolescent circumcision), and ascetic conduct (as in anchoritic sects) serve to channel charisma in two directions at once. This charismatic bifurcation is at the heart of ritual.

But seeing the full picture requires an analysis of the management cadres behind ritual. Astute cultic leaders engage charismatic elements to bind

their membership *through unbinding*. Control of charismatic excess, as in the biblical Samson's Nazarite frenzies of killing or in the "hysterical" biting-off of a chicken head in certain *vodou* religions, imbues the leadership figure with authority and also acts as a form of purgation for the group empathetically experiencing the frenzied act—a purgation to be followed invariably *not* by imitation of the excessive act but by a collective experience of restraint. Asceticism for this reason holds a special place in many religions, and indeed in society at large. Identification with ascetics as savior-figures results from a recognition on the part of an exclusionary group that the ascetic is tapping into a divine source for his or her strength. The rationale for asceticism, particularly in an extreme form, is that self-sacrifice and disdain for the body bring the soul closer to godhead. Consequently, we can call this a form of relatively rational behavior, ritualized to the extent that people worship the ascetic accomplishment by reenacting it during feasts and observances.

The Jewish Passover feast (Pesach) might be called a privation holiday. Believers (or just Jews in general who wish to acknowledge their tie to biblical origins) take part in a number of rituals reaffirming their link to the Israelite exodus from Egypt. The Passover feast is observed at a Seder, where, in addition to ritual readings from the Haggadah, a meal is prepared that symbolizes haste, famine, and feast. The Seder Plate contains a number of dishes, each representing a feature of the escape and journey: *mazor* and *chezoret*, the bitter herbs symbolizing the slavery; *charoset*, a coarse-textured mixture symbolizing the mortar of the storehouses the Israelite slaves built in Egypt; *karpas*, a leafy vegetable dipped in salt water to signify pain; *z'roa*, the shank bone of the Paschal lamb, a sacrificial offering; and *beitzah*, the roasted egg that symbolizes the festival sacrifice. The dishes center on the privations suffered by the enslaved Israelites. In sharing these highly symbolic dishes contemporary worshippers commemorate the escape from Pharaoh's clutches and cement the charismatic bond of Jewish identity. For a week the Passover feast lasts, during which time privation and celebration coexist. Only unleavened bread can be eaten, in honor of the legend that the Israelites left Egypt in such haste that they didn't have time for the bread to rise. But this privation is accompanied by large Seder meals and the gathering of friends and families in a holiday spirit.

Devout Christians observe a similar privation holiday. They combine privation and "rejoicing" at Easter, beginning with Palm Sunday, the week before Easter, a day on which churches are adorned with palm leaves recalling the palms given to Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem. This is a mixed event in the New Testament, of course, the result of which in Christian

myth is the death of the man and the rise of the god. For the four days of Holy Week—Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter day itself—Christians follow the course of Christ’s suffering, crucifixion, and rise. Lent, the 40 days leading up to Easter are characterized by voluntary privation or ascetic vows on the part of believers (most commonly in Catholicism), a relatively long course of privation kicked off, predictably, by the bacchanals of Mardi Gras and culminating in the sacred celebrations of Easter day.

As long as group participation results, behavior is relatively rational on both sides of the privation/excess threshold, and is imbued with charismatic authority. This kind of privation/excess pattern, though perhaps most commonly identified in religious myth and believers’ conduct, also appears in socio-political situations (including those not attached to theocratic governments). I will offer an example drawn from a novel, but an important novel for understanding group behavior. Here is George Orwell, in *1984*, succinctly capturing the balance between deprivation and complete satisfaction in a fictional authoritarian regime closely modeled on the USSR. Julia, the female character in love illicitly with Winston, holds forth on the hysteria caused by sexual privation, and the manner in which it can be channeled:

With Julia, everything came back to her own sexuality. As soon as this was touched upon in any way she was capable of great acuteness. Unlike Winston, she had grasped the inner meaning of the Party’s sexual puritanism. It was not merely that the sex instinct created a world of its own which was outside the Party’s control and which therefore had to be destroyed if possible. What was more important was that sexual privation induced hysteria, which was desirable because it could be transformed into war fever and leader worship. The way she put it was:

“When you make love you’re using up energy; and afterwards you feel happy and don’t give a damn for anything. They can’t bear you to feel like that. They want you to be bursting with energy all the time. All this marching up and down and cheering and waving flags is simply sex gone sour. If you’re happy inside yourself, why should you get excited about Big Brother and the Three-Year Plans and the Two Minutes of Hate and all the rest of their bloody rot?” (Orwell 1949: 110–111)

Key to the passage is the idea that the hysteria caused by sexual privation “could be transformed into war fever and leader worship.” This is exactly the sort of transformation that dissolves the threshold separating privation

from excess, merging the two conditions. In 1984, the hysteria caused by privation is channeled into the relatively rational participation in Three-Year Plans and the ritualistic "Two Minutes of Hate." Indeed, the ritual aspects of this rechanneled hysteria should not escape our notice. Although Orwell probably want us to see these rechanneled energies as transformed into neurotic or pathological obsessive behavior, it is also possible to identify in this threshold-smashing the root of the ritual process.

Where, we must now ask, does charisma play a part in this threshold-smashing? The answer is that in transforming hysteria to practical energy to perform repetitive cultural practices requires a mythic narrative. And, moreover, while this myth need not be *a fortiori* charismatically deployed, more often than not leaders intent on capitalizing on the transformation of hysteria introduce a charismatic solution to the heterogeneous needs of those experiencing the surfeit of emotional energy caused by excessive privation. Revolutionary or extreme reactionary political movements fixate on the privations of a populace in order to isolate and channel the hysterical reaction manifest by that privation, in the course of which a charismatic leadership cadre emerges. This is what Orwell is getting at when he says that Julia "had grasped the inner meaning of the Party's sexual puritanism." What she had grasped, in effect, was her own awareness of how her *heterogeneous* needs—that is, not merely sexual needs—had been suppressed by the Party's puritanism and thereby manipulated into performing ritualistic practices which had no meaning for her. And since the practices had no meaning for her we can deduce two things: first, the rituals were not sufficiently labile and the social structure was petrified; second, no charismatic content linked Julia to the ritual and satisfied the needs released by privation.

Since ritual plays a part in both licentious behavior and its opposite, purgation rituals, led by a priestly class, are found in all cultures. Charisma fuels and structures the magnetic polarization—that is, the energy that holds apart the need for completion and the need for purgation is supplied by and administered within a dissipative environment. Without a charismatic bond, the polarization would collapse on itself. There would be no cult, and, more significantly, no ritual to perform. Polarization is a convenient structure for organization, being predominantly a binary tool. Leaders of routinized charismatic groups such as those we have discussed already—political movements, church sects, or even military units (whose discipline is usually antithetical to charisma, according to Weber)—structure the heterogeneously inspired needs for excess and purgation within the relatively rational contours of ritual practice.

As is well known, in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud explored the idea that groups were held together by suppressed libidinal ties. He applies his concept of “libidinal structure” first to what he terms “artificial groups,” the Church and the army, and then to “the different kinds of groups, more or less stable, that arise spontaneously” (Freud 1959: 32). Though Freud himself doesn’t mention charisma in this context, his prospective study agenda calls out for an analysis in terms of charismatic authority: “We should consider,” he says, “whether groups with leaders may not be the more primitive and complete, whether in the others an idea, an abstraction, may not take the place of the leader (a state of things to which religious groups, with their invisible head, form a transitional stage), and whether a common tendency, a wish in which a number of people can have a share, may not in the same way serve as a substitute” (Freud 1959: 32). We have already seen how abstractions in the form of symbols and traditions take the place, not of a leader per se, but of an *original* leader. The “wish in which a number of people can have a share” constitutes, under the proper circumstances of numinous blessing or extraordinary leadership, a charismatic situation. Structuring such a situation begins immediately—it is never “primitive and complete,” as Freud puts it. Completion is death. Rather, the transitional structure remains in play even when the stability of the group appears to be a *fait accompli*.

Consequently, as long as transitional structuring continues, suppressed libidinal energy forms the basis of the charismatic bond. This fact explains the virtually universal fear of sexual license in charismatic myth systems. And, predictably, it also explains the deployment in many cultures of orgiastic behavior in a highly regulated ritual context, as in what Burgo Partridge called the “safety-valve” of the “orgiastic festivals such as the Dionysia” in ancient Greece (Partridge [1958] 2005: 32). Orwell clearly recognizes the necessity of the safety-valve, and his *Two Minutes of Hate* are meant to fill the bill in Oceania. But, as Julia’s declaration of erotic freedom proves, the safety-valve doesn’t sufficiently polarize the excess/privation needs of the psychologically bound group, which results in empty rituals and an inevitable unbinding and rebellion. (Since Oceania is a totalitarian dystopia, however, the powers-that-be simply suppress Winston’s and Julia’s rebellion without any attempt to realign their libidinal urges and reorient them charismatically into the ritual practices. Force replaces suppressed libidinal bonding.)

The premium placed on celibacy and virginity is the other side of the coin. Both are ascetic categories, and while celibacy tends to carry more charismatic charge insofar as it appears usually in routinized charismatic

organizations, virginity (as with nuns) can also carry such a charge. Ordinary virginity—that is, of a young girl before marriage—certainly qualifies as part of the excess/privation cultural syndrome, but its charismatic content depends on the institutional myth surrounding it. Catholic priests must be celibate in order to partake of the office charisma inhering in their role in the church. Similarly, nuns and abbesses maintain their virginity in Catholic religious orders, often wearing a wedding band indicating their marriage to Christ. As organizational leaders of a routinized, and highly dogmatic, charismatic movement, they must use their asceticism as a model of sacrifice. Through identification with their libidinal suppression the church members form a charismatic bond, at once honoring the self-sacrifice as emblematic of other kinds of sacrifice and participating in ritual observances led by these specially endowed people. The “wish in which a number of people can have a share,” as Freud puts it, emanates from the polarization—again, as when two magnets of the same charge meet head to head—of church members who believe themselves to be in a constant state of sin (generally through a lack of restraint) and the ascetics who lead them. It is easy to see how unstable such a polarization would be. Church members, through good works or, just as commonly, personal friendship with the priests and nuns, might feel themselves increasingly closer to the virtuous ascetic (who, it should not be forgotten, in the Christian myth is herself or himself *also* a sinner). But closing the gap between the priestly class and cult or group membership would perilously collapse the excess/privation polarization—at which point the ritual practices that confirm the authority of the ascetic model would empty out. This, or something like it, is what happens in Orwell’s fiction. But that’s a political economy, whereas the economy of the sacred deals in much more significant issues, plumbing the depths of an individual member’s fears regarding the soul, an idea usually originating from the same establishment as the ascetic leaders. To collapse the polarization, therefore, puts into doubt the itinerary of the soul *and* the veracity of the establishment.

Like a Tibetan mandala, which serves as a defensive engine as much as an inner guide, ritual practice has the dual role of warding off the collapse of the excess/privation polarization and also confirming the charismatic authority of the institution it was created to re-create. I don’t want to be unnecessarily ambiguous, but the concept of ritual in fact grows out of an act of creation for the sake of re-creating an original numinosity, or an original act that has become numinous over time. “Creation to re-create,” therefore, constitutes the basic tenet of ritual. The strongest rituals garner their strength not from their petrified stability but from their ability to re-create



in a convincing manner the origins of their own creation. In this respect, ritual can be compared to symbols. The difference is that rituals, unlike most symbolic representations—the swastika, the hammer-and-sickle, the American eagle—have the protean ability to continue to adapt. In terms of structure, rituals mirror myth systems themselves. In order to survive, and to retain value as relatively rational behavior, they must change, shift, and adjust in concert with environmental development, or in order to make a difference in that environment. There is nothing relatively rational about a symbol: it is an abstraction taken on faith, and it constitutes a petrified re-creation of an original revolutionary charisma.

Ritual, on the contrary, is a practice rather than an abstraction—even if such symbolic materials as censers or animal skins play a part. I am not suggesting that this is an original discovery. Much field work has been done to support such a categorization, but of course ritual and symbol work hand in glove. In its many permutations ritual employs abstract symbols in both stable and not-so-stable forms. But, for this study, the important aspect of emphasizing ritual as a practice rather than an abstraction is to identify the contribution of charismatic authority and its ramifications—entropy-creation, routinization, and depersonalization—to the manifest experience of ritual in daily life. Reports of these kinds of experiences abound. For example, Tom Driver observes dryly that “In Haiti one hears it said that the country is 95 percent Catholic and 90 percent *vodou*” (Driver 1991: 52). The upshot of this living paradox is a vitality of creative religious practices. As Driver points out, “[the] two sides of Haitian religion exemplify the two poles between which religious ritual moves. At one pole, the paramount consideration is order, regularity, and limit. At the other, creativity and infusion of spirit. Of course, since both Roman Catholicism and *vodou* are living religions . . . both poles are represented in all of their rituals” (Driver 1991: 52). The “creativity and infusion of spirit” which Driver identifies as present in both religions has, inarguably, a charismatic basis. The exercise of rituals, therefore, “always already” contains the charismatic exigency to control the group experience through the distribution of numinous properties (like the Pauline charisms themselves, which were expressly “infusions of spirit”). Thus it would not be amiss to assert that, as practices, rituals must be structured charismatically—that is, with specific attention paid to the heterogeneous needs both of practitioners *and* of leaders. Rituals must be kept intact in the same way that living myths are kept intact, through a process of managing “dissipatively” structured repetitions.

## Processural Charisma

Creating to re-create, the living heart of ritual, is best analyzed as a charismatic process. And we should keep foremost in our minds that rituals are performances. As such, they lend themselves well to the manipulations of charismatic authority as it adapts to everyday situations. Indeed, these ritual performances raise the everyday situations, which usually stem from a heterogeneous body of needs, to a sacred or extraordinary plane. Illness, sin, dissent, thanksgiving, sex (and eroticism), harvest, and many more conditions of need, all can be satisfied, relieved, or realigned through ritual performance. Charisma enhances the performance, while at the same time changing the process to meet the ever-changing needs. Consequently, as I said above, charismatic authority can appear simultaneously to imbue ritual with numinous authority and to be antagonistic to ritual's perceived stability. This is because the satisfying of needs on a heterogeneous *charismatic* basis requires the mild chaos of dissipative structuring, a sort of processural upheaval.

Let me give an example from Turner's landmark study, *The Ritual Process*. In his discussion of medicine and the curative rituals associated with illness among the Ndembu, he notes the following in regard to the "adepts" who administer the rites: "While the junior adepts prepare the sacred site, the senior adept and his principal assistant go to the adjacent bush to find medicines. These are collected from different species of trees, each of which has a symbolic value derived from the attributes and purposes of *Isoma*. In most Ndembu rituals there is considerable consistency in the sets of medicines used in different performances of the same ritual, but in the *Isoma* rites I attended there was a wide variation from performance to performance" (Turner [1969] 1995: 23). Even in this brief passage we can see how an "adept," a senior manager of the ritual curative process, has the latitude to change medicines from performance to performance. This latitude by nature introduces a destabilizing element into the ritual, thus making the adept's response to the need for a cure into a dissipatively structured process over which he has all the authority. We can view this dissipative structure as charismatically imbued, in part because of the numinous content of the different medicines and in part because the adepts have been granted "priestly" offices.

Similarly, in a study of the Strickland-Bosavi area of New Guinea, Bruce Knauff observes that "the patterning of . . . rituals appears to be one of structural permutation, in which the same elements of ritual form and

structure are present in all societies, but are subject to distinctive emphases and combinations in each" (Knauft 1985: 326). Among his examples are the ritual dances of the Kaluli and Gebusi. Knauft calls both dances "a major form of aesthetic expression as well as being the primary peaceful setting for neighboring settlements to coalesce, irrespective of kinship" (1985: 324). Key here is the shared group experience brought about by the dances—dances in which young men reach a pinnacle of ecstatic fervor which itself binds the different clans together. The songs and dances are not, however, entirely spontaneous: they are rehearsed beforehand and then improvised upon in the wild heat of ritual performance:

When sung by the visiting male dancer and chorus, the songs evoke sudden and heartfelt memories among the hosts for their deceased loved ones. The grief-stricken hosts begin to wail and weep violently, until some of them vent their sorrow by grabbing burning resin torches and plunging them furiously into the shoulders of the singing dancer. The dancer appears oblivious to these actions, however, and continues unwavering and unperturbed in his song and in his quiet sorrowful demeanor—*despite the many second-degree burns he receives on his shoulders and back*. (Knauft 1985: 324; emphasis mine)

Several aspects of this passage strike a charismatic chord. The obvious bridging of the privation/excess threshold comes first to mind: death, loss, and lamentation play against the ecstatic burnings, carried out by the "stricken hosts" and endured by the visiting singer. The singer himself falls into some sort of trance, allowing him to ignore the pain of second-degree burns, a self-sacrifice that establishes a charismatic bond between the hosts and visitors. The entire performance has a staged quality, it seems to me, improvised yet sufficiently traditional to retain a relation to the ritual.

It would be nice to know how Knauft knows that the memories are "heartfelt" and not simply part and parcel of the ritualized performance, but that is less important than the fact that, as Knauft adds, "The dance continues . . . through the night, with the visiting dancers taking turns singing, dancing, and being burned" (1985: 324). This is important because it indicates the processural element of charisma in a ritual context. The burnings act as a form of purgation for the group, and as the dancers replace each other, proceeding through all the young Kaluli men, the ecstatic expressions of grief merge with the ecstatic endurance of pain. The result is a charismatically vital ritual whose technical elements are repeatedly created anew in order to re-create an original pain. That re-creation causes

the different kinship groups to bond, satisfying the heterogeneous needs to grieve, to express anger for a loss, and to suffer for surviving. Charisma, as I've said before, supplies the glue for the bond, creating the force that propels a *metanoia* among the participants in the Kaluli ritual—a *metanoia* which in this case is not fixed solely on one leader but on the idea of leadership, since the singers switch off all night long.

We needn't go quite so far off, however, to find examples of the charismatic process in ritual. In the United States, the practice of snake handling among evangelical Christians has the same quality as the ritual burning of the Kaluli, although the congregation probably would not experience the risk-taking as a purgative. Nevertheless, the snake-handlers invoke a charismatic claim in the most basic sense, adding, for the sake of argument, snake-handling to the Pauline charisms like speaking in tongues. Indeed, the same churches often include those who speak in tongues.

Thomas Csordas has charted the interplay of charisma and ritual among a rarer group of evangelicals in what is known as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. In a Benedictine abbey in Pecos, New Mexico, Csordas discovered that "Community life and ritual healing are self-characterized as a 'holistic' synthesis of Benedictine rule, Charismatic spiritual gifts, and depth psychology," the latter derived, perhaps not unexpectedly, from Jung (Csordas 1997: 9; author's capitalization). Offering scores of examples of how "Charismatic parishes" formed and sustained themselves across the United States and in other parts of North America, Csordas establishes the vitality of the movement (which he notes is not any longer driven by youth and therefore must adjust to old congregants), while at the same time denying that the Charismatic Renewal is exclusively a crisis cult: "While some American participants acknowledge joining in the wake of an intense personal crisis or conversion experience, others regard it as a perfectly natural step to have taken at a particular moment in their lives" (Csordas 1997: 44–45). This difference in motivations testifies to the power of the Renewal movement to satisfy heterogeneous needs on a charismatic basis. It also indicates the value of charisma in creating something that re-creates a pure and individuated link to the deity. "With the synthesis of Catholicism and Pentecostalism," Csordas explains, "the developmental need for the 'solidarity of close affiliations' became realized in the Charismatic ritual forms of personal relationship with the deity, collective prayer, and communal life" (1997: 45). But ritual form doesn't merely fulfill internal needs. Charisma, to *be* charisma as a group experience, must have the ability to create a bond among believers, congregants, parishes, and so forth. Csordas concludes: "Coming to grips with 'intuitions from the recesses of

the self' took the public form of divinely inspired prophetic utterance and the private forms of 'inner healing' from emotional disability and 'leadings from the Lord' through prayer and inspiration" (1997: 45).

One could hardly ask for a more explicit example of syncretic charisma, a term I have not used until now, but one which seems unavoidable in discussing the infusion of charismatic elements into ritual forms. In the case of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the syncretism combines Catholic anonymity before the deity with the Protestant individualism of god and human, sharing out the charisms which, for Catholics are historical, preserved in the petrified letters of Paul and the dogma of Canon Law. For the participants in the Renewal, the charisms once again become living things, ritualized by the different parishes in different ways.

Most important, however, is the realigned relationship of inner to outer experience in a charismatic setting. Jung's views on the dark side of the personality and the "recesses" of the self spring to mind, as does Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus* as a collective beast struggling with the resolution of internalization and externalization, a resolution highly relevant to charismatic group culture.<sup>2</sup> As Tony Bennet explains, "In Bourdieu's assessment, the virtue of his concept of habitus is that , by accounting for how the agent (individual or class) acts on the determinations that structure it so as to make the habitus a mobile, structured-yet-structuring structure, it overcomes a series of dualities—between inside and outside, structure and agency, body and mind—while simultaneously offering an account of how past moments of the shaping of the habitus are retained in the present" (Bennet 2007: 205). Bennet can't be blamed for the awkward phrase "mobile, structured-yet-structuring structure," which comes almost verbatim from Bourdieu's *Outline for a Theory of Practice*. Bourdieu's key paragraph in the *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* is one long, impossibly awkward sentence (cf. Bourdieu 1972: 174–75) (broken down to several sentences in Richard Nice's translation). Bennet is paraphrasing a short excerpt from this passage. Even with the translator's efforts, the prose is excruciating (an irony for someone like Bourdieu who puts so much stock in the power of language): "The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment . . . produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (Bourdieu 1977: 72).<sup>3</sup> The concept, while self-devouringly dense, nevertheless might be compared to the concept of a charismatic authority that functions through dissipative structures—indeed, Thomas Spence Smith's disequilibrium functionalism might be compared to Bourdieu's "structures predisposed to function as structuring structures."

The Charismatic Catholic Renewal might be seen as a *habitus* unto itself, replete with a “structured-yet-structuring structure” in the traditional church which is constantly being revised and restructured on a local level. The charismatic followings—agents of the *habitus*—in order to belong to the Church and participate in the revival, must overcome the dualities between inside and outside, body and mind, and above all the Jungian dualities posed by the notions of the shadow side and the “intuitions from the recesses of the self”.

Systems that are at once durable and have transposable dispositions might well be compared to myth systems whose durable symbols and traditions continually restructure themselves in order to keep belief alive and to legitimate new leaders. This is not to say that *habitus* and myth systems are the same. Yet, as collective enterprises, they clearly share a form of functionality. Felicitously, Bourdieu mentions both charisma and Weber in this context, namely that of authoritative discourse vis à vis the collective. Although he doesn’t discuss the importance to “structuring structures” of disequilibrium, he describes a comparable set of circumstances:

The relationship between language and experience never appears more clearly than in crisis situations in which the everyday order (*Alltäglichkeit*) is challenged, and with it the language of order, situations which call for an extraordinary discourse (the *Ausseralltäglichkeit* which Weber presents as the characteristic of charisma) capable of giving systematic expression to the gamut of extra-ordinary experiences that this, so to speak, objective *epoche* has provoked or made possible. (1977: 170; emphasis in original)

Bourdieu is simply restating, again in somewhat gnarled terms, the notion that heterogeneous needs—what he calls the “gamut of extraordinary experiences”—are best satisfied on a charismatic basis. Important in his emphasis, however, is the relationship of *language* to the charismatic process. Language takes many different forms, of course, from coded symbolic structures of the kind Roland Barthes explores to the aesthetically driven architectonic language of Philip Sidney’s “poesy,” even perhaps to Mircea Eliade’s collective archetypes of myth (but not Jung’s archetypes, which are prelinguistic).

In all cases, “giving systematic expression to the gamut of extraordinary experiences” aims at binding the collective charismatically in an interdependent relationship. According to Frances Gray, “For Bourdieu the process of the body’s being appropriated by the collective is to some extent

an unconscious process. Bourdieu's idea is that unconsciousness is 'the forgetting of history'. The history of the collective is implicit in its actions but members of the collective, the *habitus*, as Bourdieu puts it, are never made epistemically aware of the social structuring that engenders them as a 'natural' product of the collective. Members of the *habitus* assume the naturalness of categories which contrive to reproduce themselves. It is in the interests of the *habitus* that its history be forgotten, remain unconscious. Regularity, predictability, and abstruseness of its practices can thus be maintained without knowledge of what is happening, without epistemic awareness" (Gray 2008: 70). Gray's assessment should remind us that, as I noted when discussing routinization, charismatic groups bridle at the notion that their myths are in fact myths. No religious group refers to its doctrines or beliefs as mythological. Only disinterested observers, or outsiders of another stripe, describe the gods and laws of particular groups as myth—and they say this usually with clinical coolness or with snide hostility.

"Regularity, predictability, and abstruseness," as Gray puts it, indeed exist in the collective, or in the *habitus* if you prefer, but not one of them is actually permanent. Charisma imbues regular, predictable, abstruse practices with numinous value, so that members of the collective experience, and *contribute to* the bond that holds them together as an exclusionary group. They might not experience this bond "epistemically," whatever that means outside the realm of disinterested speculation. "Epistemic awareness" is not an absolute value, as Gray seems to think. It only exists abstractly, since the episteme itself is an impossible concept to reduce to concrete terms. In fact, if we pay attention to the passive verbs in Gray's passage, the same kinds of questions we've been asking all along arise. For instance, who is managing all this abstruseness? Who creates and maintains the practices? The "unconscious collective" makes little sense except as ideology. Ritual practices are processural, and the process must be managed. Gray goes on to say that "An effect of restricting epistemic awareness is that collective members develop the illusion that they are authors of their own being, that they can anticipate the outcomes of their actions and will see themselves as agents. What agents are actually doing exceeds their conscious intentions because they are engaged in reproducing the objective ends of the *habitus*" (Gray 2008: 70).

There is nothing wrong with this last statement. It just doesn't go far enough. If the *corpus agens* were to exist in the realm of a shared delusion, then it would be utterly cut off from social life. They would be like Satan and the fallen angels in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, "authors to themselves

in all / Both what they judge and what they choose . . . / Till they enthrall themselves" (lines 122–23; 125). The implication of such a deluded notion of self-authoring—a mortal mistake in *Paradise Lost*—begs the question of awareness. Satan has the "epistemic awareness" to choose the right way, but he has clearly forgotten history. The result is a charismatically flawed disaster, his group of followers accepting the delusion (with one exception, Abdiel), and therefore choosing wrong and plunging forever downward from heaven. But the poem is more of an object lesson in charisma and choice than a characterization of an epistemically structured *habitus*. It may be that such extraordinary moments of delusion occur in reality, as in Jonestown—that is, moments in which history and reality are completely obliterated. But, by and large, the bond that links the collective, and the charismatic processes that produce a group's myths and rituals, remain in necessary contact with the concrete realities—including, *pace* Gray, epistemic reality. "Agents," to reiterate the Weberian dictum, make deliberate choices and effect change in the world, even as members of collectives, *habitus*, or charismatically managed groups. Bourdieu himself observes a similar phenomenon: "One of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of habitus is the production of a commonsense world endowed with the *objectivity* secured by consensus on the meaning (*sens*) or practices in the world, in other words the harmonization of agents' experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression, individual or collective (in festivals, for example), improvised or programmed (commonplaces, sayings), of similar or identical experiences" (Bourdieu 1977: 80).

Paradoxically, a "commonsense world" is precisely the world of ritual. The practice of relatively rational behavior transforms the arbitrariness of rituals into a "natural," commonsense phenomenon—but only among believers already experiencing a charismatic bond. Clifford Geertz once pointed out that "In religious belief and practice a group's ethos is rendered intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs the world view describes, while the world view is rendered emotionally convincing by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs peculiarly well-arranged to accommodate such a way of life" (Geertz 1973: 89–90). Geertz is right, and the notion of a state of affairs "peculiarly well-arranged" more than adequately describes the administration of mild entropy which serves to sustain a group "ethos." Myth systems depend on such peculiar arrangements. And the rituals attached to those myth systems, rituals which are continually improvised upon and revised by local leaders to keep them "emotionally convincing,"



at once bind followers in an exclusionary group and, because of their relatively rational status, naturalize highly normative practices.

### All Divinity is Local

It comes as no surprise if I say that all divinity is local. But the statement carries the proviso that *if* divinity is in fact local, then two things must be true: first, the relationship between universal gods and parishes, cults, renewal movements, and so forth has to reflect a viable link between the historical “archetype” and the living myth; and second, the administration of divinity would by necessity differ from place to place. The localization of divinity, therefore, would involve, not so much “varieties of religious experience” (although that might be a by-product), as varieties of *charismatic group* experience. And, make no mistake, the latter is considerably different from the former, which any study of past myth systems brings abundantly to light. Here’s Bourdieu again, on the subject of Greek religion: “the rites and myths of the Greek tradition tend to receive entirely different functions and meanings depending, for example, on whether they give rise to rationalizing, ‘routinizing’ ‘readings’, with corps of scholars, to inspired reinterpretations, with the magi and their initiatory teachings, or to rhetorical exercises, with the first professional professors, the Sophists. It follows that, as a point of method, any attempt to reconstruct the original meaning of a mythical tradition must include analysis of the laws of the deformations to which the various successive interpreters subject it on the basis of their systems of interests” (1977: 231n111).

But Bourdieu misses the point to some extent. It is not only the hermeneutic vagaries that assign different functions to rites and myths—“rationalizing, ‘routinizing’ ‘readings’”—but also the transformations of myths and rites themselves, transformations introduced “*in illo tempore*” to sustain various cults and keep cult leaders in power. We cannot reconstruct these transformations except on a piecemeal basis, which doesn’t offer much help in establishing the all-important relationship between universal deities and local administrators, priestesses, or diviners, and the ritual observances they institute. But, to misquote Hamlet, perhaps these transformations are better tracked in the breach than in the observance.

Let me offer an extraordinary example of what we might call “de-ritualization.” Or, to keep to the Weberian terms I have been using, this de-ritualization might also be thought of as a unique repersonalization of a god—euhemerism in reverse in the mid-twentieth century. In the

immediate aftermath of World War II in Japan, General MacArthur, who was the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), along with his staff, arranged first for a radio address by the defeated Emperor Hirohito and then for a “humanizing” tour of the country. The radio address, which was the first time the emperor’s voice had been heard by the Japanese people, was later issued as an official document: “On New Year’s Day 1946, Hirohito formally renounced his divinity in a deftly crafted Imperial Rescript. ‘The ties between Us and Our people’, the Royal statement said, ‘are not predicated on the false conception that the Emperor is divine and that the Japanese people are superior to other races and fated to rule the world’” (Takemae Eijii 2002: 236). The idea of the Rescript was to humanize the emperor, who, it must be understood, was the equivalent of a god to the Japanese people. He represented the culmination of Yamato identity, an exclusionary ethnic status in the region. As John Dower explains, “The charisma of the imperial institution was undeniably awesome. Even the Communists stumbled, foundered, and made fools of themselves when it came to the emperor” (Dower 1999: 279). The imperial myth traced its roots to a mythical emperor, Jemmu, said to be descended from the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu. Both the myth and the emperor’s divinity were targets of the Allied attempt to humanize and therefore to assign culpability to the emperor. SCAP used several different approaches. First, on August 15, 1945, came the radio speech, which in itself constituted a revelation among the Japanese. The emperor, by definition and tradition a divinity, never spoke to the ordinary citizens. His status as a charismatically endowed descendant of deities prevented any humanizing, or contaminating, contact with the people.

The radio speech and the Imperial Rescript broke with a longstanding tradition and smashed the rituals associated with imperial visibility. Perhaps the most significant emblem of these smashed rituals was the notorious photograph taken of MacArthur and Hirohito on September 27, 1945 to mark the historic occasion of the surrender. The picture circulated in all the major dailies on September 29, to the astonishment and outrage of many Japanese.

Takemae Eijii explains that this “Front-page coverage, with the photo prominently displayed, caused a national sensation, for the monarch was sacrosanct, a ‘manifest deity’ (*akitsu-mikami*), and loyal subjects were taught to avert their eyes even from the veiled Imperial portraits kept in schools and public offices. For the authorities, the graphic image was sacrilege” (Takemae 2002: 236). Takemae’s description indicates the extraordinary character of the confrontation between the Allied Powers and Hirohito.



**FIGURE 1** Photograph of MacArthur and Hirohito taken on September 27, 1945

He was patently a “manifest deity” in Japan, a charismatic presence whose bond to the populace was equivalent to that of cultic worship. This concept not only threatened the Allied Powers, but was virtually impossible for democratized ideologues to understand. At first, therefore, SCAP’s efforts to humanize Hirohito’s power met with little success, in large measure because much of what they did was taken as insulting to a deity and destructive to the charismatic bond. The photograph said it all:

The diminutive Hirohito, a youngish 44, stood stiffly in formal “claw-hammer” morning coat, cravat and striped pants next to a relaxed, avuncular MacArthur, 65, dressed casually in khaki with no insignia of rank, hands in hip pockets, collar open. Appalled, Home Minister Yamazaki Iwao and his Police Bureau censors order the papers confiscated and attempted to suppress the demeaning photo by invoking Japan’s *lèse-majesté* law, Crimes Against the Imperial Household. (Takemae 2002: 236)

The Allied Powers quickly blocked the confiscation of the newspapers, and the photograph circulated widely. The damage to the emperor’s image—or godhead—is difficult to measure in precise terms. Yet it seems certain that, ironically, the photo represented a kind of iconoclastic image—that is, the destruction of a divine image *by* an image.

But the Allied Powers wanted more than the destruction of imperial divinity. As Dower puts it, “the occupation authorities chose not merely to detach the emperor from his holy war, but to resituate him as the center of their new democracy” (Dower 1999: 276). Anathema to imperial rule, the very idea of democracy curtailed the emperor’s power and rendered him a weak bureaucratic presence rather than an absolute monarch. “The political and ideological ramifications of this magical transformation were enormous,” Dower observes, adding that things did not go as planned because “Justice was rendered arbitrary. Serious engagement with the issue of war responsibility was deflected,” leaving both emperor and populace with a “muddled” political consciousness (1999: 276).

Moreover, in their effort to transform the emperor into a “manifest human,” to use Dower’s phrase, the Allied Powers further muddled the highly ritualized relationship of “manifest deity” to ordinary mortals. Allied Headquarters decided that the emperor “should literally descend to the level of his subjects by touring the country and mingling with the poor, hungry, and wretched” (Dower 1999: 330). Inevitably, these tours also met with mixed success, muddling rather than clarifying the relationship between a hereditary charismatic “god/king” and the figurehead monarch of a democratically ruled, but occupied, country. The trouble partly stemmed, as Shakespeare puts it in *Richard II*, from the fact that it was impossible to “wash the balm off from an anointed king.” Hirohito’s countryside tours, which were meant to be nondescript, “inevitably,” Dower says, “carried the special aura of being *gyōkō* or ‘august imperial visits.’” He adds that these tours “also marked the beginning of what became known as the ‘mass-communications emperor system’—the transformation of the monarch into a celebrity” (Dower 1999: 330).

Nevertheless—that is, despite the heavy-handedness of SCAP’s humanizing efforts—the emperor’s tours met with a unique kind of success. The tours lasted 165 days and covered approximately 33,000 kilometers, bringing the once-deified emperor into awkward contact with people he had never spoken to before, and who, by the same token, had never entertained the notion of standing next to a god (cf. Dower 1999: 330). But a strange thing happened. As the emperor’s godly charisma was obliterated by the humanization campaign, his personal charisma grew. In a sense, SCAP’s plan reversed the normal course of the charismatic process in myth systems. The emperor’s charisma was *de-routinized* and his charismatic authority was repersonalized. According to Dower, “the purpose of the tours [was] to drive the wedge, meld emperor and people, and secularize popular veneration of the throne” (1999: 330–31). But, he adds,

“Emperor Hirohito carried out these engagements with such stolid, uncomplaining discomfort that, in unanticipated ways, he actually became an intimate symbol of the suffering and victimization of the people” (Dower 1999: 331).

This is a rare phenomenon. To observe in the breach of ritual the charismatic heart of a group’s relationship to a once remote and depersonalized figure provides a unique opportunity to see “pure” charisma reinvested in a human being. As might be expected, the charismatic authority of the emperor depended on the introduction of disequilibrium into the group equation, a disequilibrium or instability managed by the emperor himself in his “stolid, uncomplaining discomfort.” Indeed, almost without trying, the emperor was cast as an ascetic figure, a martyr with whose charismatic suffering the Japanese citizens could identify. The emperor’s divinity became consummately local and *new* rituals were born from it. The relatively rational behavior of the past—both distant and recent—was transformed into a new set of relatively rational criteria. It would be difficult to find a better example of managed entropy and charismatic intervention.

## Afterword: There Are Charismas Everywhere

As I noted earlier in an earlier chapter, legend has it that the pre-Socratic philosopher Thales once remarked, with some despair, “Everything is full of gods.” What he meant, I think, was that it was impossible to build a rational, explanatory philosophy when surrounded by myth, supernatural belief, and shamanistic priesthood. For the same reason, though less despairingly, we might say there are charismas everywhere. This statement is not meant to concede to Philip Rieff’s notion of “spray-on” charisma, a derogatory term that rejects more or less all secular charismas. Rather, to say that there are charismas everywhere is meant to suggest the range of charismatic beliefs structuring the social world.

As we have seen, charismatic beliefs grow in tandem with charismatic myth systems. But we should also acknowledge that, paradoxically, charisma burgeons in epochs of “demythification,” when religious, political, revolutionary-military, or even academic groups declare themselves to be myth-free. As Eliade observed, “At a certain moment in History—especially in Greece and India but also in Egypt—an elite begins to lose interest in . . . *divine history* and arrives (as in Greece) at the point of no longer believing in the *myths* while claiming still to believe in the *Gods*” (Eliade 1963: 111; capitalization and emphasis in original). The result of this division of gods from myth, according to Eliade, a demythification which drew belief away from narrative discourse, was that mythologies “could no longer represent for the respective elites of those countries what they had represented for their forefathers”; instead of the mythologies, “for these elites the ‘essential’ was no longer to be sought in the history of the Gods but in a ‘primordial situation’ preceding that history” (Eliade 1963: 111). “We witness,” he adds, “an attempt to go beyond mythology as divine history and to reach a primal source from which the real had flowed, to identify the womb of Being”; the *regressus*, as he puts it, could no longer be obtained by ritual means, but now required “an effort of thought” (Eliade 1963: 111–12).

I would call this little tale a fantasy of demythicization. The so-called “effort of thought” that replaced cosmogonic thinking is only—yet once more—an example of a “high-carat piece of logos.” Demythicization is always already remythicization. We cannot overemphasize this point, in particular in the realm of charismatic analysis. An attempt to expunge myth but to retain divinity requires the rehabilitation of a charismatic myth, and with that rehabilitation come all the structuring elements of charisma. Eliade concedes, finally, that mythological thought could not be banished in Greece: “it is difficult to imagine a radical outmoding of mythological thought as long as the prestige of ‘origins’ remains intact and as long as *forgetting* what took place *in illo tempore*—or in a transcendental World—is still regarded as the chief obstacle to knowledge or salvation” (Eliade 1963: 112; capitalization and emphasis in original). This has begun to sound familiar, the same Eliadean formula of archetypes we discussed earlier, except that in this case Eliade has added demythicization. Absent from Eliade’s analysis is the recognition that the trace of “prestige” constitutes a charismatic manifestation, a means by which belief can be organized and whose symbolization and routinization consolidate a group bond—even if the rationale for the bond is a declaration of freedom from myth.

One wonders what Eliade thought of the Italian Futurists, whose militantly aesthetic credo involved an explicit forgetting of the past. The Futurists were overt, exaggerated demythicizers. Would Eliade have believed that they succeeded in their rejections, that they somehow managed to remain charismatically imbued and, at the same time, myth-free? F. T. Marinetti, the self-declared and generally acknowledged leader of the movement, set out to shed the binding strictures of tradition and to embrace the dynamism of the present. Futurism was a consummately charismatic movement—but a charismatic movement with a fatal flaw. Because the Futurists rejected ritual, regulation, tradition, and precedent, they failed (or refused) to routinize or even depersonalize their undeniable charisma. They offer a unique example of a charismatic movement born in revolutionary fervor, deliberately overturning everyday routines and historical (aesthetic) precedents, but evaporating without a routinized set of symbols and rituals with which a next generation might continue the movement. Their relationship to myth, and particularly to charismatic myth as an ongoing organizational structure, is therefore highly problematic.

Marinetti believed in, or at least expressed belief in, a dizzying series of contradictory ideas. He called for anarchy matched with patriotism, celibacy and male sexual domination, the beauty of violence, masterpieces without

the immortality of art. His views on “permanent revolution” were, to say the least, quirky:

The masses still love street demonstrations and noisy colorful processions more than anything else. I believe that our race, more than any other, would love to have these violent and tragic, but also revolutionary demonstrations, as well as bloody battles, *on a permanent basis* and always *on the streets* (because after the spectacle—crush punch thrash police arrest fisticuffs revolver shots—people can go and have dinner and recount what they have seen and done, and then go *to bed* to have a good fuck!)—Revolution is an intermittent war, with the evening spent in the bosom of the family and in bed with the wife. (Marinetti 2006: 438–39n21; emphasis in original)

Certainly this is not the permanent revolution of Marx or Lenin, or even Sorel’s myth-driven general strike. This is an awkward hybrid of permanence and routine in which neither the revolutionary fervor nor the domestic bliss actually merge. Marinetti, as in much of his writing, weaves his own myth of the future, but clearly refuses to knuckle under to the demands of charismatic routinization in imagining his ideal of permanence.

We can most forgivingly call Marinetti a Pan-Italianist, although he was in reality—if we are looking for epithets—patently racist and misogynist (and indeed his movement was later linked to fascism, though not entirely fairly). Among many other offensive attitudes, for instance, he castigates the Parisian and Italian tangos (of all things) as the “savage felinity of the Argentine race, stupidly domesticated, morphinized, powdered over. To possess a woman,” he insists, “is not to rub against her but to penetrate her” (Marinetti 1991: 77). Important here (beyond the weird racial claims) is Marinetti’s fixation on the crucial role aesthetic participation plays in the dynamic revolution of society. The ghost of mythopoesis invades virtually all his writings. Marinetti was a political activist throughout his life, and eventually served as a soldier (and as such embraced the routinized symbols of Italian nationalism), but he made his name by attacking the literary charisma of past generations and of reigning Italian *litterati*, such as Gabriele D’Annunzio. In “War, the World’s Only Hygiene” (1911–1915), he raged:

One must at all costs combat D’Annunzio, because with all his great skill he has distilled the four intellectual poisons that we want to abolish forever: 1) the sickly, nostalgic poetry of distance and memory; 2) romantic sentimentality drenched with moonshine that looks up adoringly to the



ideal of Woman-Beauty; 3) obsession with lechery, with the adulterous triangle, the pepper of incest, and the spice of Christian sin; 4) the professorial passion for the past and the mania for antiquity and collecting. (Marinetti 1991: 76)

In opposition to these “intellectual poisons” Marinetti placed “Futurist lyricism” (among whose heroes were Walt Whitman and other propagators of free verse). Precisely, however, Marinetti describes Futurist lyricism in terms that have a familiar ring: “The Futurist lyricism, a perpetual dynamism of thought, an uninterrupted current of images and sounds, is alone able to express the ephemeral, unstable, and symphonic universe that is forging itself in us and with us” (Marinetti 1991: 76).

He might well be describing a dissipative structure in the offing. The charismatic force of Marinetti’s “perpetual dynamism” is evident, and the “ephemeral, unstable” universe might well represent an organizational structure functioning through managed disequilibrium. In one of his Futurist Manifestos, on “The New Religion-Morality of Speed,” Marinetti links the dynamism to religious feeling. He is exalting the manufactured over the natural, praising motors, electricity, and the wresting of liquid fuels from the earth. “Tortuous paths,” he says, “roads that follow the indolence of streams and wind along the spines and uneven bellies of mountains, these are the laws of the earth. Never straight lines; always arabesques and zigzags. Speed finally gives to human life one of the characteristics of divinity; *the straight line*” (Marinetti 1991: 102–103). The resistance to nature in this passage has the earmarks of charisma in its early stage of revolutionary novelty. But there is more to it than revolution alone. Marinetti suggests that, thanks to the implementation of speed in modern life, the straight line acquires “one of the characteristics of divinity.” The introduction of divinity into the equation seems to tap into a source beyond the humanly made, beyond the electric and the manufactured. It is as if Marinetti were fashioning a new kind of numinous archetype—in both the Eliadean and the Jungian mode—an archetype that simultaneously has a presence as part of the charismatic social revolution and as an essential (even primordial) link to godhead.

The idea of divinity in speed captures Marinetti’s habitual charismatic mythicization—or remythicization, if we read his statement as a revision of the romantic authority of nature. A remythicization as powerful as this, one that utterly destabilizes a fundamental aesthetic worldview, automatically introduces a dissipative situation—which was of course Marinetti’s aim. Cinzia Sartini Blum has pointed out that “From the beginning, the futurist

program transcended the literary realm in its efforts to orchestrate collective action, extend the agency of art beyond its traditional confines, and affirm the supremacy of Italian ‘genius’” (Blum 1996: 41). Marinetti’s program might have attempted to transcend the literary realm, but in the final analysis it always carried an aesthetic burden. More to the point for charismatic studies, the program’s ability to “orchestrate collective action” had only limited success, in large measure because the management of the Futurist’s dissipatively structured movement refused to develop routinizing elements of self-sustaining authority. Blum notes that “Marinetti’s disruption of syntax and other linguistic habits coexists with reconstructive efforts. Similarly, the theme of destructive violence that pervades his work is inextricably linked to notions of creative progress and the construction of new myths: the utopia of multiplied, metallized man, immunized against love and death; the celebration of technological advances—life in the industrial city, ‘electric war,’ mechanized agriculture; and the exaltation of the all-powerful but controllable machine, which replaces woman as the ideal of beauty and as the object of man’s narcissistic love” (Blum 1996: 41–42). That’s quite a program, much of it unobjectionable (“mechanized agriculture,” for example), and much of it misguided in the extreme. But the program would not *be* a program if not for the exaltation, for it is in that posture of enthusiasm that we locate the charismatic element of the Futurist revolution.

So, did Marinetti in fact construct new myths? And if so, did he construct them in such a way that they would survive as myths? The answer to the first question is almost definitely affirmative. The answer to the second, though always more complicated, would probably be that he failed to construct lasting myths, failed, in other words, to depersonalize his charismatic mission—and a mission it certainly was—so that his creatively fostered dissipative structure could be extended beyond its immediate impact. This is not meant as a criticism of the aesthetic movement itself, which clearly had an impact on art and even literature—though we tend to remember Boccioni, de Chirico, Léger, and the Russian Malevich before the movement’s writers. But in certain ways the Futurists were without question farseeing. As Marjorie Perloff puts it in her preface to Marinetti’s writings, “Only in the light of the latest evolutions in the arts—of McLuhan and Cage, of Tinguely’s self-destroying machines, of the marriage of art and technology consummated in E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology) . . . does the seemingly incoherent mass of Futurist divination begin to compose itself into the remarkable act of foresight it has proven to be” (cf. Marinetti 1991: 13). In terms of charismatic value, Perloff’s remark

damns the Futurists by faint praise. If indeed their “mass . . . of divination” has had an influential afterlife, that afterlife owes little to the Futurist’s own efforts to construct a lasting myth. The dynamism of Marinetti’s Futurist lyricism, the self-conscious fostering of overturned romantic values—the poetry of moonshine and the indolent, natural landscape—died, as Weber would have predicted, a slow death at the hands of economic necessity and everyday routine. The lack of a charismatic myth system that *compromised* with the existing economy (including the economy of ideas) resulted in the not unexpected extinction of Marinetti’s personal mission as his pure charisma waned.

Marinetti had a dream of charismas everywhere. But that dream, for all its creative originality, was, not by coincidence, a self-destroying machine. Charisma can have a thousand faces, and like the myths it foments and eventually supports, can appeal to countless groups in innumerable circumstances. To survive charismatically, however, the collective must inhabit the whirlwind of dissipative structures, routinized symbols, and economic rationality. The myth of eternal continuity creates itself in the ongoing remythification of charismatic endowment.

# Notes

## Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Sociologists have continued to write about charisma, as the recent publication of Philip Rieff's *Charisma: The Gift of Grace and How It Has Been Taken Away from Us* (2007) indicates. But Rieff's book, which I discuss below, was published posthumously from a manuscript largely written several decades ago; as a result, the references do not take into account research on charisma since the 1970s. Nevertheless, Rieff speaks extensively about taboos and interdicts, and while he does not engage the subject of myth and charisma per se, myth systems form the background of his (somewhat polemical) study. A recent German study, Malte Lenze's *Postmodernes Charisma: Marken und Stars statt Religion und Vernunft* (2002), addresses charisma in its various modern guises, including celebrity; the study includes a section on mythmaking as a "Charisma-Strategie" (2002: 187–93). There have been several literary studies that use charisma as organizing features in their arguments. For example, C. Stephen Jaeger in his *Envy of Angels* (1994) examines medieval ideals as manifestations of what he terms "charismatic culture." David Bergeron has applied paradigms of charismatic transformation to Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. And recently, in a wide-ranging exploration of the emergence of modern universities, William Clark has published *Academic Charisma and the Origin of the Research University* (2006). As in Rieff's book, myth forms the background to these studies, but is never made the primary subject of examination.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the background material in the rest of this section is drawn from my *Charismatic Authority in Early Modern English Tragedy* (2000), esp. 1–20.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Arthur Schweitzer (1984): 312: "While Weber provided the name of charismatic rulership and mentioned most charismatic and a few noncharismatic features . . . the distinction between major and minor types of synergistic charisma is missing in his treatment. . . . More deplorable are the deficiencies of his theory of charisma. He merely compared two phases of pure and routinized charisma"; and Edward Shils (1982): 118–25, esp. 124: "Weber had a pronounced tendency to segregate the object of attributed charisma, to see it almost exclusively in the most concentrated and intense forms, to disregard the possibility of its dispersed and attenuated existence."

<sup>4</sup> In his *Canon Law*, Libero Gerosa includes a section titled "The Ecclesiological-Constitutional Role of *Charisma*." His discussion both validates the myth of the charisms and, by implication, denies its status as *fictio*. For example: "The Vatican Council II makes sober use, when all is said and done, of the terms *Charisma* and *Charismaticus*. Paradoxically however such sobriety does not put the charisms into

the shade, but ends up by witnessing in a major way both to the specific nature of charisms in relation to the other gifts of the Holy Spirit, and their decisive ecclesiological role" (Gerosa 2002: 37). See also 39, where Gerosa becomes exercised over the division of Charism from the church: "its relationship of complementarity with ministry on the one hand shows that Charism belongs to the Constitution of the Church and on the other hand *unmasks the falsity of the opposition, of a romantic-protestant origin, between Charism and Institution*" (my emphasis). It is difficult not to see the lineaments of a myth system at work in Gerosa's insistence on the inseparability of the charisms and the church. In fact, he makes this explicit: "unlike the modern State, the Church does not only not possess a formal Constitution but its material Constitution contains a structuring element which does not permit the identification of the Constitution with the Institution. This structuring element is Charism which, being given by the Holy Spirit to the Church to build up the communion through the realisation of the fruitful equilibrium of the institutional bipolarity (clergy and laity) which characterises it, develops a pivotal ecclesiological role between Institution and Constitution; a role which reveals all of its constituent force in relation to the construction of the *communio*" (Gerosa 2002: 41).

- <sup>5</sup> In his study of South American tribal cultures, Lawrence Sullivan explains it this way: "It is no longer credible to think that the unique structures of human being may be discovered if science can only penetrate beyond the contingent images of separate cultures. Culture is not a discardable cloak draped over human nature. Rather, culture *is* the specifically human condition, the way in which humankind understands itself. One cannot be human without being a cultural being" (1988: 230; emphasis in original). Although here Sullivan is speaking less of agency per se than of the inseparability of cultural production from cultural being, later in his book—for instance, in the discussion of the Pajonal Campa tribe's rebellions during the eighteenth century—he describes figures who are clearly endowed with the capacity and will so vital to Weber's conception.
- <sup>6</sup> They add the following: "an account of tradition that considers its synchronic employment as a strategy of legitimation" requires that "we understand synchrony as a position in complex historical events" (4). They cite Lincoln on the notion of the conjuncture of speakers, audience, staging, props, and "historically and culturally conditioned expectations": "the synchrony implied by this sort of 'conjunction' is not that of Saussure or Lévi-Strauss," according to Weiss and Grieve; "it is not an ahistorical 'pure' synchrony which determines history, but is itself constructed through history and therefore it is in constant flux" (4). This last statement does some injustice to Saussure's notion of synchrony, perhaps, in that the notion of purity never really arises in the *Cours*. Saussure recognized that *langue*, which he represented by the synchronic plane, was subject to change. His innovation was to see that plane as consistently uniform and complete in opposition to the interventions of diachronic (linguistic) events. To seek a parallel between the synchronic plane and tradition, as Weiss and Grieve do, and at the same time to revise synchrony to mean a structure "in constant flux" only confuses the issue.
- <sup>7</sup> The word "symbol" can be problematic, because, as Maurice Bloch points out, it combines the quite different use of the word in psychology and linguistics as

opposed to the way it is used in anthropology. In the former cases, following Saussure, a symbol is produced from the arbitrary relationship of signifiers and signifieds, while in the latter use a symbol has a more direct representation. Bloch's objection is that when these two analytic approaches are not distinguished cognition "is introduced by the back door" (1989: 110). This is a valid objection, and a danger when we try to separate ritual conduct from individual determination. Yet, in the case of charismatic symbols, it must be emphasized that some component of choice and individual determination accompanies the *metanoia* of followers even under apparently ritual circumstances. The symbols that leaders deploy, such as the Roman fasces or the crescent moon of Islam, carry weight as representations of a particular charism; even as these symbols become increasingly petrified with the routinization of the leader's authority, the symbols retain meaning which followers appreciate and comprehend presumably as thinking human beings. This is not to endorse a Kantian view that cognition must follow all action, but rather to suggest that, at least in the presence of exceptional, supernatural, *charismatic* phenomena, a cognitive element is needed to embrace important symbols. (Again I would invoke Weber's observation that "we are *cultural beings*, endowed with the capacity and the will to take a deliberate attitude toward the world and lend it *significance*" [Weber 1949: 81].) The impingement of environmental factors, and the effacement of charismatic immediacy—as in institutionalized Christianity, for instance—never entirely stifles the cognitive element. But I do not want to become embroiled in the analytic confusion that Bloch identifies. There's no question that the manipulation of charismatic symbols can be analyzed as a discursive construct, that is, in terms of the interplay of sign and signified, as is common in structural anthropology (e.g., Geertz 1973). But insofar as I have serious doubts about the concept of the arbitrary which is so fundamental to structuralism and poststructuralism (cf. Falco 2005), and since in any case my approach is neither social-psychological nor linguistically based, I will try to use the word "symbol" in its more restricted sense.

<sup>8</sup> Speaking of Christian missionaries in Madagascar, Bloch notes the prevalence of ancestor worship even among the converted. It may be that certain forms of ancestor worship (which is traditional in many cultures) have a charismatic component, although, as Bloch adds, there is also a humaneness to the practice. Citing a study on Africa, which he compares to Madagascar, he explains that "behaviour toward dead ancestors is apparently fundamentally no different than it is toward living fathers or elders. The motivations, emotions and understanding of elders and ancestors are assumed to be the same. Ancestors are simply more difficult to communicate with" (Bloch 2005: 110).

<sup>9</sup> The anthropological debates on cognitive relativity and the relationship of cognition to cultural change are relevant here. Cf. especially, Bloch 1989: 1–18; and "Are Religious Beliefs Counter-Intuitive" (Bloch 2005: 103–122). See Chapter 2 for a discussion of cognition and charisma.

<sup>10</sup> The secret speech caused considerable trouble in Chinese–Russian relations. To begin, the Chinese Communist Party Delegation "was neither given advance warning nor allowed to attend the session" (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals 2006: 4; 483Fn5). In fact, the CCP read the speech in a translation of the *New York Times* text; the *Times* had obtained a copy of the speech from the Central Intelligence

Agency. According to MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, the exclusion from the secret session, the association between Stalin's cult of personality and Mao, and the tearing-down of the obvious leader of the Communist world angered the Chinese—and for good reason, one would suppose. But Khrushchev's aim in suddenly destabilizing the Communist world, and realigning group response in areas he was able to manage, seems to have had less to do with Chinese–Russian relations than with Kremlin politics. Nevertheless, by excluding the Chinese, Khrushchev transformed the Russians who were privy to his speech into an even closer-knit, embattled group.

## Chapter 1

- <sup>1</sup> See Schweitzer 1984: 28: “We shall speak of synergistic charisma when the charismatic and noncharismatic features interact in such a way as to either maintain or strengthen the charismatic component of the interaction.” Schweitzer goes on to enumerate instances when synergistic charisma prevails, such as in politics, in the use of mass media, and when charismatic and legitimate authority are linked. The synergy at work in these instances reflects a process similar to the use of *logos* to sustain *mythos*.
- <sup>2</sup> The opposition of *mythos* to *logos*, or the supposed progression from one to the other, has tended to pit the development of the individual (or the self) against the power of myth to hypnotize the collective. As early as Plato the relation of the self to myth came under scrutiny, and, in different form, the same scrutiny continues in contemporary myth. An extreme of the argument for the individual can be found in the *Phaedrus*, where Plato concludes that the interpretation of myth is irrelevant to understanding the self, that the power of myth cannot be rationalized or analyzed away; rather, one must move beyond myth toward *logos*, toward self-examination through dialectic and reason. (Plato, 1:235–36; *Phaedrus*, Sec. 229–230). Socrates refers to the renowned “Delphian inscription” (“Know thyself”) as a criterion for rejecting myth. (This reference is either a deliberate irony on Plato's part, or one or both philosophers are blind to the possibility that the oracle—*Apollo's* oracle—might itself be a purveyor of myth.) “We cannot hope,” Cassirer notes, summarizing Plato's argument, “to ‘rationalize’ myth by an arbitrary transformation and reinterpretation of the old legends of the deeds of gods or heroes. All this remains vain and futile. In order to overcome the power of myth we must find and develop the new positive power of ‘self-knowledge’. We must learn to see the whole of human nature in an ethical rather than in a mythical light” (Cassirer 1955a: 70). Several objections come to mind in considering Plato's argument, not least the privation of cognitive freedom implied by such an absolute opposition of self-knowledge to myth.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. Bloch 2005: 107, on the difference, or similarity under certain circumstances, between the phrases “to believe in” and “to believe that”: “the phrase ‘to believe in’ is only appropriate for a particular type of counter-intuitive claim, typical of certain religions, of which Christianity is the most obvious example, where ‘to believe in’ *should* be, but *is* not, the same as ‘to believe that’” (emphasis in original).

- <sup>4</sup> See Sperber 1982, esp. 164 on the “at best vague and at worst empty” use of the term “belief,” and moreover of the relation of this term to “rational.”
- <sup>5</sup> See Carver 1998: 55; and for his alternate translation, somewhat different, though still amply metaphorical, see 14: “A spectre stalks the land of Europe—the spectre of communism. The powers that be—Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police—are in holy alliance for a witchhunt.”
- <sup>6</sup> Marx and Engels 1970: 41: “Alle Mächte des alten Europa haben sich zu einer heiligen Hetzjagd gegen dies Gespenst verbündet, der Papst und der Zar, Metternich und Guizot, französische Radikale und deutsche Polizisten.”
- <sup>7</sup> Marx and Engels 1970: 41: “Es ist hohe Zeit, daß die Kommunisten ihre Anschauungsweise, ihre Zwecke, ihre Tendenzen vor der ganzen Welt offen darlegen und dem Märchen vom Gespenst des Kommunismus ein Manifest der Partei selbst entgegenstellen.”
- <sup>8</sup> In a now controversial section of *Economy and Society*, Weber defines the ancient Hebrews as a “pariah people”: “a distinctive hereditary social group lacking autonomous political organization and characterized by internal prohibitions against commensality and intermarriage originally founded upon magical, tabooistic, and ritual injunctions” (1978: 1.493). He links Judaism with Hindu caste religion, and also connects the Jews’ pariah status to their supposed exclusion from modern capitalism. Objections have been raised to nearly every aspect of Weber’s analysis, not least for its monocausal rather than multicausal implications (Barbalet 2006: 55; and 56, for a survey of “largely negative critical literature”). Following Nietzsche, Weber speaks extensively about resentment among the ancient Hebrews and about a “theodicy of the disprivileged” which “teaches that the unequal distribution of mundane goods is caused by the sinfulness and the illegality of the privileged, and that sooner or later God’s wrath will overtake them” (1978: 1.494). While it is unlikely that the dichotomy between the privileged and the pariahs was either universal or systematic, we can nonetheless imagine how such an opposition, framed in magico-religious terms, could help form a myth of afflicted status, especially when deployed as concomitant with both hereditary charisma and messianic salvation.
- <sup>9</sup> Indeed, the Serb leader Radovan Karadžić, now under indictment for war crimes, published numerous books of poetry with themes of war and tortured “warrior” identity. See Surdowski 2005: esp. 10–19.
- <sup>10</sup> As Helen M. Hintjens observes of the Rwandan genocide, which was incidentally an example of afflicted *majority* persecution, “by definition, a conscious and deliberate state strategy like genocide cannot be attributed to spontaneous outbursts of mutual antagonisms between ethnic or racial groups. Genocide may well exploit such latent antagonisms, and may create new ones, but it cannot be caused by such divisions” (Hintjens 1999: 248; cf. Newburys 1999: 296, 298). Scholars have established since 1994 that only a deliberate political plan and significant preparation from the early 1990s, as opposed to a spontaneous outburst of violence, could have been behind the massacre of Batutsi. But the posture of affliction and ethnic fear—in this case of an afflicted majority of the population, the Bahutu, by the traditionally elite Batutsi minority—clearly served as an organizing pole among the killer cadres, even though the Rwandan groups spoke the same language and shared the same culture and religion (Newburys 1999:



295; de Waal 1994: 1–2). The relationship of the contemporary charismatic exploitation of entropy situations to such offensive propaganda as the “Hamitic myth” (itself based on a lineage charismatic claim) is too complex to untangle here (Cf. Hintjens 1999: 249; Wagner 1995: 350). But we should recall, with embarrassment, the readiness with which the Western media accepted the myth of ancient ethnic and group antipathy as sufficient to explain the extraordinary violence, as if Africans are more susceptible to tribalism and ethnic myths than Western societies.

- <sup>11</sup> Although I have offered negative examples, we need not assume that the relationship between charisma and the afflicted-group myth is always manipulated with cynical intent and belligerent results. Inspiration drawn from the charismatic promise of afflicted status has produced positive results as well over the centuries, as among the black American population in the aftermath of the Civil War where oppression and isolation helped to foster a unique gospel music tradition in yet one more realignment of the martyrdom/salvationistic myth of Christianity.
- <sup>12</sup> Cf. Gourgouris 2003: xvii: “the performativity unleashed by myth ultimately undercuts the reliance on transcendental authority, which we encounter time and again in the forging of collective identification.”
- <sup>13</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, 1956): 116. Hegel includes India in this statement. I am grateful to Adriana Proser for guidance on the material dealing with China in this section.
- <sup>14</sup> Frederick W. Mote, *Intellectual Foundations of China* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989): 7. Mote adds that although Chou military supremacy lasted for only the first quarter of its dynastic history, “the Chou court continued to exercise a nominal hegemony for five hundred years more; its power derived from a mystique of legitimacy that the founding Chou figures had carefully established and that Chou civilization nurtured and enhanced” (8).
- <sup>15</sup> As Weber noted, China is not a logocentric culture. It would be interesting to know how and to what extent the absence of logocentrism contributes to Chinese cultural stability—but this is not the place to pursue such a complex set of questions.
- <sup>16</sup> See Bol 1992, esp. chapter 4.
- <sup>17</sup> In recent years, ironically, Mao’s revolution has been largely excised from Chinese secondary school textbooks, despite Mao’s continuing popularity. The new leadership in China seems to lack a clear charismatic center, though it remains patently authoritarian in the face of much conflict over social reform. The Chinese record of human rights and such civil repressions as the censorship of the internet should attest to the ongoing repressive atmosphere that has marred the country since 1948.

## Chapter 2

- <sup>1</sup> Schweitzer’s full schema delineating synergistic charisma is worth recalling: “Synergistic charisma prevails when (1) the charismatic quality is combined with political talents; (2) scope and strength of the charismatic appeal is multiplied by

the use of mass media; (3) the charismatic group transforms itself into a mass following; and (4) charismatic authority and legitimacy are linked with non-charismatic authority" (1984: 28). With the exception of number 2, which I won't be dealing with here, all of Schweitzer's categories of transformation come into play in the generation of charismatic myth systems, though not necessarily under the heading of synergistic charisma.

- <sup>2</sup> As Michael Tager explains, Barthes believed that "through myth the subordination of colonials, women, and workers appeared eternally sanctioned—one could not argue with nature. Myth obliterated the memory that peoples were once conquered, hierarchies once imposed, and objects once made. With its anonymous universal representations, myths helped shape the forms and norms that sustained everyday life" (Tager 1986: 632).
- <sup>3</sup> Shils's fullest definition of institutional charisma is this: "It is a legitimacy constituted by sharing in the properties of the 'organization as a whole' epitomized or symbolized in the powers concentrated (or thought to be concentrated) at the peak. This is 'institutional' charisma; it is not a charisma deduced from the creativity of the charismatic individual. It is inherent in the massive organization of authority" (Shils 1981: 131). Shils's conclusion is especially pertinent to my argument regarding the interdependence of charismatic group members, even under the pressures of routinization or, in this case, of reorientation of charismatic powers: "The institutional charismatic legitimation of a command emanating from an incumbent of a role in a corporate body derives from membership in the body as such, apart from any allocated, specific powers" (1981: 131).
- <sup>4</sup> Although I have quoted Clark at some length, I must confess that I have confined myself to his introduction, where he explicitly lays out his notions of traditional charisma. But, in a sense, I am giving his voluminous book short shrift. He offers a meticulously documented portrait of the development of the German system, charting the contribution to academic charisma in German universities of a vast array of factors, such as, among others, the emergence of the cloistered *convictorium* (149), the disputational examination, the "apotheosis of writing" as the "essential charismatic exhibition" for admission to seminars (176), and charismatic appointments (245–48).
- <sup>5</sup> The last sentence reads thus in German: "die charismatische Verklärung der 'Vernunft' (die ihren charakteristischen Ausdruck in ihrer Apotheose durch Robespierre fand) ist die letzte Form, welche das Charisma auf seinem schicksalreichen Wege überhaupt angenommen hat" (1972: 734).
- <sup>6</sup> Blumenberg is not the only analyst of myth to make this point, although I find his formulation felicitous. Cf. Segal, however, who, in rejecting Blumenberg's polarization of *mythos* and *logos* in his discussion of Enlightenment myth theory, points to Edward Tylor: "Far from either blind superstition or frivolous storytelling, myth for Tylor is a scrupulously logical and reflective enterprise" (Segal 1999: 143). Segal is skeptical of Blumenberg's other arguments as well, in particular those pertaining to myth and etiology.
- <sup>7</sup> See also Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Rationalisierung und Mythos bei Max Weber" (1983: esp. 391 and 393–94, where he discusses charisma; also 398–99). Mommsen analyzes the relationship of myth to rationality in Weber's thought, though he doesn't discuss myth in connection with charisma. But see Malte

Lenze's chapter, "Mythologisierung als Charisma-Strategie" in his *Postmodernes Charisma* (187–93). Lenze identifies what he terms "Mythenmarken" (e.g., "Die Marlboro-Zigarette ist damit 'Mythenmarke' par excellence" [189]; he then links this concept to "Charismatische Marken" in postmodern consumer society.

<sup>8</sup> See Jean Seznec's still valuable *Survival of the Pagan Gods*, where he points out that euhemerism flourished in the Middle Ages, though without the "polemic venom" of the early Christian writers. He calls particular attention to Isidore of Seville's seventh-century *Etymologiae* (Book 7, ch. 9): "Quos pagani deos asserunt, homines olim fuisse produntur" ("Those whom the pagans claimed to be gods, were shown to have been men at one time.") (Seznec 1953 [1940]: 14; but see 11–15). Part of Isidore's assertion comes verbatim from Augustine, *City of God* (Book 8.5), who in turn refers to Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* to cement his observation with pre-Christian authority. Cf. Ferguson's chapter on euhemerism in *Utter Antiquity* (1993: 13–22).

<sup>9</sup> The article on euhemerism in Bonnefoy's *Mythologies* was written by Jean Pépin and translated by David White.

<sup>10</sup> Hitler is quite candid about his canniness regarding the final form of the flag: "I myself—as Leader—did not want to come publicly at once with my own design, since after all it was possible that another should produce one just as good or perhaps even better. Actually, a dentist from Starnberg did deliver a design that was not bad at all, and, incidentally, was quite close to my own, having only the one fault that a swastika with curved legs was composed into a white disk" (1971: 496).

<sup>11</sup> See Benjamin (2002), 18–19, where he discusses Ludwig Klages ideas of chthonism in his *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*: "By giving substance to the mythical elements of life, by snatching them from the oblivion in which they are sunk, says Klages, the philosopher gains access to the 'primal images' [*Urbilder*]." This passage appears in Benjamin's essay on the nineteenth-century Swiss scholar Johann Jakob Bachofen, whose work on myth was rediscovered and taken up by the Nazis. Benjamin dismisses "the adaptations of Bachofen attempted by the official exponents of German fascism" (19). The essay wasn't published during Benjamin's lifetime.

<sup>12</sup> See Schweitzer (1984): 46: "Weber's ideas on charisma, published in 1921, had hardly been mastered by sociologists and remained unknown before Hitler's trial."

<sup>13</sup> *Germanentum* is difficult to translate exactly. It means "Germanicness" but the word in English does not do justice to the German concept. As Mees points out it can be compared to the notion of *romanità* (Roman-ness) which was integral to Italian fascism (cf. Mees 2004: 256). *Germanenschwärmerei* refers to excessive, "swarming" enthusiasm.

<sup>14</sup> "We are wholly convinced," they point out in their introduction, "that social freedom is inseparable from enlightened thought. Nevertheless, we believe that we have just as clearly recognized that the notion of this very way of thinking, no less than the actual historic forms—the social institutions—with which it is interwoven, already contains the seed of the reversal universally apparent today" (xiii).

<sup>15</sup> In *The Authoritarian Personality*, the Frankfurt School (*nom de plume* of Horkheimer, Adorno, and their collaborators) describes the need in certain

societies at certain times to follow a dominant figure, but they speak little about the charismatic bond and the interdependence of authority and *metanoia*. Also, the “authoritarian personality” does not necessarily have powers regarded by his (or her) followers as supernatural, transcending everyday routines—although the implication of such powers is clearly present in the Frankfurt School discussion.

<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the entire sentence in German is worth seeing: “Jedes aus dem Geleise des Alltags herausfallende Ereignis läßt charismatische Gewalten, jede außergewöhnliche Fähigkeit charismatischen Glauben aufflammen der dann im Alltag an Bedeutung wieder verliert” (1956: 2.678).

<sup>17</sup> The word *Glauben* is conventionally used to refer to religious and devotional beliefs as well as to such concepts as trust and confidence.

<sup>18</sup> Mircea Eliade remarks, with no reference to Sorel: “The general strike might be an instrument of political combat, but it has no mythical precedent, and that alone is enough to exclude it from mythical status” (1960: 25). As will be seen, Sorel does not mean for the general strike itself, or at least the general strike alone, to provide the proletariat with myths. It might be noted here that Walter Benjamin, in an article which appeared in 1921 in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* (a journal emanating from Max Weber’s circle), offered a critique of Sorel’s *Reflexions*. According to Benjamin, there was a political difference between a general political strike and a general proletarian strike, the latter being an example of less “pure” violence. See Chryssoula Kambas (1984): esp., 72–73.

<sup>19</sup> The “irresistible wave” reminds me of the last verse of Bob Dylan’s anthem, “When the Ship Comes In”:

Oh the foes will rise  
With the sleep still in their eyes  
And they’ll jerk from their beds and think they’re dreamin’  
But they’ll pinch themselves and squeal  
And know that it’s for real  
The hour when the ship comes in

Then they’ll raise their hands  
Sayin’ we’ll meet all your demands  
But we’ll shout from the bow your days are numbered  
And like Pharaoh’s tribe  
They’ll be drowned in the tide  
And like Goliath, they’ll be conquered. (Dylan 2004: 94)

Both Sorel and Dylan are romantically optimistic about the watery end of the established order, despite Yahweh’s promise to Noah that the flood will not happen again. While the song employs a series of images to threaten the end of the current order, Sorel’s text is no less emphatic in its threat. Interesting, too, that Jung maintains “water means spirit that has become unconscious” and links it to the collective mind (Jung 1990: 18–19).

<sup>20</sup> Riviale, 67: “Le mythe . . . est d’abord *héroïque*, de sorte que la révolution est d’abord affaire de représentation, avant que d’être effective; elle ne peut être effective que si la tension héroïque est intacte.”

- <sup>21</sup> Cf. Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, a book by a gay San Francisco reporter who knew Milk and others involved in his public life. He notes in his prologue that on the night of Milk's death "forty thousand tiny flames quiver in the night breeze as mourners carrying candles trudge somberly to City Hall" (1982: xvi). The mayor of San Francisco was killed at the same time as Milk, but the speakers at the vigil speak less about the "powerful mayor" than about the slain gay politician: "The emphasis surprises few in the largely homosexual crowd. The mayor had given them leadership, but Harvey Milk—the nation's first openly gay city official—had given them a dream. 'A true function of public officials is not just to pass laws and approve appropriations, but to give hope,' Harvey had said repeatedly in his five-year political career" (xvi). Hope is a vague commodity, to be sure, but it can nonetheless have organizational value in the right hands. Obama's second book, for instance, was called *The Audacity of Hope*.

## Chapter 3

- <sup>1</sup> Although there are many studies in different disciplines in which to find the idea of progress from *mythos* to *logos*, see especially the classic study by Wilhelm Nestle, *Vom Mythos zum Logos* (1942) and also Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's influential *How Natives Think* (1926), which Jung would have read as two volumes, *La Mentalité Primitive* and *Les Fonctions Mentales Dans Les Sociétés Inférieures*, published a bit earlier in French.
- <sup>2</sup> It might be added that Henderson was one of Jung's patients and also a psychoanalyst himself. He notes that when a patient he was disappointed in Jung's focus on archetypes over personal problems: "Jung did not always differentiate images reflecting archetypes *per se* from the cultural artefacts which stereotypically represent them. This led me, along with many early analysts, to explain mythologically things that belonged in the personal or the cultural sphere" (Henderson 1991: 433).
- <sup>3</sup> But cf. Walker on the "compensation" of mythology according to Jungian theory: "However much it is mediated by individual consciousness, mythology does have a valuable *social* function for Jungian theory: that of *compensation*. Just as dreams and fantasies, by bringing in material that needs to be assimilated for the sake of greater psychological equilibrium, may be said to constitute an attempt on the part of the unconscious to compensate for imbalanced aspects of the individual conscious mind, so myths may be conceived as compensating for a culture's dangerously one-sided attitudes" (Walker 2002: 97; emphasis in original). Walker, or perhaps I should say Jung, is only half right. As we have seen, charismatic myth *needs* "dangerously one-sided attitudes" to administer as dissipative structures in order to foster remythicization and routinization.
- <sup>4</sup> Jung qualifies himself on this subject in a number of places, and, as he continually insists on his empirical approach as a practicing physician, he is well aware of environmental influences, even if in generalizations he seems to draw too sharp a line between normal and abnormal. See, for example, Jung 1969: 83, a passage drawn from "Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype": "The contents of the child's abnormal fantasies can be referred to the personal mother only in

part, since they often contain clear and unmistakable allusions which could not possibly have reference to human beings. This is especially true where definitely mythological products are concerned. . . . It must be borne in mind, however, that such fantasies are not always of unmistakably mythological origin, and even if they are, they may not always be rooted in the unconscious archetype but may have been occasioned by fairytales or accidental remarks."

- <sup>5</sup> Actually, Jung himself had more than a foreboding about what was to come. He claimed to have had a visionary dream in which he "had seen fire falling like rain from heaven and consuming the cities of Germany" (Jung, *Letters* 1973, 1975: 285n1); cf. also the letter on the same page to H. G. Baynes.
- <sup>6</sup> See Thomas Singer (2004): 17, where he states that he had recently been "using the image of Baby Zeus surrounded by the *Kouretes* to illustrate the reality of the collective psyche and the power of collective emotion to generate living myths." Certainly collective emotion generates living myth, as we have seen, but the "power of the collective psyche" is itself one of those myths.
- <sup>7</sup> Weber closes the paragraph with the disclaimer that "Value-free sociological analysis will treat all these on the same level as it does the charisma of men who are the 'greatest' heroes, prophets, and saviors according to conventional judgments" (Weber 1978: 1.242).
- <sup>8</sup> The printing history of this text is important. It was first published in French in 1949, then in English in 1954 for the Bollingen series, then in a Harper Torchbooks edition in 1959, with a different title (*Cosmos and History*) and an important preface. I used the 1991 reprint of the Bollingen series text, which includes Eliade's corrections and the additional preface from the Harper Torchbooks edition.
- <sup>9</sup> Gill suggests that *in illo tempore* is the locative case of the Latin *illud tempus* (206n2), but I am inclined to see the phrase as a typical third-declension ablative. I am grateful to Walter Sherwin and Jay Freyman for confirming my intuition.
- <sup>10</sup> Gill slightly qualifies his rejection of Eliade's view on hierophanies as "evidence of an *a priori*, noumenal sacred realm": "it may be objected, of course, that things such as faith and mystery must have a place in a theory of myth and religion like Eliade's. This may be true, but if such a theory is not immediately to devalue our embodied human existence as well as our higher faculties (creativity; rational thought) that place must be nearer to the destination of the theory and not its point of departure" (2006: 28). I will not weigh in on the question of belief in the supernatural, which I consider to be deluded in any of its stages, except to say that for charismatically managed archetypal myth, "mystery" and "faith" should be seen as discrete elements to be manipulated by hierarchs.
- <sup>11</sup> Cf. my *Charismatic Authority*, 65–100, where I discuss *Richard II*.
- <sup>12</sup> For a view of archetypes in Chinese historical thought, a view deliberately in conflict with Eliade's see Francisca Cho Bantly in Patton and Doniger, 1996: 177–207. Bantly doesn't attempt to answer the question of Eliade's prejudice for certain types of myths. Rather, her aim is to demonstrate how the archetypal narrative in Chinese culture is almost the inverse of the Eliadean version. This topic is not directly related to mine, but in the course of her argument she observes that Eliade locates archetypes in narratives, which is an important point in terms of understanding the relationship of archetypes to mythopoesis.

- <sup>13</sup> Incidentally, Eliade's claim that, in Christian myth, God chooses to limit himself doesn't apply to Milton, who did not believe that God and the Son had equal knowledge. He leaned more toward Arianism, a seventeenth-century belief in the separation of the members of the Trinity.
- <sup>14</sup> In an earlier study I referred to the most significant ramification of this paradox: "emphasis on a group ideal tends to destroy the individuality of the human being at the group's core; and conversely, emphasis on the autonomy of an individual charismatic leader destroys the group" (2000: 1). The emphasis on a charismatic figure's individuality is tantamount to allowing his blessedness to remain intact, untouchable, transhistorical. But such a condition cannot exist if the mission is to be preserved among a group construed in an interdependent relationship with the leader. I referred to this unavoidable situation as the paradox of group and agency which brings into relief the dialectic of charismatic power (cf. Falco 2000: 7). Eliade and Allen describe a comparable dialectical tension in the manifestation of the sacred.
- <sup>15</sup> But see Jean-Pierre Vernant (1988: 213–14) where he speaks of the demotion of myth first to legend and then to the level of public issue, all as a result of literary manipulation. He sees the intervention of poetic revision after Homer and Hesiod, particularly in fifth-century Athens, as detrimental to the integrity of myth in part because of the introduction of paradigmatic or exemplary figures. Homer and Hesiod are exempt from this criticism—in their works myth retains its function, in Vernant's phrase, of providing answers "without ever formulating the problems" (214). The relevant question for my study would be, does the shift Vernant describes (if indeed it occurred as he supposes) deflate the charismatic immediacy of myth, thus weakening group participation while enhancing individual imitation of the paradigm? If so, then the effect on the management of myth as a dissipative structure would surely be affected. But, as I've noted numerous times, the participation in group action *as an individual* is crucial to the functioning of charismatic organizations because interdependence of followers and leaders is the hallmark of successful charismatic relationships.
- <sup>16</sup> Doty, in an effort not to throw out the baby with the bathwater, offers this solution: "The use of the term 'archetype' can be retained, if it is given a grounding with a wider semiotics and semantics of mythicity and discourse. *Archetypes are signs for a necessary exteriority of speech in which we recognize the impossibility of language speaking fully or ultimately.* Archetypes are significances shared by speaker and listener (artist and observer) who inhabit the same language world, who continually seek (and historically have sought) to bridge the ontological gap between event and meaning by metonyms that constantly slip into metaphors. (Doty 2000: 203; emphasis in original). I think there is a valuable connection between charismatic mythopoeisis and Doty's idea that archetypes are "significances shared by speaker and listener."

## Chapter 4

- <sup>1</sup> The *TANAKH*, a very well-regarded translation, renders 32:6, "Early the next day, the people offered up burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; they

sat down to eat and drink, then rose to dance.” The difference between rising to dance and rising to play is perhaps insignificant, as long as the former retains something of a negative connotation and perhaps a slight indication of sexual license.

<sup>2</sup> On Jung, see Csordas (1997): 54: “Evil spirits are sometimes described in psychological terms as ‘autonomous complexes.’ Healers cite Jung on the shadow, on the importance of spirituality, and on the healing power of imagery processes.”

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bourdieu 1972: 175: “les structures qui sont constitutives d’une type particulier d’environnement . . . et qui peuvent être saisies empiriquement sous la forme des régularités associés à un environnement socialement structuré, produisent des *habitus*, systèmes des *dispositions* durables, structures structurées prédisposées à fonctionner comme structures structurantes” (emphasis in original).



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