

## 8. Tacitus and tyranny: propaganda (Germania) and denouncement (Annales)

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Tacitus' *Germania* is one of the “one hundred most dangerous books ever written”, as Arnaldo Momigliano considered it<sup>135</sup>. “This is how we will become again, or at least some of us”<sup>136</sup>. “The ancient Germans’ standard epithets” were: “simple, brave, loyal, pure, just and honourable”<sup>137</sup>. *Germania* was a textbook taught in German schools. It was widely spread in Nazi pamphlets. It fueled with enthusiasm all sorts of people, from foot soldiers to high ranking leaders. *Germania* was held as an account of Germany and its past, widely celebrated as a magnificent monument. “However, unfortunately, it is not an account and nor is about Germany’s past”<sup>138</sup>. *Germania* was an intellectual epidemy. Therefore, we will try to detect its symptoms, its aetiology. How can we come to terms with demagoguery embedded in rhetoric? As Krebs says, “to write an intellectual epidemiology means to visit the patients and to inspect the various historical and cultural contexts in which this innocuous yet noxious text figure”<sup>139</sup>.

The description of the peoples of *Germania* by Tacitus is the same used by Greek historiographers for the Scythians and Egyptians. Ethnic purity, physical appearance, and military prowess, but also laziness and inertia are shared by many peoples. When the focus is on the peoples of *Germania*, clearly the description is circumscribed to these peoples. No other is mentioned, not even for comparison. The impression left on us is that the people of *Germania* is a second-best people, after the Roman people. Tacitus writes from the height of his high concept of himself as a Roman. We are going to start by presenting the features of the peoples of *Germania* that Tacitus invokes with regard both to their physical build, appearance, and strength,

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135 Krebs, Christopher B. (2011) 42.

136 From Himmler’s diary, 24th September 1924. Quoted by Krebs (2011) 15.

137 Krebs (2011) 20.

138 Ibid. 17.

139 Ibid. 23.

and to their, especially military, worth and how the whole, the group or collective is valued above the individual. But we shall also have the opportunity to see moral qualities highlighted by Tacitus, such as monogamy, the value of the family or the importance of women in the family. Other ancient values, like hospitality and frankness, are highlighted. Along with the positive features, Tacitus lists some other negative ones, as we shall see. The history of how Tacitus' *Germania* was received over the centuries glossed over the Germanic peoples' negative traits and widened and increased their positive qualities. What could appear negative sometimes got transformed into something positive. What we want to understand is how the text got distorted to the point of serving as a propaganda pamphlet for the Teutonic Order and later for the German people under the Third Reich. How can *Germania* be called the most dangerous book of all books, when, in truth, the history of its interpretation is the history of a misrepresentation of the text? The peoples inhabiting Roman *Germania* are not the Germans since Bismarck. Their diversity is not based on the diversity of the German *Länder*. The cultures at that time, the languages, religion, habits and costumes, legal entities, mentality, way of being, way of living, everything was different, even very different from Germany, even with all its diversity.

In Tacitus' *Germania* we can find the elements of propaganda that promote a people. The list of positive features is based on the set of values of an author who is a Roman senator and general. This criterion is what leads him to interpret the history of the Roman people, its values, its aspirations in life in society and the rejection of actions carried out in the light of negative values. The peoples of *Germania* are described on the basis of the set of values with which a Roman sees himself in his world, and its empire. It is the peoples of *Germania* that are not entirely romanized and, for this reason, one can also understand the admiration with which they are contemplated. It can even seem that excuses are being sought for the Roman military lack of success over the centuries. But Tacitus' description is not entirely positive, as we shall see. What we want to understand is how a book like *Germania* can be used as propaganda, the book where the peoples of *Germania* find their pedigree or DNA, which grants them superiority. To this end, it is important to see how the negative features are erased, glossed over or interpreted positively by all those who reviewed the text over almost two millennia. What we are going to do here is present the list of first positive and then negative features, as found in Tacitus' text. After that, we are going to try and pinpoint a number of moments in the history of how *Germania*

was received, particularly by the Third Reich. Lastly, we are going to try and redeem Tacitus from this horrible situation, to which he is foreign, by discussing some of the questions regarding racial supremacy and political propaganda, but already in his *Annales*. It is here that we shall read several passages where Tacitus denounces arrogance, dictatorship as we know it in modern times, injustices and unfairness.

### 1. The features of the peoples of *Germania* listed by Tacitus

*“For myself I am disposed to side with those who hold that the German peoples have never intermarried with alien stocks, but have always stood forth as a race rooted in the soil, pure and unlike every other”*<sup>140</sup>. *These people are only similar to themselves. No one else had their physical appearance, from which it follows that also “This is why, extraordinarily numerous as the Germans are, they all possess precisely the same physical characteristics, fierce blue eyes, red hair, and large frames which are good only for a spurt”*<sup>141</sup>.

What they no longer have is

*“they certainly have not a corresponding power of endurance for hard work, while, although inured by the nature of their climate and soil to hunger and cold, they have never learned to support heat and thirst”*<sup>142</sup>.

In the passage quoted above, we can see that the features are not entirely positive. At least on a first reading. The *Germanics* lack the ability to suffer<sup>143</sup> when performing work and crafts and are not good at enduring difficulties, thirst and heat.

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140 *“Ipse eorum opinionibus accedo qui Germaniae populos nullis aliarum nationum conubiis infectos propriam et sinceram et tantum sui similem gentem extitisse arbitrantur”* Tac. Ger. 4.1.

141 *“Unde habitus quoque corporum, tamquam in tanto hominum numero, idem omnibus: truces et caerulei oculi, rutilae comae, magna corpora et tantum ad impetum valida”* Tac. Ger. 4.2.

142 *“Laboris atque operum non eadem patientia, minimeque sitim aestumque tolerare, frigora atque inediae caelo solove adsueverunt”* Tac. Ger. 4.3.

143 Patientia, -ae. [f].

But what Tacitus tries to underline are the features making the Germanic peoples brave, to such an extent that the Romans were never able to entirely subjugate all of them at the same time, but only partially and at different times. Their military bravery is described shortly afterwards:

*“to fall back, however, provided only a man comes on again, is held to be good tactics, not cowardice. Even in a defeat, they carry off the bodies of their comrades. Throwing away the shield is the crowning disgrace, and a man who has so dishonored himself may neither take part in the rites of religion nor enter the general assembly; many such survivors from the battlefield have been known to end their shame by hanging themselves”<sup>144</sup>.*

The shame<sup>145</sup> and infamy resulting from military dishonor, retreat, relinquishing one’s shield, — metonymy for abandoning a military position and, thus, one’s companions in arms — involve a set of values corresponding positively to pride in military bravery, courage, honor, and fame obtained through military glory. These same positive and negative values make it possible to understand the boundaries, how military life provides honor and dishonor, glory and disgrace, pride and shame. These same values, even if exaggeratedly attributed to the Germanic people(s), could be easily found in various warrior peoples.

The election of their kings is the result of a meritocracy founded on military prowess or noble descent. Power is not discretionary. In fact, their military commanders gain their rank through fame and reputation. Only priests, as representatives of God, who is present in battles, are allowed to punish, and nobody else:

*“They choose their kings for their noble birth, their generals for their prowess: the king’s power is neither unlimited nor arbitrary, and the generals owe their authority less to their military rank than to their example and the admiration they excite by it, if they are dashing, if they are conspicuous, if they charge ahead of the line.*

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144 “Cedere [loco](#), [dummodo rursus instes](#), [consilii quam formidinis arbitrantur](#). [corpora suorum etiam in dubiis proeliis referunt](#). [scutum reliquisse praecipuum flagitium](#), [nec aut sacris adesse aut concilium inire ignominioso fas](#), [multique superstites bellorum infamiam laqueo finierunt”](#) Tac. *Ger.* 6.6.

145 Flagitium, -i. [n]

*But they may not execute, they may not bind, they may not even strike a delinquent; those are the privileges solely of the priests, and they do such things not as a form of military punishment nor at the generals' bidding, but as if such were the express commands of the deity whom they believe to be present on the field; and they carry with them into battle certain images and statues brought out of the sacred groves”<sup>146</sup>.*

The family is more important than its elements. The state is more important than the individual. The initiation of the young has a military form. No action, whether public or private, is performed without arms. Nevertheless, it is not usual for someone to bear arms without the city having demonstrated that they are qualified to do so. One of the princes, his father or one of his relatives equips a young man with a shield and a *frêmea*. Tacitus sees this consecration as being like the Roman ceremony where young men get their toga, the greatest honor of their youth. It is at this time that they begin to be considered part of the State, whereas, until now, they were just members of the family<sup>147</sup>.

*“Illustrious birth or great services rendered by the family may confer the rank of chief even upon mere youths; such youths associate themselves with the others whose strength is more matured and whose quality has been already put to the proof; nor is it considered to be any sort of derogation for them to be seen in a chief's body-guard. In fact, among the henchmen or retainers composing the body-guards there are varying degrees of rank conferred by the chief whom they follow, and there is an eager rivalry between the retainers for the post of honor next their chief, as well as between the different chiefs for the honor of having the most numerous and the most valiant body-guard. Here lie dignity and strength. To be perpetually surrounded by a large train of picked young warriors is a distinction in peace and a protection in war”<sup>148</sup>.*

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146 “Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt. nec regibus infinita ac libera potestas, et duces exemplo potius quam imperio, si prompti, si conspicui, si ante aciem agant, admiratione praesunt. ceterum neque animadvertere neque vincire, ne verberare quidem nisi sacerdotibus permissum, non quasi in poenam nec ducis iussu, sed velut deo imperante, quem adesse bellantibus credunt” Tac. Ger. 7.

147 “Nihil autem neque publicae neque privatae rei nisi armati agunt. sed arma sumere non ante cuiquam moris quam civitas suffecturum probaverit. tum in ipso concilio vel principum aliquis vel pater vel propinqui scuto frameaque iuvenem ornant: haec apud illos toga, hic primus iuventae honos; ante hoc domus pars videntur, mox rei publicae” Tac. Ger. 13.1.

148 “Insignis nobilitas aut magna patrum merita principis dignationem etiam adulescentulis adsignant: ceteris robustioribus ac iam pridem probatis adgregantur, nec rubor inter comites aspici. gradus quin etiam ipse comitatus

There is another set of features considered positive from Tacitus' moral point of view. Their marital faithfulness is extolled, even if the possibility of bigamy is allowed in some cases.

*“For all that, the marriage bond is strict, and feature in their mode of life is more creditable to them than this. Unlike the great majority of barbarians, they are content with one wife: very few of them have more than one, and these few exceptions are not due to wantonness; they are cases of men of high rank, to whom several matrimonial alliances have been offered from motives of policy”<sup>149</sup>.*

Today's reader may appreciate Tacitus' politically correct observations about the women. There is an elevating and a consideration of women that has its ideal in the *Valkyries*. Their attributes are physical courage and military boldness.

*“Their traditions tell that more than once, when a German line was wavering on the point of giving way, the women rallied it, urgently entreating the men to fight on, baring their breasts and crying out that their captivity was at hand. Captivity for their women is a thing the men abhor far more than for themselves; so that, as a matter of fact, we always obtain the firmest hold over those states which are compelled to include amongst the hostages they send us some maidens of noble birth”<sup>150</sup>.*

The high regard they have for their women appears clear, in the light of the women's marital obligations, in both peacetime and wartime. This is evident as regards dowries, the way women take their marriage vows, and how they bring up their children and give them what accrues to them through inheritance so that the latter also leave this to their descendants.

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*habet, iudicio eius quem sectantur; magnaue et comitum aemulatio, quibus primus apud principem suum locus, et principum, cui plurimi et acerrimi comites. haec dignitas, hae vires: magno semper electorum iuvenum globo circumdari in pace decus, in bello praesidium. nec solum in sua gente cuique, sed apud finitimas quoque civitates id nomen, ea gloria est, si numero ac virtute comitatus emineat; expetuntur enim legationibus et muneribus ornantur et ipsa plerumque fama bella profligant” Tac. Ger. 13. 2-4.*

149 *“Quamquam severa illic matrimonia, nec ullam morum partem magis laudaveris. nam prope soli barbarorum singulis uxoribus contenti sunt, exceptis admodum paucis, qui non libidine sed ob nobilitatem plurimis nuptiis ambiuntur” Tac. Ger. 18.1. S.m..*

150 *“Memoriae proditur quasdam acies inclinatas iam et labantes a feminis restitutas constantia precum et obiectu pectorum et monstrata cominus captivitate, quam longe impatientius feminarum suarum nomine timent, adeo ut efficacius obligentur animi civitatum quibus inter obsides puellae quoque nobiles imperantur” Tac. Ger. 8.1.*

*“Lest the woman should think that masculine courage and the perils of war lie beyond her sphere, these tokens remind her upon the threshold of marriage that she comes as the man's partner in toils and dangers; and that in peace and in war she must expect to suffer and to dare the same. This is the signification of the oxen in the yoke, of the harnessed horse, of the offering of arms. Thus is she bound to live and thus to die. She receives what she is to hand on to her sons, inviolate and unprofaned; what her sons' wives are to receive after her, and they, in their turn, to hand on to her children's children”<sup>151</sup>.*

To be added furthermore to the above values is their hospitality. No other people indulge more generously in banquets and hospitality. It is considered a sacrilege to turn anyone away from one's door; each person receives a meal prepared in line with his possessions.

*“No people in the world are more prodigal of hospitality, whether to friends or to strangers. They account it a sin to refuse the shelter of their roof to any human being. Every host provides the best entertainment that he can afford for his guest. When supplies fail, he becomes the guide and finds elsewhere a welcome for his guest. They enter, uninvited, the next house; no difference is made between them; both are received with equal courtesy; no one draws any distinction between friend and stranger as far as the rights of hospitality are concerned. On departing, it is customary to present the guest with anything he may ask for, and there is the same absence of embarrassment in asking a boon in return. They like gifts, but the giver does not consider them as scored to his credit, or the receiver feel that he is being laid under an obligation”<sup>152</sup>.*

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151 *“ne se mulier extra virtutum cogitationes extraque bellorum casus putet, ipsis incipientis matrimonii auspiciis admonetur venire se laborum periculorumque sociam, idem in pace, idem in proelio passuram ausuramque: hoc iuncti boves, hoc paratus equus, hoc data arma denuntiant. sic vivendum, sic pariendum: accipere se quae liberis inviolata ac digna reddat, quae nurus accipiant rursusque ad nepotes referantur” Tac. Ger. 18. 4.*

152 *“Convictibus et hospitibus non alia gens effusius indulget. quemcumque mortalium arcere tecto nefas habetur; pro fortuna quisque apparatis epulis excipit. cum defecere, qui modo hospes fuerat, monstrator hospitii et comes; proximam domum non invitati adeunt. nec interest: pari humanitate accipiuntur. notum ignotumque quantum ad ius hospitis nemo discernit. abeunti, si quid poposcerit, concedere moris; et poscendi in vicem eadem facilitas. gaudent muneribus, sed nec data imputant nec acceptis obligantur” Tac. Ger. 21.2-3.*

They are frank:

*“Not being a crafty or a cunning race they furthermore disclose their secret thoughts in the freedom of the feast, and so the minds of all lie open and discovered. On the morrow, the matter is debated again, and the double process justifies itself. They discuss when the disguise is impossible, they decide when too sober to blunder”*<sup>153</sup>.

All these features we are compiling are positive, if one can say so. They describe the Germanic peoples as regards their mental and emotional dispositions. Tacitus describes with affection the nature of relations within families, how women are treated, community life, their favorable disposition towards hospitality and their humanity and frankness. On its own, this list, which stresses glory obtained in military action, physical courage, pride in courage and the nobleness of character that earns them honor, the abominating of cowardice, the ignoble and inglorious, the infamy and shame that result from this and lead to the prohibition of life in society, in the form of being banned from entering temples, excommunication, but also to suicide, show that Tacitus describes the peoples of *Germania* by stressing the qualities he exaggerates in the Roman people and turns them inside out in order to structurally interpret all other peoples either in their remoteness, strangeness and alienness vis-à-vis the Roman gens, or in their closeness and similarities to the Roman people, as if they were almost Roman. Without wanting them to be Roman, they are on the borderline of being able to become Roman. Tacitus is the main critic of Roman uses and customs, a courageous whistle-blower of the human bondage within Roman society, the rationale of terror, the loss of freedom, the way in which every totalitarianism also overcomes the pusillanimity of the oppressed and how it gives the latter *panem et circenses*, how it soft soaps him with entertainment, sport, shows, public buildings, public festivals and the maintaining of a Senate where the decrees passed and laws issued have the appearance of democracy, only because of the number of senators of which it is composed, but the majority can express only one opinion.

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153 [“Gens non astuta nec callida aperit adhuc secreta pectoris licentia loci; ergo detecta et nuda omnium mens. postera die retractatur, et salva utriusque temporis ratio est: deliberant dum fingere nesciunt, constituunt dum errare non possunt”](#) Tac. *Ger.* 22.4.



Outlining the character of a people is like outlining the character and personality of a person. It has virtues and qualities and might even have all of them, but this is only an extreme in the range of possibilities. It has, for sure, defects, a bad or very bad lack of qualities, and this too is an extreme in the range of possibilities. Tacitus lists the negative qualities, once again from a Roman worldview standpoint. This means that being a “bad” German entails the same as being a “bad” Roman, even if the negative features listed constitute character traits of the Germanic peoples, rooted in their essence. A bad Roman is an exception to the existential and social project of being Roman. Certainly, however, it can happen that the exceptions stop being negligible minorities and become absolute majorities.

## 2. The negative qualities

One of the negative features is laziness. They do not like working.

*“In the intervals of wars they spend much of their time in hunting and still more in doing nothing, without any sort of object except sleeping and eating, all the boldest and most warlike men having no employment whatsoever, while the care of the house and its belongings and the cultivation of the fields are abandoned to the women and old men and to the weaklings of the family. The warriors lie torpid. Amazing inconsistency! The same men love sloth and hate peace”<sup>154</sup>.*

The violence in their character may originate from this intolerance of work or from the ferocious element in them that leads them to aspire to war.

The Germanic people’s disposition is a mental or spiritual one characterizing deep down a way of living. The way of living in peace, living quietly and calmly, seems to be impossible to tolerate; it is tedious and sluggish. Only the way of living in war, with the exercise of violence or military activity, makes it possible to tolerate life in society,

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154 “Quotiens bella non ineunt, non multum venatibus, plus per otium transigunt, dediti somno ciboque: fortissimus quisque ac bellicosissimus nihil agens, delegata domus et penatium et agrorum cura feminis senibusque et infirmissimo cuique ex familia, ipsi hebent, mira diversitate naturae, cum idem homines sic ament inertiam et oderint quietem” Tac. Ger. 15.1.

even the company of those who accompany them. Tacitus' notes are interesting for an analysis of the collective emotional disposition and mentality of a people or population, integrated into an appreciation that in truth living life, the essence of life, proves completely different when it concerns inaction, idleness, quiet and calm or, on the other hand, when one is involved in action, one is active and is occupied.

*“If a State lies long resting in peace and inactivity, off go most of the noble youths belonging to it, of their own accord, to join other nations where a war of some sort is going on ; because peace is repulsive to the race, and the path to glory lies through danger, and also because a numerous band of retainers can only be maintained by war and rapine. For they claim from the liberality of their chief the coveted war-horse and the blood-stained spear of victory that they desire. As a substitute for pay they have repasts and banquets, coarse it may be, but abundant”<sup>155</sup>.*

They drink with relish.

*“There is no shame attached to drinking steadily all day and night long; naturally among drunken men quarrels frequently spring up, and these seldom stop at angry words, but in the majority of cases end in wounds and bloodshed”<sup>156</sup>.*

### **3. The review of the most dangerous book of all<sup>157</sup>**

The stereotypes used to describe ancient peoples are freedom, courage, morality, and simplicity<sup>158</sup>. These help to shape the national character of the future Germans<sup>159</sup>. Loyalty, for example, goes beyond the circle of friends and family. *“To return from battle*

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155 *“Si civitas in qua orti sunt longa pace et otio torpeat, plerique nobilium adulescentium petunt ultra eas nationes, quae tum bellum aliquod gerunt, quia et ingrata genti quies et facilius inter ancipitia clarescunt magnumque comitatum non nisi vi belloque tueare; exigunt enim principis sui liberalitate illum bellatorem equum, illam cruentam victricemque frameam; nam epulae et quamquam incompti, largi tamen apparatus pro stipendio cedunt” Tac. Ger. 14. 2-3.*

156 *“Diem noctemque continuare potando nulli probrum. crebrae, ut inter vinolentos, rixae raro conviciis, saepius caede et vulneribus transiguntur” Tac. Ger. 22. 2.*

157 Christopher B. Krebs. 2011. *A Most Dangerous Book. Tacitus' Germania From the Roman Empire to the Third Reich*. New York. W.W. Norton & Company.

158 Krebs. (2011) 45.

159 (Ibid.) 47.

*surviving one's leader [was considered] shameful and a disgrace for life*"<sup>160</sup>. Almost two millennia later the members of the SS used the motto: *My honor is called loyalty*<sup>161</sup>. Tacitus shows a liking for the raw bravery, moral integrity and passionate yearning for freedom among the Germanic peoples<sup>162</sup>. If he is not mentioned hardly ever during late antiquity and the middle ages, later, at the end of 1425, Poggio Bracciolini discovers him<sup>163</sup>.

When, in 1471, Pope Pius II makes the Turkish threat his priority, Giannantonio Campano, nephew of Pius II and, later, Pius III, is the head of the papal delegation in Regensburg. To incite the German leaders against the Turks, he appeals to the Germanic people's best moral features and qualities. Germanic military boldness, the strength, glory, nobility, freedom and bravery<sup>164</sup>.

*"I beseech you by the most glorious shadows of our ancestors [per gloriosissimas umbras patrum uestrorum] make sure that Germany is Germany [Germania sit Germania] and that it commands those fighters now whom it commanded them"*<sup>165</sup>.

The Germans are raised to the peaks of religiousness. Once they worshiped Mars, the Roman god of war, as their highest deity. Now, as Christians, they exceed all other peoples in faith and piety, with the building of magnificent churches.

The humanists considered that the Romans trusted the Germans more than the Romans themselves. In the Annals, Tacit writes that Arminius was "*without doubt the liberator of Germany*"<sup>166</sup>. Perseverance was a Germanic national characteristic, whereas the Italian character was shaky: one of the stereotyped accusations against the Italians and evermore so against the French. Masters of duplicity and deception, they changed loyalties easily. Italians and French were portrayed

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160 (Ibid.) 46.

161 "Meine Ehre heisst Treue". Quoted by Krebs. (2011) 238.

162 Krebs. (2011) 49.

163 (Ibid.) 56.

164 Ibid. 92-93.

165 "Per gloriosissimas umbras patrum verstrorum" Ibid. 95.

166 "Liberator haud dubie Germaniae".

with a character diametrically opposite to that of the Germans. The latter had preserved their loyalty with a merciful and steadfast heart<sup>167</sup>.

Herder<sup>168</sup> also used Tacitus to inspire patriotism<sup>169</sup>, by basing himself on Klopstock<sup>170</sup>, when the latter defined German thinking, based on their history and general culture. For a people to be united around its own culture is an existential need. No greater harm can be inflicted on a nation than stealing its national character from it. A national character resides in the distinctiveness of its spirit and language. The German language and literature were all the German nation had in common<sup>171</sup>. The spirit of the Germanic people was in its people. The German word for people – “*Volk*” – changed with Herder from a predominantly sociopolitical term to an ideological one<sup>172</sup>. The requisites applied specifically to the Germans – the vigorous embracing of their words, myths and poetry and the right to self-determination – were applied to all peoples, united in Herder’s hopeful notion of humanity<sup>173</sup>.

But if Herder rejects the DNA – blood and the notion of race, Friedrich Kohlrausch<sup>174</sup> goes on to stress the purity of the racial composition of the Germanic forefathers as members of the Caucasian, then Aryan and, finally, Nordic race. All this learned through the “mirror of honor and pride” supplied by Tacitus<sup>175</sup>.

In his *Addresses to the German Nation*<sup>176</sup>, Fichte<sup>177</sup> explicitly addresses himself to the German people. The characteristics of Germanic existence, conceived in Tacitus’ canon, made it possible to invoke: the seriousness of the spirit expressed as loyalty, seriousness, honor, and simplicity. With these virtues the Germans fought for their independence from Rome, under Arminius’ leadership, and, more than a millennium later for their independence from the Roman church,

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167 Ibid. 118.

168 1744-1803.

169 Ibid. 177.

170 1724-1803.

171 Ibid. 178.

172 Ibid. 180.

173 Ibid. 181.

174 1840-1910.

175 Ibid. 183.

176 Johann Gottlieb Fichte. 1978. 1808: Reden an die deutsche Nation. In: *Philosophische Bibliothek*. 5<sup>a</sup> ed. Vol. 204. Hamburg. Felix Meiner Verlag.

177 1762-1814.

under the Reformers' leadership. It now had to fight for its freedom, once again, to drive away the French yoke. Only in this way could all humanity progress<sup>178</sup>.

In Chamberlain's view, "*the Germans were the makers of the history of the world (and, in the final analysis, the masons of 19th Century Europe). They founded nations, made humanity progress with their technical inventions, raised the human spirit with their art, to such an extent that a people's level of civilization was in direct proportion to the quantity of its Germanic blood*"<sup>179</sup>. Based on Tacitus' account, "*freedom and loyalty were the two roots to Germanic nature.*" [...] *This race established the purity of blood as its governing principle.*" Chamberlain believed in "*racial differences, that race determined talent, and that races were the authentically*<sup>180</sup> *historical individuals*"<sup>181</sup>. The use of Tacitus made by Chamberlain resulted in a "*worldview of the popular movement (völkisch): racist, anti-Semitic, pan-Germanic. Germania was the book to study: over centuries the Germanic Aryan race had accumulated its virtues: pureness, physiognomy, rural peasant lifestyle, custom and mentality*"<sup>182</sup><sup>183</sup>.

But there is no lack of resistance to the ideas of the Nazis and of Chamberlain. The archbishop and cardinal of Munich and Freising, Michael von Faulhaber<sup>184</sup>, whose sermons were broadcast by a loudspeaker in two other churches, spoke against Article 24 of the National Socialist programme<sup>185</sup>. Article 24 tried to explicitly debunk the New Testament, by stating that it was a moral offense against the decency of the Germanic race<sup>186</sup>. In Faulhaber' eyes the admirable qualities mentioned by Tacitus – loyalty, hospitality, and faithfulness in marriage – did little to diffuse the impression that there was not a civilization, strictly speaking, among the Germans

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178 Ibid. 185.

179 Ibid. 209.

180 "Eigentlich".

181 Ibid. 210.

182 "Gesittung".

183 Ibid. 211.

184 1869-1952.

185 Art. 24: "We demand freedom for all religious confessions from the State, to the extent that they do not endanger its existence or clash with the moral sentiment of the Germanic race. The party, as such, represents the point of view of a positive Christianity, without tying it confessionally to a particular conversion. The party fights the Jewish materialist spirit within and outside the Country and is convinced that a lasting recovery of our people can only happen from within. (24. Wir fordern die Freiheit aller religiösen Bekenntnisse im Staat, soweit sie nicht dessen Bestand gefährden oder gegen das Sittlichkeits- und Moralgefühl der germanischen Rasse verstoßen. Die Partei als solche vertritt den Standpunkt eines **positiven Christentums**, ohne sich konfessionell an ein bestimmtes Bekenntnis zu binden. Sie bekämpft den jüdisch-materialistischen Geist in und außer uns und ist überzeugt, daß eine dauernde Genesung unseres Volkes nur erfolgen kann von innen heraus)".

186 Ibid. 214.

of the pre-Christian period<sup>187</sup>. Rosenberg<sup>188</sup>, the Nazi party's ideologue, accused the cardinal of “severely attacking the process of self-reflection that was going on in the Third Reich”<sup>189</sup>. Tacitus' *Germania* was, insisted the Nazis, the bible every German should possess, because “this booklet, written by the Roman patriot, should fill us with pride about the superior character of our forefathers”<sup>190</sup>.

Education collapsed into propaganda<sup>191</sup>. The traditional schools were radically altered and ideologically aligned. It was in athletics and physical education that the master spirit was to be revealed<sup>192</sup>.

“Teachers fought as ‘brave combatants’ at the front of the revolution. [...] They received ideological guidance at conferences. [...] In discussing the famous little book, teachers were to focus their students’ attention on how to ‘fashion the German future in the ways of their forefathers’, a task made difficult since instructors ran the risk of getting carried away ‘out of sheer joy about the subject at hand’”<sup>193</sup>.

The meaning of propaganda comes from the singular feminine nominative form of the gerund of the Latin verb *propago*, -are, -aui, -atum, with the meaning of propagate, reach out, expand, widen, increase. The concept primarily arose separately from the obvious biological connections linked to proselytism and propagation of the faith: *de propaganda fide*<sup>194</sup>.

Propaganda cannot be considered solely a form of persuasion or dissuasion. Chomsky uses the term with the understanding that propaganda employs manipulative forms of persuasion or that it is not a persuasion without some form of manipulation. The actors involved in propaganda have various ways to interpret their activity. For some, the manipulation of opinions, beliefs, and behavior is intentional, even if, or especially until when, camouflaged. Others have incorporated a particular view of the world

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187 Ibid. 215.

188 1893-1946.

189 Ibid. 216.

190 Ibid. 217.

191 Ibid. 221.

192 Krebs translates the German “Herrensinn” with “master spirit”. Ibid. 221.

193 Ibid. 221-222. The “little booklet” is *Germania*.

194 Fellows, E. (1959). 'Propaganda:' History of a Word. *American Speech*, 34(3), 182-189. With the bula *Inscrutabili Divina* (June 22th, 1622), Pope Gregory the XVth creates a Congregation, named after: *Propaganda Fide*.

to such an extent that they think they are telling the truth. Others think manipulation is part of life and it is impossible to get around its actions directed at others or avoid others' actions directed at us.

*“The common feature across all of these self-perceptions is the organized, systematic and intentional manipulation of information in ways that either distort peoples’ perception of reality or pushes them to behave in ways they would not otherwise do”<sup>195</sup>.*

There seems to be the ancient sophistry principle: claiming the worst argument is the best and undoing the best argument as if it were the worst.

But there is an immediate link, almost, between the word and the sinister figure of Goebbels. In the diaries he wrote on an almost daily basis as a mirror for his activities, which were already known just after the war, we can read some of his directives regarding propaganda. Propaganda in peacetime mirrors propaganda preparing for war and wartime propaganda. And moreover: it has to not ingenuously anticipate the enemy’s propaganda. There is, therefore, a complexifying of the notion of manipulation and counter-manipulation. *“Propaganda has to be planned and carried out by a single authority”<sup>196</sup>. “For there to be an understanding of propaganda, an audience’s interest has to be awakened and it has to be transmitted using a means of communication capable of grabbing attention”<sup>197</sup>. “Anyone talking first and foremost to the world is always right”<sup>198</sup>. So to sum up. “A propaganda campaign has to start at the right moment. The slogan has to be repeated but not beyond the point where it loses its effectiveness. Propaganda has to label people and events with distinct expressions and slogans”<sup>199</sup>.*

It is with the presupposition of the good faith with which different groups converse with each other in public that interest gets generated among an audience listening to the conversation among different groups. The purpose of promoting a public discussion

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195 Robinson, P. (2018). Does the Propaganda Model Actually Theorise Propaganda? In *Pedro-Carañana J., Broudy D., & Klaehn J. (Eds.), THE PROPAGANDA MODEL TODAY: Filtering Perception and Awareness* (pp. 53-68). London: University of Westminster Press. 58.

196 Doob, L. (1950). *Goebbels' Principles of Propaganda*. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 14(3), 419-442.

197 Ibid. 426.

198 Ibid. 435.

199 Ibid. 435.

is to disseminate information, supposedly in good faith, even if the good faith only exists among those listening or the audience. Manipulation, nevertheless, involves the material being covert, with ulterior motives and insinuations. Bad faith. On the other hand, it is possible that, at a certain stage in the history of our relationship with propaganda, we become dogmatically skeptical and do not believe in anything. Worse still than someone telling the truth being disregarded as someone who is manipulating us. When we become aware of our influences, both the good and the bad, we enter the preconception domain. The preconception domain is a door opening onto superstition<sup>200</sup>.

Beatus Rhenanus<sup>201</sup>, a friend of Erasmus of Rotterdam, gives Krebs his epilogue, with another reading of *one of the most dangerous books ever*<sup>202</sup>. Krebs writes:

*“Rhenanus was not free of patriotic fervor either, but the occasional trip notwithstanding, he refused to submit his scholarly conscientiousness to his patriotism. Philologically rigorous and historically circumspect he focused on retrieving Tacitus’s own words: what he had written and what he meant. [...] The past, he advocated, should be understood on its own terms. ‘It is impossible to say how big are the changes that affected kingdoms and nations [from then until now]... Consider the following questions again and again: When was the text you are reading written, by whom and on what; then [only] compare recent times with old ones”*<sup>203</sup>.

#### **4. Anatomy of Tyranny**

When Tacitus talks of the Chatti, one of the Germanic tribes, it is with admiration but not without condescension. For example, when he talks of the ability the Chatti have of depending more on their commander than on the army itself. In spite of, in this list of good qualities, exclusively obedience to, and trust and faith in the commander being compared to Roman military discipline, all the others

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200 Hoffer, C. (1942). *A Sociological Analysis of Propaganda*. *Social Forces*, 20(4), 445-448. doi:10.2307/2570877.  
201 1485-1547.

202 Ibid. 245-250.

203 Krebs quotes *Commentariolus* (n.2), 70. Cf. Krebs. (2011) 285. n. 4.



are distinctive trademarks of the Roman imperial army, all of it depending on the commander of the commanders, the emperor. On the other hand, in this passage, we can see it would be unlikely for Tacitus' *Germania* to be Germany and the Germanic tribes the Germans. It would also be unlikely for the Germans of racial supremacy to identify themselves only with the Chatti, even if they considered the Scandinavians direct descendants of the proto-Germans.

*“They are distinguished beyond their fellows by their singularly hardy frames, well-knit limbs, resolute eyes, and by a remarkable energy of spirit. For Germans, they have an unusual amount of method and skill: they choose leaders and obey them when chosen; they keep their ranks, discern the requirement of the moment, and can postpone an attack; they throw out pickets by day, and entrench their camps at night; they trust less to fortune, which is fickle, than to their own courage, which is proof; and, rarest of all, a thing characteristic only of a discipline like the Roman, they rely more on their general than on their army. Their whole strength is in foot soldiers, who, besides carrying their arms, are loaded with tools and supplies; other Germans come out for a single battle, the Chatti for a campaign”<sup>204</sup>.*

When Tacitus writes in his *Annals* about the tyrannies of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, we can imagine what he would have written about the Third Reich. It is as an *anatomy of tyranny* that we try to read the *Annals*.<sup>205</sup>

Tacitus describes the changing of the principal position in the state<sup>206</sup> as an empire, held by Octavius Caesar Augustus, into the tyrannical government of a sole person<sup>207</sup>: “*absolute government with the unrestricted power of a sole person, in contradiction*

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204 “*Duriora genti corpora, stricti artus, minax vultus et maior animi vigor. multum, ut inter Germanos, rationis ac sollertiae: praeponere electos, audire praepositos, nosse ordines, intellegere occasiones, differre impetus, disponere diem, vallare noctem, fortunam inter dubia, virtutem inter certa numerare, quodque rarissimum nec nisi Romanae disciplinae concessum, plus reponere in duce quam in exercitu. omne robur in pedite, quem super arma ferramentis quoque et copiis onerant: alios ad proelium ire videas, Chattos ad bellum*” Tac. *Ger.* 30. 2.

205 Roger Boesche (1996): *Theories of Tyranny From Plato to Arendt*. Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania State University Press.

206 “Principatus, us. [m]”. Boesche (1996) 87.

207 “Dominatio, -nis.” [f]. Ibid.

with freedom”<sup>208</sup>. Tacitus thus describes the changing of a *Republic*<sup>209</sup> into *private property*<sup>210</sup>, the transformation of the State into a private domain.

The change was already being prepared at Octavius’ time. Already, even before Augustus died, Tiberius had a private army. It was a true para-military force. His soldiers escorted him to the senate<sup>211</sup>. In his litany of assassinations, executions, and suicides Tacitus responds to the spirit of the times. But the control of power was not limited to terror, accusations and the logic of suspicion that led to fearing enemies and supporters of different parties among friends, parents, and siblings. The control of the *situation* was also closely linked to the policy the Roman emperors always knew how to put into practice: *bread and circuses*<sup>212;213</sup>.

Enticement is stronger than force. Nero was capable of tying down anybody important with generous presents<sup>214</sup>. The emperors thus controlled the population through the corruption inherent to bribery and entertainment. Force, corruption and the control of the legal system, in particular, the *law against the crime of lèse-majesté*<sup>215</sup>. This law, used without discrimination, made it possible to condemn everyone who was accused, with or without reason, since an informant system without precedent had been put in place.

He who, literally, occupies public space, holds the power. When the police and paramilitary forces occupy private places, we are in the presence of a tyranny<sup>216</sup>. When it is bureaucrats and the civil service, we can perhaps talk about bureaucratic rule. Only when it is citizens who enforce public space, with discussions about rights and guarantees, do we find freedom. When, in Rome, violence takes over control of the public sphere, the political organization eradicates any possibility of discussion and, in particular, obliterates any political opposition. The State becomes virtually impossible<sup>217</sup>. “*The existence of spies, informers (delatores)*,

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208 “Liberty”. Ibid.

209 “Res publica”. Ibid.

210 “Res privata”. Ibid.

211 Ibid. 90.

212 “Panem et circenses” occurs for the first time in Juvenal’s Satires. Cf.: Juv. S. 10.81.

213 Ibid.

214 Tac. *Ann.* 13.28, quoted by Boesche (1996) 91.

215 The *lex maiestatis* or *crimen maiestatis* was a crime of lèse-majesté or treason.

216 Boesche (1996) 93.

217 Ibid.

*the atmosphere of mutual suspicion, the terror of the violence led to the psychological isolation that was chipping away at the Republic*<sup>218;219</sup>.

## 5. The denouncing of tyranny

Socrates' thesis in Plato's *Górgias* dialogue is that it is better to undergo injustice than to perpetrate it. Socrates does not say he wants to undergo injustice. Injustices are undergone through necessity and, therefore, inevitably. His second thesis is this: if someone is unjust they must render justice, that is, they must pay for what they have done and not remain unpunished. The logic of normality has its own interpretation of these things even if in the form of a primary reaction. If it is not me, it is another who does them; I am not the only one and doing them is better than them doing it. On the other hand, it seems more advantageous, even when one recognizes that it went wrong, to not pay for what one did and go on happily with one's life as if nothing happened. Defense gives rise to accusations. The defense of oneself gives rise to accusations of oneself, which appears to Callicles as a world turned inside out. Tacitus knows this dialogue of Plato's when he talks about Tiberius' disposition at the end of his life. Tacitus makes Tiberius talk in direct speech:

*"The beginning of the emperor's letter seemed very striking. It opened thus: "May all the gods and goddesses destroy me more miserably than I feel myself to be daily perishing if I know at this moment what to write to you, Senators, how to write it, or what, in short, not to write". So completely had his crimes and infamies recoiled, as a penalty, on himself. With profound meaning was it often affirmed by the greatest teacher of philosophy that, could the minds of tyrants be laid bare, there would be seen gashes and wounds; for, as the body is lacerated by scourging, so is the spirit by brutality, by lust and by evil thoughts.*

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218 Ibid. 95.

219 It is in this framework of generalized high-handedness that the moralist Tacitus condemns the immorality and barbarity of his time. To make an incomplete list, we can read Tacitus mentioning: "debauchery, slavish obedience, orgies, subservience, homosexual improprieties, cruelty, gluttony, rape and loss of respect for family ties. Boesche (1996) 98 quotes, in no. 51: Tac. *Ann.* 2.33, 1.2, 4.67, 3.65, 5.3, 3.52.

*Assuredly Tiberius was not saved by his elevation or his solitude from having to confess the anguish of his heart and his self-inflicted punishment”<sup>220</sup>.*

The anatomy of a tyrant is the anatomy of tyranny. Both tyranny and injustice need to be denounced. Tacitus’ *Annals* are at the same time a denunciation of a tyrant’s psychology from both the sociological point of view and that of the social ontology of a state under tyranny. The logic is that of denunciations, accusations and informing placed at the service of truth and freedom. Truth is the only condition of possibility for freedom<sup>221</sup>. When Tacitus reflects about his task as a historian, he invokes the period about which he is writing. He makes a set of observations about the substance of the facts he invokes. He compares his work to that of the ancient historiographers. Different periods require different analyses. They require different perceptions, perhaps different historians too. In book 4.32 of the *Annals* we read:

*“Much of what I have related and shall have to relate, may perhaps, I am aware, seem petty trifles to record. [...] Still, it will not be useless to study those, at first sight, trifling events out of which the movements of vast changes often take their rise”<sup>222</sup>.*

Tacitus’ idea of history is at the service of action. It is not a literary style. There is an awareness (*non nescius sum*) of the apparently limited importance of the Senate’s decisions, at least at first sight (*primo aspectu*). But the apparently

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220 “Insigne visum est earum Caesaris litterarum initium; nam his verbis exorsus est: 'quid scribam vobis, patres conscripti, aut quo modo scribam aut quid omnino non scribam hoc tempore, di me deaque peius perdant quam perire me cotidie sentio, si scio.' adeo facinora atque flagitia sua ipsi quoque in supplicium verterant. Neque frustra praestantissimus sapientiae firmare solitus est, si recludantur tyrannorum mentes, posse aspici laniatus et ictus, quando ut corpora verberibus, ita saevitia, libidine, malis consultis animus dilaceretur. quippe Tiberium non fortuna, non solitudines protegebant quin tormenta pectoris suasque ipse poenas fateretur” Tac. *Ann.* 6.6. The passage of *Gorgias* that Tacitus has in mind is 524e.

221 Cf. NT, Jo. 8.2.: “Truth has to free you”.

222“Pleraque eorum quae rettuli quaeque referam parva forsitan et levia memoratu videri non nescius sum. [...] non tamen sine usu fuerit introspicere illa primo aspectu levia ex quibus magnarum saepe rerum motus oriuntur”. The interim text is: “sed nemo annalis nostros cum scriptura eorum contenderit qui veteres populi Romani res composuere. ingentia illi bella, expugnationes urbium, fusos captosque reges, aut si quando ad interna praeverterent, discordias consulum adversum tribunos, agrarias frumentariasque leges, plebis et optimatum certamina libero egressu memorabant: nobis in arto et inglorius labor; immota quippe aut modice lacessita pax, maestae urbis res et princeps proferendi imperi incuriosus erat” Tac. *Ann.* 4. 32.

limited importance of the recounted situations in Rome's internal life and foreign affairs is not without profit (*non sine uso*). They, at first sight, constitute the driving force giving rise to the great revolutionary movements (*ex quis magnarum saepe rerum motus oriuntur*). The formula can trigger the same feeling<sup>223</sup> that Titus Livius had when writing his history of the foundation of the city: "moments of great importance often depend on the result of moments of little importance".

This feeling is vouched for in Aristotle's *Politics*: "Revolutions<sup>224</sup> do not arise from situations of great importance but from situations with little importance". Tacitus contrasts the interest of history in usefulness for life with this, insofar as he tries to single out the seeds of revolution, the source from which change comes. Tacitus' idea of history is in contrast with that of the ancients. Perhaps even only because the Roman people's situation was different. Maybe because this very idea of history did not bear in mind its *usefulness* for one's own life and life in society, especially because the Roman people had not been subjected to the discretionary power of gangsters or exposed to unlimited oppression. History is the denunciation of injustice, oppression and the exercising of discretionary power over the population. The little things of daily life are neither separate nor anecdotal. They constitute the subject matter of days and the biographical content of societies and the women and men forming them. Rome's triumphal history derives from memory of the glorious period. It beguiles readers' spirits. The history Tacitus *narrates* derives from limited and inglorious work (*in arto inglorius et labor*). It is not an entertainment for refreshing (*redintegrare*) readers' spirits with the glorious past. It is the identifying of the seeds of revolution. Now, every revolution is a project, a shot in the future. It involves action. Reading and studying for taking action. Not for recreation.

In 4.33 Tacitus continues:

*"All nations and cities are ruled by the people, the nobility, or by one man. A constitution, formed by selection out of these elements, is easy to commend but not to produce; or, if it is produced, it cannot be lasting. Formerly, when the people had power or when*

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223 Cf. Furneaux (1894) ad loc.

224 Cf.: Arist. *Pol.* 1303b17-30: "Γίγνονται μὲν οὖν αἱ στάσεις οὐ περὶ μικρῶν ἀλλ' ἐκ μικρῶν, στασιάζουσι δὲ περὶ μεγάλων." The *LSJ* translates *στάσις* with "faction, sedition, discord". But the verb *στασι-άζω* means *make revolution*. An explicit link with transformations and changes is found in 1307b24-25: "ὅθεν μὲν οὖν αἱ μεταβολαὶ γίνονται τῶν πολιτειῶν καὶ αἱ στάσεις." *Ibid.*

*the patricians were in the ascendant, the popular temper and the methods of controlling it, had to be studied, and those who knew most accurately the spirit of the Senate and aristocracy had the credit of understanding the age and of being wise men. So now, after a revolution, when Rome is nothing but the realm of a single despot, there must be good in carefully noting and recording this period, for it is but few who have the foresight to distinguish right from wrong or what is sound from what is hurtful, while most men learn wisdom from the fortunes of others. Still, though this is instructive, it gives very little pleasure. Descriptions of countries, the various incidents of battles, glorious deaths of great generals, enchain and refresh a reader's mind. I have to present in succession the merciless biddings of a tyrant, incessant prosecutions, faithless friendships, the ruin of innocence, the same causes issuing in the same results, and I am everywhere confronted by a wearisome monotony in my subject matter. Then, again, an ancient historian has but few disparagers, and no one cares whether you praise more heartily the armies of Carthage or Rome. But of many who endured punishment or disgrace under Tiberius, the descendants yet survive; or even though the families themselves may be now extinct, you will find those who, from a resemblance of character, imagine that the evil deeds of others are a reproach to themselves. Again, even honor and virtue make enemies, condemning, as they do, their opposites by too close a contrast. But I return to my work”<sup>225</sup>.*

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225 “Nam cunctas nationes et urbes populus aut primores aut singuli regunt: delecta ex iis et consociata rei publicae forma laudari facilius quam evenire, vel si evenit, haud diuturna esse potest. igitur ut olim plebe valida, vel cum patres pollerent, noscenda vulgi natura et quibus modis temperanter haberetur, senatusque et optimatum ingenia qui maxime perdidicerant, callidi temporum et sapientes credebantur, sic converso statu neque alia re Romana quam si unus imperitet, haec conquiri tradique in rem fuerit, quia pauci prudentia honesta ab deterioribus, utilia ab noxiis discernunt, plures aliorum eventis docentur. ceterum ut profutura, ita minimum oblectationis adferunt. nam situs gentium, varietates proeliorum, clari ducum exitus retinent ac redintegrant legentium animum: nos saeva iussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium et easdem exitii causas coniungimus, obvia rerum similitudine et satietate. tum quod antiquis scriptoribus rarus obtrectator, neque refert cuiusquam Punicas Romanasne acies laetius extuleris: at multorum qui Tiberio regente poenam vel infamias subiere posteris manent. utque familiae ipsae iam extinctae sint, reperies qui ob similitudinem morum aliena malefacta sibi obiectari putent. Etiam gloria ac virtus infensos habet, ut nimis ex propinquo diversa arguens. sed ad inceptum redeo” Tac. *Ann.* 4.33.

The movements underlying revolutionary transformation try to choose a type of state granting unity and harmony. But the best type of state, the best constitution can only exist in men's heads. It is difficult to find or invent, or put into practice. And, when it is found, it is not for very long. Says a realistic Tacitus. Both the ancient historians and political leaders thought a people's nature had to be understood (*noscenda uulgi natura*), and senators' and aristocrats' character traits had to be studied to perfection (*perdidicere*). Anyone understanding the nature of the masses could control them with moderation (*temperanter*). But the situation described by the *Annals* changed radically. The present situation has a sole man in power (*imperitare*). It is precisely about this situation, where an empire is under a sole man's power that it is important to seek seriously and investigate carefully (*conquiri*). Few have the ability to distinguish honesty from dishonesty, bad from good or the advantageous from the harmful. It is examining the destiny of the lives of the others who lived through terrible times that can teach us (*docere*). History is the biography at difficult times of individuals and legal entities. Its direction is the future. The goal of history is the transformation of reality, changing bad into good, the harmful into the useful, beneficial and advantageous. The destinies of the past lives of people who lived oppressed are not, nevertheless, pleasant (*minimum oblectationis*). What in truth ancient historians write about are situations that no longer matter. It does not matter if we would like the Carthaginians or Romans to have won the war.

What matters, however, is that there are survivors of tyranny, innocent victims of oppression. Tacitus writes for the survivors, for the descendants of those who suffered punishment and defamation at the hands of a tyrant like Tiberius. And even when entire families were wiped out and no descendant survived, Tacitus writes for anyone who feels in debt towards the destiny of those who suffered at the hands of a tyrant or of any one of its inventive ways of manifesting itself among humanity. Tacitus writes for anyone who pays attention to past lives and their destinies, as a form not of distraction or entertainment, but of accusation which makes it possible to take precautions and set up prophylactic measures so that the horror does not have the opportunity to rearise.

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