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Authority and Force: Investigating Authority in the Works of Thomas Hobbes and in J.M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*

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Abstract of the Thesis

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'Authority' is said to govern force; it is a word one is born into, a word that shapes what one knows, and even what he is able to see, but it is also a word that conceals its precise meaning and which refuses to divulge its origins. The relationship between force and authority is dynamic, intimate, and infinitely complex; authority and force are often conflated, or differentiated only by the thinnest and most porous of tissue. As force and authority commingle, articulating the difference between the two becomes increasingly problematic, and the most profound consequence of this inability to distinguish between force and authority is that one cannot differentiate between legitimate force and illegitimate violence. Thomas Hobbes provides an account of authority, and J.M. Coetzee's novel *Diary of a Bad Year* provides an excellent forum in which to track the movement of authority and its relation to force, and to see if Hobbes' model obtains. Employing Hobbes and Coetzee, I investigate the dynamics of authority, arguing that the distinction between force and authority is not a matter of semantic nuance, but of necessity. Following this investigation, I articulate the importance of a particular conception of authority wherein it is understood that authority does not exert force but collects it, and thus that its utility as a concept lies in its capacity to reveal the axiological and epistemological topography of an entity's reasoning, i.e., the standard(s) according to which it evaluates and attributes value and truth.

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I. Thesis and Program

The relationship between force and authority is dynamic, intimate, and infinitely complex; authority and force are often conflated, or differentiated only by the thinnest and most porous of tissue. As force and authority commingle, it becomes increasingly difficult to describe the content of each, and thus articulating the difference between the two becomes increasingly problematic. The most profound consequence of this inability to distinguish between force and authority is that one cannot differentiate between legitimate force and illegitimate violence. But if the perpetual motion and interweaving of force and authority frustrate attempts to isolate the qualities specific to authority from those belonging to force, J.M. Coetzee's novel *Diary of a Bad Year* provides an excellent forum in which to track the movement of authority and its relation to force because it foregrounds issues pertaining to authority, fixes them in text, and offers them for consideration.

Diary of a Bad Year begins with an evocation of Hobbes and Rousseau; consequently, the first movement of this paper will present an account of the genesis of authority based on a reading of Thomas Hobbes that makes clear the distinction between force and authority, and thus the need of a revision of our understanding of each phenomenon. The second movement exports the newly developed concept of authority to literature and a consideration of the notion of 'the Author.' By employing the force/authority distinction and analyzing the relationship between the author and the text,

and between the author and the reader, I provide an account of authorial authority that speaks in terms of "force exerted" and which investigates the relevance of authorial authority to the act of reading and writing in those terms. In the third and final movement, I articulate the importance and utility of the conception of authority I have developed, and of the correlative distinction between force and authority. The distinction, I argue, is not a matter of semantic nuance, but of necessity: it is only in moving beyond an understanding of authority as 'that which exerts the greatest force' that we can recognize that authority does not exert force but collects it, and thus that its usefulness lies not in its ability to enforce obedience to a set of normative dictums, but rather in its capacity to reveal the axiological and epistemological topography of an entity's reasoning, the standard(s) according to which it evaluates and attributes value and truth.

II. Thomas Hobbes: Philosophical Anthropology, the State of Nature, and Civil Society.

Hobbes' *Leviathan* offers a theoretical account of the genesis of authority, and while the authority it considers is specifically that of the political sovereign, the fundamental aspects of his theory obtain in the consideration of the phenomenon of authority more generally construed. I must accomplish several tasks in order to demonstrate the applicability of Hobbes' account of political authority to the broader consideration of authority as a phenomenon. A) Hobbes must be placed within his historical context so that we may understand more fully why he chose to depart from ethical tradition and ground his ethics in a philosophical anthropology. B) The dynamics and characteristics of Hobbes' concepts, 'The State of Nature' and 'Civil Society,' must be explicated to reveal the centrality of consensus and consent to humanity's transition

from a state of nature to civil society. C) It must be demonstrated that Hobbes' account of sovereignty implies a distinction between 'force' and 'authority,' and that it is this distinction that allows his account of political sovereignty to be exported to considerations of the broader phenomenon of authority.

A. Background: historical, philosophical, and political

Thomas Hobbes was born in England in 1588, and lived the entirety of his life surrounded by ideological, personal, political, religious, and social conflict. England was embroiled in a conflict with the Dutch, maintaining a sizable army in Holland from 1584-1642; the Bohemian Revolt broke out in 1618, contributing to the outbreak of England's civil war in 1642, and leading directly to the Thirty Years war (1618-1648). Concurrently, intellectual, ideological, and scientific developments shook the known world: Hugo Grotius' *The Laws of War and Peace* and Mersenne's *Scientific Truth: Against the Sceptics or Pyrrhonians* appeared in 1625, taking issue with both philosophical skepticism and humanism, the predominant mode of philosophical thought of the time. Descartes finished his first major work, *The World*,[1] in 1633, the same year in which Galileo was condemned by the Roman Church.[2] It is no exaggeration to say that Hobbes saw the world around him reordering itself: the cosmos changed as Galileo demonstrated that the earth rotated; political and ideological uncertainty prevailed as, in England, the Parliamentarians and Royalists fought for supremacy in a contentious battle fueled by virulent conflict over political and ecclesiological matters. Intellectuals were in the process of shifting away from a heavily Aristotelian philosophical approach, toward a cautious conviction that one could discover in the world *natural laws* that made a limited

knowledge of the world possible (here we see the effects of the burgeoning field of the sciences).

Hobbes took up the latter charge, working not to obliterate skepticism, but to amend it, to mitigate the radical relativism that was in vogue in order to engage moral and scientific ideas, and to produce useful models for treating ethics and politics. Hobbes' departure from the Aristotelian tradition of discussing matters of ethics in classical terminology, using concepts such as 'virtue' and 'the good,' in favor of the language of natural 'rights,'[3] represents a development of great importance to political and ethical thought upon which I will elaborate below.

This is a cursory gloss of the conditions in which Hobbes lived and wrote, intended to serve as a propaedeutic that will enable us to understand what Hobbes intends to convey with the phrase 'state of nature,' and to recognize his consequent distinction between force and authority. To this end, it is of paramount importance that we recognizes Hobbes' predominant motivation in writing on sovereign authority: namely, the desire to provide an account of human relations that would respect the insights of humanistic skepticism whilst simultaneously qualifying them in order to rebut radical ethical relativism, ultimately rendering the discussion of ethics both possible and coherent.

B. The State of Nature

Hobbes writes: "But the most frequent reason why men desire to hurt each other, ariseth hence, that many men at the same time have an Appetite to the same thing; which yet very often they can neither enjoy in common, nor yet divide it; whence it followes

that the strongest must have it, and who is strongest must be decided by the Sword."[4] This, then, is the state of nature, the condition of men *qua* men prior to political organization; Hobbes conceives of this state as a broil of force wherein each individual acts, (i.e., generates as much force as s/he may) in service of her desired end.[5] Within this state there are no objective laws, and seemingly, no grounds for positing them; the state of nature is a raw, brutish mêlée, a state without government or law, wherein the only restriction upon one's action is that imposed by his/her own limitations, or by the force of one whose desired ends conflict with the actor's. In the absence of objective truth, no action can be called right or wrong, because each individual has his own understanding of what poses a threat to him, and therefore, the right to act as he sees fit to meet that threat. Hobbes argues that such an existence is unsustainable, that some standard of authority must be brought to bear: "In the state of nature… every man is his own judge, and differeth from others… from those differences arise quarrels… [and the] breach of peace; it was necessary there should be a common measure of all things that might fall in controversy… what is to be called right … For in these things private judgments may differ, and beget controversy."[6]

But how was one to arrive at this common measure? The unlikelihood of achieving common agreement as to was to what is right seems to necessitate that the common measure be imposed, but by whom? We find ourselves facing the quintessential quandary: how is one to differentiate between legitimate force and illegitimate violence. Classical Aristotelian ethical systems argued from *a priori* principles using concepts such as 'God' and/or 'virtue' to create ethical frameworks that could be used to evaluate the morality of an action/telos; conversely, the humanism into which Hobbes was born

(Montaigne's and Lipsius' skeptical humanism) insisted that the multiplicity and diversity of human beliefs and practices rendered any universal ethical system false and unenforceable. Hobbes' difficulty is clear: he wants to argue for the superiority of peace and the necessity of a restraint upon one's ability to act, but he must do so without recourse to God, morality, or Aristotelian virtue, all of which, his skeptical relativism asserts, are subjective illusions engendered by the passions.[7] Hobbes needs a new basis for ethics and the investigation of ethical questions.

Before proceeding to outline the specifics of the basis Hobbes develops, and to examine his account of civil society, it bears mentioning that the manner in which Hobbes identifies the fundamental human right in a state of nature suggests the method he will employ in developing his account of ethics. Hobbes does not aim at writing objective truths; rather, his purpose is to proffer a logically convincing argument that will engender a moral consensus. He argues that, stripping all talk of duty, virtue, and the good, one can produce a statement that can be met without objection: 'All individuals have the right to defend themselves against attack, and to do whatsoever s/he sees fit for the preservation of his/her own being.' Hobbes equates 'good' with 'pleasurable,'[8] and his aim is to provide an account of human life whereupon people arrive at the moral consensus based on a recognition of what will serve their own interests. He writes, "That which is not against reason men call RIGHT, or just, or blameless liberty of using our own natural power and ability. It is therefore a right of nature: that every man may preserve his own life and limbs, with all the power he hath."[9]

Succinctly: Hobbes is appealing to reason to derive a formulation that will, by virtue of its rational appeal, overcome the absence of clear, objective truth and lead to a common moral language.

C. *To Ethics Through Politics: Civil Society*[10]

From the onset, Hobbes assumes that "…such creatures [humans] could not enjoy a decent social existence unless they were capable of using a common moral language to describe their activities."[11] As indicated above, the chief problem men find in a state of nature is not the absence of truth, but rather the abundance of conflicting 'truths' amongst which, morality being a subjective matter, humanity has no means to adjudicate. Eschewing moral language, Hobbes comes to speak in terms of 'rights' and introduces a proto-utilitarian relativism that locates ethics through politics, i.e., through consensus. Extrapolating from this principle, Hobbes argues that one's fundamental right to self-preservation is more secure in a time of peace than a time of conflict; ergo, it is in everyone's best interest to surrender the right to act without restraint in order to attain and maintain peace. Hobbes writes: "The only way to erect… a Common Power, as may be able to defend them… is, to conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, by plurality of voices, unto one Will… to beare their person…"[12] It in this way that humanity is restrained, through the consent of the many to transfer their right toward violent action to a sovereign.

By speaking in terms of consensus rather than truth, Hobbes seeks to describe a manner in which law and authority can emerge in the absence of objective truth, and in the absence of any logical necessity that the emerging law/authority take the suggested

form. He argues that sovereign authority requires a vertical contract wherein each individual promises to allow his will to be subsumed into the sovereign's so that each individual no longer governs himself, but abides by the dictums of the sovereign; in order for the vertical contract to obtain, there must also be a horizontal contract wherein the individual binds herself to those in her society, promising to abide by said vertical contract. Hobbes writes: "[The individual says] I Authorise and give up my Right of Governing my selfe to this Man, or to this Assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him, and authorize all his Actions in like manner."[13] What results is a social contract wherein the many yield authority to one for the sake of self-preservation. Essentially, Hobbes utilizes pragmatic (as opposed to moral) arguments to appeal to peoples' sense of their own self-interest, arguing that individuals ceding a portion of their liberty to a sovereign will be better off for it.

In summary, Hobbes' model requires that we accept the following statements: (1) Sound philosophical thought must reject the possibility of clear, objective truth. (2) Because there is no consensus as to the content of revealed truth, political authority rests not on truth but on a pragmatic contract. (3) All rational human beings aim at self-preservation. (4) All rational individuals can agree that the right to preserve oneself is fundamental to all human beings. (5) As self-preservation is easier in times of peace than in times of war, logic dictates that peace is preferable to war. (6) Peace, law, and an ethics are possible only by virtue of the rule of a sovereign authority. (7) Sovereign authority is consummated by a horizontal consensus that binds those who will be governed to one another, each promising to all others to cede their right to self-governance to the sovereign, and (8) is immediately followed by a vertical contract

wherein both the governed and the sovereign consent to fulfill the obligations of their respective positions.

D. Consensus and the Distinction Between Force and Authority.[14]

Hobbes is often portrayed as the chief apologist for totalitarian despotism, and while such a portrayal amounts to an egregious injustice and a blatant misreading of Hobbes' texts, it would be disingenuous not to acknowledge that Hobbes does not emphasize the words 'consent' and 'consensus' in the same way as this paper, nor does he employ the words as frequently this paper will. That said, two significant points justify the paper's emphasis and demonstrate that it is not at odds with what Hobbes intended to convey.

(1) Hobbes gives individual agency a generative role in the creation of authority. I quote at length:

> The only way to erect such a common power… **is [for the many] to confer all their power and strength** upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, **that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices**, unto one will: which is as much as to say, **to appoint** one man, or assembly of men, **to bear their person**; and **every one to own and acknowledge himself to be author of** whatsoever he that so beareth their person shall act… and therein **to submit their wills**… to his will… This… is a real unity of them all… **made by covenant of every man with every man**, in such manner as if every man should say to every man: **I authorise and give up** my right of governing myself to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition; that thou give up, thy right to him, and authorise all his actions in like manner. This done, the multitude so united in one person is called a COMMONWEALTH …For **by this authority, given him by every particular man in the Commonwealth**, he hath the use of so much power and strength **conferred on him**… one person, of whose acts a

> great multitude, **by mutual covenants** one with another…"[15] (emphasis mine)

Hobbes' language is striking; it provides an account wherein the individuals and their consent are emphatically demonstrated to be the progenitors of the authority by which they will be ruled. The individuals must "confer," "reduce," "appoint," "acknowledge," "submit," "covenant," "authorize," "give up," and more, in order for sovereign authority to come into being; the consensus they achieve, and their collective consent to be governed, conceive, gestate, and birth their sovereign. Hobbes states this explicitly: "The attaining to this sovereign power is by two ways… one is by natural force… The other, is when men agree amongst themselves to submit to some man, or assembly of men…"[16]

(2) Hobbes leaves it to the agency of each individual to decide how she will pursue her own preservation. It is true enough that the law of nature Hobbes develops communicates what one ought to do if she is thinking clearly and rationally: namely, that she ought to surrender her right to self-governance to an existent sovereign authority and join civil society, but Hobbes is clear that the law of nature is not determinative. Man's natural right in nature trumps the laws of nature. Hobbes writes: "THE right of nature, which writers commonly call *jus naturale*, is the liberty each man hath to use his own power as he will himself for the preservation of his own nature; that is to say, of his own life; and consequently, of doing anything which, in his own judgment and reason, he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto."[17] If an individual wishes to exercise his natural right outside the authority of a sovereign, he is free to do so, at which point the

sovereign is no longer that individual's authority, and, should the sovereign want to rule him, the sovereign's only recourse is the use of force.

The agency of the subject is central to the genesis of Hobbesian authority, even if one could argue that the Hobbesian subject's moral agency, and the sovereign's need of her consent, wanes shortly after the sovereign is created.[18] However, upon reading Hobbes on the issue of sovereign authority and the Hobbesian subject's agency, one must make a critical interpretive decision: to what extent does the Hobbesian subject retain his moral agency? If the ruled retains his moral agency, then the possibility remains that he could revoke his consent to be ruled and legitimately dissolve the sovereign's authority over him. If the Hobbesian subject forfeits the entirety of his moral agency to the sovereign, then the subject's will belongs entirely to the sovereign, or is held in escrow to be released if and only if the sovereign fails to provide the protection and basic means of survival stipulated. The interpretive decision one makes determines her understanding of the nature of Hobbesian authority. Should one choose the former option, authority emerges as doubly reflexive, consummated and sustained by the incoming consensus and the forces generating it which authority collects without volition, referring only to itself, to the consensus that is its being, as decisive and normative.

Choosing the latter option creates a volitional authority that differs from force by the thinnest (possibly insignificant) qualification, namely that at one historical moment, desire culminated in consensus, conjuring a sovereign the basis of whose authority lay not in a particular content or substance, but in the fact that it once collected and now maintains a considerable amount of force. I contend that this position is untenable because it destroys the boundary between force and authority while enshrining a

superficial understanding of authority wherein authority is predicated entirely on force, and an authority is the entity capable of generating the greatest amount of force in a particular domain. While it is common to imagine that authority issues from strength, since force resembles authority functionally in that its effect can be normative, regulative, and authoritarian, force is not, finally, equivalent to authority, and such a conception of authority is an example of a failure to differentiate between correlation and causation. Force is correlative with authority because authority is consummated by consensus, i.e., by the coalition of the forces of many individual wills into a single will, but force does not cause authority. Rather, authority is produced by consent and consensus.

Hobbes's answer to any seeking to distinguish between legitimate force and illegitimate violence centers on consent. Force, Hobbes demonstrates, is owned and its exertion is characteristic of the state of nature in which action belongs to the singular will and imposes itself as a manifestation of the power of that will. Conversely, he depicts sovereign authority as arising from consensus, and speaks of the potential for a sovereign to overstep his authority in such a way that violates the contract between the governor and the governed;[19] from this one can infer that in a political ethics such as Hobbes's, sovereign authority is and must always be granted; authority cannot be claimed or singularly attributed, but only arrives with the popular consensus that is both its consummation and its conferral, and which enables it to function within civil society as the "common measure" that will adjudicate in instances of conflict. Authority, then, whether it be the authority of a sovereign ruler, the authority of an idea, or the authority of an episteme, exists insofar as it is bestowed and recognized; as individuals cease to recognize the person/idea/episteme as an authority, and the person/idea/episteme is

forced to demand recognition by means of force, its authority disintegrates. Thereafter, the person/idea/episteme is merely another entity exerting force, and even if it successfully assumes the guise of an authority and the dynamics of its operation come to be attributed to authority, it cannot exist as an authority without an individual or group of individuals consenting to it. Force, like the state of nature, is chronologically and historically prior to authority and intrinsic to life. Life implies force, but neither life nor force imply the existence of authority. Just as there must be individuals pursuing their ends without restraint before a sovereign authority can be born of the individuals' consensus that such an authority is necessary, so too must there be existent forces before an authority can be created to rule over them.

III. Barthes, Foucault, and 'the Author'

"The fact that such common locutions as 'my leg,' 'my eye,' 'my brain,' and even 'my body' exist suggests that we believe there is some non-material, perhaps fictive, entity that stands in relation of possessor to possessed to the body's 'parts' and even to the whole body. Or else the existence of such locutions shows that language cannot get purchase, cannot get going, until it has split up the unity of experience."[20]

The conception of the Author underwent a radical change in the wake of the literary criticism generated by the Russian Realists of the 1920's, Roland Barthes, Michael Foucault, Peter Lamarque**,** et al.[21] This section will begin with a sketch of the problematization of the notion of the Author that occurred circa 1968, following Roland Barthes' "La mort de l'auteur"[22] and Foucault's lecture entitled 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?'[23] Thereafter, I will investigate the complexity of the concept of the Author alongside J.M. Coetzee's treatment of 'the author' in *Diary of a Bad Year*. Employing a Hobbesian distinction between force and authority, I will articulate a different conception of the

Author* than those offered by Barthes and Foucault, identifying a conception whose content simultaneously respects their insight while allowing the reader to address her experience of the presence of an author in a text.

A. The Question of the Author

Barthes and Foucault begin their revision of the concept of the Author by challenging the very ontological ground upon which the Author is assumed to stand. Barthes launches his challenge from within structuralist linguistics, arguing that the ontology generally attributed to the Author is undermined by the concept's reliance upon a linguistic structure to bring it into being. He writes: "Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing… language knows a 'subject,' not a 'person,' and this subject, empty outside of the very enunciation which defines it, suffices to make language 'hold together,' suffices, that is to say, to exhaust it."[24] Barthes is arguing that the traditional conception of the Author affords the concept an ontological priority, locating the Author chronologically prior to writing in such a way that poses "him" as the father of writing, as its progenitor. Barthes is enacting a deconstructive, analytical process wherein he employs a structural claim about the dynamics of language to contravene the ontological claims of the concept of the Author that he believes are responsible for the predominant and erroneous understanding of the phenomenological activity of the Author. Dr. Adrian Wilson offers an assessment of the effect of Barthes' conclusions: "To assimilate the lesson supplied by linguistics was to dethrone the Author. No longer would writing… be taken to emanate, from some parental figure anterior to

* And consequently, of authorial authority.

itself, i.e. from the Author or from the Author's 'hypostases'- society, history, psyche, liberty; instead, writing could now at last be repositioned back where it belonged, that is to say, inside language."[25]

In order to correct the prevalent misunderstanding of the Author's ontological status, Barthes proffers a distinction between *écriture* and *écrire*, linking the former term to the phenomenon 'language,' simultaneously constituting *écriture* as a singular phenomenon and imbuing it with the ontological priority thereof. *Ecrire*, by contrast, is an action; it must be tied to individual entities and construed as ontologically derivative. Barthes believes the distinction between *écriture* and *écrire* is corrective in that it enacts the annihilation of the Author and the derivative ontological and phenomenological fallacies by making the maintenance of the traditional concept of the Author and its concomitant tyrannies (for example, 'the Critic') impossible. As Wilson explains: "This apocalyptic redemption of writing would entail killing not only the Author but also the Critic; the collusive pair Author-Critic would now be replaced by the new couplet of 'the modern scriptor' and the sovereign reader. The 'modern scriptor' would be a writer who is not an Author, whose being does not precede writing but on the contrary is constituted and delimited by writing itself."[26]

The consequences of Barthes' destruction of the concept of the Author were profound: the decimation of the Author was the decimation of the center of Text; it amounted to the erasure of the very mechanism that unified discrete components and created the unified text, according to the predominant account of the phenomenology of a text (not to mention of the Book). The argument Barthes employed may have emancipated writing from the tyranny of the Author, but it also left him without a

coherent account of the Book, leaving only "text," a generic concept that encompassed shopping lists, wills, novels, etc. without distinction. Barthes, however, was unconcerned by the loss of the Book, it had been, he argued, like the idea of the Author, a purely mythic unity. Writing, being inscribed within language, was prior to the Author who existed only as a construct, an imposed violence; citing 'an author' of a text was an absurdity that ignored the fact that the lines composing a text are an amalgam of reappropriations, references, and cuttings of, to, and from a multitude of traditions. As Barthes writes, "the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture."[27] If writing amounts to cultural bricolage, originality is impossible, and the idea of the unity of a text forming around an author and a particular meaning are shattered. All that is left are language and text, and those who encounter them: readers. Wilson writes, "[For Barthes] the fundamentally redemptive figure was to be the reader, who was already the true and only source of the otherwise mythical unity of the text, and whose constitutive role in the making of écriture would now be revealed and accepted."[28]

Adrian Wilson speaks of Barthes' objectives in terms of supercession and annihilation, and it is here that one can detect the reason for the discrepancy between Barthes and Foucault: one can only annihilate something which exists, and whereas Barthes understands the concept of the Author as an operative, malignantly tyrannizing writing ("[I]t is language which speaks, not the author"[29]), Foucault believes that literature has already progressed beyond the Author. Using Samuel Beckett as an example *par excellence*, Foucault writes: "What matter who's speaking, someone said, what matter who's speaking'. In an indifference such as this we must recognize one of the fundamental ethical principles of contemporary writing."[30] Barthes and Foucault have

fundamentally different understandings of the state of the Author, of the Critic, and of literature, and consequently have different concerns: Barthes wants to rescue literature and writing from a limiting and erroneous understanding of text as issuing from an originary author and singular meaning, while Foucault wants criticism to plumb the insight that is already intrinsic to literature, "that is, to 'explore' the 'consequences' of the author's disappearance, to 'appreciate' the 'importance of this event', to 'take full measure' of it."[31]

Foucault begins his enquiry into the matter of the Author by interrogating the relationship between an author and a text. Just as Barthes objects to the notion of the Author as antecedent to writing, so also Foucault takes issue with the perception that a text points to an author-figure that is both prior to and outside of itself. Foucault draws a distinction between a 'writer' and an 'author,' which permits him both to explain the genesis of a text in the absence of an author, and to interrogate the consequent insertion of an author by the reader. Importantly, this author is neither intrinsic to, nor originary of, a/the text; rather, Foucault argues, an author is a hermeneutic, a construct overlaid on a text by a reader as part of the interpretative act.

After defining the Author as a function extrinsic to Text, Foucault rather quickly explodes the notion that there is a necessary connection between Author and Text, or between an author and a text. Positing the absence of a necessary link between Author and Text allows Foucault to investigate the effect of the author as an addition to a text, and to state that: "[T]he function of an author is to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society."[32] The significance of this quote will be discussed below; however, before doing so it is important to note that the absence of a

necessary link between Author and Text also allows Foucault to discover texts without authors. He writes: "[T]he name of an author is a variable that accompanies only certain texts… a private letter may have a signatory, but it does not have an author; a contract can have an underwriter, but not an author… an anonymous poster attached to a wall may have a writer, but he cannot be an author."[33]

The matter of the Author, which may at first seem a mere intellectual curiosity, is for Foucault a grave concern, a fact that is best understood in light of his concept of discourse. The intelligibility of Foucault's concept of "the author-function"[34] relies on one's awareness of his conflation of 'text' and 'discourse,' a conflation which he does not explicitly justify, and which he seems to accomplish by a rhetorical slight of hand wherein his use of the word 'text' expands its semantic reference as the lecture progresses. At its beginning, 'text' refers to something authored; however, the word's meaning slowly moves to a point where it (also? exclusively?) signifies something written, and then finally, transforms into a word denotative of spoken material so that 'text' = 'discourse.' This is a key rhetorical development because Foucault believes that discourse produces power, which is to say that it is the womb from which authority is born, the dynamic arena of forces that erects and maintains the determinative axiological, cosmological, and epistemological reality wherein individuals compete for power. The scholar Iara Lessa supports this view, asserting that Foucault defines discourse as "…systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak."[35] For Foucault, discourse is both axiologically and ontologically determinative; it shapes reality according to a set of laws which it then enforces by means of reward and

punishment, by providing or restricting access to power and goods. It is the mechanism through which power relations produce speaking subjects.[36] Foucault takes issue with the notion of the Author as a legitimating Authority because it obscures the fact that an author is not an entity, but a function, created rather than creative. More importantly, by posing as a sovereign, the Author/authors conceal the true source of authority: discourse. Discourse is pervasive, accompanying the breadth, depth, and width of human activity, and is thus and necessarily protean; the Author as a function, i.e., Foucault's author-function, masks a further aspect of discourse: the fact that the various elements of its substratum are logically independent of each other, and thus that there is not and cannot be a coherent account of the structure and logic of discourse. The notion of the Author manifest in a name neutralizes contradictions in discourse that would otherwise be problematic; it classifies texts, eliding unwanted differences and effecting bridges "from text to text"[37] across vast chasms by suggesting a uniformity and continuity of content. It is in this way that the Author remains for Foucault, not as the Author/an author within literature specifically, but as the author-function within discourse, that is, within the larger reality of which literature is only a part and wherein it is interpreted. As such, though he credits "imaginative" literature with bringing about the effacement/death of the author, Foucault maintains an awareness that the idea of 'the Author' remains at large and active in the world. "[T]he principle of the author," he writes, "most powerfully reasserts itself when it is thought absent," and "the concept of the author is never more alive than when thought dead…. [and thus] We can conclude that… the author remains at the contours of texts-separating one from the other, defining their form, and characterizing their mode of existence."[38]

Foucault wrote “What is an Author?” in an attempt to establish Discourse as the progenitor of power, not because he was greatly concerned about literature or literary criticism. Consequently, “What is an Author?” has been the object of considerable criticism, and several literary critics have demonstrated that Foucault’s terminological innovations cause more problems than they solve, managing only to reproduce the initial quandary in different terms.[39] Nonetheless, the questions that drove Foucault were universal and plumbed the very “conceptual figurations” of discourse, revealing the unreflective passivity with which they were accepted even as and after they had been surpassed. Foucault revealed the Author/an author as a hermeneutic, as a particular approach to Text/a text that structures discourse about Text/the text around an effected unity (the Author/an author) despite the fact that the writer of a text may or may not have originated the prevalent interpretation thereof. The effect of Foucault’s thought on literature was powerful, and remains visible within the literature and literary criticism of the present. “[Its] signal achievement,” Wilson writes, “was to reveal that the figure of the 'author' is an interpretative construct: a construct associated with canonical works, notionally identified with the writer of such works, but none the less categorically distinct from that writer.”[40] This achievement, however, accomplished by Foucault's expansion of ‘text’ to include utterance, and by his conjoining of writing and speech, was accompanied by a failure similar to that of Barthes. Wilson writes:

> …what we have seen of Barthes's *écriture* is equally true of Foucault's *discours*. The very question 'what matter who's speaking?' unwittingly announces both that someone is 'speaking' and that it is speaking which 'matters'. Thus *discours*, like *écriture*, is assigned precisely the properties-voice and origin, agency and authority, presence and

power-which have been so insistently re-moved
from the figure of the author.[41]

Thus reader, writer, and critic alike must proceed, newly aware that the Author is a socially constructed hermeneutic,[42] yet uncertain as to the character of his voice, origin, agency, and without a coherent account of the nature of his power or the extent of his authority.

B. Profligate Force: Authority in Coetzee's Diary of a Bad Year

I. "Every account of the origins of the state starts from the premise that 'we' – not we the readers but some generic we so wide as to exclude no one – participate in its coming into being. But the fact is that the only 'we' we know – ourselves and the people close to us – are born into the state; and our forebears too were born into the state as far back as we can trace. The state is always there before we are."[43]

II. "In the novel, the voice that speaks the first sentence, then the second, and so onward – call it the voice of the narrator – has, to begin with, no authority at all. Authority must be earned; on the novelist author lies the onus to build up, out of nothing, such authority."[44]

III. "Homais, c'est moi."[45]

Can one trace the current of authority through these three quotes? The first quote reproduces the first words of Coetzee's novel, forceful words issuing a series of authoritative sentences that coalesce in a statement presuming to obliterate "every account of the origins of the state." Can it be believed? Its meaning is at once apparent. Can it be constituted as an authority? According to the content of the second quote the reader has to no justification for doing so: Coetzee writes, "In the novel, the voice that speaks the first sentence… has, to begin with, no authority at all."

At what point has the author built up sufficient "authority" to be believed? The first quote begins on page three. The table of contents (which contains seven words and

six numbers, assuming that '155,' for instance, counts as one number and not three) is on the first page, and a section header reading:

"One
Strong Opinions

12 September 2005 – 31 May 2006"

is on the second page.

Do twelve words, ten numbers (assuming one doesn't count the word 'one' as a number), and three punctuation marks (two periods on page one, and a dash on page two) amount to building up authority? Two facts leap to mind before the question can be answered: 1) There is a page prior to the table of contents that reads:

"J.M. Coetzee"
Diary of a Bad Year"

Below the 'Diary of a Bad Year,' in the lower left-hand corner, there is a representation of a penguin, enclosed in a circle; beneath that is written "PENGUIN BOOKS." 2) The first quote falsifies itself, claiming that "Every account of the origins of the state starts from the premise that 'we' – not we the readers but some generic we so wide as to exclude no one – participate in its coming into being," and then proffering an account that doesn't do so.

Thought 1) raises the question of whether a) the pages of the book have been mis-numbered, whether page one, the table of contents (which is not actually marked with a page number) should be page two, and page two (which is also not marked with a page number) should be page three, and so on, all the way to page 231 (or to page 232, on which one finds the ISBN numbers for other books written by J.M. Coetzee and added, presumably, by Penguin Books, but which is not marked as page 232, or by any page

number at all). Or b) The page inscribed with the penguin and "PENGUIN BOOKS," and the advertisement on the final page *in* the book (whether one can say "of the book" is precisely what's under consideration) don't count as pages because they were inscribed with a mark (either "PENGUIN BOOKS or with the aforementioned depiction of a penguin enclosed in an oval) that indicated the page was written by one other than J.M. Coetzee. If the latter is correct, then we must ask: "On what grounds could one attribute the table of contents and the section header to either Coetzee or one other than Coetzee, given that they are neither paginated, nor marked with an authorial inscription?"

The theologian Joe R. Jones writes: "In speaking of authority relationships as transitory and conditional… Kierkegaard is drawing our attention to how authority is legitimized in human relationships. And herein the legitimacy seems to be a function of a complex set of arrangements in human society."[46] These comments serve to frame the analysis above in such a way that reveals its utility and prevents one from dismissing it as insouciance. Consider the complex societal arrangements involved in reading a book: to begin with, there must be a general agreement upon the content implied by "book," upon the manner in which a book will display that content; moreover, there must be agreement about how one should approach and engage with a book. Once achieved, these agreements coalesce into a singular, prescriptive force (with some internal variation) that purports to be an authority, and which acts reflexively to perpetuate itself in a process of self-legitimation. The reason a reader does not become trapped in the quagmire of the above questions pertaining to pagination is that the common (authoritative) account of "reading," both as an activity and as a concept, does not place great emphasis on pagination or the authorship of title pages and tables of contents. Furthermore,

advertisements tucked in the end of a book are not part of the author's (in this case, J.M. Coetzee's) book. The fact that such conventions are arbitrarily established and maintained is progressively occluded as an increasing number of individuals consent to their "authority," adding their forces to the collective. 'Authority' must elide a vast number of complexities and contradictions in order to govern the action and procedure of a great number of people and maintain the illusion that its account is definitive. Any thorough attempt to explicate the content of the account around which consensus has been achieved, to articulate the logic according to which the account connects its various prescriptions and justifies its authority, necessarily leads to the reality of the Hobbesian force/authority distinction and of Foucault's author-function's operation within discourse. Foucault's author-function must be modified in recognition of the fact that an author is coextensive with the author-function, and to address the fact that 'text' is not equivalent to 'discourse' but is rather a particular species of its manifestation; nonetheless, one can state that the authority of a text/author/concept/practice is a function of a complex set of arrangements in human society, i.e., a product of discourse. The invocation of discourse returns us to the second quote, wherein Coetzee discusses the necessity of an author producing his authority, a discussion that dovetails nicely with Foucault's definition of discourse; the author is negotiating the power dynamic that will characterize the force generated by the text he produces within the larger domain of language, and thus the authority it is accorded.

The second quote employs the concepts: 'novel,' 'voice,' 'sentence,' 'narrator,' and 'authority,' each of which refers to a species of manifestation of discourse. The words are connotative rather than denotative; each suggests a general conceptual horizon

and a general homogeneity of semantic content that yet does not definitively set a limit or enumerate a specific set of characteristics, the possession of which would render something appropriate to its particular appellation. *Diary of a Bad Year* demonstrates the flexibility of each of these concepts and in so doing enervates the authority of the words, complicating any attempt to understand them as signifying a decisive content. *Diary of a Bad Year* is a 'novel' that consists of essays, diary entries, and letters, wherein 'voice' proliferates and complicates, beginning with two distinct voices (kept separate by a horizontal line bifurcating the page) that originate from one person, expanding into three distinct voices (kept separate by horizontal lines trifurcating the page) emanating from two people, and then phasing in and out, relocating erratically so that the voice that begins in the top section (spatially speaking) appears in the second, in the third, in the first again, and then alongside the voice that begins in the bottom section but is then in the second section – or a voice disappears entirely, leaving a void pages long.

'Sentence' is violated syntactically, in overt, superficial ways, e.g. through the omission of punctuation marks, and in subtle, profound ways, such as:

> …a… development in the simplification of the rule of concord between subject and verb. 'Fear of terrorist attacks are affecting travels.' The emerging new rule… seems to be that the number of the verb is determined not by its subject but by the number of the noun most closely preceding it. We may be on the road to a grammar (an internalized grammar) in which the notion *grammatical subject of* is not present.[47]

A 'sentence' is a syntactical unit governed by grammatical rules, but what happens when those rules are violated without any adverse effect on its ability to communicate? At points, Coetzee ignores grammatical and syntactic convention,

omitting punctuation, misplacing a modifier – in places even employing constructions that, if read grammatically, are semantically null. The meaning of the word 'sentence' (in the grammatical sense) is widely known, but what is a 'sentence' when all the rules/characteristics that are said to be constitutive of the word can be violated without diminishing one's ability to recognize a series of signs as such? How does the word sentence retain its authority, the authority to name a grammatical unit of one or more words, bearing minimal syntactic relation to the words that precede or follow it, often preceded and followed in speech by pauses, having one of a small number of characteristic intonation patterns, and typically expressing an independent statement, question, request, command, etc., when the sheer arbitrary quality of the sign is so clearly in view? Put another way, how precisely does 'sentence' communicate?

The realization that words are connotative rather than denotative destabilizes the content of 'novel,' 'voice,' and 'sentence,' and this destabilization then problematizes the fourth word, 'narrator.' A narrator gives an account, tells a story, but if one cannot isolate 'voice,' cannot determine the identity of a speaker and attribute to him a manner of comportment by which he is characterized, recognized, and understood – or if there are multiple speakers that commingle so that "voice three" speaks in the section that had been reserved for "voice two" but uses "voice two's" words, at first reporting them, but then carrying them further and further away from the initial (partial?) attribution – how is one to understand 'narrator,' to isolate him?[48]

And then there is 'authority.' The second quote employs the concepts 'novel,' 'voice,' 'sentence,' and 'narrator' in order to arrive at 'authority,' a word for which neither the quote, nor *Diary of a Bad Year*, offer a definition.[49]

Authority: a word without content?

Authority: a purely connotative word?

If either of these, then how does the author write? What, if not authority, allows him to write his "story" – or if it is authority that makes it possible, how is this authority to be conceived?

Authority is neither secured, nor generated by the 'truth' of its declarations (i.e., their correspondence with demonstrable facts). A word, for example, need not signify a fixed and exhaustive knowledge of its content in order claim authority over it: the word 'novel' is said to be the authority designating its own content, and thus its decrees as to what content is appropriate to a 'novel' are more or less accepted as definitive despite the fact that one can quite easily demonstrate the gaps in logic, the fragility, of said decrees. If an acknowledged authority can make statements that may or may not be 'true,' then something other than truth generates and secures authority.[*] By Hobbes' account, individuals' consent consummates and promulgates authority; as such, he anticipates Foucault's concept of discourse. Both Hobbes and Foucault depict authority as emerging from the perpetual struggle for power between conflicting forces. 'Discourse,' then, is a shouting match, a forum in which logic and demonstrability do not necessarily issue in power.

One can demonstrate the necessity of consent to authority, and the impossibility of authority originating from a definite quality by another angle: If claims of authority derived their legitimacy from the demonstrability of their content, each claim would amount to an argument wherein the claiming entity asserts that he/she/it possess a unique

[*] Cf. Coetzee's discussion of the masters of information in *Diary of a Bad Year*, 19-23.

and superior capacity that warrants its issuance of definitive and prescriptive statements (usually within a specific domain). Yet, as an argument, each claim would be subject to the burden of proof and/or the requirements of logical arguments; it would be held against the rules of logic and forced to demonstrate the validity of its premise(s), inference(s), and conclusion(s) by that standard. Its authority, then, would be determined by some other force. By virtue of the fact that a claim of authority can be accepted or rejected according to an external standard, a claim of authority is revealed to be an appeal dependent on another power(s), and thus, as something other than an authority, i.e., as a force among other forces.

Hobbes's *Leviathan* demonstrates that there is no necessary, self-evident, and legitimate ground from which to dictate how one ought to adjudicate disputes amongst competing forces, and thus that individuals must give their consent to an entity in order to confer authority upon that entity. Coetzee, as an author, writes within this reality, he employs concepts (such as 'novel,' 'voice,' 'sentence,' and 'narrator') because they are accepted and understood, despite their instability, and are thus a means by which he can construct his appeal. He is, as Foucault demonstrated, not prior to language, not prior to text, but within it, lamenting its constraints. Coetzee's Señor C gropes to find the right words, searching among a vast but finite list of words, and he wonders, "Would the whole experience be any different, any less complicated, any better… if I had a truer, less questionable mother tongue… in which to work? Perhaps it is so that all languages are, finally, foreign languages, alien to our animal being."[50] Señor C's discomfort stems from his recognition of the truth of Hobbes' thesis, from the absence of an authority from which he could receive comfort and correction. Señor C knows he must procure consent

if his book/essay(s) is/are to have any traction, any 'authority.' He knows that concepts such as 'novel,' 'voice,' 'sentence,' and 'narrator' can act as the authorities of their respective content despite their inadequacy (i.e., their incomplete and amorphous account of their own content), because people consent to accept their declarations. He is aware that, as the legal scholar William Sokoloff writes:

> The ultimate ground of the legal order is ungrounded. A paradox haunts all founding moments. The act of founding is itself unfounded. They are logical impossibilities; something akin to a woman giving birth to herself. …there is nothing that could serve as an incontestable point of support for foundations. Appeals to natural law, self-evident truths, or God attempt to eliminate this problem insofar as they attempt to silence discussion about the foundation. They are invoked in order to deny the inescapably arbitrary essence of foundations.[51]

What distinguishes legitimate force from illegitimate force (violence) if not authoroity? How does one build up authority when authority is precisely that which cannot be created or demanded? "The god can be invoked," Señor C writes, "but does not necessarily come."[52] What quality causes a concept to be seen as authoritative, as a law, as something that may legitimate force?

These are questions that no concept, no law, and no writer can answer definitively, because every concept, every law (what else is a concept, but a prescribed structure for thought, an attempt to focus thought and restrict its range to an established horizon?[53]), is a matter of force, and relies on the strength of the force it marshals to justify its application. But force cannot command authority, cannot assert authority without, as Derrida explains, reinforcing its distance from authority: "The word 'enforceability' reminds us that there is no such thing as law (*droit*) that doesn't imply in

itself, *a priori*, *in the analytic structure of its concept*, the possibility of being 'enforced,' applied by force."[54]

Many forces claim authority, but most rest upon force and must create the illusion of legitimacy without permitting it to be imagined that their "authority" has an external source, because an external source would undermine the nature of the authority *qua* authority. For this reason, the authority of an author is initially very vulnerable to attack, because one holding a text has the feeling that the source of the text's authority is immanent – held between his two hands – and must inevitably yield itself to discovery. Barthes and Foucault are examples of just such a person. A writer (not an author), they feel, writes, using language that he does not create, but which is in fact his creator; the writer collects lines and ideas from an existent world and reassembles them without producing a unified text; it is only the reader who unifies text. According to Barthes and Foucault, language itself reveals the falsity of the pretense of 'the author' and her authority. Coetzee is aware of this attitude; Señor C writes:

> Announcements of the death of the author… made by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault… came down to the claim that the authority of the author has never amounted to anything more than… rhetorical tricks. …Diderot and Sterne… made a game of exposing the impostures of authorship. The Russian formalist critics… concentrated their efforts on exposing Tolstoy… as a rhetorician.[55]

The conclusion that the authority of a novel stems from rhetoric is the inevitable result of treating the novel solely as a product of language, that is, as a sequence of syntactical units and rhetorical devices. The fixity of an author's text permits it to be parsed, run through an analytic sieve, in short to be reduced to a collection of rhetorical units chosen from an arbitrarily finite set of such units. Barthes and Foucault deem the novel an

incomplete text, requiring the reader and discourse to fill in the gaps and thus predetermine that their enquiry will find its conclusion in the death of "authorial authority." Derrida quotes Pascal to this effect: "Custom is the sole basis for equity, for the simple reason that it is received; it is the mystical foundation of its authority. Whoever traces it to its source annihilates it."[56]

One must treat the final sentence of the previous quote carefully, noting the finality of "one who traces it [authority] to its source": the distinction between one who has completed the trace and one who is attempting to do so, or has done so incorrectly, is essential. Authority must seem necessary and justified, but it must not appear to be its own source and justification, rather some intrinsic quality emanating from its unique being must link it to a potent but ineffable "legitimator," a higher lawmaker (e.g., 'God,' 'freedom,' 'justice'). The authority of an authority rests on its ability to abbreviate a tracer's efforts, either satisfying his quest before he arrives at the true source, the fiat, or sending him onward in search of an indefinable apparition. An author accomplishes this in three ways: 1) First, he writes. 2) He achieves a sufficient command of the elements of written language to marshal rhetorical force. 3) He points away from himself, either ignoring or denying his authority. These three steps will be elaborated upon below.

C. Write, Effect, Demure – all at once.

Language and the authority thereof, the almost universal consensus that language can capture reality and that one can engage in transactions of reality by arranging linguistic units, is the beginning of writing; to write is the first and originating act of authorial authority. Señor C is at once honest and misleading in stating that an author

begins without any authority: the author has no authority of his own, but the act of writing allows one to step into the fact of language, into its authority, and into the fact of the literary tradition and the momentum of its authority so that, from the first word, the collective force of language, writing, and the literary tradition appear to be emanating from the author himself. Thus, when Coetzee writes: "Homais, c'est moi," he is both correct and devious, a shameless rhetorician taking full advantage of this illusion, and an honest man.

Coetzee's entrance into the literary tradition and his appropriation of its authority seem evident; following Dumas' Edmond Dantès,* *Diary of a Bad Year* has the voice that: a) was written by the novelist J.M. Coetzee b) was not written by the novelist J.M. Coetzee, but by Señor C c) the voice that in speaking of his life recounts a life similar to that of the incarnate man, John Maxwell Coetzee,[57] d) the voice referred to with the pages of *Diary of a Bad Year* as "John," e) "Mr. C," f) "JC," g) "Señor C," and h) "El Señor," i) the academic who wrote novels but is too tired to do so anymore, and j) who was writing essays but k) is now writing something more akin to memoir says: "I am [Monsieur] Homais." Homais is, of course, Monsieur Homais, Flaubert's character from *Madame Bovary*, and thus "JC" simultaneously, says "I am a narcissistic liar," and attaches himself not only to Dantès but to the literary titan Gustave Flaubert[58]; moreover, these are far from the only literati Coetzee summons in *Diary of a Bad Year*: he refers to Borges, Cervantes, Dostoevsky, García Márquez, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Pascal,

* Dantès character is also called "Number 34," "Chief Clerk of Thomson and French," "Count of Monte Cristo," Lord Wilmore," "Sinbad the Sailor," "Abbé Busoni," and "Monsieur Zaccone."

Tolstoy, Yeats – and those are only the literary titans – he cites Hobbes, H.S. Versnel,[59] Jean-Pierre Vernant,[60] and Judith Brett[61] in his notes, and discusses other notable names.

Yet, one can only say that Coetzee's appropriation of the authority of the literary tradition "seems" evident in light of the fact that the same voice claims:

> Now that the dust has settled, the mystery of… the authority of… great authors…remains untouched…. What great authors are masters of is authority. What is the source of authority, or of what the formalists called the authority effect? …what if authority can be attained only by opening the poet-self to some higher force by ceasing to be oneself and beginning to speak vatically?[62]

If it seemed, prior to this quote, that Coetzee, or "Señor C" was summoning literary masters in an endeavor to slide into the authority of other great authors and assert his authority via a species of *argumentum ad verecundiam*, one might now consider that he is doing so for two reasons that are entirely different from wishing to usurp their authority. First, the very fact that there is a name for the type of logically invalid argumentation that aims to use the prestige of others to strengthen its own case (*argumentum ad verecundiam*) seems to indicate that the erroneous nature of such a line of argument is well known, and since Coetzee/Señor C is discussing authority and rhetoric, it seems unlikely that he would reproduce such a fallacy. Rather, when he writes, "The god can be invoked, but does not necessarily come. *Learn to speak without authority*, says Kierkegaard. By copying Kierkegaard's words here, I make Kierkegaard into an authority. Authority cannot be taught, cannot be learned,"[63] it is more likely that he is aware of the true nature of authority, and of the fact that force often tries to slip into the guise of authority by such means. By overtly calling on writers of the past, he is both uncovering the ruse of such "authority by association" claims, and demonstrating that

authority is always bestowed upon an entity by another entity. J.M. Coetzee, or his created voice, "El Señor," make/remake the Great Dane, Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, an authority. Secondly, if authority is only to be maintained by evacuating the self so that it might be replaced by some higher force that will speak through him, who better to open oneself to than the great lights of literary history? A writer cannot remove himself from the momentum of the literary tradition, for by the very act of writing, he inscribes himself within it, within the trajectory of the literary and within the larger discourse of society and its texts, but perhaps by summoning the voices that have and do contribute to said momentum, a writer can acknowledge that he starts from privileged ground.

Rhetoric, literary device – what one may loosely call style – can be construed both as a means, a techne that contrives to produce an effect, and as an umbrella term for content that doesn't fit within any of the sanctioned components of a logical argument. In the first sense, it is an indication of education, and moreover, a sign that the writer has fulfilled a period of indentured servitude to the written language, thus making it more likely that he has achieved an intimate knowledge of its intricacies. To the extent that *Diary of a Bad Year* showcases some of the more arcane rhetorical devices, it could serve as a companion to a primer on rhetoric; Coetzee/JC employs anadiplosis, anacoluthon, hendiadys, and polysyndeton on pages 143-151 alone.[64] But Coetzee/JC seems far more interested in the second sense of rhetoric, i.e., in rhetoric taken not as techne, but as a reference to a novel's emotional content, to the aspects which cannot be qualified in terms of the components of a logical/rational argument. "Far more powerful than the substance of his argument, which is not strong," Coetzee/Mr. C, writes, "are the accents of anguish, the personal anguish of a soul unable to bear the horrors of this world."[65] If

the great writers are masters of authority, and authority can only be bequeathed, then the pull, the visceral capacity of writing that is "great-souled"[66] to move one to "share" the feelings of a non-existent character must be the foremost concern of Coetzee/Mr. C, of one who would be a master. Rhetoric conceived as a techne must bow before rhetoric conceived of as an acknowledgement of and engagement with the unity of human existence, i.e., the irrational as well as the rational. J.M. Coetzee/Anya, the third section's voice now writing in the second section, writes (or is it J.M. Coetzee writing John, reading the words that Anya wrote?): "I am going to Townsville to spend some time with my mother. I will see how I feel when things have cooled down, whether I want to come back."[67] Emotion is determinative; Anya wants to wait for her emotions to cool so she can then evaluate her emotional desires.

The two senses of rhetoric cannot be separated; it is never one or the other. The point of force in making a distinction has to do with the nature of language itself: authorial authority/the authority-effect can never be a matter of rhetoric conceived of as techne, because one can only employ a techne efficaciously after he has understood that no closed system (e.g., language, logic, mathematics, rationalism, rhetoric) can exhaust experience, that "language cannot get purchase, cannot get going, until it has split up the unity of experience."[68] But using language to produce an irrational, logically invalid argument (there are rhetorical devices that do exactly that) is not equivalent to language grasping the inadequacy of a finite system; rather, rhetoric conceived as a unity of the senses described above issues in rhetoric that acknowledges the existence of something beyond its limits even as it attempts to express that reality in terms that are within its limits by "speaking vatically," by uttering nonsense, by saying: "You are everywhere in

it, everywhere and nowhere,"[69] and "As for you… you deserve whatever has come to you, you have the divine spark."[70]

The steps being elaborated are not steps guaranteed to issue in authority; rather they are the intervals the contemporary writer must cross to dress authorial force as authorial authority, in order to avoid having the entire enterprise truncated – grounded as it were – by a reader locating its capacity within a limited vehicle. These steps need not be construed as disingenuous; perhaps it may even be said that attempting to cross these intervals is an essential moment in an author's endeavor to establish the good faith required of literary art.[71] Literature must evoke more than it can convey, it must reconstruct what the confines of language necessitate that it disassemble. The act of taking up the pen inscribes a writer within a discourse that has produced the concept 'Author,' that has accrued its own force, and has even had a certain authority conferred upon it; a writer cannot change the fact. Likewise, the conventions and history of language usage have indelibly embedded the concept of rhetoric in literary consciousness and tied it to the concept of literary skill. Nonetheless, authority, though it cannot be won, can and must be aimed at by any literary work that is to be considered (in Foucault's terminology) to have an author, and thus a writer must acknowledge the trajectory and force of literature, and he must employ rhetoric in order to demonstrate the seriousness of his aim at authority. However, traversing the final interval between the presentation of naked authorial force and the presentation of authorial authority requires the effacement of an author's/the Author's role in the creation of a text, so that the rhetorical skill he achieves becomes a thematic undertone that may be recognized but does not protrude;

author, device, and philosophical content must "fold discretely into the narrative."[72] From the author's perspective, the interval's determinative question can be posed as such: "[O]ne can say act without agent, but how does one think act without agent?"[73] How can one be brought before and into a story in such a way that she is coextensive with it, so that it is lived rather than heard, so that it can be "A response to the present in which I [they] find myself [themselves]."[74]

Diary of a Bad Year displays several tactics a writer can employ to occlude his presence: categorical demurral, personal demurral, quotation, and attribution. Examples will be offered and examined below.

A writer is engaged in a categorical demurral when he endeavors to complicate or cast suspicion on a category of entity or action that is said to be intrinsic to a reader's encounter with a text. He may, for example, downplay the importance of the writer to the production of story, or he may disparage attempts to suss out knowledge from a text; the best categorical demurrals achieve both, subtly, presenting themselves as mere observations – thoughts even – passing gossamer intended neither to argue, nor to bear the burden of an assertion. Anya says to JC, "If you tell a story at least people will shut up and listen to you. A story or a joke." He is old, melancholy, resigned; he replies, "Stories tell themselves, they don't get told… That much I know after a lifetime of working with stories. Never try to impose yourself. Wait for the story to speak for itself. Wait and hope that it isn't born deaf and dumb and blind."[75] One reads this and thinks, *Authors are unimportant, story appears, it erupts from… something*. Here, the off-the-cuff musings of an old man enact an epistemic restructuring; the exchange simultaneously denigrates an author's significance and locates the origin and authority of

story in an undefined "beyond," sending any who may be interrogating the authority of story into a realm of infinite space wherein nothing is necessarily (logically) excluded from being the source. Later, he takes another shot at the writer, and more subtly, at the enterprise of seeking truth in texts: "But how can this hunger [for truth, for relief from prevarication] be satisfied by the mere writer… when the grasp of the facts that the writer has is usually incomplete or unsure, when his very access to the so-called facts is… within the political field of forces, and when, half the time, he is because of his vocation as much interested in the liar and the psychology of the lie as in the truth?"[76]

Subversions of the writer and of truth-seeking in texts must always be handled with great care, because (leaving aside psychological arguments such as the contention that the desire to discover truth is a central motivator for reading) if they are overdone, an author risks crippling not just his ability to present force as authority, but his reader's expectation of encountering it, and thus his capacity to generate force at all. One sees, then, that if it is in fact J.M. Coetzee who wrote the words in *Diary of a Bad Year* (an assertion that Barthes would call into question), then he is aware of the need for balance. He writes atop page 162: "The document is nominally addressed to me, but after the first few pages could be addressed to anyone in the universe, anyone prepared to hear her cries."[77] and in the bottom section: "[He] can see me through other men's eyes as something fresh and alluring and illicit."[78] Intentionally not as overt as the categorical demurrals above, these statements serve as subtle counterbalances, reinforcing common themes mentioned in discussing the capacity of the written word, and energizing the truth seeking reader. The first quote asserts the special universality of the written word, of the epistolary, and is reinforced by the second's "see me through other men's eyes," the

message being that the classic claims of the literary are true: literature allows one to converse with and understand the other, to see anew, to understand new truth.

Personal demurral is a species of categorical demurral that possesses the tone of confession and implies intimacy. J.M. Coetzee/the essayist writes: "I was never much good at evocation of the real… the truth is, I have never taken much pleasure in the visible world, don't feel with much conviction the urge to recreate it in words."[79] The writer disparages himself, disowns his authority, dissembles the substance of his hopes: "Whatever art has come from my hand… is not great-souled, as the Russians would say…[it] lacks generosity, fails to celebrate life, lacks love."[80] One sees here, too, the balance, the push and pull; the author effaces himself but always replaces himself, with "the real" and "the truth" in the former quote, and with "the Russians," "life," and "love" in the latter. The novel demonstrates that truth may issue from failure, from lies, that the reader may discover truth and beauty through the writer's shortcomings. The author slips beneath or behind the real, truth, the Russians, life, and love, and his failure, his lie about his art, issues in the illusion of authorial authority. Anya explains, "A lie in the individual dimension does not necessarily count as a lie in the bigger picture. It can transcend its origins. …It's like makeup. Makeup may be a lie, but not if everyone wears it. If everyone wears makeup, makeup becomes the way things are, and what is truth but the way things are?"[81]

Quotation and attribution as techniques of authorial self-effacement are not necessarily instances of *argumentum ad verecundiam*. In the rhetorical sense, *argumentum ad verecundiam* is an appeal to authority that uses the admiration of the famous to try and win support for an assertion ("Isaac Newton was a genius and he

believed in God"[82]); however, as a means of authorial self-effacement, quotation and attribution allow the author to employ words, ideas, or images that issue in force which cannot be attributed to his agency, and behind which he can thus disappear. In the final pages of *Diary of a Bad Year*, J.M. Coetzee's essayist/John meditates upon Bach and is lead to Borges' "Kafka and His Predecessors," and to Barthes, and to Foucault, whose thought Borges anticipated:

> 'Who,' he muses, 'is Johann Sebastian Bach to me? In naming him, do I name the father I would elect if, from all the living and the dead, one were allowed to elect one's father? Do I in this sense choose him as my spiritual father?'[83]

After Bach, Borges, Barthes, and Foucault (he only explicitly mentions Bach on the page cited above), comes Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*: Ivan, Jesus, Alyosha, Fyodor Michailovich, and "Mother Russia": "master Tolstoy," "master Dostoevsky," and "an [ethically] better artist."[84] It is a deluge of concepts, images, names, and characters that the reader is likely to know; they are interspersed with Coetzee's/the essayist's own sentences, his own questions, but one almost doesn't notice them, one misses that the questions are rhetorical, misses the particularity of the permutation in which Coetzee/the essayist presents them. It is a demonstration of what Borges discovered in "Kafka and His Predecessors," and of the truth of Foucault's argument that the author of a text is not necessarily the man who wrote the text. Coetzee is – as all readers do – reappropriating authors (Bach, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, etc.) and their texts, and redeploying them. The authority of the names, echoing as they have for a hundred years and more, permeates the sentences until the reader forgets that four pages prior, in a letter from Anya that Señor C is reading to himself, Anya said of him, (him: the man whom she has called both "El

Señor" and "JC") "You bring things to life."[85] Behind master Tolstoy and master Dostoevsky, the author is forgotten; if one remembers him at all, it is as their student, as an apprentice who has reminded us of their words.

IV. Authority Recast, and Why the Concept is Useful

A. Retracing the Path of the Argument

This investigation began with the interrogation of the concept of authority. The most immediate difficulty the investigation encountered was that to use the word "authority" is to inscribe oneself within the very discourse he intends to modify, and within the purview of its definition(s) "which of course [are] unquestionable, from the moment one decides to call [authority]… the very thing one thus defines: [it is] a question of a circle…"[86] Barthes and Foucault, yoked together by their shared interest in language and the common influence of a Saussurien structuralism, face a similar difficulty in addressing the matter of the Author, and indeed their efforts only recreate the juxtaposition of Author and Text (wherein the concept of 'Author' is the unifying center of the concept 'Text,' and the concept 'Text' is the unifying center of the concept 'Author'). This indicates that the difficulty of isolating a definitive content appropriate to the concept of 'authority' stems in part from the fact that the appellation 'authority' is a manifestation of language which, due to its lack of a center, necessitates that each sign must be filled/completed at each iteration. This process is accomplished, as Derrida indicates,[87] both hermeneutically (in the reception and interpretation of the reader/listener) and through the strategic and unacknowledged juxtaposition of the

signaled word/concept with other words/concepts. Derrida, standing on the shoulders of Maurice Blanchot, Kierkegaard, Pascal, and others wrote:

> That is the folly: that logos is mad, that the discourse of reason is unable to assure itself of its meaning, of the single meaning of the day and, if not of univocality, at least of totalization of the remembering order, even of the remembrance of the history of the polysemy of the day. From then on the madness of the day is also the madness of the word, of the noun 'day,' a madness of the titular element insofar as a simulacrum of unity, a simulacrum of the law, a simulacrum of the trial which at once has the appeal of authority, gives the daylight to law while playing law, maddening and twisting the judgment and the critical decision.[88]

The fact that language and meaning are arbitrary, constructed, and thus radically unstable, and yet are commonly used (and with great success) points to the necessary centrality of consent/consensus to the authority that permits them their success. When Derrida writes in *Politics of Friendship*, "Why these words again, when they no longer mean what they were always thought to mean? When they still mean what they were believed not to mean…"[89] he speaks of the whole of language whose components claim to know and disclose those concepts and words which are active in the production of a specific meaning, but whose claim is ultimately false. The benefit of Derrida having chosen the word/concept 'Friendship,' is that, both as a word and as a concept, it indicates a relational dynamic; it implies a sociality that is perhaps not as forcefully evident in the words "language" or "concept." The difficulty inherent to both a concept and to language as a whole is the problem of authority: authority requires a warrant, and yet, as Derrida demonstrates so successfully,[90] there is no entity or power capable of providing such legitimation; "…it is impossible for authority not to be arbitrary."[91]

Yet if authority can only be arbitrary, how can one credibly claim a distinction between the legitimate force of authority and illegitimate force? Hobbes, anticipating Derrida's claims by three hundred years, offers an account of the genesis of authority that resists taking recourse to an argument that authority originates from a particular necessity (e.g., divine providence, proximity to the Truth/Good, or the possession of a suitable characteristic), and instead offers a contractual account of its origins. I have proposed an alternative reading of *The Leviathan* that develops the role consent plays in the production of authority more explicitly while simultaneously accounting for the fact that many powers claim authority and demand obedience as their consequent right; the above distinction between force and authority results.

The ensuing discussion of 'authorial force' and the 'illusion of authorial authority' in J.M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* is an attempt to explicate the nature and manner of an author's pursuit of authority in light of the fact that authority cannot be taught, learned, or claimed. This paper is guided by the conviction that this discussion and explication will render the definition of 'authority' that is to follow intelligible, and moreover that it will enable one to understand what it means to say that "it is only in moving beyond the understanding of authority as 'that which exerts the greatest force' that we can recognized that 'authority' does not exert force but collects it, revealing the axiological and epistemological topography of an entity's reasoning, i.e., of his/her/their evaluation and attribution of value and truth."

B. The Dynamics of Authority Reconceived

The affinity between force and authority is obvious: The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'authority' as "**1.** Power to enforce obedience. **1a**. Power or right to enforce obedience; moral or legal supremacy; the right to command, or give an ultimate decision,"[92] and 'force' as "**1.** Strength, power."[93] All that differentiates the primary definition of 'authority' from 'force' is the fact that 'authority' specifies that the amount of power the authority can generate is sufficient to force obedience; **1a**'s "right to enforce obedience; moral or legal supremacy" is so abstract as to be semantically null. Further, the invocation of the "right" of authority only amounts to arguing that, "authority has authority to enforce authority," which begs the question: what is authority? Hobbes understands the problems inherent in authorities' claims of legitimacy because he recognizes that many different entities assert their authority citing the same basis as their warrant, and that the consequent proliferation of such conflicting claims causes the distinction between force and authority to become so tenuous that 'authority' collapses into 'force.' Consequently, whatever an authority cites as its warrant, in actuality, its warrant is force.

By relocating the source of 'authority' so that it is external to the authority, one ensures that authority cannot be conceived of as issuing from a particular characteristic or mode of being that (according to God, Justice, The Good, etc.) justifies or necessitates a claim of authority. Instead, the capacity of an individual to confer a limited authority replaces her ability to assert authority and effectively redraws the dynamics of authority so that it is bidirectional rather than unidirectional, and as such, is distinct from 'force.' Authority, then, is consummated when an individual or individuals consent to accept or

affirm the value, normativity, and appropriateness of an entity's action(s) or a phenomenon's presence within a specific domain. Perhaps most notable about authority as such is its utter passivity and receptivity. Whereas force creates a content, is active, and pursues a particular end, authority is passive, unreflective, and receptive. Consequently, the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate force is recast: the fact that authority has been conferred upon an entity doesn't change the nature or origin of the entity's action: it remains force and issues from the entity, not from authority. The function of authority is, rather, akin to that of a series of mirrors that collect and reflect light in such a way that amplifies its effect; the stream of authority exalts the entity/virtue/phenomena upon which it has been conferred so that it is more visible, appears luminescent, and is commended as ideal and desirable; force exerted in its service is thus legitimated.

Concerning its duration, a further analogy may be made between authority and a star. A star begins with the confluence of hydrogen, helium, and various other elements that form from the contact of a cooperation between distinct forces. Nuclear fusion transform the hydrogen atoms into helium at the same time as convective and radiative processes cause energy to emanate from the belly of the star, processes which will continue as long as the pressure at the core of the star offsets the force of its gravity. After its supply of hydrogen has been exhausted, however, it ceases to exist as a star, and a portion of its atoms will be released into space where, eventually, they will form a new generation of stars. Similarly, the formation of authority begins as an individual(s) encounters an entity, phenomenon, or claim, and authority is consummated by a particular response on behalf of the individual by consent. For so long as the individual(s)

acknowledges and renews his consent, authority is maintained; however, in the event of the withdrawal of the constitutive consent, authority ceases to exist, though often the prestige of something that has long been regarded as an authority lingers and creates the appearance of authority.

C. The Utility of 'Authority'

Conceptions of authority wherein authority and force are collapsed into one, and which locate the source of authority within the authority, struggle to articulate the manner in which authority is secured. Such accounts frequently tie authority to abstract notions (e.g., morality, right, good, or just) that, while not unimportant, have no clear definition or referent, and are thus frequently at the center of controversy. Despite this inherent amorphousness, it is characteristic of such accounts to present their assertions as universally true and ontologically necessary, as if they were present and self-evident from the beginning of time. However, linking authority to a warrant that is itself a center of conflict, to a particular axiological account or a particular worldview, inevitably produces an account of authority warranted by force, wherein the entity that is able to assert his connection to the moral/right/good/just the most violently becomes the authority.

By contrast, an understanding of authority as distinct from force (as it is elucidated above) makes no pretension of universality; it begins by acknowledging the constructed nature of meaning and authority, and by drawing emphasis to the moment in which an authority is consummated by the conferring party/parties offering her/their consent. The singularity of a moment of consent, each of which is its own moment even if there are numerous co-extensive moments of consent, affords the opportunity to identify the entity/phenomena upon which an individual(s) is bestowing authority and to

consider what is indicated by the particular choice. The concept of 'authority' becomes propaedeutic to ethical activity when one recognizes that authority is created by individuals and as such, its content speaks not of the nature of Being within existence, but of the specific epistemological and axiological convictions of beings within existence. Authority, as something that is granted, as the object of individual(s) consent, reveals the axiological and epistemological terrain upon which the individual(s) lives and reasons; consistent attention to authority as such and the terrain it reveals can lead one toward the production of a topography[94] of an entity's/society's reasoning, i.e., of his/her/their evaluation and attribution of value and truth.

Coetzee writes: "[I]f authority is ultimately a function of power, then it ought to be possible, through the rediscovery of fiction's capacity to reconfigure the rules of discourse..."[95] This thesis includes the section on *Diary of a Bad Year* precisely in order to demonstrate fiction's capacity to reconfigure the rules of discourse, to show that authority issues from a response rather than an assertion, and that it must be conferred upon an entity rather than claimed. Because authority is consummated in a response, the writer who would be an author (in Foucault's sense) is forced to present material in order for there to be something for a reader to respond to, and yet he must allow the reader to fill the center, to determine for himself what he is conferring authority upon. The writer who would be an author must erect a framework and present a vision, but, as both Barthes and Foucault have indicated, he must not attempt to define that vision because he is not at liberty to do so; he is not the sole authority of the meaning of the text he creates. In an essay entitled "What Is a Classic?" Coetzee writes: "By not invoking any idealist justification of 'value in itself' or trying to isolate some quality, some essence of the

classic, held in common by works that survive the process of testing, I hope I have allowed the term… the classic to emerge with a value of [its] own, even if that value is only in the first place professional and in the second place social."[96] Such is and must be the logic of the writer, for if the writer claims absolute authority over his text, he limits himself and reduces the reader's role to that of one trying to guess at or suss out the writer's intended meaning; he precludes the possibility of the reader truly encountering and consenting to follow, the text.

Diary of a Bad Year deals thematically with the issue of authority – not merely with authorial authority, but with the authority necessary to live, to read, and to think. For Coetzee, "language is conceived… as a field of contestation,"[97] and as such, a thread of contrast runs throughout the novel's treatment, a contrast between the static and the dynamic, between things which are monoliths, closed to the world and to change, and things that are unfolding, that ebb and flow with experience even if their content remains largely unchanged. This contrast is a microcosm of the argument I have attempted to present: in light of the dynamism of discourse wherein each entity seeks to establish its claim to power, it is essential that individuals have access to a concept of authority that allows them to interrogate the ever changing "meanings" upon which an individual/society bestows authority, rather than one which suggests authority of a static nature warranted by a universal necessity. Stanley Cavell writes: "Words come to us from a distance; they were there before we were; we are born into them. Meaning them is accepting that fact of their condition. To discover what is being said to us, as to discover what we are saying, is to discover the precise location from which it is said; to understand why it is said from just there, and at that time."[98] The concept of authority developed

above is useful because it grasps this reality. 'Authority' is a word one is born into, a word that shapes the things he knows, and even the things he is able to see, but it is a word that conceals its precise meaning and which refuses to divulge why it has come as it has, and where it has come from. What does X signify? Why? From where does X come? What values does it bring with it? These are questions one must be able to pursue in order to "face directly the one question that truly engage[s] his soul: how to live."[99]

Understood as an individual's consent to regard a specific entity as exemplary and normative, 'authority' permits one to ask how he lives, how he knows, and what he values.

Endnotes

[1] Similarly to Mersenne's *Scientific Truth*, *The World* aimed to refute the philosophical skepticism of the day. Whereas Mersenne's arguments were mostly ad hoc, Descartes employed an elegant argument based on a subtle distinction between internal and external phenomena. Richard Tuck explains: "For the skeptics, the fact that one person thought an apple was green and another thought it was brown illustrated our incapacity to know the truth: the apple, they believed, must be a determinate color, but human perception could not decide what it was. …Descartes… argued that we have no reason to suppose that there are colors… in the real world… and therefore no reason to conclude that color-blindness (for example) means that we cannot know the truth about the world. Color is solely an internal phenomenon, caused no doubt by something external, but neither fallibly nor infallibly representing it." Richard Tuck, *Hobbes: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 21.

[2] The following is a quote from the Papal Condemnation of Galileo (June 22, 1633): "We condemn you to the formal prison of this Holy office during our pleasure, and by way of salutary penance we enjoin that for three years to come you repeat once a week at the seven penitential Psalms. Reserving to ourselves liberty to moderate, commute or take off, in whole or in part, the aforesaid penalties and penance." Galileo was sentenced to life in prison. Citation at: University of Missouri-Kansas City school of Law, "Papal Condemnation (Sentence) of Galileo (June 22, 1633)," University of Missouri-Kansas City, http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/galileo/condemnation.html

[3] Richard Tuck underscores and elaborates upon the radicalness of this move. Tuck, 68.

[4] Thomas Hobbes, "De Cive: Philosophicall Elements of a true Citizen." (1.6) constitution.org, http://www.constitution.org/th/decive01.htm

[5] C.f. *De Cive* 1.13 and Tuck, 69.

[6] Thomas Hobbes, "The Elements of Law," (II.10.8), Wikisource, http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Elements_of_Law/Part_II/Chapter_29

[7] Hobbes utilizes Descartes' distinction between internal and external phenomena (mentioned above), treating moral terms the same way Descartes treated color, and arguing that an individual's moral disgust or approval is the product of an external reality impacting his or her internal emotive system, rather than an encounter with an objectively moral truth.

[8] Hobbes continued to insist that 'pleasurable' was identical to 'good' until the time of his death. Hume rather convincingly demonstrated the existence of significant differences between 'pleasurable' and 'good' in later years. C.f., *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), and *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751).

Richard Tuck explains that Hobbes's conviction was not at all unique: "That [Hobbes] never [drew a distinction between 'pleasurable' and 'good'] is best seen as a consequence of his immersion in the skepticism of Montaigne's time, with its standard assumption that people take to be 'good' what is in their own interest." Tuck, 64-65.

[9] "The Elements of Law" (I.14.6).

[10] Hobbes' most common formulation of a civil society is "the state of men under the a regime of civil laws" or a/the "commonwealth." Though Hobbes uses the words "civil society" infrequently, the term has been used almost exclusively by later writers referring to Hobbes' commonwealth and has become the convention.
[11] Tuck, 65.
[12] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1985) 227.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Though Hobbes speaks of authority in the specific context of the sovereign of a political entity, I will expand the scope of 'authority' to include any entity making an epistemological or axiological claim that orders a particular domain in a determinative, if ambiguous, manner. (I use the phrase 'in a determinative, if ambiguous, manner,' because the account of the ordering effect doesn't take the form of a structuralist schematic wherein the supra-rational aspects of human activity, e.g., the emotional, mystical, and religious, are sublimated into a rationally conceived, mechanistic process.)
[15] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 227-228.
[16] Ibid., 228.

According to Hobbes, the first way in which authority can be attained "by natural force: as when a man maketh his children to submit themselves, and their children, to his government, as being able to destroy them if they refuse; or by war subdueth his enemies to his will, giving them their lives on that condition." This assertion is problematic because it elides the reality that sovereign authority achieved this way, i.e., achieved by force, doesn't actually become authority until the conquered consent to being ruled, as the clause "giving them their lives on that condition" implies. Thus, there is only one way in which authority arises, and that is through the consent of the individuals.
[17] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 189.
[18] The issue of the agency retained by the Hobbesian subject is inherently complex, and the complexity is only exacerbated by (what appear to be) several contradicting claims. While Hobbes certainly speaks of people surrendering their rights to a sovereign, he nonetheless places certain restrictions on the action of a sovereign authority (c.f., *Leviathan*, chapter 14, especially 190-201), and enumerates various obligations the sovereign has to his/her subjects, which should the sovereign fail to honor, would legitimate some manner of response by his/her subjects (c.f., *Leviathan*, especially chapters 14 and 30). Oppositely, Hobbes attributes to the sovereign the "total right" (Tuck, 84) to legislate intellectual matters based on the contention that "The actions of men proceed from their opinions." (*Leviathan*, chapter 18, 233.) Tuck writes, "Hobbes's sovereign is thus… an ambiguous figure: possessed of great and apparently illiberal powers, there are nevertheless some things he cannot (or, more properly, should not) do which a modern state would regard as unquestionably legitimate. The vital point is that Hobbes's theory embodies the paradoxes of early or classical liberalism…" (Tuck, 83-84.)
[19] C.f. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapters 18, 24, and 30.
[20] J.M Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 59.
[21] For a more in depth analysis of the concept of 'the author' and its demise and resurrection c.f., Peter Lamarque, 'The Death of the Author: An Analytical Autopsy',

British Journal of Aesthetics, 30 (1990), 319-331; Sean Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992; repr. I998); Donald Keefer, "Reports of the Death of the Author," *Philosophy and Literature* 19 (1995), 78-84. See also the essays in *What is an Author?,* ed. Maurice Biriotti and Nicola Miller (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), and the papers reprinted in *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*, ed. Sean Burke (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995). Footnote taken from Adrian Wilson's "Foucault on the 'Question of the Author': A Critical Exegesis," *Modern Language Review* 99 no. 2 (Apr., 2004), 339 n.2.

[22] Published 1968. Translated into English as "The Death of the Author." The following citations of the article are taken from Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana/Collins, 1977), 142-148.

[23] Published 1969. Translated into English as "What is an Author." The following citations of the article are taken from Michael Foucault. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1977), 113-138.

[24] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 144-146.

[25] Adrian Wilson, "Foucault on the 'Question of the Author': A Critical Exegesis," *Modern Language Review* 99, no. 2 (April 2004): 340-1. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3738750.

[26] Ibid., 341.

[27] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 146.

[28] Wilson, 341.

[29] Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 143.

[30] Foucault, "What is an Author?" 117.

[31] Ibid., 117, 119.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 124.

[34] Wilson writes "Thus Foucault's exposition of [3] [i.e., the third characteristic of the author-function: 'it is defined not by the spontaneous attribution of a text to its creator, but through a series of precise and complex procedures]-the fulcrum of his argument-has had the curious effect of eliding the issue with which he began, namely the bond between text and author, 'the singular relationship that holds between an author and a text, the manner in which a text apparently points to this figure who is outside and precedes it' Foucault's concept of the 'author-function' degenerated, in the course of his own exposition, into incoherence." (349, 352.)

For criticism and analysis of Foucault's author-function, see Gail Stygall's "Resisting Privilege: Basic Writing and Foucault's Author Function" *College Composition and Communication* 45, no. 3 (Oct., 1994), 320-341, Sean Burke's *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes*, 5-11 (Reprinted in 2004 by Edinburgh University Press), and Roland Barthes' *Criticism and Truth* (Athlone Press, 1987).

[35] Iara Lessa, "Discoursive Struggles within Social Welfare: Restaging Teen Motherhood." *British Journal of Social Work* 36, no. 2 (2006): 283–298. http://bjsw.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/36/2/283
[36] S. Strega, "The View from the Poststructural Margins: Epistemology and Methodology Reconsidered. Research as Resistance," in *Research as Resistance*, ed. L. Brown and S. Strega (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2005): 199-235.
[37] I employ scare quotes in order to acknowledge that Foucault problematized the idea of the 'the work' as a discrete, bounded phenomena. Following such logic, one can argue that the author-function doesn't erect bridges from text to text, or does so only incidentally. Rather, what are bridged are the lacunae in the logic/warrants that exist between the various manifestations of discourse.
[38] Foucault, *Death and Return*, 6-7, and "What is an Author?," 124.
[39] C.f., Wilson, 360-363.
[40] Wilson, 360.
[41] Wilson, 361-2.
[42] Jacques Derrida's *Positions* is especially helpful in considering the relevance and impact of hermeneutics. His concepts of differance, supplement, and the parergon/ergon distinction all probe the effects a hermeneutic has on thought.
[43] Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 3.
[44] Ibid., 149.
[45] Ibid., 191.
[46] Jones, Joe R. "Some Remarks on Authority and Revelation in Kierkegaard." *The Journal of Religion* 57, no. 3 (1977): 243.
[47] Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 145.
[48] Cf. Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 55. "Anya" is relating a conversation between her and Senor C, and though it is not entirely unconventional, there are no quotation marks, and thus no definite delineation between his voice and hers. This uncertainty is compounded by the fact that she also refers to Senor C as El Señor, a Spanish name for God, who is, theologically speaking, the Creator and Author, i.e., the author of everything.
[49] 'Authority' is spoken of and around at great length in *Diary of a Bad Year* (c.f. 148-225, but especially 55, 149-154, 175-179, 189-193, and 221-227), but is nowhere defined.
[50] Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 196-7.
[51] William W. Sokoloff, "Between Justice and Legality: Derrida On Decision," *Political Research Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (June 2005): 343.
[52] Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 151.
[53] According to Jacques Derrida, the western metaphysics (of which concepts, law, and language are products) engages in the construction and application of horizons that, in becoming the forms of thought and communication, are also the limits of thought and communication.
[54] Jacques Derrida, "Force Of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority," in *Deconstruction And The Possibility Of Justice*, ed. Drucilla Cornell, Michael Rosenfeld, and David Gray Carlson (New York: Routledge Press, 1992), 6.

[55] Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 149-50.
[56] Derrida, "Force of Law," 12.
[57] The similarities between the life of the JC of the novel and that of the individual John Maxwell Coetzee, an author, now living in Australia (at least those which are demonstrable) are primarily in reference to their public, professional lives. Both "men" have been academics, both men have been novelists, and both men have published at least one collection of essays. Demonstrable, factual differences between the two include the fact that the former "man" was said never to have married or had children, whereas the latter man was married (later divorcing) and had two children (see "J. M. Coetzee," The Nobel Foundation. 2003. Online at: <http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2003/coetzee-bio.html.>
[58] Though there is not time to pursuit the matter herein, it is interesting to note that Flaubert, while incontestably a literary giant of the utmost importance to the development of literature as we now know it, is said to be the father of literary realism, a now thoroughly discredited school of thought. Flaubert, then, is a microcosm of the problem of authorial authority and the ineffable quality of its origins.
[59] A professor at the Leiden University Institute for History who specializes in Ancient History and the Graeco-Roman world. His significant works include: *Triumphus. An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Diss. Leiden 1970), (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship. Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden 1981), *Satricum e Roma. L'Iscrizione di Satricum e la storia romana arcaica* (Meppel 1990), *TER UNUS. Isis, Dionysos and Hermes: Three Studies in Henotheism (Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion* I (Leiden 1990), and *Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual (Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion* II (Leiden 1993).
[60] A French historian, anthropologist, and a specialist in ancient Greece. He published well over 30 works from 1962-2004.
[6161] A professor at the Latrobe University School of Social Sciences. Her publications include: Holden, C., Trembath, R. and Brett, J. *Divine Discontent: The Brotherhood of St Laurence - A History*, (2008), *Exit Right: The Unravelling of John Howard*, (2007), "Relaxed and Comfortable: The Liberal Party's Australia," *Quarterly Essay* no. 19, (2005), and *Australian Liberals and the Moral Middle Class: From Alfred Deakin to John Howard*, (2003).
[62] Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 150-1.
[63] Ibid., 151.
[64] **Anadiplosis**: ("doubling back") the rhetorical repetition of one or several words; specifically, repetition of a word that ends one clause at the beginning of the next. **Anacoluthon**: lack of grammatical sequence; a change in the grammatical construction within the same sentence. **Hendiadys:** use of two words connected by a conjunction, instead of subordinating one to the other, to express a single complex idea. **Polysyndeton**: the repetition of conjunctions in a series of coordinate words, phrases, or clauses.
[65] Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 225.
[66] Ibid., 170.

[67] Ibid., 171.
[68] Ibid., 59.
[69] Ibid., 181.
[70] Ibid., 184.
[71] For a discussion of the ethics of writing and an explication of "good faith" between reader and writer from a writer's point of view, cf., J.M. Coetzee, *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*, ed. David Attwell (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 251-294. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton and Company, 1988), 218-235. John Gardner, *On Writers and Writing* (New York: MJF Books, 1994), vii-xxii, 70-77, 216-227, and Flannery O'Connor, *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1969), 63-142.
[72] J.M. Coetzee, *Stranger Shores: Literary Essays 1986-1999* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 2001), 143.
[73] J.M. Coetzee, *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*, ed. David Attwell (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 145.
[74] Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 67.
[75] Ibid., 55.
[76] Ibid., 126.
[77] Ibid., 162.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid., 192.
[80] Ibid., 170.
[81] Ibid., 86.
[82] "Constructing a Logical Argument," virtualschool.edu, <http://www.virtualschool.edu/mon/SocialConstruction/Logic.html>
[83] Ibid., 222.
[84] Ibid., 226-7.
[85] Ibid., 222.
[86] Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship,* trans. George Collins (New York: Verso, 2005), 304.
[87] Cf., *Of Grammatology,* [Jacques Derrida, *De la Grammatolgie* (Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 1967). Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).] *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* [Jacques Derrida, *La Voix et le phénomène: Introduction au problème du signe dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967). Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allinson and Newton Garver (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1979).] (See especially chapters three and six). Cf. also *The Truth in Painting*, [Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).] (especially 37-82).
[88] Jacques Derrida, "Title (to be specified)," *SubStance* 31 (1981): 17.
[89] Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 297.
[90] Cf. Derrida, "Force of Law" and "Title (to be specified)."

[91] William W. Sokoloff, "Between Justice and Legality: Derrida On Decision," *Political Research Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (June 2005): 343.
[92] The Oxford English Dictionary, "authority," The Oxford English Dictionary, http://dictionary.oed.com.
[93] The Oxford English Dictionary, "force," The Oxford English Dictionary, http://dictionary.oed.com.
[94] Topography, in this case, is used in distinction to cartography. Topography indicates the activity of producing detailed maps of small areas, whereas cartography is the construction of maps more generally, including maps of relatively vast expanses of space. One of the essential features of authority as it has been depicted is that it deals in the particular as opposed to the general or universal.
[95] Coetzee, *Doubling the Point*, 11.
[96] Coetzee, *Stranger Shores,* 15-16.
[97] Coetzee, *Doubling the Point*, 8.
[98] Stanley Cavell, *The Senses of Walden* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), 64-65.
[99] Coetzee, *Diary of a Bad Year*, 193.

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