

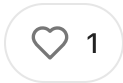
# The Return of the Tyrant

How Archetypal Power, Collective Projection, and Empathy Collapse Have Given Rise to New Era of Strongmen



STERLIN MOSLEY

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*“The people always have some champion whom they set over them and nurse into greatness. This and no other is the root from which a tyrant springs; when he first appears, he is a protector.” —Plato, *The Republic*.*

The tyrant rarely begins as a villain. He arrives dressed as a savior, speaking in the language of protection, reassurance, and certainty. He promises order where there is chaos, identity where there is fragmentation, and strength where there is fatigue. And in a world that has grown weary of ambiguity and allergic to nuance, that promise is enough. The tyrant does not seize power by force alone; he is summoned by a culture that has lost its taste for responsibility. We imagine that by placing our faith in someone who doesn't flinch, who never doubts, who never bends under the weight of nuance, we might be spared the agonizing vulnerability of having to think, feel, or act with integrity ourselves.

This is the psychic contract many have unconsciously signed with narcissistic and autocratic leaders. We hand over our discernment in exchange for a performance of strength. But what lies beneath is rarely strength. It is an emptiness hungry to be filled with projection, loyalty, worship, and, ultimately, submission.



As I write in [\*Center of the Universe\*](#), “Narcissistic figures who possess just enough charisma to be forgiven for their transgressions, just enough ‘authenticity’ to disguise their entitlement, and just enough theatricality to pass for visionaries, become lightning rods for the disowned needs, fears, and shadow material of the collective.’ other words, they become walking archetypes—mirrors for our spiritual laziness, or hunger for protection, and our failure to confront the very parts of ourselves that cr domination and praise in equal measure.

The strongman is not a new invention. He is one of the oldest myths in the human story: the pharaoh who demands allegiance in exchange for survival, the emperor who rewrites morality to suit his whims, and the guru who blurs love and control until his followers can no longer tell the difference.

What has changed is the delivery system. Where once the tyrant was a distant figure glimpsed through palace gates or smoky thrones, he is now live-streamed to us in high definition, curated through algorithmic consent. His image is broadcast through memes and soundbites, condensed into hollow slogans that echo in the soul. And we, conditioned by a culture that rewards certainty and spectacle, have learned to mistake confidence for competence, virality for virtue.

The narcissistic tyrant thrives when the public has not done its spiritual homework

“The narcissist often becomes a kind of projection surface for the disowned longings of the masses, particularly when those masses are spiritually underdeveloped. The tyrant is not always loved, but he is rarely disbelieved, because he speaks to the parts of the self that long to be vindicated, exalted, and relieved of responsibility. In this way, he becomes not a leader, but a kind of national alter ego” ([Center of the Universe](#))

When people have not developed inner clarity, they become magnetized to outer authority. When compassion is framed as weakness and empathy is derided as emotional indulgence, what rises in its place is cruelty, justified, ritualized, and repackaged as common sense.

It is not hard to see this happening in the United States and worldwide. The re-emergence of authoritarian figures clothed in populist rhetoric is a symptom of a deeper breakdown—not just political but metaphysical. As a culture, we are confronting our inability to tolerate emotional ambiguity, our addiction to spectacle, and our resistance to growing up.

“When a society becomes saturated with narcissistic values, its people begin to confuse domination with leadership, and manipulation with strategy. The tyrant is just a person; he is a manifestation of a collective ego trying to preserve its illusions at any cost.” (Mosley, *Center of the Universe*)

And that cost is staggering.

It includes the erosion of democratic norms, the collapse of truth as a shared value, demonization of the vulnerable, and the normalization of cruelty. But perhaps the most dangerous cost is that we begin to forget that we are capable of governing ourselves—not just politically but spiritually.

The return of the narcissistic tyrant is not inevitable. It is a symptom. And like all symptoms, it carries a message.

We are being called to grow up. To take back the projections we have cast onto false messiahs. Remember that real strength is not the absence of emotion but the ability to act from principle in its presence. That true power does not demand obedience but invites responsibility. That the cure for narcissism—on both the personal and collective level—is not more charisma but more consciousness.





We are not doomed to repeat history. But we are fated to repeat whatever we refuse to confront.

As we watch the spectacle unfold again, with better production values and more cunning narratives, we must ask ourselves: What part of me wants to be rescued? What part of me prefers a lie that feels good over a painful truth? What part of me would rather be ruled than be responsible?

Until we ask those questions, personally and collectively, the tyrant will always find his throne and rule with the authority of our unchecked baser impulses.

And yet, there is hope.

If there is one glimmer in this dark moment, it is that the absurdity has reached a fever pitch. The curtain has been pulled back, and many are beginning to awaken not only to the danger of unchecked narcissism but to the power of human dignity, integrity, and compassion across political, religious, and racial lines. As people begin to choose principle over personality, conscience over convenience, and collective humanity over collective illusion, a quiet revolution is happening beneath the noise.

It may not be loud, and it will not go viral. But it is real.

And it begins wherever you are willing to tell the truth.





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