



# The Transparency Society

*Byung-Chul Han*

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## **The Transparency Society** Byung-Chul Han

Transparency is the order of the day. It is a term, a slogan, that dominates public discourse about corruption and freedom of information. Considered crucial to democracy, it touches our political and economic lives as well as our private lives. Anyone can obtain information about anything. Everything—and everyone—has become transparent: unveiled or exposed by the apparatuses that exert a kind of collective control over the post-capitalist world.

For transparency has a dark side that, ironically, has everything to do with a lack of mystery, shadow, and nuance. Behind the apparent accessibility of knowledge lies the disappearance of privacy, homogenization, and the collapse of trust. The anxiety to accumulate ever more information does not necessarily produce more knowledge or faith. Technology creates the illusion of total containment and constant monitoring of information, but what we lack is adequate interpretation of the information. In this manifesto, Byung-Chul Han denounces transparency as a false ideal, the strongest and most pernicious of our contemporary mythologies.

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