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Genocide and Modernity

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Introduction

For the older generation of 'genocide scholars', an intimate relationship between genocide and modernity seemed so obvious as to hardly warrant investigation.[1] After all, the frequency and scale of genocides in all parts of the globe during the twentieth century suggested that modernization crises regularly resulted in the destruction of human communities. It remained to reconstruct and compare cases by mixing the ingredients of the standard recipe: a base of utopian ideology, a packet of racial enmity, plenty of state terror and some indifferent bystanders, topped off by an uncaring global community. These scholars also had an activist agenda, more interested in predicting and preventing genocide in the contemporary world by exhorting the United States, where they lived, to 'humanitarian intervention', than in reflecting on the deeper causes of civil wars and regional conflicts.[2] There seemed little point in pondering the nuances of such concepts when people were being displaced and killed *en masse* today.

There is no denying it, academic discourse can seem futile when even the meanings of 'genocide' and 'modernity' are subject to permanent dispute, as in the following:

> 'Modernity' stems from anthropocentric thought! Or is it instrumental reason? Belief in science? Rationality? The rise of nation-states? A shift from a static to dynamic ideal ('make it new') or reflective consciousness? All have singly or in combination been praised or blamed for Modernity which, everyone knows, started with Gutenberg, Machiavelli, Erasmus, Luther, Montaigne, Bruno, Galileo, Descartes, Roussseau, American or French revolutionaries, or Hegel; or is it Nietzsche? One author's Modernity starts circa 1500 then also, again, with the French Revolution...[3]

And so on. Other scholars dispute whether it makes sense to speak about a single 'modernity' or the 'enlightenment' at all, because these terms suggest the existence of monolithic entities that were in fact heterogeneous.[4] Definitional imprecision seems to preclude scientific certitude let alone political action.

And yet, intellectuals and scholars outside the field of 'genocide studies' have been convinced that much is at stake in these academic debates for the national group, religion or political ideal to which they belong or are commit-ted. Consider both optimistic and pessimistic analyses of modernity.[5] As a byword for material and intellectual advancement, national liberation and international peace, individual freedom and enlightenment, modernity promises a utopia realizable in the rational unfolding of history as the scientific method supplants religious obscurantism, and the public use of reason dissolves the unexamined assumptions of encrusted traditions and the arrogant claims of absolutist authority. By contrast, pessimists wonder whether the Promethean attempt to master the circumstances of existence by fetishizing reason and material production has imprisoned humanity in systems and structures of its own making. Far from signifying emancipation, modernity has issued in racist utopias and totalizing visions of purity, soulless bureaucracy and the omnipo-tent state, global capitalism and rapacious industrialism, advanced weaponry and inhuman technology, the 'culture industry' and 'the last man'.

We are dealing then, really, with the question of theodicy: how can evil, above all the undeserved suffering of innocents, be squared off with historical progress? Has the fantastic growth in human productivity over the past three centuries resulted in greater human happiness? Indeed, is 'historical progress' a coherent or morally defensible concept any longer? Or, are there still grounds for secular hope in human affairs? What is the link between the global spread of 'civil society' and destruction of Indigenous peoples since the sixteenth century? If modernity promises human improvement over time, does it also accept the terrible human cost exacted by the epochal transformation from premodernity?

Given the underlying issues of theodicy and group survival, it is no surprise that rhetorical excess is sometimes a feature of the discourse. Thus the Jewish Studies scholar Steven T. Katz is ambivalent about modernity because he thinks it hastens the assimilation of Jews, especially in countries with little anti-Semitism, leading to 'an invisible though far less painful Holocaust'.[6] Jews are fated to suffer a Holocaust in all conditions it seems, whether at the hands of fanatical anti-Semites or by those for whom ethnic identity is irrelevant when choosing a marriage partner. The Nazi and the secular liberal are equally per-petrators of genocide, the one physical, such as the Edomites supposedly attempted, the other spiritual, represented by the Moabites. For someone who has devoted his career to forbidding use of the descriptor 'genocide' for the

large-scale destruction of other national groups, Katz's claim reveals more about his ethnic anxieties than the subject matter he seeks to examine.[7]

If verbal hyperbole is a problem for some, explanatory over-determination is a temptation for others, especially social scientists who vie with one another to identify the 'essential' or 'underlying' meaning of modernity. Noted sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, for instance, writes of the 'modern era' that it 'has been founded on genocide, and has proceeded through more genocide', basing this generalization more on an ideal typical model of modernity than the empirical examination of genocides through the ages.[8] Equally sweeping is the opposite claim that attributes genocide solely to anti-modern or counter-enlightenment movements and ideologies, conveniently equating modernity with liberalism and benign social progress.[9] These polarized positions, which have characterized the tensions within German historiography for one, are difficult to reconcile.[10]

Still another approach questions whether the genocide–modernity couplet obscures more than it reveals. The stark distinction between modernity and premodernity, civilization and barbarism, historian Dan Stone points out, ignores the fact that genocidal violence may be intrinsic to all human societies at all stages of history. And characteristic of modernity is neither the genocidal potential of a cool instrumental reason, nor the anti-genocidal prophylactic of the liberal rule of law advocated by Raphael Lemkin, but the barbaric behaviour modern societies can produce because they stifle non-rational modes of expression.[11]

Going even further, the postcolonial perspective crticises modernity as an irreducibly Eurocentric construct requiring unmasking. Non-Europeans experience the category of modernity as a European license to dominate them because it implies their own backwardness. Marxism is as much the culprit as liberalism, justifying forced 'development' to 'overcome backwardness' at the cost of millions of lives lost in contrived famines and coerced population movements. As if working in concert with modernity, the concept of genocide then obscures from view the ultimately western source of these fatalities and cultural disasters because, as a western invention as well, its preoccupation with individual and state intentions to consciously destroy human groups precludes problematizing the equally destructive effects of authoritarian modernization programmes.[12]

Plainly, these debates do matter for scholars of genocide but so far philosophers and social theorists have been their main contributors.[13] 'Genocide studies' can learn from this literature by examining how it answers the central questions of the discipline: why does genocide occur, and do the social upheavals of the past two to five hundred years constitute a qualitatively different 'genocidal context' than earlier periods? We will see that the most influential theories of modernity since the middle of the twentieth century were produced by German Jews whose focus was not genocide per se but, understandably enough, the Holocaust

and either totalitarianism, fascism or Nazism. Any consideration of the relationship between genocide and modernity, then, has to work through this foregrounding of Europe and the Holocaust, and consequent marginalization of colonialism and non-European genocides.

For all their Eurocentrism, however, these theories' assumption that *any* society can descend into genocide remains an important antidote to 'exighophobia', the substitution of explanation for the emotionally satisfying but intellectually and morally questionable ascription of genocidal potential solely to certain, stigmatized peoples.[14] Due to its historiographical remit, this chapter proceeds in a nominalist fashion, eschewing the attempt to define either keyword conclusively, and focusing on the key thinkers who have defined the terms of discussion.

Civilization, progress and genocide

If liberals were inclined to equate historical progress and civilization, they also associated genocide with barbarism. Raphael Lemkin, the Polish Jewish lawyer who coined the concept of genocide in 1944, regarded the development of national and international law as a civilizational advance because such legal codification inhibited the militarization of social norms. For him, the Nazis represented a reversion to the barbarism of premodern wars in which combatants and civilians were not distinguished.[15] The work of the German Jewish historical sociologist Norbert Elias provides an influential theoretical and empirical elaboration of this common paradigm. The belated discovery of his works from his days as an assistant to Karl Mannheim at the University of Frankfurt in the 1930s has led to a cottage industry of commentary and application of his approach since the 1980s.[16] Like the other key thinkers of genocide and modernity examined here, Elias's ideas developed out of personal experience of Nazism. Witnessing the paramilitary violence of the Weimar Republic, and having fled to Great Britain, Elias was acutely conscious of the fragility of those norms underlying social life. *The Civilizing Process* highlights the historical contingency of such norms by reconstructing the process of their development since the Middle Ages. Drawing on Freud, Elias postulated an anthropology of violent and egoistic drives, represented historically by the 'warrior' ethos of the aristocracy. The epochal development was the absolutist state, whose monopoly on force diminished capricious violence in everyday life and the anti-civilizational ethos of the warrior caste. Over time, the subjects of early modern Europe internalized the new external constraints with the help of etiquette manuals. Knives and forks came into use.

The Civilizing Process is primarily about the French case because of that country's paradigmatic constellation of social forces. The aristocracy eventually

accepted its reduced status by the crown, swapped the 'warrior' ethos for 'courtly' rituals and then socialized the rising middle class in the art of modern manners and self-restraint. The court at Versailles became the school of the nation. Like the maturation of children, the civilization of a society is the gradual replacement of external social or state authority with the individual super-ego. At the summit of this process stands parliamentary democracy, whose functioning requires the anthropologically remarkable ability of individuals and groups to delay or forgo gratification in the name of compromise. Civilization is the habitus of self-control.[17]

How did Elias apply his theory to Nazism and the Holocaust? In *The Germans*, he explained Germany's descent into barbarism by reference to its divergence from the west, especially France and Great Britain. Germans became enthralled by Nazism and they perpetrated the Holocaust because they were never fully civilized in the first place.[18] Their vulnerability to Nazism was the result of a German tradition that had retained the cultural hegemony of the warrior ethos represented by the Junker elites, whose power and influence had never been entirely tamed. Indeed, dueling fraternities and the army became the school of the nation, and bourgeois Germans spared no effort to associate themselves with these institutions, which inculcated 'a pitiless human habitus'.[19] The strong emphasis on ritual in this milieu inhibited the development of internal behavioural and moral restraints. Consequently, Germans did not develop the self-control or conscience that could inhibit their national delusions when the rule of law was removed. [20] They were civilizational children.

If the defeat in 1918 and the rise to power of the despised Social Democrats traumatized the bourgeois German habitus, the 'humiliation of Versailles' was felt by all Germans. Unlike Britain after the Second World War, Germans were unable to come to terms with their national decline because their insufficiently developed individual egos required a commensurately strong group national ideal as compensation. Consequently, they opposed the Weimar Republic and its policy of international co-operation, eventually following the man who promised to fulfill their dream of historical greatness. The Nazis merely generalized the anti-civilizational habitus that hitherto had been limited to middle class and aristocratic Germany.[21] When they began to implement their ideologically driven plans of genocide, there was little within Germans to prevent their enthusiastic participation.

Although Elias was an unashamed proponent of the *Sonderweg* thesis, he was, nonetheless, offering a theory of universal application. The originality of the analysis lies in the attention to the dynamic relation between the macro-level of state formation and the micro-level of personality structure. The static categories of 'the individual' and 'society' are historicized and situated within an overarching theory of modernization. Thus the 'lust for submission' of middle-class

Germans is explained by reference to centuries of national development rather than by recourse to specious national character arguments in the manner of Robert Vansittart.[22]

Even so, Elias's theory is open to a number of objections. If he defines civilization as a functional matter of self-control (such as eating with knives and forks), it is less clear how the normative component of social equality and mutual recognition evolves.[23] This tension is evident in the seeming paradox that the Nazis ate with knives and forks and that Himmler, in his infamous 'Posen Speech', took pride in the 'decency' of his men because they had not robbed the Jews they had just shot. Were not Germans very civilized in many respects? Was not an aspect of their racism towards 'Ostjuden' and Slavs that they were seen as uncivilized? It seems unsatisfactory to conclude that German behaviour under Nazism can be fully captured by thinking they had relapsed into barbarism.

Elias's interpreters have amended his stark contrast between barbarism and civilization by attending to processes of 'dycivilization'.[24] Barbarism and civilization can co-exist when the former is 'compartmentalized', that is, demarcated in separate social spaces. Acting as a psychic defence mechanism, such compartmentalization allows, say, concentration camp guards to cordon off their conduct in their minds, and behave like any other person. Violent ghettos are perfectly compatible with liberal societies because they are normalized as 'off-limit' zones for the majority of citizens.

For all that, if Elias's argument has been nuanced to the extent that the state's monopoly on violence does not necessarily entail complete social civilization, it still implies that those pockets, such as ghettos, are uncivilized because the state's writ does not extend to them. But what if the state is the perpetrator? Elias's interpreters have considered this possibility: for genocide to occur the violent targeting of marginalized groups of people needs to escalate and be extended: 'a radical and annihilationist regime [must] complete the shift in the direction of a dycivilizing process'.[25] But *why* does this extension and escalation happen? What drives the state to persecute and even destroy certain categories of people? How and why such a regime comes to power is left open. Here are lacunae in Eliasian civilization theory that other traditions have pondered.[26]

Pessimism, civilization and genocide

Writing at roughly the same time as Elias, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno came to very different conclusions. Although also German Jews of the same generation who worked in Frankfurt, and likewise indebted to Freud, their disciplinary and ideological backgrounds set them apart. As philosophers, Horkheimer and Adorno did not feel as obliged to offer detailed explanations for specific phenomena as the historical sociologist Elias, even if applied social research was central to the mission of Critical Theory.[27] As Marxists, they did

not privilege any existing state as ideal, least of all liberal capitalist ones. And yet, their question was largely the same: what was the source of the German fascism that made refugees of them all, and what did the Nazi regime and its crimes mean for 'civilization'?

The key text is *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, published in 1944 but only read widely years later. Although Horkheimer and Adorno did not thematize modernity per se – they placed the entire span of western civilization in the dock – their supposed thesis that 'instrumental reason' was the defining and most dangerous feature of the modern age has achieved classic status.[28] Even if they went well beyond Max Weber's famous definition of rationalization as the 'disenchantment of the world', Horkheimer and Adorno agreed that the 'nationalist, pagan and other modern mythologies' of the age were not a counter-Enlightenment reversion to barbarism, as Elias and Lemkin maintained. 'Enlightenment itself' culminated in fascism 'when paralyzed by the fear of truth'. Enlightenment tended to myth if confined to the 'factual mentality' of British empiricism, positivism and the technological mastery of nature. People forgot that the humanly created apparatus had become autonomous and was dominating both them and nature.[29]

In laying the blame for the genocide of European Jewry at the feet of the Enlightenment, Horkheimer and Adorno were not referring only to the intellectual movement and cultural changes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The process of enlightenment commenced with the socio-psychological constitution of the self at the dawn of western civilization. Their book, then, is as much a philosophical anthropology as a reconstruction of a historical process.[30] We need to understand both aspects of the argument.

They found clues to the pathological construction of the self in ancient literature, specifically in Homer's epic poem, *Odyssey*. Their starting point was the assumption that human survival initially depended on a mimetic relationship to nature, which was thought of in animist or magical terms. Because nature was also feared, the imperative of survival eventually led to the constitution of the self through its separation from and domination of nature.

This diremption had a number of fatal consequences. One was that selfhood was based not only on the human alienation from nature but also on the universalization of domination. 'The awakening of the self is paid for by the acknowledgement of power as the principle of all relations'.[31] Another consequence was that the self, in resisting the duty of propitiary sacrifice to nature, sacrificed its own 'inner nature' – the capacity to experience sensual pleasure and, ultimately, happiness.[32] The development of the self, then, paradoxically undermined the possibility of a fulfilling life.

> Man's domination over himself, which grounds his selfhood, is almost always the destruction of the subject in whose service it is undertaken; for the

substance which is dominated, suppressed, and dissolved by virtue of self-preservation is none other than the very functions of which the achievements of self-preservation find their sole definition and determination.[33]

Horkheimer and Adorno drew on Nietzsche, Freud and the French surrealist intellectual Roger Caillois to maintain that this renunciation of natural instincts was pathological.[34] Odysseus exemplified this renunciation. In order to resist the Sirens' songs, he had to block the ears of his sailors and tie himself to the ship's mast, signalling the proto-bourgeois subject's atrophied imagination and diminished capacity to enjoy beauty.[35] The origins of totalitarianism lay here:

> The irrationalism of totalitarian capitalism ... [that] makes the satisfaction of needs impossible and tends towards the extermination of mankind, has its prototype in the hero who escapes from sacrifice by sacrificing himself.[36]

Simultaneously, the management of the world required the development of universally applicable systems of logic and science abstracted from natural objects themselves. Reason no longer meant self-legislation but substanceless technique at the service of any power. Emotion was treated as irrational, although the worship of this truncated reason was itself irrational.[37] Unlike Marx's optimistic faith in the historical process of 'self-enriching alienation' – humanity's dialectical recovery of its historical products in the economy, culture and religion – Horkheimer and Adorno postulated a pessimistic historical process one might call 'self-impoverishing alienation': 'the submission of everything natural to the autocratic subject finally culminates in the mastery of the blindly objective and natural.' This process was 'the self-destruction of the Enlightenment'.[38]

If Horkheimer and Adorno thought fascism perfected methods of domination and brandished them nakedly, how did they account for its emergence out of the liberal Enlightenment? The answer lay, again, in the dystopian unfolding of human subjectivity. Unable to encounter nature itself, the instincts sought gratification in illusion, projecting desires outward. As before, the *Odyssey* provided a clue to this phase of the dialectic of Enlightenment. The episode of the lotus-eaters showed that illusory pleasure was meaningless, leading not to the enjoyable experience of nature but to the conformity of the culture industry. Illusions replaced reality and became a surrogate for utopia. What is more, the culture industry made even its pleasure 'an object of manipulation', thereby effectively extinguishing it.[39]

Such an impoverished subject was prone to destructive episodes of paranoid projections against scapegoated minorities. The world, evacuated of pleasure, was experienced solely as dangerous and fearful. Security demanded

the imposition of uniformity, leading ultimately to the impulse to destroy external reality.[40] Minorities were targeted because, in their weakness and vulnerability, they reminded the majority of the nature from which it was alienated and that it oppressed: 'since he cannot allow himself the pleasure of following his own instincts, he attacks other individuals in envy or persecution just as the repressed bestialist hunts or torments an animal'.[41] Horkheimer and Adorno linked the fate of all vulnerable minorities, as well as women, because patriarchy was also the will to domination.

> And since the victims are interchangeable according to circumstances – gypsies, Jews, Protestants, Catholics, and so on – any one of them may take the place of the murderers, with the same blind lust for blood, should they be invested with the title of the norm. There is no genuine anti-Semitism, and certainly no such thing as a born anti-Semite.[42]

Their point was that such prejudices did not posses ontological status. They were not pre-given, 'independent variables', as Daniel J. Goldhagen theorized in his controversial study *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. These prejudices were referable, ultimately, to a flawed society. 'The Jews today are the group which calls down upon itself, both in theory and practice, the will to destroy born of a false social order'.[43] The Holocaust was not just a large hate crime.

Christianity was an important cultural precondition for fascism. Having never totally exorcized magic from its religious imaginary, unlike Judaism, Christianity postulated two realms: the spiritual realm that offered the pleasure of modulated mimesis in pseudo-magical practices; and the earthly one that was emptied of moral law and, therefore, available for domination.[44] Fascism continued this tension by trying to recover pleasure through its symbols and mass events – 'the organized imitation of magic practices' – while simultaneously perfecting modes of domination. 'The new German pagans and warmongers', Horkheimer and Adorno observed, 'want to set pleasure free once more'.[45]

For all that, the fate of the Jews in European modernity was particular. They were attacked not only because they represented a 'provocative image of powerless happiness'. Jews also suffered for the sins of rapacious capitalism for which they were held responsible. A double victim, Jews represented both nature and civilization.[46] The 'Jewish question', Horkheimer and Adorno wrote, 'would prove in fact to be the turning point of history', because it represented the most acute crisis experienced by the capitalist system. Germany had not embarked on a divergent path of development, as Elias supposed, but incarnated all the pathologies of western civilization in its most acute form. 'By raising the cult of strength to a world-historical doctrine, German Fascism also took it to an absurd extreme.'[47] Anti-Semitism was the most extreme case of paranoia and false projection, the culmination of the dialectic of Enlightenment.[48]

As might be expected, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* has been criticized by many commentators for various sins of commission and omission. It does not adequately explain why Germany should have perpetrated the Holocaust.[49] It focuses too much on individual psychology at the expense of mass psychology.[50] It lacks any grounding in historical events, identifying the process of Enlightenment over a millennium rather than the specific events of leading to National Socialism, let alone the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[51] It conflates the disaster of German development with the west as a whole, unjustifiably denouncing the Enlightenment.[52] All these objections are sustainable, and more could be added, such as the book's virtual conflation of liberalism and fascism. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is also astonishingly Eurocentric, totally ignoring the effects of European colonialism that Marx and Engels had noted in considerable detail. Subaltern writers, some of them Marxists, were much more sensitive to the global context of European fascism, which they felt non-European peoples had been enduring for centuries.[53] It would seem that no general theory of genocide is to be extracted from Critical Theory unless the thesis that civilization culminates in total domination in the form of fascism is to be counted as one. Moreover, it goes without saying that many elements of their analysis are now of historical interest only. The philosophy of history to which they subscribed, with its Marxist anthropology of the human subject rationally controlling its creations, is not one to which even Horkheimer and Adorno held fast after the Second World War.

And yet, looking for elements that are not in the book is to miss its point. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was not intended as a work of history, sociology or political science. In its idiosyncratic blend of philosophy and psychology, this Hegelian Marxist account of civilization and, ultimately, modernity attempted to ground the origins of murderous prejudice in a bigger story than the analytically fruitless fables of 'ancient hatreds', 'ethnic conflicts' or even the rise of integral nationalism. Horkheimer and Adorno sensibly rejected the tautological and circular argument that one group targeted another simply out of hate.

In its stead, they proposed a general theory in which any minority could be victim, any group a perpetrator. Societies produced prejudice, and social crises were the backdrop to genocides. Consequently, they did not think paranoid false projection ceased with the defeat of Nazism. It lingered even in liberal democracies like the USA, where they had seen out the war, in the form of the stereotypical thinking ('ticket mentality') that affected the 'Jewish masses', as they put it, as much as any other. 'The anger against all that is different is teleologically inherent in the [ticket] mentality, and, as the dominated subjects' resentment of natural domination, is ready to attack the natural minority – even when the social minority is threatened first.'[54]

Was there an antidote? The survival of Jewish minorities provided a model of resistance. After effectively ignoring anti-Semitism in the 1930s, Horkheimer

and Adorno came to see the refusal of Jews to assimilate as the salutary resist-
ance of the non-identical – of human variety and plurality – to the steamrolling
conformism of modern civilization.[55] The presence of any minority in a popu-
lation, they were effectively arguing, preserved social and political freedom by
challenging the tendency of the unhappy majority to cast reality in its own
impoverished image.

   Their aspiration to join psychology and philosophical anthropology to
explain the unprecedented events of the 1940s was intellectually courageous.
So was the insistence that paranoid false projections persisted in all societies
after fascism's defeat. That was the conclusion to which Adorno and his
collaborator came in their famous study on the 'authoritarian personality'.[56]
After all, post-war genocides have been driven by such paranoia. Horkheimer
and Adorno help researchers today by locating the origins of genocide in social
crises rather than only in the crises of the perpetrators themselves.

Hannah Arendt and the 'rise of the social'

Horkheimer and Adorno's bleak portrait of modernity became an inspiration
for cultural pessimists on the left who were appalled by the arms race of the
Cold War and possible nuclear Armageddon. The German writer Hans Magnus
Enzensberger expressed such anxieties in his book, *Politik und Verbrechen*
(Politics and Crime), which became the subject of a celebrated exchange with
the political philosopher Hannah Arendt, one of a brilliant generation of
German émigré scholars who analyzed totalitarianism.[57] Declining to review
Enzensberger's book, she objected to his claim that Auschwitz had discredited
the western political tradition, which he held accountable for the possibility of
future 'Holocausts' by producing the technological capacity for global nuclear
annihilation. Such a generalization of Auschwitz's meaning, she complained,
was 'a highly cultivated form of escapism', because it diluted German national
responsibility for the crime.[58] Enzensberger replied that his future-oriented
construction was in fact necessary to prevent further catastrophes. While assur-
ing Arendt that he had never sought to diminish Germany's culpability, the
real escapism, he retorted, was to consign the Holocaust solely to the German
context and to the past, and fail to draw pressing, more general, conclusions
about the present. Such a conclusion highlighted the destructive trajectory of
a technologically driven western civilization, of which Auschwitz was hitherto
its most extreme instance.

   Arendt remained unconvinced. While not disagreeing with the imperative to
avoid future disasters, the question remained regarding the correct lessons the
Holocaust taught. The 'equation' of Auschwitz and the 'megadeath' of nuclear
war, she insisted, obscured the anti-Jewish specificity of the former, and this
distinction issued in very different political implications than those urged by

Enzensberger. 'The fatal dimension of Auschwitz [unlike nuclear war], of course, is that a repetition is possible without catastrophic consequences for all participants.' She concluded by warning against an 'apparent radicalism' that subsumed particular cases under general categories, and she urged commentators to forsake abstractions and constructions in favour of the 'concrete'.[59]

That Arendt's own account of modernity and genocide, or 'megadeath', was concrete would surprise those detractors who have criticized her for supposedly downplaying the specificity of Jewish victimhood in and German responsibility for the Holocaust.[60] In fact, like her own complex German-Jewish identity, she tried to mediate particularism and universalism, in this case accounting for the Holocaust neither in terms of its perpetrators' intentions alone, nor as the unintended product of blind, anonymous forces. To understand her position, we need to attend to the special notion of judgement, to which she was referring Enzensberger.

Modernity conspired against the judgement necessary for political life. The modernizing process had eroded the customs, habits and life-worlds – the 'common sense' – by which people assessed moral and political issues. Totalitarian ideologies offered substitute categories to such disoriented people; their widespread popularity represented 'total moral collapse'. Drawing on Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, she saw the antidote in 'reflective judgement' that permitted objects to reveal themselves in moments of 'exemplary validity'.[61] Such judgements illuminated an object's universal significance while retaining its particularity, rather than reducing it to an instance of some global process or a universal category. This epistemology shared ground with Critical Theory, which also retained the difference between subject and object so that neither dominated the other.[62] The act of judging thus resisted totalizing philosophies of history that categorized people under the aspect of their teleology.[63] In practice, this meant that those Germans who helped Jews during the Second World War judged them as victimized individuals rather than in terms of the regime's propaganda. These Germans were able to distinguish right from wrong.[64]

Modernity was also a problem because of the decline of 'the political' and the 'emergence of the social realm'. The concern with the material reproduction of human existence (the social) was supplanting the possibility of 'spontaneous action or outstanding achievement' (the political) by demanding that everyone conform to 'only one opinion and one interest'.[65] Such uniformity tended to totalitarianism, but this epochal transformation was characteristic of bourgeois society generally. Arendt echoed Luxemburgian themes in her depiction of capitalist modernity.[66] The imperialist phase before totalitarianism was brought about by 'the political emancipation of the bourgeoisie', because this class sought to use politics to transcend the limits of the nation state for the global spread of capital.[67] Contrary to Elias and other theorists of the *Sonderweg* who thought the under-development of the German middle class was the problem

of German political culture, Arendt saw its gradual increase in political and eco-
nomic power after the mid-nineteenth century as the key issue.[68] The bour-
geoisie was the bearer of the social, as was the consequent labour movement,
whose concern was, of course, the 'social question'.

Arendt had to draw on a variety of intellectual traditions to reconstruct the
decline of the political. Like conservative observers, she noted the rise of the
'mob', the proletarian and petty bourgeois masses dislodged from traditional
lifeworlds; it eventually joined forces with the German middle class in National
Socialism.[69] Heidegger's analysis of inauthentic modern speech went into her
theory of political communication.[70] But whether the source of her analysis
was leftwing, conservative or reactionary, the bourgeois man, concerned only
for his own well-being and that of his family, was the main culprit responsible
for genocide.

Contrary to the widely held view, Arendt was not fascinated by bureaucracies
because they distanced administrators from the genocidal consequences of
their actions, or because the interchangeability of their personnel meant they
functioned smoothly irrespective of individual intentions. In fact, she was
more interested in how the prosaic careerism of the bourgeois individual drove
policies and processes, having witnessed the opportunism of Germans when
the Nazis came to power in 1933.[71] People without previous ideological com-
mitments quickly and avidly adjusted themselves to the prevailing norms in
the name of getting on and fitting in. Arendt's much-discussed and much-
misunderstood concept of the 'banality of evil' must be set against this back-
ground. Evil prevailed with the ordinary motivations of careerist bureaucrats
who espoused the party line.[72] She did not think that even someone like Adolf
Eichmann possessed a subjective criminal intent, because his actions were law-
ful in the criminal regime of Nazi Germany, and because he had convinced
himself that his actions were just. His was not a conscious choice for evil, a
willed transgression. He participated in the deportation and killing process
with a good conscience. 'The deeds were monstrous, but the doer ... was quite
ordinary, commonplace, and neither demonic nor monstrous.' A wicked heart
was unnecessary to cause tremendous evil. 'Thoughtlessness', the inability or
unwillingness to judge, was the essential precondition.[73]

What about the question of destructive intention central to the crime of
genocide? Its source was not to be found in Nazis like Eichmann, Arendt
insisted, because his banality bore no relationship to the scale of the enormity
being perpetrated. The Holocaust was 'beyond the pale even of solidarity in
human sinfulness', and could not be ascribed to the usual 'promptings of inter-
est or volition'.[74] Because the intention to render people superfluous was not
humanly willed, she wrote in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Nazi crimes repre-
sented a form of 'radical evil'.[75] Radical evil and banal evil complemented one
another. If the former was ontologically distinct from human intentions because

it was driven by a humanly created but uncontrollable historical process, it required 'banal' agents – 'thoughtless' people who had lost their convictions and ability to judge – to blindly expedite its imperatives.[76] The meaning of the Nazi genocide could not be grasped by reading back from the motives of the perpetrators but by paying regard to the deeper significance of their persecution in relation to the trajectory of modern history.

For that reason, she thought that fixating on the Nazis' anti-Semitism obscured what was really going on. It was wrong to regard the Holocaust 'as not much more than the most horrible pogrom in Jewish history'. Nazi anti-Semitism was a historically contingent manifestation of pathological modernization, not pathological Jew-hatred: 'only the choice of victims, not the nature of the crime, could be derived from the long history of Jew-hatred and anti-Semitism'.[77] The actual crime, then, was the decision to erase *any* people from the human community, not just the Jews. This was a crime against that community as well as against the victims. For all that, she did not think Jews were accidental targets of the Nazis. They were isolated and persecuted because they were neither permitted to assimilate successfully nor be accepted as Jews in an environment increasingly dominated by integral nationalism. Germany's pathological modernity had no place for them.

Still, the problem remained the broader crisis of modernity: the simultaneous rise of the social and the social disintegration of political-ethical categories and judgement. This process had culminated in the totalitarian regimes of Stalin and Hitler, being 'the invention of a system in which all men are equally superfluous'. Their concentration camps were the sites where the 'logic of total domination' was perfected. 'The camps are meant not only to exterminate people and degrade human beings, but also to serve the ghastly experiment of eliminating, under scientifically controlled conditions, spontaneity itself…'.[78] Totalitarianism manifested a crisis of world-historical proportions: a 'system' that rendered people superfluous, perfected total domination and extinguished spontaneity.

If the inhuman potential of the world-historical process of modernization (the 'system') was revealed in totalitarianism, it persisted fatally into the post-war period.[79] 'The danger of the corpse factories and holes of oblivion', she wrote in 1951, 'is that today, with populations and homelessness everywhere on the increase, masses of people are continuously rendered superfluous if we continue to think of our world in utilitarian terms'.[80] Human nature itself continued to be threatened after the war: by effacing plurality and inhibiting spontaneity, the system was creating a uniform 'human species' bereft of the regenerative capacities she called 'natality'. Like Horkheimer and Adorno, then, Arendt thought the paramount problem was much broader than radicalized moments like the Holocaust.

What can scholars of genocide learn from this analysis? Certainly, her methodology is difficult to emulate. Arendt consciously eschewed a narrative,

structural or psychological account of Nazism and totalitarianism because she thought that history viewed in terms of cause and effect violated the postulate of human freedom and responsibility.[81] Accordingly, she could morally condemn Nazi criminals like Eichmann, however banal, while also proclaiming the ultimate reasons for his deeds a mystery.[82] The social sciences, she complained, failed to appreciate the novelty of totalitarianism because they interpreted all phenomena through their conventional disciplinary lenses. Though indebted to Luxemburg, she opposed Marxist and social science history because they purported to uncover the hidden significance of historical phenomena instead of attending to their patent meaning or connections. She was a political philosopher writing a phenomenology of modernity and totalitarianism, not a social scientist or conventional historian constructing models or crafting narratives of particular events. She had little time for Weber, whether on bureaucracy or charisma.[83]

This is difficult advice to follow, and Arendt did not do so herself. After all, her rendering of 'the social's' rise could be read off 'the facts' only with her particular blend of Marxism, German Idealism and Heideggarian cultural pessimism. Would genocide scholars be content to refer to specific group destructions under the aspect of a global process that supposedly renders people superfluous, culminates in total domination, and extinguishes spontaneity? Is it possible to discount ideology in the way she did because it permitted agents to kill with a good conscience? Can we talk any longer of the 'mob'?

For all that, her attention to imperialism as a precursor to Nazism is yielding important insights in genocide research. If Arendt was not the first thinker to make this connection, she was at least less Eurocentric than the émigrés from Frankfurt.[84] And her attempt to chart the course of modernity as a material and cultural totality that radicalizes in certain circumstances is equally valuable, even if elements of her analysis are no longer tenable. To register her impatience with sociology's penchant for typologization is to understand why much of genocide studies need revamping: sociological abstractions do not explain why events unfold.[85] Like Critical Theory, she did not take anti-Semitism, or any other racism, as an ontologically given starting point for the explanation of genocide. Like Critical Theory, then, Arendt challenges genocide studies to make its unit of analysis a global social system rather than a nation state or ethnic group.

Marxism, genocide and modernity

Given Marxism's dialectical epistemology, it is no coincidence that both Arendt and the Frankfurt School inspire the work of Enzo Traverso, the Italian political scientist and historian who has been modifying Marxism to meet the

challenge of Holocaust scholarship.[86] Following Arendt, he wishes to uncover the 'European roots of National Socialism', because focusing solely on Germany misses the broader crisis of modernity.[87] He disagrees with François Furet, Ernst Nolte, Arno Mayer and Goldhagen that Nazism can be explained monocausally as a species of either anti-Communism, anti-modernism or anti-Semitism. And like Arendt, he wants to highlight the formative and radicalizing effect of European colonial violence that liberal scholars like George L. Mosse and Zev Sternhell ignored. At the same time, with Adorno, he does not want to dissolve the 'crime in a long historical process' as other Marxist historians have.[88] The aim of his *The Origin of Nazi Violence* is to mediate the proposition that the Holocaust of European Jewry is rooted deeply in the traditions of liberal Europe – there was no German *Sonderweg* – as well as maintain its particularity by avoiding reductionist arguments. Finally, he adopts Arendt's phenomenological approach as a source of methodological inspiration. In her introduction to Walter Benjamin's *Illuminations*, he notes, Arendt used felicitous imagery to distinguish the approach from orthodox historical ones: 'Like a pearl diver who descends to the bottom of the sea, not to excavate the bottom and bring it to light but to pry loose the rich and the strange, the pearls and the coral in the depths, and bring them to the surface.'[89]

What, then, are the pearls and coral that the author brings to the surface? The origins of Nazi extermination are generally European rather than specifically German, and they begin in the late eighteenth century. The material preconditions emerge with the rise of industrial civilization. In particular, the guillotine and industrial factory, and especially Taylorism and bureaucratic procedures, are the innovations of modernity that permitted humans to be slaughtered impersonally en masse. Another element is the European penetration of the world through conquest and colonization, above all, in Africa. Combining the growing literature on social Darwinism, eugenics and imperialism, Traverso shows how European elites regarded the colonies as spaces for their fantasies of modernization. In the colonies, the European powers learned practices of racist exclusion and exercised the right to decide the fate of entire peoples, many of whom disappeared from the face of the earth. The notion of 'living space' was developed there long before German eyes looked eastwards, just as colonial wars demonstrated the murderous power of the machine gun to mow down thousands of 'natives' well before the First World War.

Presumably relying on Foucault, Traverso highlights the 'biologization' of the proletariat by bourgeois elites. Beginning with the Paris Commune in 1871, they linked leftist insurrection and degeneracy as a dangerous threat to the capitalist order.[90] This marriage of class and racial hygiene became even more significant as Jews came to be regarded as purveyors of political subversion, a view that was pan-European rather than distinctly German. Winston

Churchill, for instance, was one of many who saw Jews as 'the force hidden behind every subversive movement of the nineteenth century'.[91]

The 'Nazi synthesis', as Traverso describes its ideological 'magma', was to link class racism and modern anti-Semitism; the 'biologization of political subversion' was the distinctive feature of German fascism.[92] The Nazis also congealed the preceding features of European modernity: the striving for a racial state and living space, anti-liberalism and anti-Bolshevism based on a mysticism of nature and a 'redemptive myth of a return to the land', 'to produce a unified anti-Jewish crusade'. Drawing on Saul Friedländer, Traverso concludes that Nazism was driven by a 'regenerative anti-Semitism' that functioned as a 'political religion', a characteristic that defines Nazism as 'unique'.[93]

For all its synthetic virtues, *The Origins of Nazi Violence* does not help us explain why colonial and other genocides occurred. And despite its teleological focus on the Holocaust, it cannot answer the question about its causes because, like Arendt, his method explicitly eschews causal analysis. Instead, he deploys an ensemble of metaphors to capture the relationship between the Holocaust and its antecedents, technology, industry, and eugenics: they were a 'forerunner', a 'laboratory', an 'analogy', they 'led ultimately' to Auschwitz, 'prepared the way' or were an 'anteroom'. The Nazis 'integrated and developed' them. The basic argument is that these general European developments were a necessary precondition for the genocide, a conclusion reached by scholars discussed here some time ago. In attempting to marry Marxism and the Holocaust's uniqueness, Traverso has abandoned the most interesting feature of theories that inspired him, namely that a *process* drives historical change.[94]

Bureaucracy, technology and biopolitics

The difficulty of reconciling the contingency of specific cases of genocide with overarching processes such as modernization is evident in the influential work of the Polish-born sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman. An outsider in his own discipline, he sees himself working in the critical tradition of 'solitary writers such as Theodore [*sic*.] Adorno or Hannah Arendt'. Reflecting on the background to his famous book, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), he reported that

> It was my intention to pick up where Adorno and Arendt had left a blatantly unfinished task: to exhortate [sic.] fellow social thinkers to consider the relation between the event of the Holocaust and the structure and logic of modern life, to stop viewing the Holocaust as a bizarre and aberrant episode in modern history and think through it instead as a highly relevant, integral part of that history.[95]

The debt to Arendt and Critical Theory is indeed heavy. Like these thinkers, he rejected the proposition that the Holocaust could be explained by referring to anti-Semitism alone. As Arendt had excoriated sociology for failing to identify the radical novelty of totalitarianism, so Bauman criticized his colleagues for ignoring the Holocaust's challenge to the assumptions of their discipline.[96] He drew on her theory of morality and judgement for his 'postmodern ethics', which counter-posed an autonomous conscience to the norms that sociologists usually regarded as a functional, and presumably healthy, product of social reproduction.[97] Far from contradicting modern society, as the social sciences generally presumed, the Holocaust brought its destructive potentials to the surface. Like Horkheimer and Adorno before him, Bauman pointed out that since modernity regards people in terms of abstract categories, rather than as concrete others, people are killed by virtue of the category to which they belong.[98] He also followed their thesis that enlightenment (or modernity) seeks to control, if not obliterate, everything outside its compass, because untamed reality is a source of fear and frustration.[99] From Arendt, he also took the notion that the Holocaust was conducted with 'ethically indifferent efficiency' – i.e., its perpetrators were 'banal' – and thus indifference rather than racism was the real danger of modernity.[100]

However extensive his reliance on these thinkers, Bauman remains a sociologist, given to generalizing about 'modernity' as an ideal type. Such modelling, though rich in insights, also has the shortcomings identified by Arendt decades earlier. What, then, does his model look like? Bauman posits that modernity is a temporal modality, a never-ending drive of modernizing the premodern, an 'order making zeal', a 'perpetually unfinished project' of removing 'weeds' from the social garden, a process that is thereby 'transgressive' and potentially genocidal. States are gardeners, the minorities who stand in the way of its plans are 'weeds'. Hitler was, in his own way, 'keeping order'. Genocide occurs when fantasies of order conflict with the messiness of reality.[101] We are speaking, then, of an 'authoritarian high modernism'.[102]

Unlike Arendt, Bauman thinks bureaucracy, that emblem of modernity, was elemental to the Holocaust, propelled by an instrumental reason whose only criteria of success were efficiency and economy.[103]

> [T]here is hardly any doubt that however vivid was Hitler's imagination, it would have accomplished little if it had not been taken over, and translated into routine process of problem-solving, by a huge and rational bureaucratic apparatus [...] bureaucracy made the Holocaust. And it made it in its own image.[104]

Because of such statements, Bauman's name has become synonymous with the thesis that instrumental reason and bureaucracy are modernity's contribution

to genocide.[105] That does not mean he has succeeded in convincing all. Consider the criticism of the Polish intellectual historian Andrzej Walicki, remembering the Nazi-occupied Warsaw of his youth.

> I agree that people of all countries are capable of committing horrendous crimes but, nonetheless, the holocaust was not a problem of soulless modern bureaucracy. It involved genuine hatred, genuine cultural repulsion. I vividly remember the Nazi posters in the occupied Warsaw: all of them mobilized popular hatred by portraying Jews as vermin, lice, dirty bearers of typhus, definitely non-human beings. It would be impossible to launch such a campaign against, say, the Danish minority – even if a Danish minority were numerous and disliked by the Germans. And it was typical that German soldiers began to hate Jews even more when they saw the masses of poor 'Ostjuden' in Poland. This, I think, shows the power of spontaneous hatreds towards people seen as cultural alien, 'oriental', etc. Modern bureaucracy could mobilize and employ these feelings but could not create them.[106]

In reply, Bauman would contend that the antagonistic identities at odds here are themselves products of 'liquid modernity', as imagined national communities replace premodern social bonds dissolved by secularization and urbanization. Still, there is an air of inevitability here that sidesteps the production of extreme affects in moments of social and political crisis: 'Categorical murder is nowadays a by-product, side-effect, or waste of their production', he writes.[107] So although Bauman is aware that bureaucracies do not initiate genocide themselves, he prioritizes the moment of social engineering. Thus he thinks that the Armenians were murdered by the Young Turks in 1915 'for being the wrong people in a wrong place'.[108]

The limitations of model building when applied to factual circumstances are readily apparent in such statements. The Armenian genocide cannot be explained in terms of the utopian schemes of Ottoman modernity. The most important context is the contingent two-front invasion of the country when the Armenians were accused of collaborating with the enemy.[109] Such explanatory lacunae are also evident in Bauman's belief that genocide could occur

> whenever an *accelerated construction of a new and improved order happened to be undertaken* by some resourceful and overwhelmingly strong powers of the modern state, and whenever that state exercised full and undivided, non-interfered with rule over the population of its sovereign territory.[110]

Nowhere does he attempt to explain why states feel compelled to engage in accelerated development, nor why its elites become enthralled by utopian

ideologies. An account of modernity that claims genocide lies at its heart, as Bauman does, must attend to these issues. Just as significantly, his belief that genocide is most likely when a state is most sovereign flies in the face of research that shows genocides are usually undertaken by revolutionary regimes in countries of failed modernization that feel extremely weak and vulnerable and, indeed, are at war with foes that they fear will destroy them.[111] Bauman's picture of an all-powerful bureaucracy exterminating hapless victims in radically asymmetric encounters occludes the fact that paranoia as well as frustration is the operative emotion in the perpetrator, and that conquest and occupation, which are colonial in nature, are the common circumstances of genocide rather than nation-building exercises. Here, counter-insurgency and security imperatives, intrinsic to empires in all epochs, are as much a factor as any specifically modern attributes.[112]

Similarly general is the hugely influential work of Michel Foucault. Most relevant for the question of modernity and genocide has been his identification of a new form of power in the eighteenth century: 'biopower'. In terms strikingly similar to Arendt's notion of the 'rise of the social' also occurring at this time, Foucault observed that European states began to make the physical welfare of their populations the objects of policy in order to increase the productivity of the economy. 'Biopower' brought human life, at the level of both the individual body and body politic, 'into the realm of explicit calculations'. Governing was replaced by 'governmentality', characterized by the administration of material life.[113] Henceforth, the state and its agencies became preoccupied with measures to improve health, life expectancy and the birthrate.

Such measures did not necessarily have sinister outcomes, as historians of the modern welfare state have pointed out.[114] At the same time, optimizing life was not the only potential policy outcome of biopolitics. The state could incarcerate or destroy elements in the population – the unproductive, the mentally ill, for instance (Arendt's 'superfluous people'?) – that were thought to endanger public health or 'racial fitness'. Foucault rarely used the term 'genocide', but when he did its implication with the modern regime of governmentality was clear.[115] The inverse of biopolitics was 'thanatopolitics'.

> If genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers, this is not because of a recent return of the ancient right to kill; it is because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population.[116]

These theoretical insights contributed to a wave of research into eugenics, racial hygiene and demographic discourses in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This now massive body of work has yielded important insights into the nature of modern societies, highlighting the policies of 'population

improvement' common to both liberal and totalitarian states, including the use of sterilization in progressive, supposedly liberal societies.[117] At the same time, the literature concurred in regarding fascist societies, above all Nazi Germany, as taking the logic of 'negative eugenics' to its disastrous, logical conclusion.[118]

For all the influence in these branches of historiography, Foucault's approach has not been as useful to scholars of genocide who must attend as much to government as to governmentality. They need to understand the workings of the conventional sovereignty – the agency of government actors – that Foucault expressly sought to supplant with his focus on subjectivity formation through discipline and regulation. What is more, many scholars of the Holocaust contest the proposition that anti-Semitism and the genocide of European Jewry can be regarded as by-products of biopower. They were not an outcome of the modernity paradigm, but had specifically German roots.[119] Are we left, then, with the stark polarization of a homogeneous modernity on the one hand, and a German *Sonderweg* on the other?

Supplementing modernity

Critics of both approaches have supplemented them by drawing on anthropology and psychoanalysis, thereby following in the footsteps of Critical Theory. Dan Stone has advanced the discussion by drawing attention to the importance of the French surrealist thinker Georges Bataille for understanding the relationship between fascism and modernity, while Dominick LaCapra has highlighted the social-psychological mechanism of 'scapegoating' and, like Bataille, sacrifice, common to all genocides, and most extreme in the Holocaust.[120]

Bataille helps us theorize the source of the powerful affects that accompany genocide – the 'social madness' of the carnivalesque intoxication experienced by many killers while committing atrocities. With Roger Caillois, who, we will recall, Horkeimer and Adorno read with profit, Bataille founded the *Collège de sociologie* in the 1930s to replace surrealism's focus on the individual with a 'sociology of the sacred', a study of social rituals and myths. This group of intellectuals was particularly interested in how traditional societies reproduced themselves by permitting the periodic expression of excessive emotions in carnivals, festivals and other manifestations of semi-controlled ritual violence.[121] In critical sympathy with Bataille, Stone posits that societies have permanent violent propensities that historically have been safely dissipated in various social rituals. Modernity's potential for barbarism lies in its taboos that increase the desire for non-rational forms of behaviour but do not allow for its release.[122] Elias's civilizing process is Bataille's pressure cooker.

Can one interpret National Socialism and the Holocaust as irrational outbursts of pent-up social energies? Yes and no. Bataille thought bourgeois society enslaved people to the 'homogeneous', the utilitarian calculus that reduced human life to the pursuit of material profit. If for Arendt freedom from the utilitarianism of 'the social' inhered in political action, Bataille thought that human 'sovereignty' lay in non-instrumental behaviour, indeed with the Dionysian unleashing of emotions and the transgression of social norms. He esteemed the role of sacrifice as the pinnacle of sovereignty, because the purposeless killing of a creature created an 'ecstatic community' by enabling contact with the sacred.[123]

Did he think the Holocaust was an authentic expression of the 'heterogeneous' rather than its opposite, instrumental reason? Apparently not. Fascism and the Holocaust were in fact the perversion of social energies by a hyper-exploitative state capitalism, although it undoubtedly harnessed affects pent-up by bourgeois society. Neither could the Holocaust be seen as a purposeless sacrifice, Stone points out, because Jewish bodies and goods were actually exploited by the Nazis who justified their actions in terms of eradicating vermin, that is, on instrumental grounds. The Holocaust was the murder of Europe's traditional scapegoats in a society whose affective life had been distorted and channeled in a pathological, pseudo-productive manner. The petty bourgeois character of the genocidal crime was sealed by Himmler's taboo on excess and emotion, and invocation of restraint.

Even so, Bataille's celebration of excess as an expression of sovereign freedom is hard to follow, Stone continues, when the law against murder is precisely that prohibition which is supposed to be transgressed in the name of sacrificial freedom. Although he is well aware of Arendt's argument that European morality was corrupted in its racism and imperial exploitation, Stone believes that Auschwitz was the ultimate transgression because, as Horkeimer and Adorno pointed out, Jews represented the monotheistic prohibition on killing, they rejected sacrifice, and they simultaneously incarnated modern and premodern characteristics.[124]

Dominick La Capra also thinks the modernity literature underplays the religious and chiliastic dimension of the Nazis worldview. In showing that there is more to National Socialism and the Holocaust than instrumental reason, he draws on French thought as well, adapting René Girard's notion of sacrifice. In the theory of modernity he advances, anti-Semitism figures as the manifestation of a scapegoating mechanism that is the return in a secularized form of religious impulses repressed in the modernizing process.[125] Mediating the universal and particular, LaCapra sees anti-Semitism as an irreducible component of Nazism while also embedded in a broader schema of modernization. To make his point, he focuses on the simultaneous presence of radical transgression and social norms in Heinrich Himmler's infamous 1943 Posen speech.[126]

Because so much is made of the speech by many commentators, it is worth
quoting the relevant section in full.

> Most of you must know what it means to see a hundred corpses lie side by
> side, or five hundred, or a thousand. To have stuck this out and – excepting
> cases of human weakness – to have kept our decency – that is what has made
> us hard. In our history this is an unwritten and never-to-be-written page of
> glory, for we know how difficult we would have made it for ourselves if
> today – amid the bombing raids, the hardships and the deprivations of war –
> *we still had the Jews in every city as secret saboteurs, agitators, and demagogues.*
> *If the Jews were still ensconced in the body of the German nation, we probably*
> *would have reached the 1916–17 stage by now.*[127]

I submit that this quotation can be interpreted without suggestive but ulti-
mately ahistorical theories of sacrifice and scapegoating. If we accept Arendt's
advice to attend to the actual events and statements of historical subjects, we
should take seriously what Himmler openly declares. He is saying that Jews
were an internal security threat and needed to be dealt with accordingly, lest
Germany be betrayed and undermined from within yet again, as in the
final stages of the First World War when strikes crippled German industry.
Protracted theoretical throat-clearing is not necessary to understand the juxta-
position of the proclaimed 'decency' and mass murder. There is no paradox.
The sharp distinction between cold-blooded (or bureaucratic 'desk') murderers
and sadistic killers presented by Goldhagen and his critics does not account for
a third possibility: men and women who convinced themselves that their
deeds were necessary rather than gratuitous.[128] However fantastical Himmler's
linkage of Jews and subversion in 1916–17 and the 'danger' of Jewish partisans
in 1939 or 1941, and however useful concepts of trauma are to comprehend
how he could view events in this way, the key variable here, as in virtually all
genocides, is the fear of internal subversion at a time of existential crisis. The
questions raised by Stone and LaCapra – and by Critical Theory 60 years before
them – are the right ones: how to explain this paranoia. Seen in this light, the
answer of scholars such as Saul Friedländer and Dan Diner that anti-Semitism
is the causal starting point seems insufficient.[129] We need to dig deeper. Why
the vehement anti-Semitism in the first place?

Colonialism and the rise of the West

If the bureaucratic focus of Bauman's and Foucault's model of modernity needs
to be supplemented by the insights of surrealism, anthropology and psychol-
ogy, their attention to the temporal consciousness of modernity is more fruit-
ful for genocide studies. Bauman is interested in how modernity – postcolonial

theorists would say 'the west' – 'managed to recast as inferior and doomed all those forms of life which did not harness their own plan to the chariot of reason'.[130] Less Eurocentric scholars have pointed out that such a philosophy of history licensed Europeans to commit violence against non-Europeans because the metanarrative of progress divided humanity along the lines of modernity–tradition, civilization–savagery, science–magic and nation state–non-state spaces. These differences were then essentialized, such that the male European was inevitably superior to his non-European other. In other words, the revolutionary social logic of modernity was inherently colonial.[131] Not for nothing were the new weapons of modernity – the cylindro-conoidal bullet, the machine gun, even artillery – perfected in the dozens of colonial wars in the nineteenth century.[132] Bauman implicitly acknowledges the colonial and imperial application of his theory when he admits that most genocides occurred *without* modern bureaucracy. His singular focus on the Holocaust participates in the Eurocentrism of much writing on modernity.[133]

It is important, therefore, to pay regard to non-European thinkers who have examined the colonial essence of modernity. Rather than locating the apogee of what Achille Mbembe calls 'necropolitics' in Nazi Germany, like Foucault and others, he finds it much earlier in European colonies. Drawing on Carl Schmitt's notion of the 'state of exception' via Giorgio Agamben, Mbembe identifies these colonial spaces as 'the site where sovereignty consists fundamentally in the exercise of a power outside the law (*ab legibus solutus*) and where "peace" is more likely to take on the face of a "war without end"'. As a 'formation of terror', then, the colony was not a space in which the usual distinction between enemy and criminal obtained. The European rulers could decide upon matters of life and death absolutely: 'the sovereign right to kill is not subject to any rule in the colonies.'[134] The destruction of colonialism did not just inhere in cultural assimilation or even the violence of 'pacification', Mbembe avers, but in the Europeans' arrogation of the right to dispose of their subject peoples in any manner they wished.

An important though neglected voice is that of the Argentine philosopher, Enrique Dussel who, unlike many South Asian postcolonial theorists, does not place himself in the postmodern camp, which he regards as equally Eurocentric.[135] Drawing on the world-systems theory of Immanuel Wallerstein, he identifies the origins of modernity with Spain's foundation of the first world-system late in the fifteenth century. Hitherto, Europe had been at the periphery of the Eurasian landmass dominated by China and other powers, and only geographical contingencies enabled the Iberian maritime states to gain a comparative advantage over the far more advanced eastern economies. The point is that modernity did not originate solely in Europe as modernization theorists suppose, but that it evolved in the European relationship with non-Europe, initially with Amerindia. The 'Eurocentric fallacy in understanding

modernity' forgets its non-European anchoring.[136] Like Horkeimer and Adorno, Dussel thinks modernity is blind to its own mythic quality; it 'carries out an irrational process that remains concealed even to itself'.[137]

This blindness, to be sure, did not obtain at the outset. In the first phase of modernity, Europeans like Bartolomé de Las Casas questioned the genocidal consequences of European empire, inaugurating an important international debate about the morality of foreign occupation.[138] These scruples were forgotten by philosophy, however, during the second phase of modernity that commenced with capitalism in the late eighteenth century and that was dominated by north-western Europe. Henceforth, European reflection centered on managing the burgeoning world, capitalist system rather than questioning its impact on the non-Europeans with whom modernity had originated. Only with this forgetting of its non-European roots and blindness to its impact could philosophy think that modern subjectivity developed solely in the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment and French Revolution.[139]

This erasure had grave consequences for non-Europeans. The theodicies of Kant, Hegel and others, Dussel continues, posited dramas of reason and emancipation overcoming backwardness and tyranny that made the West the culmination of world history. The bearers of the world spirit were the 'Germanic peoples' before whom 'every *other people* have no rights'. Spreading civil society became their right and duty, and conquest became integral to the modern ego, whose first exponent was the notorious conquistador Fernando Cortes. Northern military power to conquer and colonize was thereby sacralized, and 'sacrificial violence' became the essence of western modernity. The European philosophical tradition became complicit in the 'saving sacrifice' of indigenous people.[140]

Dussel does not want to abandon modernity, only to overcome its mythic development. The 'transmodernity' he enjoins includes non-Europe in its consciousness, and thereby overcomes the justification of developmental violence. If his approach adds much needed historical and non-European flesh to the bones of the mid-century theorists of modernity, Mark Levene's recent contribution provides the clothes for this body of thought. For over a decade, he has been developing an approach that takes the international states' system, above all, the rise of the west, as its object of analysis rather than individual nation states.[141] Distinctive in the twentieth century, he thinks, is the supplanting of the multi-national empire by the nation state as the normative form of political organization. Like Michael Mann in the *Dark Side of Democracy*, Levene recognizes that the empires were racist, hierarchical and often practiced retributive genocide when challenged, but were inclusive if subject nations, peoples and cities towed the line.[142] They were not inherently genocidal. Extermination or the effacement of otherness was not essential for their reproduction.

The replacement of such empires with a global system of competitive nation states led to inevitable problems. The imperative to establish sovereign auton-omy collided with reality as the leaders of ethnically heterogeneous states mobilized their demographic and natural resources to survive in the competi-tive environment. The rise of the west, then, led to unprecedented state-driven modernization that often destroyed domestic obstacles, like ethnic or national minorities. Far from being a return to barbarism as Lemkin thought, the twen-tieth century marked a very new phase in world history, the distinctively mod-ern paradox of progress and destruction.

> Only after the Second World War and, more specifically, in the era of European post-colonial retreat did genocide become a truly global phenom-enon, most obviously facilitated through the extension of the Western-created concept of the nation-state to all hemispheres, and with it of the embrace of the entire world's population as citizens of such states within its international nation-state framework.[143]

We have here, then, a *Sonderweg* of the West, an anti-theodicy that inverts the celebratory rise of the West in the pro-imperial encomia fashionable today. The European origins of the nation state lie in the unique combination of polit-ical power and religious uniformity of the small starts that emerged from the disintegration of the Roman Empire in the middle ages.[144] With Christianity as the official religion of small feudal entities, the inevitable conflicts were met with declarations of war on schismatics and heretics, who were scapegoated in a phobic way. This phobic reaction, a pattern and term Levene uses in relation to twentieth century totalitarian regimes, started here.

Given that the master narrative is the rise of the West, the world historical turning point is not 1492 – the spread of European power abroad in blue water empires – but the French Revolution of 1789 with its militarized nationalism. The first modern genocide occurred in the *Vendée* against royalist rebels whom republicans regarded as evil opponents of the reason and progress embodied by the new nation. This new ideology knew no internal limits against the extirpation of such opponents, nor was there a chance of conversion that Christian Europe at least offered heretics and non-Christians. Here was a total-izing agenda of statist people-making – Heather Rae calls it 'pathological homogenization' – engendering the new religion of patriotism and a mass politics that elites would later find difficult to contain, as conservative German historians like Friedrich Meinecke and Gerhard Ritter feared long ago.[145] Unlike liberals such as Eric Weitz and Norman Naimark, however, Levene does not think the ideology of integral nationalism can account for genocide.[146] It is the modernizing process, rather than modernity per se, that forces insecure states to catch up to the core, often liberal, states in the system. The system produces

what he calls a 'political environment of almost perpetual crisis' that issues in illiberal, sometimes genocidal polities.[147]

These are the preconditions of genocide. What triggers genocide is a confluence of factors: when modernizing elites perceive that their attempts to secure political and economic sovereignty are hampered by national minorities, such as Armenians in the Ottoman Empire or Jews in Germany; when they regard these minorities as proxies for foreign enemies; and when these minorities are held responsible for the failure of previous bids for sovereignty, for instance, the perceived Armenian disloyalty in the late nineteenth century, and the perceived Jewish and leftist betrayal of the army between 1917 and 1920. Never again would these national elites permit such minorities to undermine national security and progress by representing foreign influence and causing domestic mayhem.

At the same time, these elites fantasized about a 'powerful and resplendent past' that they contrasted with a 'diminished and enfeebled present' for which these minorities were to blame.[148] Such ideologies compensated such enervated elites (or would-be elites), driving them to vain attempts – with genocidal shortcuts – to establish national sovereignty. These traumatic memories, then, are a contingent cultural dimension that account for the vehemence phobic reaction to perceived minority disloyalty. Even in this short explication, it is clear that Levene's combination of world systems theory and cultural factors is a tremendously impressive advance in our understanding of how and why genocides have occurred in long twentieth century.

Conclusion

The disputes of Holocaust historiography may seem peripheral in light of such a global perspective. After all, one of the great contributions of genocide studies has been to inform scholars and the public that the Holocaust is far from the only case of group destruction in the past century, even if its status as the most extreme case is widely acknowledged. And yet, debates within this field remain of general interest because its particular intensity continues to yield insights. The reception of Götz Aly's book *Hitlers Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus* (Hitler's People's State: Theft, Racial War and National Socialism) is a case in point. Aly, a former leftist activist turned journalist-historian, is the author of a number of ground-breaking works on the Holocaust that link its unfolding to administrative and material factors rather than to antisemitism alone.[149] Over the years, his materialism has been roundly condemned by German-Jewish historians like Dan Diner for playing down the independent variable of ideological Jew-hatred. Diner, it should be noted, is also dissatisfied with Arendt who he thinks mischievously argues

that 'while the crimes had indeed been committed by Germans, others were capable of perpetrating similar criminal acts'. The problem with the historiography, he complains, is that too often Germans are tempted to regard the Holocaust as a 'human-historical problem' rather than a particularly German one.[150]

Aly's *Volksstaat* advances a case in terms of the modernity paradigm that certainly violated Diner's precepts. It argues that the Nazi state won the considerable support of the German population less for its racism than by the distribution of plunder from Jews ('Aryanization') and the occupied territories. Nazi German was a racist social democratic welfare state populated by banal figures who could have been drawn by Arendt: 'Without stature, or much of a brain', opportunists, profiteers, mercenaries and politically irresponsible. He topped off the argument by adapting Horkheimer's famous quip about anti-Semitism, capitalism and fascism: 'He who won't speak about the advantages of millions of simple Germans should keep silent about National Socialism and the Holocaust'.[151]

Reviewers of the book made the usual kinds of academic objections about the sources used, the methodological underpinnings and so forth.[152] Because of the high identity stakes associated with the Holocaust, and because the generalizing dimension of the modernity paradigm challenges the 'Nazism as aberration' thesis that Diner and many others advance, *Volksstaat* also attracted exighophobic criticisms – replacing explanatory strategies based on the assumption of a common humanity with national character 'arguments' – mentioned at the outset of this chapter. As this problem is not uncommon in the literature, it is important to briefly examine Natan Sznaider's symptomatic discussion of the book, which demonstrates the emotional affect and problems of exighophobia.

> The brouhaha [about Aly's book] has erupted because, underneath all the numbers, readers find a unique argument that Germans have seemingly been waiting to hear for sixty years. Just as they always suspected, every one of them was guilty – but not of hating the Jews. It turns out what they were guilty of was of giving into their baser instincts and robbing the Jews. For Aly, this judgment makes the Germans – if anything – even more guilty; such greed makes the crime more base. But in terms of the German public, exoneration of the crime of racism is a dream come true. According to Aly, the Germans did not hate the Jews more than any other Europeans. There was no *Sonderweg*. Germany was a 'normal' country. People have tried to make this argument intermittently for years.
>
> He says that Nazi Germany was an ethnically based, social-democratic state. It followed the same logic as all other such states – it simply took it

farther. Of course, non-ethnic Germans lived worse, to put it mildly. But, Aly argues, what is that condition but the logic of the ethnically homogenous welfare state carried out to its logical conclusion? European welfare states have always been based on ethnic solidarity.

... it is all the fault of 'ordinary Germans'—but they are just the same as everybody else. They are not racist. Just greedy. They responded to the same incentives that everyone else did. There were just more of them. Clearly, the idea that Nazi Germany was no more racist than any other country is on its face absurd.[153]

Consider what Sznaider is asking the reader to believe. First, that Germans were (are?) ontologically different from other human beings because they did (do?) not respond to the same incentives as the rest of the human race. Second, that Germans were (are?) more racist than other Europeans. Both propositions are untenable; if the first is sociological nonsense, the second is historically questionable. Nazi Germany may have been the most racist of states, but most Europeans at the time thought in national if not racist terms. Ukrainians and Poles fought an extremely vicious ethnic war in the 1940s, as did Croats, Serbs and other nationalities; many Europeans turned on their Jewish and Roma neighbours, betraying them to the Nazis and callously stealing their property. The fighting in Palestine in 1947 and 1949 was no less barbaric, as was the partition of India at the same time.[154] After the war, the so-called liberal powers of France and Great Britain tortured and killed tens of thousands of Arabs, Africans and Asian to maintain their profitable empires.[155]

Given the blindness to these realities in Sznaider's review, the validity of the modernity paradigm, whatever its limitations, remains a necessary, indeed humanistic antidote to exighophobia. Seen in this light, it is to the lasting credit of the cosmopolitan German Jews Elias, Arendt, Horkheimer and Adorno that, despite the harrowing experience of exile from their native Germany, they resisted the exighophobic temptation, and developed critical narratives of modernity of lasting significance that addressed generally human as well as specifically Jewish concerns. Genocide scholarship would benefit from applying many of their insights about modernity and the Holocaust to other cases of genocide.

Notes

1. Members of this generation like to regard themselves as the founders of the discipline although that honour goes to the much older Raphael Lemkin (1900–1959). See S. Totten and S. L. Jacobs, eds, *Pioneers of Genocide Studies: Confronting Mass Death in the Century of Genocide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002). My thanks to Yehonatan Alshesh and Natasha Wheatley for helpful comments. Of course, they are neither responsible for the view expressed or any errors committed here.

2. For example, H. Fein, 'Definition and Discontent: Labelling, Detecting, and Explaining Genocide in the Twentieth Century', *Jahrbuch für Historische Friedensforschung*, special edition, *Genozid in der Modernen Geschichte*, eds, S. Förster and G. Hirschfeld, 7 (1999); S. Totten, 'The Intervention and Prevention of Genocide: Sisyphean or Doable?', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 6, 2 (2004), 229–47. For commentary, see A. D. Moses, 'Why the Discipline of "Genocide Studies" Has Trouble Explaining How Genocides End?', Social Science Research Council, http://howgenocidesend.ssrc.org/Moses/, December 2006. Prominent exceptions to this trend are the English scholars Mark Levene and Martin Shaw: Levene, 'A Dissenting Voice: Part 1', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 6, 2 (2004), 153–66, and 'A Dissenting Voice, Part 2', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 6, 3 (2004), 431–46; Shaw, *What is Genocide?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).

3. E. Rothstein, 'Broaching the Cultural Logic of Modernity', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 61, 2 (2000), 363.

4. B. Yack, *The Fetishism of Modernities: Epochal Self-Consciousness in Contemporary Social and Political Thought* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997); J. Schmidt, 'What Enlightenment Project?', *Political Theory*, 28, 6 (2000), 734–57.

5. J. Kaye and B. Strath, 'Introduction', in Kaye and Strath, eds, *Enlightenment and Genocide, Contradictions of Modernity* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2000).

6. S. T. Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues: Critical Studies in Modern Jewish Thought* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), pp. 258–9. D. J. Goldhagen made analogous claims about the assimiliationist demands of nineteenth-century German liberals, which he described as 'eliminationist': *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996). A more nuanced case for the Enlightenment's complicity in the Holocaust by virtue of its hostility to particularity is advanced by B. Lang, *Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 186–95.

7. S. T. Katz, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). Volume two has not appeared at the time of writing.

8. Z. Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 227.

9. W. D. Rubinstein, *Genocide*: *A History* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2004).

10. Good surveys of the literature are D. Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust: A Study in Historiography* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003); T. Rohkrämer, 'Antimodernism, Reactionary Modernity, and National Socialism: Technocratic Tendencies in Germany, 1890–1945', *Contemporary European History*, 8, 1 (1999), 29–50; A. Beyerchen, 'Rational Means and Irrational Ends: Thoughts on the Technology of Racism in the Third Reich', *Central European History*, 30, 3 (1997), 386–402; M. Roseman, 'National Socialism and Modernization', in *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Comparisons and Contrasts*, ed., R. Bessel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 197–229.

11. D. Stone, *History, Modernity, and Mass Atrocity: Essays on the Holocaust and Genocide* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006).

12. V. Lal, 'The Concentration Camp and Development: the Pasts and Futures of Genocide', in *Colonialism and Genocide*, eds, A. D. Moses and D. Stone (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 124–47; D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

13. Exceptions are S. Clark, *From Enlightenment to Risk: Social Theory and Modern Societies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); J. Shipway, 'Modern by Analogy: Modernity, Shoah and the Tasmanian Genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 7, 2 (2005), 205–19; J. Docker, 'The Enlightenment, Genocide, Postmodernity', *Journal of Genocide Research*,

5, 3 (2003), 339–60; A. Kimura, 'Genocide and the Modern Mind: Intention and Structure', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 5, 3 (2003), 405–20; M. Freeman, 'Genocide, Civilization and Modernity', *British Journal of Sociology*, 46, 2 (1995), 207–23.

14. I take this concept from G. Hage, '"Comes a Time We Are All Enthusiasm": Understanding Palestinian Suicide Bombers in Times of Exighophobia', *Public Culture*, 15, 1 (2003), 65–89.

15. See D. Stone, 'Raphael Lemkin on the Holocaust', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 7, 4 (2005), 539–50.

16. N. Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation: soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, 2 vols, rev. edn (Bern: Francke, 1969); *The Civilizing Process: State Formation and Civilization*, trans. E. Jephcott. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982); S. Mennell, *Norbert Elias: Civilization, and the Human Self-Image* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); idem, *Norbert Elias: An Introduction* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1998); D. Smith, *Norbert Elias and Modern Social Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 2001).

17. R. van Krieken, *Norbert Elias* (London: Routledge, 1998), chapter four.

18. N. Elias, *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, trans. and preface by E. Dunning and S. Mennell; (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

19. Ibid., 107–8.

20. E. Dunning and S. Mennell, 'Elias on Germany, Nazism, and the Holocaust: On the Balance Between "Colonizing" and "De-Civilizing" Trends in the Social Development of Western Europe', *British Journal of Sociology*, 45, 3 (1995), 339–57.

21. Ibid., 197, 374.

22. Lord Vansittart, 'The Problem of Germany: A Discussion', *International Affairs*, 21, 2 (1945), 313–24.

23. Elias, *The Germans*, 32–3, 109.

24. A. de Swaan, 'Dyscivilization, Mass Extermination and the State', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 28, 2–3 (2001), 265–76.

25. Ibid., 271.

26. Ibid., 273.

27. M. Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and Institute for Social Research, 1923–1950* (New York: Little Brown, 1973).

28. M. Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. J. Cummings (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1972). The section on 'Element of Anti-Semitism' was added in 1947. Commentary: J. Schmidt, 'Language, Mythology and Enlightenment: Historical Notes on Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*', *Social Research*, 65, 4 (1998), 807–38; J. Habermas, 'The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-Reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment*', *New German Critique*, 26 (1982), 13–30; A. Honneth, 'The Possibility of a Disclosing Critique of Society: The Dialectic of Enlightenment in Light of Current Debates in Social Criticism', *Constellations*, 7, 1 (2000), 116–27; A. Hewitt, 'A Feminine Dialectic of Enlightenment? Horkheimer and Adorno Revisited', *New German Critique*, 56 (1992), 143–70; C. Rocco, 'Between Modernity and Postmodernity: Reading *Dialectic of Enlightenment* against the Grain', *Political Theory*, 22, 1 (1994), 71–97.

29. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. xiii–iv, 4, 37–8.

30. Ibid., pp. xvii, 45.

31. Ibid., p. 9.

32. See A. Rabinbach, 'Why Were the Jews Sacrificed? The Place of Anti-Semitism in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*', *New German Critique*, 81 (2000), 55.

33. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. 54–5.

34. Caillois wrote about traditional rituals of excess and chaos that he thought regenerated the collective order. See J. Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Surrealism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 23, 4 (1981), 559.
35. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. 35, 105–6.
36. Ibid., p. 55.
37. Ibid., pp. 14–16, 87–92.
38. Ibid., p. xvi. On self-enriching alienation, see A. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap into the Kingdom of Freedom: The Rise and Fall of the Communist Utopia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).
39. Ibid., pp. 62, 83, 106, 170. Y. Sherratt, 'The *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: A Contemporary Reading', *History of the Human Sciences*, 12, 3 (1999), 41–4.
40. Sherratt, 'The *Dialectic of Enlightenment*', 48–9.
41. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 192.
42. Ibid., pp. 110–12, 171, 187. 'The thought of happiness without power is unbearable because it would then be true happiness': 172.
43. Ibid., p. 168. D. J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996).
44. Ibid., pp. 177–8, 190.
45. Ibid., pp. 31, 184–9.
46. Ibid., pp. 60, 173–4.
47. Ibid., p. 100.
48. M. Jay, 'The Jews and the Frankfurt School: Critical Theory's Analysis of Anti-Semitism', *New German Critique*, 19 (1980), 147.
49. Rabinbach, 'Why were the Jews Sacrificed?', 62.
50. E. Bahr, 'The Anti-Semitism Studies of the Frankfurt School: The Failure of Critical Theory', *German Studies Review*, 1, 2 (1978), 137.
51. R. Rorty, 'The Overphilosophication of Politics', *Constellations*, 7, 1 (2000), 128–32.
52. J. Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 9–10.
53. K. Marx, *Colonialism and Modernization*, ed. and intro. S. Avineri (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968); R. H. King, *Race, Culture, and the Intellectuals, 1940–1970* (Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).
54. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 207.
55. Jay, 'The Jews and the Frankfurt School', 148f.
56. T. W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswick, Daniel Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford. *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York, Harper, 1950).
57. *Politik und Verbrechen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1964). For a contextualisation of her work on totalitarianism with that of other émigré scholars, Ernst Fraenkel, Franz L. Neumann, Sigmund Neumann, Carl Joachim Friedrich and Zbigniew Brezinski, see A. Söllner, 'Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in its Original Context', *European Journal of Political Theory*, 3, 2 (2004), 219–38.
58. *Merkur*, 205 (April 1965), 380–1.
59. Ibid., 384.
60. E. Gellner, *Culture, Identity, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 89–90; M. Marrus, 'Hannah Arendt and the Dreyfus Affair', *New German Critique*, 66 (1995), 147–61; S. E. Aschheim, 'Nazism, Culture and *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: Hannah Arendt and the Discourse of Evil', *New German Critique*, 70 (1997), 117–39; W. Laqueur, 'The Arendt Cult: Hannah Arendt as Political Commentator', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33, 4 (1998), 483–96; R. Wolin, 'Operation Shylock: Arendt,

Eichmann, and the "Unheimlichkeit" of Jewish Identity', *History and Memory*, 8, 2 (1996), 9–34. Sympathetic studies are R. J. Bernstein, *Hannah Arendt and the Jews* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), S. Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996); N. Curthoys, 'The Politics of Holocaust Representation: the Worldly Typologies of Hannah Arendt', *Arena Journal*, 16, (2001), 49–74. See also D. R. Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror: Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

61. H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, edited with an interpretive essay by R. Beiner (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), chapter eight, 'Evil, Thinking, and Judging', 154–78.

62. Jay, 'The Jews and the Frankfurt School', 147.

63. See Beiner in Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 127.

64. H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, rev. edn (New York: Penguin, 1965), p. 295.

65. H. Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 27, 39–40. See H. F. Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

66. P. Spencer, 'From Rosa Luxemburg to Hannah Arendt: Socialism, Barbarism and the Extermination Camps', *The European Legacy*, 11, 5 (2006), 525–40.

67. H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd edn. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1958), 125. Contrary to Lenin, she thought (p. 138) that 'Imperialism must be considered the first state in political rule of the bourgeoisie rather than the last stage of capitalism'.

68. B. Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1966); R. Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968). See the fundamental critique of D. Blackbourn and G. Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

69. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 124.

70. A. N. Flakne, 'Beyond Banality and Fatality: Arendt, Heidegger and Jaspers on Political Speech', *New German Critique*, 86 (2002), 3–18.

71. She explicitly rejected the 'cog in the machine' argument because it ignored human responsibility: Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, p. 289.

72. Y. Lozowick, *Hitler's Bureaucrats: The Nazi Security Police and the Banality of Evil* (New York: Continuum, 2002); M. T. Allen, 'The Banality of Evil Reconsidered: SS Mid-Level Managers of Extermination Through Work', *Central European History*, 30 (1997), 253–94.

73. H. Arendt, *The Life of Mind – Thinking – Willing* (New York and London: Harvest/HJB Book, 1978), p. 4; idem, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, p. 287. See Lang, *Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide*, for an attempt to argue that the Nazis were consciously committing evil.

74. H. Arendt, 'Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture', *Social Research*, 38, 3 (1971), pp. 418, 437.

75. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 459.

76. Ibid., pp. 459, 468.

77. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, pp. 267–8, 282.

78. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 438.

79. Ibid., p. xxx; idem, 'On Humanity in Dark Times', in *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1968), pp. 3–31.

80. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 459.

81. H. Arendt, 'The Concept of History', in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking, 1961), pp. 41–90; S. E. Aschheim, 'Against Social Science: Jewish Intellectuals, the Critique of Liberal-Bourgeois Modernity, and the (Ambiguous) Legacy of Radical Weimar Theory', in *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans and the Jews* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), pp. 23–43.
82. H. Arendt, 'The History of a Great Crime', *Commentary*, 13, 3 (1952), 304.
83. P. Baehr, 'Identifying the Unprecedented: Hannah Arendt, Totalitarianism, and the Critique of Sociology', *American Sociological Review*, 67, 6 (2002), 804–31.
84. For example, R. H. King and D. Stone (eds), *Hannah Arendt and the Uses of History: Imperialism, Nation, Race and Genocide* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).
85. Symptomatic is H. Fein, 'Revolutionary and Antirevolutionary Genocides: A Comparison of State Murders in Democratic Kampuchea, 1975 to 1979, and in Indonesia, 1965 to 1966', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 34, 4 (1993), 796–823.
86. E. Traverso, *Understanding The Nazi Genocide: Marxism after Auschwitz* (London: Polity Press, 1999); idem, *The Marxists and the Jewish Question* (New Jersey: The Humanities Press, 1994).
87. E. Traverso, *The Origins of Nazi Violence*, trans. J. Lloyd (New York: The New Press, 2003), p. 4.
88. See the critique of N. Geras, *The Contract of Mutual Indifference: Political Philosophy after the Holocaust* (London: Verso, 1998), and P. Spencer, 'The Shoah and Marxism: Behind and Beyond Silence', in *Re-Presenting the Shoah for the Twenty-First Century*, ed., R. Lentin (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), pp. 155–77.
89. H. Arendt, 'Introduction', in W. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. H. Zohn (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp. 50–1.
90. M. Foucault, *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–76*, trans. D. Macey (London: Penguin, 2004).
91. Traverso, *Origins of the Nazi Violence*, p. 103.
92. Ibid., p. 121.
93. Ibid., p. 143.
94. Norman Geras likewise wants to reconcile Marxism with Holocaust uniqueness: Geras, 'In a Class of its Own?', in *Moral Philosophy and the Holocaust*, eds, E. Garrard and G. Scarre (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).
95. Z. Bauman, 'The Duty to Remember – But What?', in *Enlightenment and Genocide*, eds, Kaye and Strath, pp. 31–2.
96. Z. Bauman, 'Sociology after the Holocaust', *British Journal of Sociology*, 39, 4 (1988), 469–97. On Arendt, see Baehr, 'Identifying the Unprecedented'.
97. Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), pp. 177–78.; idem, *Postmodern Ethics*, pp. 249–50.
98. Z. Bauman, 'Categorical Murder, or: How to Remember the Holocaust', in *Re-Presenting the Shoah for the Twenty-First Century*, ed., Lentin, p. 24.
99. Z. Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 16.
100. Bauman, 'The Duty to Remember', 37; idem, 'The Holocaust's Life as a Ghost', in *Social Theory after the Holocaust*, eds, R. Fine and C. Turner (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), p. 16.
101. Ibid., pp. 38–40; idem, *Postmodern Ethics*, p. 123; idem, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 92.

102. J. C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).
103. Arendt thought Nazi Germany was anything other than an orderly bureaucratic state: Arendt, *Origins*, p. 361.
104. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 105. For a lucid discussion of the issue in general, see D. Bloxham, 'Bureaucracy and Mass Murder: a Comparative Historical Analysis', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 22, 1 (2008).
105. He is not, of course, the first to draw the link. Hilberg, his teacher Franz Neumann, and Hans Gerth, had done so much earlier. See Söllner, 'Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in its Original Context'.
106. A. Walicki, personal communication, 14 January 1999.
107. Bauman, 'Categorical Murder', 37.
108. Ibid., 24; idem, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 105: 'True, bureaucracy did not hatch the fear of racial contamination and the obsession with racial hygiene. For that it needed visionaries, as bureaucracy picks up where visionaries stop'.
109. D. Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
110. Bauman, 'Categorical Murder', 36. Emphasis added.
111. M. Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State*, 2 vols (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005); R. Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992); T. Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
112. A. D. Moses, 'Empire, Colony, Genocide', in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History.* ed., A. D. Moses (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008); Freeman, 'Genocide, Civilization and Modernity'.
113. M. Foucault, 'Governmentality', in *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, vol. 3, ed., J. D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), pp. 201–22. Cf. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 28, 46: 'the body of peoples and political communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic nationwide administration of housekeeping'. Society becomes 'the form in which the fact of mutual dependence for the sake of life and nothing else assumes public significance and where the activities connected with sheer survival are permitted to appear in public'.
114. E. R. Dickinson, 'Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse about "Modernity"', *Central European History*, 37, 1 (2005), 1–48.
115. N. Rose, 'The Politics of Life Itself', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 18, 6 (2001), 1–30.
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119. S. T. Katz, 'The Uniqueness of the Holocaust: The Historical Dimension', in *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, ed., A. S. Rosenbaum (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996); D. Diner, *Beyond the Conceivable: Studies on Germany, Nazism, and the Holocaust* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).

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122. Stone, *History, Memory and Mass Atrocity*, p. 241.

123. On Bataille and sacrifice, see J. Goldhammer, *The Headless Republic: Sacrificial Violence in Modern French Thought* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 11.

124. Ibid., pp. 83–6; King and Stone, *Hannah Arendt and the Uses of History*.

125. D. LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 92, 99–100; idem, *History and Memory after Auschwtiz* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

126. D. LaCapra *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. 137.

127. L. Dawidowicz, ed., *A Holocaust Reader* (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1976), p. 132. Emphasis added. I replace the word 'integrity' with 'decency', which is a better translation of *antständig*.

128. Cf. A. D. Moses, 'Structure and Agency in the Holocaust: Daniel J. Goldhagen and his Critics', *History and Theory*, 37, 2 (1998), 194–219.

129. S. Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the* Jews*, vol.1, The Years of Persecution, 1933–39* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997). He relies on the work of U. Tal, 'On Structures of Political Theology and Myth in Germany Prior to the Holocaust', in *The Holocaust as Historical Experience*, eds, Y. Bauer and N. Rotenstreich (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), pp. 43–76.

130. Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, p. 226.

131. A. L. Hinton, 'The Dark Side of Modernity: Toward an Anthropology of Genocide', in *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, ed., A. L. Hinton (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 6; Shipway, 'Modern by Analogy'.

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135. E. Dussel, 'Beyond Eurocentrism: The World-System and the Limits of Modernity', in *The Cultures of Globalization*, eds, F. Jameson and M. Miyoshi (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), p. 19.
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137. E. Dussel, 'Europe, Modernity, and Eurocentrism', *Nepantla: Views from South*, 1, 3 (2000), 472.
138. On Las Casas and his idealization by Raphael Lemkin, see M. A. McDonnell and A. D. Moses, 'Raphael Lemkin as Historian of Genocide in the Americas', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 7, 4 (2005), 501–29.
139. Dussel, 'Beyond Eurocentrism', pp. 25–6.
140. Ibid., pp. 12, 25–6. Emphasis in the original. Dussel, 'Europe, Modernity, and Eurocentrism', 472–3.
141. E.g., M. Levene, 'The Chittagong Hill Tracts: A Case Study in the Political Economy of "Creeping" Genocide', *Third World Quarterly*, 20 (1999), 339–69; idem, 'A Moving Target, the Usual Suspects and (Maybe) a Smoking Gun: The Problem of Pinning Blame in Modern Genocide', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 33, 4 (1999), 3–24; idem, 'The Limits of Tolerance: Nation-State Building and What It Means for Minority Groups', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 34, 2 (2000), 19–40; idem, 'Why is the Twentieth Century the Century of Genocide?', *Journal of World History*, 11 (2000), 305–36.
142. M. Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 79.
143. Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation-State*, vol. 1, p. 164.
144. Ibid., p. 121.
145. H. Rae, *State Identities and the Homogenisation of Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); cf. H. Maier, 'Potentials for Violence in the Nineteenth Century: Technology of War, Colonialism, and the "People in Arms"', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 2, 1 (2001), 1–27.
146. E. D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); N. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).
147. Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation-State*, vol. 1, p. 177.
148. Ibid., p. 187.
149. The book is translated as *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007); Earlier works are: G. Aly and S. Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction*, trans. A. G. Blunden (London: Phoenix, 2003), and G. Aly, *'Final Solution': Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of European Jews*, trans. B. Cooper and A. Brown (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
150. D. Diner, 'Hannah Arendt Reconsidered: On the Banal and the Evil in Her Holocaust Narrative', *New German Critique*, 71 (1997), 179. The second quotation by Diner is in T. Assheuer, 'Die Wiederkehr der Schuldfrage?', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 10 May 1996. His critique of Aly and Heim is in his *Beyond the Conceivable*, pp. 187–200.
151. G. Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2005), p. 362: 'Wer von den Vorteilen fuer die Millionen einfacher Deutscher nicht reden will, der sollte vom Nationalsozialismus und vom Holocaust schweigen'. The Horkheimer quotation is: 'He who does not wish to speak of capitalism should also be silent about fascism'. See Jay, 'The Jews and the Frankfurt School', 138 for discussion of Horkheimer's 'Die Juden und Europa'.

152. For example, M. Wildt, 'Alys Volksstaat. Hybris und Simplizität einer Wissenschaft', *Mittelweg*, 36, 3 (2005).

153. N. Sznaider. 'Review of Götz Aly, *Hitler's Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus*', H-German, H-Net Reviews, May 2005. URL: http://www.h-net.org/ reviews/showrev.cgi?path=202471121350466.

154. T. Snyder, 'The Causes of Ukraine-Polish Ethnic Cleansing, 1943', *Past and Present*, 179 (2003), 197–234; M. Hogan, 'The 1948 Massacre at Deir Yassin Revisited', *Historian*, 63, 2 (2001), 309–33.

155. For one notorious episode, see D. Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2004); C. Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Pimlico, 2004).