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Introduction

The Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson initiated the Taskforce for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research in 1998 after visiting a Nazi concentration camp and learning that many Swedish school children were ignorant of the Holocaust. Holocaust education, he hoped, would promote democratic values. Two years later, the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust was founded, and the United Kingdom established an official Holocaust Memorial Day.¹ Some ten years after the United States and forty years after Israel then, European political elites were institutionalizing Holocaust memory. Not for nothing did the German-Israeli historian Dan Diner observe that the Holocaust had become the ‘founding act’ of the new Europe, constituting ‘a catalogue of values which are of normative importance’, because the genocide had been the ‘negative apotheosis of European history’.² One might go even further now that the United Nations has designated 27 January as ‘International Day of Commemoration to Honour the Victims of the Holocaust’.³

Extending this insight, the sociologists Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider have constructed an influential theory of global cosmopolitan memory at the centre of which stands the Holocaust. The Holocaust, they say in their book, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, ‘becomes everyone’s common property and allows people from different places to deal with it in the most diverse ways’.⁴ The memory is not uniform, they point out; it varies according to local concerns. Even so, it has the same effect everywhere, namely to transcend nationalist memory regimes by fostering a human rights culture that appeals to transnational universal standards. Because of the universal nature of its evil – the genocide of European Jewry as the ultimate negation of cosmopolitanism – Holocaust memory inculcates a historical consciousness that is critical of heroic national narratives.⁵

Certainly, the authors – and others – can point to plenty of evidence for these notions.⁶ The tribulations of non-Jewish groups are often related to the Holocaust in order to gain attention and lend gravity to their suffering, as is evident in the titles of books like *The Forgotten Holocaust*,⁷ the term ‘abortion Holocaust’, the seemingly promiscuous use of the analogous term ‘genocide’ and so forth. However much rancour such claims may generate, the point these scholars make is that affiliating the Holocaust with local grievances contributes to cosmopolitanism by aiding victim

groups in their claim-making against hegemonic, heroic national memories. In this way, the Holocaust is supposed to have a cathartic or healing effect, indeed such memory might contribute to transcultural understanding.

Is this proposition sustainable? Not if one considers the political and memory wars occurring over the last few years. Far from progress in intercultural understanding, regressions to states of collective narcissism and paranoia are all too apparent. The Holocaust is indeed used in many ways but not with the cosmopolitan effect that these scholars suppose. It is invoked, rather, to express the fear of collective destruction: the apocalypse of genocide. Instead of tending only in a liberal direction of transcultural understanding, this usage contributes towards terroristic political action in the form of pre-emptive strikes and anticipatory self-defence to forestall feared destruction. Rather than being the harbinger of a universal human-rights culture then, transcultural memories – actually interpretations – of the Holocaust often lead to the ‘calamitization’ of politics. As one might expect, everything depends on *how* the Holocaust is remembered, by whom, when and under what circumstances. As we will see, its invocation is not so progressive once one ventures beyond the European Union and United Nations. There the Holocaust is integral to what, in another context, the Romanian scholar of religion Mircea Eliade called the ‘terror of history’.

This article explores how and why the ‘terror of history’ is an inescapable feature of modernity as it unfolds in historical reality as opposed to tidy sociological theories. The violent substitution of multi-confessional empires by avant-garde states with contingent borders and populations, all too often based on mass expulsions of defenceless civilians, intent on domestic homogenization and in thrall to security paranoia: this was the scenario after both world wars.⁸ For the ‘small nations’ and their diasporas in particular, traumatic memories of genocide and flight, and experiences of continuing exile from and occupation of imagined homelands, constitute a political imaginary that is irreducibly catastrophic. Politics is necessarily ‘calamitized’. Below I account for the ‘terror of history’ by drawing on a variety of psychological and sociological literatures, and lay out its various modalities by referring to the statements of intellectuals and political leaders. In the larger project of which this essay is a part, I refer to many conflicts – settler-indigenous politics in Australia, the Armenian-Turkish memory dispute, and the partition in South Asia, for example – which deliver a wealth of salient material and that, I hope, bear out the theses developed here. Because of the ‘organic’ link between Holocaust memory and its instrumentalization in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, I will focus here on that case as the most accessible and salient example of the ‘terror of history’.

The Terror of History

In his book written over fifty years ago, *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Archetypes and Repetition*, Mircea Eliade coined the phrase ‘terror of history’ for the memory of group suffering endured without recourse to consoling myths. ‘Modern man’, as he put it, had to confront the terrible proposition that such suffering was meaningless. He elaborated in these terms:

we are concerned with the problem of history as history, of the ‘evil’ that is bound up not with man’s condition but with his behavior toward others. We should wish to know, for example, how it would be possible to tolerate, and to justify, the sufferings and annihilation of so many peoples who suffer and are annihilated for the simple reason that their geographical situation sets them in the pathway of history; that they are neighbors of empires in a state of permanent expansion. [...] And in our day, when historical pressure no longer allows any escape, how can man tolerate the catastrophes and horrors of history – from collective deportations and massacres to atomic bombings – if beyond them he can glimpse no sign, no transhistorical meaning; if they are only the blind play of economic, social, or political forces, or even worse, only the result of the ‘liberties’ that a minority takes and exercises directly on the stage of universal history?⁹

For what Eliade called traditional man – which, he readily conceded, comprises possibly the majority of people even in the contemporary world (he was probably thinking of his native Romania) – the prospect of unbearable meaninglessness was avoided by interpreting suffered atrocities and defeats according to the culturally fixed archetypes of sacred time with its eternal return. In this consoling temporal modality, ‘Every hero repeated the archetypal gesture, every war rehearsed the struggle between good and evil, every fresh social injustice was identified with the sufferings of the Saviour [...] each new massacre repeated the glorious end of the martyrs’.¹⁰ But what about ‘modern man’, to which he counted himself, who believed in linear time bereft of consoling myths?

It is now well known that, as a young man, Eliade (1906–1986) was an intellectual supporter of the fascist Iron Guard in interwar Romania.¹¹ He was gesturing to Romania’s historical experience when he asked, ‘How justify, for example, the fact that southeastern Europe had to suffer for centuries – and hence renounce any impulse toward a higher historical existence, toward spiritual creation on the universal plane – for the sole reason that it happened to be on the road of the Asiatic invaders and later the neighbor of the Ottoman Empire?’¹² Here the Romanians and southern Slavs are the victims of history, an unbearable experience for the Romanian nationalist intelligentsia, who blamed their nation’s plight on its supposed colonization and cosmopolitanization by Jews. Ridding Romania of Jews, for this intelligentsia, was a redemptive act of national liberation.¹³ Such projects were characteristic of ‘modern man’, though Eliade tactfully abandoned national exultation for Christianity as the only viable alternative to nihilistic despair when he wrote his book after the war.¹⁴

What is the relevance of these seemingly esoteric observations for transcultural memory, genocide and the terror of history? Two aspects may guide our reflections. First, Eliade highlights the fact that trauma can be experienced collectively as a form of structural violence, as an occupied nation or one subject to powerful neighbours. Trauma, Eliade is implying, should be understood as including a much broader structure of experience than the individual, event-based model so prevalent in western writing on the subject.¹⁵ The Belgian literary scholar Stef Craps rightly

notes that ‘there is a need to expand our understanding of trauma from sudden, unexpected catastrophic events that happen to people in socially dominant positions to encompass ongoing, everyday forms of violence and oppression affecting subordinate groups’. Such a model of trauma reflects the experience of subaltern groups by highlighting their ‘chronic psychic suffering’ endured through ‘[e]xposure to acts or threats of physical and psychological violence’. We are dealing here with ‘repetitive and cumulative traumas’ that fall below the threshold of the sudden event model of trauma, a paradigm particularly salient to indigenous people.¹⁶ This insight is confirmed by psychological literature, which tells us that ‘an insufficient background of safety’ and ‘difficulties in taking survival for granted’ can lead to the development of ‘annihilation anxieties’.¹⁷ Rather than being a punctual event, then, trauma can be akin to repetitive strain injury, when stress endured over time overwhelms the subject’s capacity to recover.¹⁸ By attending to the totality of the subject’s material reality in this way, we avoid the danger of ‘psychologism’ and its methodological individualism highlighted long ago by Adorno.¹⁹

Second, as a member of a small nation whose interwar elites saw it as bereft of historical agency, Eliade exemplified the temptation of ‘modern man’ to surmount impotence through collective self-assertion in the form of national-spiritual liberation, projects that can have genocidal implications when they are directed against allegedly dangerous and polluting ‘foreigners’ and ‘colonizers’. Only when his fascist flirtation failed did he turn in resignation to Christianity. In these elements, he embodied a national liberation and anti-colonial intellectual habitus. These elements constitute the terror of history by articulating a structure of feeling that, extrapolating from Freud, we may call collective *Todesangst* – fear of death or, better, mortal terror – that follows survival of a near fatal experience.²⁰ By the terror of history, then, I mean to describe the subject’s response to an unbearable group past. It is my contention that this subject responds to this past by seeking redemptive solutions that appeal to culturally embedded tropes (‘traditional man’) and/or novel projects of group construction (‘modern man’).

Trauma as Unbearable Affect

Eliade’s intuitions about the ‘terror of history’ can be elaborated in psychological terms by referring to what Vamik Volkan calls the ‘large group identity’ of traumatized peoples.²¹ The key concepts are trauma and the affect of unbearability. Paul Ricoeur’s notion of ‘wounded memory’ accurately identifies how a state’s ‘founding violence’ can humiliate its victims and lead to repetition compulsion, although he optimistically believed that wounded memory could be healed.²² The evidence I present below suggests grounds for pessimism.

For one, mental trauma is physically inscribed into/onto the body, as shown by clinical studies which show that neurobiological changes in the brain lead to distortions in the processing of and reaction to external stimuli. Traumatic memories are *engraved* in the brain’s processing regime, impairing the subject’s reality-checking ability.²³ These memories are elicited by stressful experiences. ‘Under pressure, they may feel, or act as if they were traumatized all over again.’²⁴ The subject experiences

panic attacks, exaggerated startle response and hyper-vigilance; it tries to avoid physical reminders and emotional triggers of the original trauma but often cannot ward off intrusive memories, flashbacks and nightmares.

So much, very briefly, for the individual but what about the group? Warnings against generalizing about collectives on the basis on individual psychology are commonplace and well taken.²⁵ Recent interdisciplinary research shows that it is possible to talk sensibly about group emotional experience without reductionisms because the reality of trauma is that the individual's experience is socially and cultural mediated – whether through individual and collective narratives that invest meaning in them or because the developing medical diagnoses alter the self-perception of subjects' illnesses – and the social and cultural mediation of collective experiences can have psychiatric effects in the sense described above. In other words, psychiatry and sociology work in both directions.²⁶ Rather than traumatic group identity consisting of 'memory-traces of the experience of our ancestors',²⁷ as Freud argued in *Moses and Monotheism*, scholars are talking about 'conditioned fears' – that is, traumatic behaviour as an acquired 'cognitive habit' – transmitted via 'secondary traumatization through symbolic presentation of the original trauma' which the child experiences 'with an intensity that engenders anxiety symptoms'.²⁸ Parents can pass on their traumas – whether primary or secondary – through 'contagion', that is, 'distressful knowledges that recipients have generally obtained from a firsthand source and are unable to assimilate or accommodate'.²⁹ That is, particular modes of speaking about individual and group traumas can perpetuate traumatic symptoms across an entire culture.³⁰

These recent insights into the acquisition of secondary, group-wide trauma cast doubt on the common view that the return of traumatic memories for individuals is accompanied by a 'limited capacity for verbal representation',³¹ just as cultural theorists relate trauma to the sublime, as an 'excess that overwhelms the self',³² which impairs the subject's signification capacities. The evidence of collectively experienced traumatic emotions, in fact, is that they are readily narrated in familiar patterns to make them meaningful. As Lauren Berlant notes, trauma can be 'the literal unsymbolisable mark of pure violence, or its opposite, violence congealed in an intensified representation'.³³ As we will see, the narrative coagulations are at once omnipresent and omnipotent.

To understand this pervasiveness, it is necessary to examine their affective dimension. Such narration is necessarily subtended by an intercultural temporality; to belong to an ethnic, racial, national or religious group is to have access to an archive of memories about the fate of one's group in relation to other groups. For example, group humiliation is always a transcultural phenomenon, because it entails a lowering of status in relation to an other: 'colonial humiliation' involves an experienced asymmetry, an unequal relationship in what, ideally, should be an equal one, where a degree of agency, self-respect and trust in the social world has been violated and ruptured by conquest and occupation.³⁴ That is why the Palestinian intellectual Azmi Bishara refers to Salam Fayyad's political and economic plans for Palestine as 'a contrived folk festival where the occupied *bow* to

their oppressors'.³⁵ He experiences this liberal mode of nation-building as humiliating.

These collective emotions – the shame and humiliation, the annihilation anxieties of defeat, exile or occupation – are experienced as unbearable. Lamentations for the travails of one's people, often said to be unique, is the evidence. In 1846, the prominent German-Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz was moved to write that 'This is the eighteenth hundred-year era of the Diaspora, of unprecedented suffering, of uninterrupted martyrdom without parallel in world history', indeed that this exile 'was a history of suffering to a degree and over a length of time such that no other people has experienced'.³⁶ Likewise, Eleizer Ben-Yehuda, the founder of the modern Hebrew language, in his *Brief History of the Nation of Israel in its Land* (1891), wrote 'one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two years later, the Jews wander in exile from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another, and at all time and in all places many terrible afflictions find them'.³⁷ For the Zionist Ben-Yehuda, the trauma was not only the Jews' expulsion from ancient Israel but also their ongoing exile: and it was intolerable because, as David Ben Gurion put it in the 1920s, it meant 'dependence, humiliation, slavery and degradation'.³⁸ These experiences border on *Todesangst* – 'fears of being overwhelmed, merged, disintegrated, penetrated, or abandoned' – and are traumatic and therefore unendurable.³⁹ They demand action.

Trauma then, is, 'in essence, an experience of unbearable affect'.⁴⁰ But '[wh]at happens when emotions become unbearable?', asks the psychologist David Garfield.⁴¹ He or she feels *compelled* to act in order to cope with these emotions. Thus a Palestinian doctor wrote recently, 'To live under oppression and submit to injustice is incompatible with psychological health. Resistance is not only a right and a duty, but also a remedy for the oppressed. Even if not as a strategic, pragmatic option, we should resist as an expression of – and insistence on – our human dignity'.⁴² Resistance – the Arab word is *makawama*, which also means 'struggle' – is an end in itself, testifying to the refusal to surrender that prevent national and psychological disintegration. It is in those terms that the Russian Jew Leon Pinkser experienced the consequence of pogroms in Russia in the early 1880s: as 'the absence of national *self-respect*' among Jews, and turned to Zionism as the answer.⁴³ Exile and occupation elicit national resistance and liberation movements as a psychological necessity.

That resistance against occupation and striving to end exile should lead to the 'calamitization' of politics is intuitively obvious, but how exactly does it occur and what are its modalities? Lest I be misunderstood: I am indeed arguing that, at least for some, radical political action becomes an *automatic reflex* in these circumstances. As we will see, the terror of history is refracted through ideologically interpolated subjects and groups in specific times and territories, and operates in various modalities under a general structure of traumatic repetition.

The Repetition of Trauma

When current events are depicted as reincarnations or perpetuations of the traumatic, often genocidal, experience, the ensuing posture is defensive, leading to

preemptive or anticipatory self-defence. In terms of media theory, the future is 'premediated' to render it safe from the repetition of traumatic events that have 'remediated' historical experience.⁴⁴ This pre-emption is significant for military and genocidal escalation, because what is understood as intelligent defence by the one agent is experienced as genocidal aggression by the other who is attacked. Moreover, because all threats are anticipated, they are also not falsifiable, thus laying bare those who warn against confrontation and escalation to accusations of appeasement, treachery and other crimes against the group. In this way, the terror of history locks groups into escalatory mechanisms of post-traumatic reality out of which it is difficult to escape. For both subjects, '[t]he degree of annihilation anxiety is a safe measure of the degree of aggressiveness'.⁴⁵

Consider the statement of Dr Shimon Samuels, Director for International Relations at the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Paris, writing in 2009 about contemporary antisemitism:

[...] we stood before the Millennium 2000 when roaring stock markets and peace processes marked the human condition. Think back only nine years [to 2000], the Jewish condition seemed almost Messianic. We believed in our return to the family of nations, from 'a people that dwells alone' (*Am Levadad Yishkon*, excluded and ghettoized) to emerge as 'Or LeGoyim', a light unto the nations. These illusions of normalization were splintered with the Intifada, Durban 2001 (the UN World Conference Against Racism) as a new threshold in post-Holocaust antisemitism and a new global threat to both the Jewish and the global condition. [...] The language is strikingly reminiscent: 'B.D.S./ Hitler's 'Kauft nicht bei Juden' [don't buy from Jewish shops]; 'Naqba/ 'Die Juden sind unser Unglück' [the Jews are our misfortune].⁴⁶

Leaving aside the messianic temporality with which Samuels starts and focusing on his latter statements, it is apparent that he thinks the boycott campaign resembles the Nazi shopping boycott of 1933 and the Palestinian claims about the catastrophe of their ethnic cleansing in 1948 are tantamount to Heinrich Treitschke's anti-Semitic propaganda in the later nineteenth century. Contemporary challenges here are cast in a frame of anti-Jewish persecution that culminated in the Holocaust and that is ongoing. Samuels is not alone in this fear. According to other commentators, many Jews today face the danger of a 'second Holocaust' from Iran and its allies Hamas and Hezbollah.⁴⁷

The obvious danger here is that no limits can be set on action to prevent such a catastrophe from happening again. Thus the domestic affairs reporter for the Israeli *Haaretz* newspaper Yair Sheleg wrote that for his compatriots to meet the challenge posed by Iran, 'we must depart from the routines of hedonistic Western society'. What this meant was 'that *any means to preserve it should be adopted* [...] If hesitating to hurt Lebanese civilians in response to attacks on us could send Iran the message that we will hesitate to hurt civilians if Iran strikes us, then we must not be deterred'.⁴⁸ Attacking innocent Lebanese women and children and thereby committing war

crimes and crimes against humanity would be perfectly acceptable in such calamitous circumstances. One is reminded of two of Carl Schmitt's observations about the moralization of politics: that 'What always matters is the possibility of the extreme case taking place, the real war, and the decision whether this situation has or has not arrived'. And that war to abolish war – in our case to abolish permanent anxiety – 'simultaneously degrades the enemy into moral and other categories and is forced to make of him a monster that must not only be defeated but also utterly destroyed'.⁴⁹ The editor of the (New York) *Jewish Week* was bearing out this truth when he defended the killing of Osama Bin Laden by US forces.

Jewish history and tradition speak of Amalek, the personification of evil in his attack on the weakest of the Israelites in the Bible, and the obligation to erase his memory, and the memory of subsequent Amaleks, from Haman to Hitler, who rise up against us.

If there is anything we have learned from the Holocaust in the days after our annual observance of Yom HaShoah, it is that when a political or religious demagogue calls for the destruction of an entire people or way of life, take him seriously. And take action to stop him.⁵⁰

The vow to annihilate Amalek, the hereditary mortal enemy of Jews, and to blot out his name (Deuteronomy 25:19) is belied by the compulsion to analogize between present threats and Amalek. Thus the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu apparently regards Iran in terms of Amalek. In 2009, the American journalist Jeffrey Goldberg expounded his conversation with one of Netanyahu's advisors who had invoked Amalek in the following terms:

The rabbis teach that successive generations of Jews have been forced to confront the Amalekites: Nebuchadnezzar, the Crusaders, Torquemada, Hitler and Stalin are all manifestations of Amalek's malevolent spirit. If Iran's nuclear program is, metaphorically, Amalek's arsenal, then an Israeli prime minister is *bound by Jewish history* to seek its destruction, regardless of what his allies think.⁵¹

Muslims too engage in a similar shuttling back and forth between past and present to interpret present day struggles and suffering as a continuation of previous experiences. In 2009, for example, during the Ashura celebrations in Nabatieh in Lebanon, one of the participants said, 'We are teaching our children about the fate of the Prophet's family, and by cutting their heads and shedding blood we bear testimony to what happened'. A Hezbollah official led the march and gave a speech, linking 'the battle of Karbala to the resistance [against Israel and Lebanon's enemies] in the south and said Hizbullah faced the 2006 summer war with the same valor Hussein faced his enemies'.⁵² There are long memories of humiliation and betrayal among Sunnis as well. Islamists place contemporary Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon in a continuum of the Crusades, the destruction of Baghdad in 1258 by Mongols and the US invasion of 2003. Osama Bin Laden declared in 2003 that 'our wounds have yet to heal from the Crusader wars of the last century against the

Islamic world, or from the Sykes Picot Agreement of 1916 [...] which brought about the dissection of the Islamic world into fragments'.⁵³ All memory is postmemory, and politics is removed from the realm of pragmatic calculation. History is repeating itself. Past events are not past but 'perpetually re-experienced in a painful, dissociated, traumatic present'.⁵⁴

History as Revenge and Retaliation

Fear of annihilation is not the only emotional modality that the terror of history induces. Another is revenge for past humiliations. Even centuries old defeats can activate large group emotions for revenge because of what has been called the 'pain of their histories', the 'accrued grief of the centuries' or sedimentation of these emotions, especially in conditions of ongoing exile or occupation.⁵⁵ Such insights are also based on the psychological research that highlights the power of shame as an unbearable affect which creates a 'vengeful state of mind' demanding discharge, namely 'turning the tables' or 'getting even'. Based in part on the influential work of Heinz Kohut in the 1970s, this literature shows how shame is a narcissistic injury, an experience of extreme powerlessness that threatens the subject's social identity and self-respect. A regression to the 'paranoid-schizoid position' (Melanie Klein) can manifest itself in narcissistic rage that seeks vengeance against the humiliator on whom loathed aspects of the self are split off and projected.⁵⁶ Noteworthy is that the unendurable experience of shame resembles the 'ego helplessness' and 'disintegration anxiety' of *Todesangst*.⁵⁷

As might be expected, such experiences are gendered. Individual and collective humiliation is experienced by many men as emasculation. When Hany Abu-Assad, the Palestinian director of the film *Paradise Now* (2005), was detained at the Gaza's Kalandra checkpoint and 'ordered to stand with his hands up against a wall for three hours in the blistering sun, three hours during which he feared for his life', he was literally impotent for a month thereafter.⁵⁸ The Palestinian journalist, Khaled Amayreh, expresses the gendered language of occupation when he casts Palestine as the virtuous woman violated by the rapist (for him, Nazi-like) Israelis, contrasting his people's honour with the 'pornographic hypocrisy' of the West.⁵⁹

This reaction has precedents. Over a century earlier, in 1896, the Zionist Max Nordau called for 'muscle Judaism' to reverse the alleged feminization of Jewish men that 2000 years of powerless exile had inculcated.⁶⁰ Not for nothing does shame and humiliation entail the production of a militarized masculinity as the history of national failure is attributed to the effeminized and incompetent leadership as well as the perfidious external enemy.

Such a subjectivity uses history for 'revenge and retaliation', in Jyotirmaya Sharma's striking phrase.⁶¹ In his analysis of an early Hindu nationalist history of the anti-British uprising in 1857 by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, he shows how the author's narrative justified the killing of British women and children as the necessary consequence of colonial occupation and humiliation, calling to mind Sartre's observation, in his preface to Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, that 'In Algeria and

Angola, Europeans are massacred at sight'.⁶² Indeed, again anticipating Sartre, the violence is depicted as redemptive: by obliterating colonial humiliation, it is the first step in the making of a new Indian nation. 'Words like revolt, revolution, rebellion and revenge', notes Sharma, 'were legitimate in order to remove injustice and bring about parity and justice'.⁶³

Revenge fantasies also compensate for stored-up resentments that endure after the genocide or occupation. Consider commentary on Quentin Tarantino's film *Inglourious Basterds* (2009). According to Jeffrey Goldberg's report, Eli Roth plays a 'basterd' known as the 'Bear Jew' who specializes in what is described as 'braining Germans with a baseball bat'. Roth, the real-life actor, enjoyed the part, commenting that he experienced 'almost a deep sexual satisfaction of wanting to beat Nazis to death, an orgasmic feeling'. He continued, making the link to Holocaust pedagogy: 'My character gets to beat Nazis to death. That's something I could watch all day. My parents are very strong about Holocaust education. My grandparents got out of Poland and Russia and Austria, but their relatives did not'. Goldberg shared emotionally in this lesson of the Holocaust when he wrote, 'When I came out of the screening room the night before our interview, I was so hopped up on righteous Jewish violence that I was almost ready to settle the West Bank – and possibly the East Bank'. After he collected himself, he reflected that the morality of this 'kosher porn' (a term he takes from Roth) was not particularly helpful 'in the context of current Middle East politics'. That context included, he noted from his own time as an Israeli prison guard, 'immoral things, like beating the hell out of Palestinians because they could', a violence that transcended vigilance and entered the domain of revenge.⁶⁴ The prison guards – no invention of Tarantino – had learned their lessons well; never again would Jews be defenceless.

If the subject that suffers from annihilation anxiety is disintegrating, history as revenge and retaliation reassembles, regains and re-gathers. From the shards of the oppressed nation, it makes a single, united subject. The terror of history drove Menachem Begin, a former Israeli prime minister, to hate, as we can see from his memoirs, *The Revolt*:

It is axiomatic that those who fight have to hate – something or somebody. And we fought. We had to hate first and foremost, the horrifying, age-old, inexcusable utter *defencelessness* of our Jewish people, wandering through millennia, through a cruel world, to the majority of whose inhabitants the defencelessness of the Jews was a standing invitation to massacre them. We had to hate the humiliating disgrace or the homelessness of our people. We had to hate – as any nation worthy of the name must and always will hate – the rule of the foreigner, rule, unjust and unjustifiable *per se*, foreign rule in the land of our ancestors, in our own country. We had to hate the barring of the gates of our country to our own brethren, trampled and bleeding and crying out for help in a world morally deaf.⁶⁵

The conclusions he drew were seemingly ineluctable when the world abandoned European Jewry to its fate at the hands of Nazi Germany:

the generation of Holocaust and Resurrection, swore an oath of allegiance: never again shall we endanger our People; never again will our wives and our children – whom it is our duty to defend, if need be even at the cost of our own lives – be put in the devastating range of enemy fire.⁶⁶

Begin did not just hate the oppressive gentile. He hated Jews for having meekly endured their fate for centuries. So, as suggested above, hate can be turned inward against Jews who are seen to endanger the group. For his preparedness to negotiate with Yasir Arafat in the 1990s, the Israeli religious and political right depicted Yitzhak Rabin in Nazi uniforms and denounced him as a traitor, an ‘Oslo criminal’ and a new *Judenrat*. Ariel Sharon and Netanyahu, Begin’s political children, addressed mass rallies with incendiary speeches, adding fuel to the fire of calamitization. Rabin’s assassin invoked such imagery in his defence.⁶⁷

Rupturing the Continuity of History

Yet another modality, one that often builds on the other two, is a desire to dramatically interrupt the traumatic continuity of history. Again, Jewish history affords good examples. Eleizer Ben-Yehuda did not want Jewish children to learn about what he called ‘our history of degradation in exile’. Only the Jewish history in ancient Israel could motivate them to act now to reclaim that country.⁶⁸ The fatal continuum of Jewish history needed to be ruptured by a revolutionary Zionist temporality that would connect the present with the distant, mythical and glorious past while leaping over the 2000 years that link them. It is with this motivation that in 1942 the Ukrainian-born Hebrew author Haim Haziz has his fictional character Yudka declare to his fellow *kibbutznikim* that he is ‘opposed to Jewish history’. Why?

Because we didn’t make our own history, the *goyim* made it for us. [...] What is there in it? Oppression, defamation, persecution, martyrdom. And again oppression, defamation, persecution, and martyrdom. And again and again and again, without end. [...] just a collection of wounded, hunted, groaning, and wailing wretches always begging for mercy. [...] I would simply forbid teaching our children Jewish history. Why the devil teach them about their ancestors’ shame?

Consistent with the ‘lachrymose’ interpretation of Jewish history (Salo Baron) and its diasporic powerlessness, he declared that ‘Zionism begins with the wreckage of Judaism, from the point where the strength of the people fails’.⁶⁹ But there is inspiration to be salvaged in the wreckage.

The Masada myth of the resistance and mass suicide of ancient Israeli fighters and their families in the face of Roman conquest in 79 A.D. was forgotten in Jewish culture for millennia until the story was translated into Hebrew in 1923 and rendered as a story of heroic defiance and patriotic struggle for Jewish settlers in Palestine – ‘never again shall Masada fall’.⁷⁰

Strange as it may seem to introduce Walter Benjamin into this context, the terror of history drove his famous 'Theses on the Philosophy of History'. Rejecting the Rankean project of describing history 'the way it really was', he wanted 'to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger', a lesson that 'the oppressed teaches us': we lived in a 'state of emergency' that required action. Attending to the suffering of all humanity, rather than a single nation or religion, allowed his angel of history to see 'one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet'. The response: 'make whole what has been smashed' by seizing its shards and consciously making a new, redeemed future. 'Thus, to Robespierre ancient Rome was a past charged with the time of the now which he blasted out of the continuum of history. The French Revolution viewed itself as Rome incarnate'. This messianic temporality that explodes 'the continuum of history', Benjamin observed, was 'characteristic of the revolutionary classes at the moment of their action'.⁷¹ As we have seen above, it is also characteristic of Zionism, but for Benjamin rupturing time was an imperative for humanity as a whole.

Resisting Reality Checking

The reason for the widespread calamitization of politics, this article has suggested, is that the terror of history is inscribed into the minds and bodies of its victims. If so, it is unlikely that they will be easily amenable to the reality testing that cosmopolitan ethics demands. Consider an interview with Avraham Burg, who served as the head of the Jewish Agency and later as speaker of the Israeli parliament. Burg told Israelis that they are suffering from Holocaust trauma, as indicated in the title of his book, *The Holocaust Is Over: We Must Rise From its Ashes*. This is how the exchange unfolded:

Avi Shavit: What you are saying is that the problem is not just the occupation. In your eyes, Israel as a whole is some sort of horrible mutation.

Burg: The occupation is a very small part of it. Israel is a frightened society. To look for the source of the obsession with force and to uproot it, you have to deal with the fears. And the meta-fear, the primal fear is the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

Shavit: That is the book's thesis. You are not the first to propose it, but you formulate it very acutely. We are psychic cripples, you claim. We are gripped by dread and fear and make use of force because Hitler caused us deep psychic damage.

Burg: Yes.

Shavit: Well, I will counter by saying that your description is distorted. It's not as though we are living in Iceland and imagining that we are surrounded by Nazis who actually disappeared 60 years ago. We are surrounded by genuine threats. We are one of the most threatened

countries in the world. You are patronizing and supercilious, Avrum. You have no empathy for Israelis. You treat the Israeli Jew as a paranoid. But as the cliché goes, some paranoids really are persecuted. On the day we are speaking, Ahmadinejad is saying that our days are numbered. He promises to eradicate us. No, he is not Hitler. But he is also not a mirage. He is a true threat. He is the real world – a world you ignore.⁷²

Similar statements about the ‘existential threat that Israel faces every day’ appear regularly in the Israeli and Jewish press.⁷³ This conviction is so intensely believed that Tony Judt and others are ignored or denounced when they contend that Israel is not in fact existentially threatened. The calls of even committed Zionists like Leon Wieseltier to stop what he calls the ‘Amalekization of the present enemy’ fall on deaf ears.⁷⁴ This is not surprising, for as Kohut observed, ‘the reasoning capacity, while totally under the domination and in the service of the overriding emotion, is often not only intact but even sharpened’.⁷⁵ Even Khaled Amayreh seems to understand that the terror of history is engraved in Jewish subjectivities:

We just can’t expect people who were breast-fed with the holocaust religion all their life to suddenly convert to anti-Zionism. In France, as in the United States and much of the West, turning one’s back completely to Israel and Zionism means losing a certain part of one’s identity. Hence, many people are just not ready to undergo the desired transformation.⁷⁶

As might be expected, overcoming trauma for Amayreh means renouncing Zionism altogether. What he does not understand are the traumatic sources of what he sarcastically calls the ‘Holocaust religion’, preferring to ascribe its attraction to propaganda.

The psychic reasons why hyper-vigilance is reproduced and largely impervious to reality checking are therefore important to recall. After the shocked surprise of an initial experience, ‘a memory trace of a traumatic situation becomes a component of the anticipation of disaster, and the patient may then experience in the present the terror faced at the earlier traumatic moment’.⁷⁷ This need not be problematic. On the contrary, suspicion of one’s environment and potential threats can be prudent, Freud noted. ‘The individual will have made an important advance in his capacity for self-preservation’, he wrote in 1926, ‘if he can foresee and expect a traumatic situation which entails helplessness, instead of simply waiting for it to happen’.⁷⁸ This was a sign of a healthy learning process. In the Jewish context, it was what Simon Rawidowicz, in his essay, ‘The Ever-Dying People’, called ‘Jewish realism’, a posture that was neither excessively pessimistic nor optimistic. Not surprisingly, his remarkable poise was linked to his insistence that the Diaspora occupied equal status in the Jewish world with Israel. Unlike Ben-Yehuda, Yudka, Ben Gurion and other Zionists, he did not negate millennia of Jewish existence in exile.⁷⁹

Where vigilance is salutary, hyper-vigilance is not. It leads to the confusion between danger and imminent existential threat, which leads to panic and pre-emption.

Where fear is related to a known threat, anxiety is more ‘a response to the perception of danger’. Psychologists have ascribed the latter problem to ‘over-stimulation’, which interferes with the ‘ability to discriminate and categorize’, thus threatening the self with ‘fantasies of nothingness, fading away, and being shattered, broken, and scattered’.⁸⁰ The over-stimulated subject cannot distinguish between critical interaction and the destructive attempt to ‘delegitimize’ it. While healthy vigilance means reacting to external dangers in circumstances in which *Todesangst* may be life saving, the hyper-vigilant subject is externalizing internal processes because the terror of history has led to a melancholic paranoia in which anxiety is a permanent condition. Rather than promoting awareness, ‘Holocaust education’ and the functional equivalents in other national memories promote misperceptions of reality. All too difficult is the critical self-reflection and self-control that ideally characterize secular scholarship.⁸¹ If is difficult enough for the Zionist ‘postcolonial subject’ who thinks it is still exiled and oppressed – Israel as ‘a small nation surrounded by enemies’ (*U’ma ktanna mukefeth oyvim*) – to combine heteropathic and idiopathic identification necessary for full integration; it is all the more challenging for Palestinians who are in fact occupied and exiled.⁸²

Conclusion

Far from leading to a cosmopolitan outlook, then, the terror of history that Holocaust memory so intensely represents today is the affect that locks Palestinians and Israelis in a fatal embrace. The dominant Israeli conception of peace is driven, understandably, by security, and it demands an impotent, agentless Palestinian subject; a separate Palestinian state is required to be especially impotent. It insists upon Palestinian acceptance of Zionism as legitimate, and the consequent implication that Palestinians are not indigenous and were not illegitimately expelled. The Israeli annihilation anxiety goes so far that the refusal of Palestinians to ‘recognize Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people’ – meaning that Jews everywhere have a ‘right of return’ while Palestinians expelled within living memory do not – is cast as a matter of ‘our very existence’.⁸³ Thus Israelis need their terror of history to justify and hold on to their victories in 1948, 1967 and beyond by believing and representing themselves to be the victims of the powerful Arabs. Palestinian resistance, however moderate – indeed, the simple contestation of Zionist claims that Jews are more indigenous to Palestine than Palestinians – is interpreted by Israelis and their supporters abroad as illegitimate attempts to delegitimize and thus destroy Zionism and Israel. Behind any Palestinian agency, it is feared, lurks Hamas and terrorism and the return to exile and annihilation.

As a result, Edward Said’s dire prediction has come to pass: ‘For Zionism, the Palestinians have now become the equivalent of a past experience reincarnated in the form of a present threat’. He understood and feared the regressive nature of this interaction. His concern was ‘that the Palestinians’ future as a people is mortgaged to that fear, which is a disaster for them and for Jews’.⁸⁴ This is a self-reinforcing and metastasizing entwinement of positions in which little can be done. While liberals advocate justice, they are understandably uncomfortable with the redemptive violence entailed in the terror of history. Yet it is this non-consoling history that gives

oppressed people the motivation to escape their exile and disempowerment. It worked for Menachem Begin.

It is for this reason that the US-based Jordanian-Palestinian scholar Joseph Massad has cast the Palestinian trauma not only as the ethnic cleansing of 1948 (the *Nakba*), but as a *continuing* occupation and exile. Writing of the annual *Nakba* commemorations, he challenges the Palestinian preoccupation with 1948 because it implies its irreversibility; one is remembering an inconsolable loss. But by conceiving of *Nakba* as the ongoing project of colonial domination that began in the 1880s and endures, he insists it is contestable and reversible. By the simple fact of their obdurate existence, he writes, Palestinians tell Zionists that their efforts are contingent and incomplete. In reminding Palestinians, as the nineteenth-century Jewish historians did for Jews, that exile and occupation are a contemporary condition and therefore reversible, Massad wants to instill in them hope as an antidote for colonial humiliation and exile.⁸⁵ The terror of history is here congealed in an exilic ideology of resistance. He is arguing and feeling like Ben Yehuda, Yudka, Ben Gurion, Begin – and Mircea Eliade.

To argue, as Levey, Sznajder and other scholars have, that the narrow Holocaust-definition of trauma should be the normative threshold for recognition of moral shock is indeed a novelty. For it is the broader definition of trauma that has driven Zionist political emotions for over 100 years: namely, repudiating exile and colonial humiliation that Palestinians now have to endure to permit the realization of the Zionist dream. After all, the Zionist rejection of the ‘one-state solution’ is based on the proposition that Jews do not want to be powerless again in Palestine because conjoining the Jewish and Palestinian populations in one polity could mean relinquishing ethnocentric control of the state. Having cast many Palestinians into exile and occupied others, the establishment of the Holocaust as *the* threshold of trauma in western modernity conveniently renders invisible the experience of trauma that has driven the vengeful yet redemptive politics of minorities and displaced peoples for centuries, including, significantly, the Palestinian one.

What does the liberal hope to banish violent politics – manifested in the cosmopolitan ethics pronounced as lessons of the Holocaust – offer those who are exiled and oppressed? Is Eliade’s religious resignation the alternative to despair? Not if you are occupied and/or exiled. In these circumstances, the widespread belief that ‘Holocaust education’ will make the world a better place is wildly optimistic. It can be as much a source of ‘revenge and retaliation’ as ‘tolerance’. The inescapable terror of history insists upon the constant instrumentalization of the Holocaust. It is impossible to banish from politics, globalizing not a postnational ethic of human rights but the paranoid, potentially genocidal pre-emptive self-assertion as self-defence to ward off the apocalypse. Edward Said’s hope that a shared experience of diaspora would ultimately lead Jews and Palestinians to surmount their current roles as ‘antagonists of each other’s history and underlying reality’ was well intentioned but ultimately misplaced.⁸⁶ The terror of history demands the end of exile at all costs, foreclosing the poise of Edward Said and Simon Rawidowicz for the solace of ethnic fear and fealty.

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¹ < <http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/about-the-itf/stockholm-declaration.html> > [04/07/11], < <http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/about-the-itf/history-of-the-itf.html> > [04/07/11], < <http://www.hmd.org.uk> > [04/07/11].

² Dan Diner, 'Haider und der Schutzreflex Europas', *Die Welt* (26 February 2000). It is noteworthy that the date of Holocaust Memorial Day in Europe is the liberation of Auschwitz while in Israel it is the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, indicating the existence of a specifically European narrative.

³ < <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/> > [04/07/11].

⁴ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), p.8. See also Jeffrey Alexander et al., *Remembering the Holocaust: A Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁵ Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, pp.201, 232.

⁶ Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); John Torpey, *Making Whole What Has Been Smashed: On Reparations Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

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⁸ Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State*, 2 Vols. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005); Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses, 'Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing', in Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth, eds., *Political Violence in Twentieth Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.87–139, 225–231.

⁹ Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, [1949] 1954), p.151.

¹⁰ Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, pp.151–2.

¹¹ Adriana Berger, 'Mircea Eliade: Romanian Fascism and the History of Religions in the United States', in Nancy Horowitz, ed. *Tainted Greatness: Antisemitism and Cultural Heroes* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), pp.51–74.

¹² Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, p.151.

¹³ Cristina Bejan, 'The Paradox of the Young Generation in Interwar Romania', *SLOVO, Interdisciplinary Journal of Russian, East-Central European and Eurasian Affairs*, 18:2 (2006), pp.115–128. See Mihail Sebastian, *Journal: 1935–1944* (London: Pimlico, 2003), for a Romanian Jewish intellectual's contemporary observations and experiences of antisemitism.

¹⁴ Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, p.162.

¹⁵ For 'structure of experience', see Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp.131–34.

¹⁶ Stef Craps, 'Wor(l)ds of Grief: Traumatic Memory and Literary Witnessing in Cross Cultural Perspective', *Textual Practice*, 23:4 (2009), p.5; Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), p.91; Robert W. Robin, Barbara Chester, and David Goldman, 'Cumulative Trauma and PTSD in American Indian Communities', in *Ethnocultural Aspects of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*, eds. Anthony J. Marsella, et al. (Washington: American Psychological Association, 1996), pp.239–253; Catherine Lane West-Newman, 'Anger in Legacies of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and Settler States', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 7:2 (2004), pp.189–208.

¹⁷ Marvin Hurvich, 'The Place of Annihilation Anxieties in Psychoanalytic Theory', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 51:2 (2003), p.581.

¹⁸ Charles R Figley, 'Traumatology', in Lester Kurtz, ed., *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, & Conflict*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Elsevier, 1999), vol. 3: p.2195.

¹⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, 'Sociology and Psychology, Part 1', *New Left Review*, 46 (November–December 1967), pp.67–80, and 'Sociology and Psychology, Part 2', *New Left Review*, 47 (January–February 1968), pp.79–97.

²⁰ Max M. Stern, 'Fear of Death and Neurosis', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 16:1 (1968), p.12.

²¹ Vamik D Volkan, 'Large-Group Identity: Border Psychology and Related Societal Processes', *Mind and Human Interaction*, 13 (2003), pp.49–75.

²² Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

²³ Bessel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, 'The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma', *American Imago*, 48:4 (1991), pp.425–454; Babette Rothschild, *The Body Remembers Casebook* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), pp.46–75. The reader can refer to literature cited here for technical details about brain functioning and trauma.

²⁴ Bessel A. van der Kolk, 'The Body Keeps Score: Memory and the Emerging Psychobiology of Post Traumatic Stress', in *Traumatic Stress*, eds, Bessel A. Van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane and Lars Weisaeth (New York: Guilford Press, 1996), p.291.

²⁵ Wulf Kantsteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies', *History and Theory*, 41 (2002), pp.179–197. See generally Antonius C.G.M Robben and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco, eds, *Cultures Under Siege* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Jeffrey Alexander et al, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²⁶ Eg. Laurence J. Kirmayer, Robert Lemelson, and Mark Barad, eds, *Understanding Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Perri 6, Susannah Radstone, Corinne Squire and Amal Treacher, 'Introduction', in Perri 6, Susannah Radstone, Corinne Squire and Amal Treacher, eds, *Public Emotions* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), p.3; Nigel C. Hunt, *Memory, War and Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). By contrast, Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman's influential *Empire of Trauma* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp.6–7, 276, consciously eschew the psychiatric literature for a 'constructionist' approach influenced by Foucault.

²⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (London and New York: Hogarth Press, 1939), p.100. For commentary, see Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p.31.

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Social Research, 75:1 (2008), pp.1–22; William Hirst and Gerald Echterhoff, 'Creating Shared Memories in Conversation: Toward a Psychology of Collective Memory', *Social Research*, 75:1 (2008), pp.183–216.

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³⁴ Khaled Fattah and K. M. Fierke, 'A Clash of Emotions: The Politics of Humiliation and Political Violence in the Middle East', *European Journal of International Relations*, 15 (2009), pp.67–93. Generally on such political emotions, see the important article by Ghassan Hage, "'Comes a Time we are all Enthusiasm": Understanding Palestinian Suicide Bombers in Times of Exigophobia', *Public Culture*, 15:1 (2003), pp.65–89, and of course the work of Jacqueline Rose, e.g., *The Question of Zion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³⁵ Azmi Bishara 'We Want to Live', *Al-Ahram* (13–19 March 2010). Emphasis added.

³⁶ Heinrich Graetz, 'The Diaspora: Suffering and Spirit', in *Modern Jewish Thought: A Source Reader*, ed. Bessel A. Van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth (New York: Schocken, 1977), p.20.

³⁷ Dan Porat, 'The Nation Revised: Teaching the Jewish Past in the Zionist Present (1890–1913)', *Jewish Social Studies*, 13 (2006), pp.70–71.

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³⁹ Marvin Hurvich, 'The Place of Annihilation Anxieties in Psychoanalytic Theory', p.581.

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- ⁵² Mohammed Zaatar, 'Blood flows freely in Nabatieh as Shiites mark Ashura', *Daily Star* (29 December 2009).
- ⁵³ Khaled Fattah and K. M. Fierke, 'A Clash of Emotions: The Politics of Humiliation and Political Violence in the Middle East', *European Journal of International Relations* 15 (2009), p.75.
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- ⁵⁵ Robert E. Harkavy, 'Defeat, National Humiliation and the Revenge Motif in International Politics', *International Politics*, 37 (September 2000), pp.345–368.
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- ⁵⁷ Marvin Hurvich, 'The Place of Annihilation Anxieties in Psychoanalytic Theory', pp. 579–616.
- ⁵⁸ Tirzah Agassi, 'In Conversation: Paradise Now Director Hany Abu-Assad', *Tikkun Magazine* (27 May 2008): <<http://www.tikkun.org/article.php?story=20090327092512386>> [04/07/11].
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- ⁶⁰ Todd Samuel Presner, "'Clear Heads, Solid Stomachs, and Hard Muscles": Max Nordau and the Aesthetics of Jewish Regeneration', *Modernism/modernity*, 10:2 (2003), pp.269–296; Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
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- ⁶³ Jyotirmaya Sharma, 'History as Revenge and Retaliation', p. 1719.
- ⁶⁴ Jeffrey Goldberg, 'Hollywood's Jewish Avenger', *Atlantic Monthly* (September 2009). Gavriel Rosenfeld has observed this potential for upsetting conventional western perceptions of the Middle East conflict when he notes that 'If Jews are not going to be pristine, morally, ethically upright people and are instead, willing to use sadism and violence, that changes the moral calculus a little bit. [...] Maybe that changes the equation of how people perceive victims and perpetrators in the Middle East'. Cited in Danielle Berrin, 'Oscar Buzz: The Impact of "Inglorious Basterds" on the Jews', *The Jewish Journal* (24 February 2010).
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- ⁶⁶ Address of Prime Minister Menachem Begin to the Knesset, 20 November 1977: <http://www.knesset.gov.il/process/docs/beginspeech_eng.htm> [04/07/11].
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- ⁶⁹ Haim Hazaz, 'The Sermon', *Partisan Review*, 23 (Winter 1956), pp.173–75. Generally: David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken, 1986).
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- ⁷² Avi Shalit, 'Leaving the Zionist Ghetto', *Haaretz* (8 June 2007); Avraham Burg, *The*

Holocaust Is Over (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008); The Israeli psychologist Carlo Strenger regularly writes in these terms, e.g., ‘Israel is Trapped in Paranoid Vicious Circles’, *Haaretz* (31 December 2010); Anshel Pfeffer, ‘Comparing Iran to Nazis Harms Israel’, *Haaretz* (13 June 2009). Shavit’s rebuke of Burg is reminiscent of Gershom Scholem’s remark to Hannah Arendt that she did not sufficiently ‘love’ (display empathy for) the Jewish people.

⁷³ E.g. Ruth Eglash, ‘Capetown: “Conscientious Objectors” Visit May Spur anti-Semitism’, *Jerusalem Post* (7 October 2009).

⁷⁴ Leon Wieseltier ‘Against the Ethnic Panic of American Jews: Hitler is Dead’, *The New Republic* (27 May 2002).

⁷⁵ Heinz Kohut, ‘Thoughts on Narcissism and Narcissistic Rage’, p.382.

⁷⁶ Sylvia Cattori, ‘Khaled Amayreh’.

⁷⁷ Marvin Hurvich, ‘The Place of Annihilation Anxieties in Psychoanalytic Theory’, p.596.

⁷⁸ Cited in Marvin Hurvich, ‘The Place of Annihilation Anxieties in Psychoanalytic Theory’, p. 586.

⁷⁹ Simon Rawidowicz, *Israel, the Ever-Dying People and Other Essays* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1986). Analogous is Paul Gilroy’s complaint about the Afro-centrism in some African-American thought that overlooks the achievements of black American culture: Gilroy, *Black Atlantic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

⁸⁰ Marvin Hurvich, ‘The Place of Annihilation Anxieties in Psychoanalytic Theory’, p.593. I suspect that even otherwise self-disciplined colleagues in thrall to the terror of history may

experience these emotions when reading this article.

⁸¹ I mean secular in the sense advanced by Edward Said. See his *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage, 1995), ch. 6, ‘Gods that Always Fail’. Said argued for ‘critical detachment’ and eschewal of ‘political gods’. Though this ethic certainly does not preclude political engagement, as Said’s own career amply demonstrates, it does mean renouncing the temptation of ‘absolute certainties and a total, seamless view of reality that recognizes only disciples or enemies’: p.120. Exemplary is Hannah Arendt’s critique of Zionism as misperceiving reality: ‘The Jewish State, 50 Years Later. Where Have Herzl’s Politics Led’, in Hannah Arendt, *The Jewish Writings* (New York: Schocken, 2007), pp.375–387. For an application to Egyptian political culture, see Amal Treacher Kasbeh, ‘Postcolonial Subjectivity: Masculinity, Shame, Memory’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30:2 (2007), pp.281–299.

⁸² See Amal Treacher, ‘Circulating Emotions, Beliefs and Fantasies: The Middle East and the West’, *Psychodynamic Practice*, 13:4 (2007), p.354.

⁸³ Thus Moshe Yaalon, Minister for Strategic Affairs in Netanyahu’s Likud-led government. Cited in Isabel Kershner, ‘Leaked Documents Open a Door on Mideast Peace Talks’, *New York Times* (24 January 2011).

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