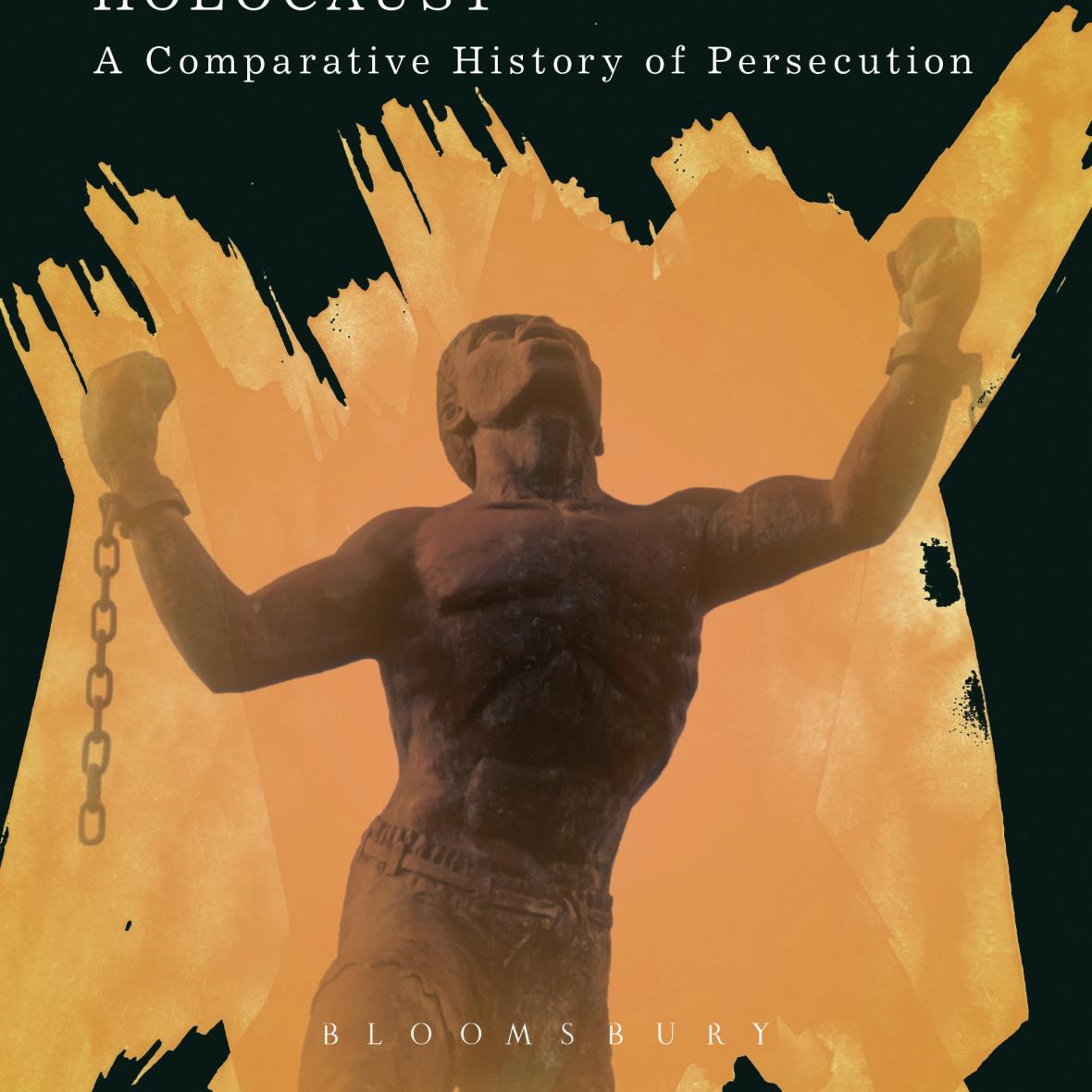


A MODERN
HISTORY OF
POLITICS &
VIOLENCE

KITTY MILLET

THE VICTIMS OF SLAVERY, COLONIZATION AND THE HOLOCAUST

A Comparative History of Persecution



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A Comparative History of Persecution

Kitty Millet

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Since then, I have argued and debated the book's theses and perspectives with many colleagues in Europe, Africa, the United States and Israel. I do not have the space to thank them all. However, I must mention several individuals, in particular. Michael Berkowitz of University College London provided great encouragement at times when I most needed it. Dennis Klein of Kean University was ever prepared to discuss and analyse all aspects of this project. Dorothy Figueira of the University of Georgia offered suggestions and recommendations on how to position the text for readers across the disciplines of the humanities. Wlad Godzich of the University of California, Santa Cruz, has remained a constant encouragement over the years and a cherished colleague. Of special note are two colleagues at my institution of San Francisco State, professors Julietta Hua of the Department of Women and Gender Studies, and Venise Wagner of Journalism. Through their comments and insights, I was able to craft a better book. In Professor Hua's case, her tireless rereading of the text gave me a sense of the necessity of scholarly interlocutors. Additionally, I am grateful to the Department of Jewish Studies, especially my chair, Fred Astren, for his unflagging support for this project and my professional development overall.

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List of Abbreviations

Places

GSWA	German Southwest Africa, now Namibia
SWA	Southwest Africa (GSWA before colonization)

Archives

CJ	Centre Juive, Paris
GHI	German Historical Institute
NA	National Archives, Kew, London
NNA	Netherlands National Archive, Amsterdam
NYPL	New York Public Library
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC
YV	Yad Vashem, Jerusalem

Electronic archives

SEP	Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
DocSouth	Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina
HEART	Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team
VHA	Visual History Archive/University of Southern California Shoah Foundation

Texts and legislation

BBG	<i>Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtenstums</i> , or the ‘Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service’
GA	General Act of 1884–1885, Berlin Conference

Companies and organizations

EIC	East Indies Company
VOC	Dutch East India Company
RMS	Rhenish Missionary Society
ICA	International Cartography Association

Introduction: Comparative Histories of Persecution

This book traces the subjective experiences of victims in three groups – slaves in the Americas, colonized Africans and Jewish extermination camp deportees – to compare the concepts and principles they used to survive persecution. From the outlines of these experiences, I examine how persecution was intuited in victim groups in order to demonstrate that the epistemologies of persecution – what victims intuited and what victimizers applied – are not necessarily reducible to each other, although both victim and perpetrator share the same historical data. This difference presupposes that persecution extends beyond its role as such data and that it seeps into both victim's and victimizer's *sensus communis*, internalized as part of a sensibility about the self and how that self belongs to an imagined community. To that end, this introduction highlights how scholars currently view persecution as an object, the unarticulated concepts that legislate the interpretation of its data and what is lost, inevitably, in discussions of persecution that do not focus on, or even include, victim experiences.

As an object of knowledge, scholars describe persecution usually in terms of its quantification – how many were affected? – and the causes we ascribe for its occurrence – why did it happen? The amount of data gathered becomes meaningful objectively, through patterns we deduce in order to construct a causality behind events, implicitly posited as a narrative, a history. Thus, histories of persecution include the number of dead and maimed, the property lost: the objects scholars can list, the data they can collect and the bodies they can count, always with a view to revealing persecution's causes.

The problem with this approach is the obvious one: we miss the human subjects who experienced persecution in favour of counting their corpses, adumbrating the ways they suffered or sifting through the remains of their social institutions. Human subjectivity becomes a gloss for bodies as oppressed objects. John Blassingame first described the tendency in relation to the history of slavery. He recognized that it ensued from the kinds of primary sources historians used to determine what happened, how slaves' bodies circulated, where they were confined.¹ Inevitably, this orientation reduced slaves to their bodies, and this reduction represented them as objects within epistemology.

Blassingame proposed the need to shift attention from slaves' bodies to slaves' subjectivities, and the sources for this attention had to be 'autobiography' because, 'more clearly than in any other source', it offered insight into slave interiorities.² Since the 'personal records of slaves', their 'letters and diaries', were few, Blassingame noted that 'the autobiography' provided the details of 'what went on in the minds of black

men,' a knowledge excluded 'in the commentaries of "outsiders."'³ He contended that a scholarship focused exclusively on observable data set aside the 'personalities' and subjectivities of persecution's victims in order to construct the larger schema of slavery as a system.⁴ While understanding slavery as a system was an important goal, it was not the only goal.

A similar tension runs through Holocaust studies. Saul Friedländer characterized it as the missing 'internal history of the Jewish people during the years of persecution and extermination'.⁵ Like Blassingame, Friedländer argued that the orientations of scholars towards 'German and related policies' during the Second World War occluded 'the properly Jewish dimension of the events' in order to posit the Jews as 'passive victims, an amorphous mass, whose history could be reduced to mere statistical data: a given percentage of the Jewish population exterminated in such and such a country'.⁶ Friedländer saw this occlusion as a scholarly tendency to displace the 'large number of diaries (and letters) ... written by Jews of all countries, all walks of life, all age groups, either living under direct German occupation or within the wider sphere of persecution'.⁷ It reflected a desire to focus on a collective subject position, shared by the many, in which the victims remained manageable data, rather than specific individuals within a community, who resisted, negotiated and lived through persecution.

While I do not dispute the necessity of quantification, the number of victims tends to overwhelm scholarly attention. It poses the question: How does one talk about the human in the face of so much loss, so many dead bodies? Is it possible to describe, as Thomas Kühne did for Wehrmacht and Nazi soldiers during the Second World War, the 'constitutive side rather than the destructive side' of persecution for victims?⁸

Even in narratives about victims that include their pasts before persecution, scholars tend towards disparate constructions, the individuals prior to their victimization and then, these abject, disconnected beings, the 'amorphous mass'. Sociologists and anthropologists might survey how communities and individuals absorb and transform persecution experiences, but how victims' experiences change their modes of thought and their sense of 'being' remains underanalysed, with the exception of the psychoanalyst's case study. Since the case study can only offer a singular example, scholarship veers away, inherently, from concern for individual victims to an analysis of how rational peoples become perpetrators, a collective subject position accented by a modern history in which state-sponsored persecution is routine because, ultimately, the therapist's couch is not the purview of the majority of scholars.

This reflex is tied, I believe, to the ways scholars have linked persecution implicitly with the twentieth-century phenomenon of genocide. Thus, genocide studies scholars have established the terms for persecution's analysis in the modern era, and with their reevaluation, a new genealogy for persecution has emerged, mediated by a modern suspicion that colonization is the real cause of persecution. The victims of persecution have become synonymous with the victims of colonization, and in their interchangeability, the genealogy has begun to resemble a formula. This introduction places that genealogy in the context of its unarticulated propositions in order to ask how these underwriting concepts mediate victims' subjective experience.

Persecution and the formulas of genocide

In seminal texts on the study of genocide, historians Jürgen Zimmerer and A. Dirk Moses have each claimed the precedents for Nazism to derive, respectively, from German colonial history and European imperialism. Their claims have since found purchase within Holocaust studies, postcolonial studies and German studies.⁹ Consequently, they appeal to scholars to look more carefully at the concepts underpinning these two historical precursors to understand the Nazis' genocidal intent.

Zimmerer's approach hinges on posited 'structural parallels', usually syntactic and linguistic signifiers, that appear in the Herero-Nama genocides of 1904–8, conducted by the Germans in Namibia, and in the Germans' treatment of Poles during the Second World War. He maintains that these 'parallels' have been 'largely ignored', even 'avoided' by Holocaust historians,¹⁰ but these 'shared structures' were evidence that 'the German war against Poland and the USSR was the largest colonial war of conquest in history'.¹¹

To justify the claim, Zimmerer shifted his focus to assert that two elements, no longer only Nazis but also Germans, were the agents of war, and these agents fought 'against Poland and the USSR'. The shift freighted the Nazis' actions towards the Poles with a historical narrative of German bias, linked intimately through the shared term, 'inferior'. Germans had referred to both groups as their 'inferiors'. The reference constituted a 'shared structure', embedded both in German colonial policy in Africa and in German fears over the territorial encroachment of 'the East' on its borders. Thus, the presence of 'shared structures' tethered the Holocaust to a historical precedent associated with 'the East' as a non-specific signifier. It connected multiple groups – Russians, Poles, Slavs, Jews and Roma – linked through victimization. Zimmerer's expanded victim group included a range of experiences of victimization that overlapped and preceded the Holocaust.

Zimmerer pointed then to the circulation of these 'shared structures' within German culture to suggest that the Nazis' biases were not 'unprecedented' but, rather, extensions of a pre-existing ideology that applied to a range of ethnic and racial groups. He concluded that the Herero-Nama genocide in German Southwest Africa (GSWA) signalled an 'important precedent' for understanding Nazism because it established, for him, that the Germans were not following a *Sonderweg* or 'special path' to extermination.¹² Germans engaged, instead, in actions akin to other European colonial powers.¹³ They were colonial agents who had used genocide to achieve their territorial goals, illustrated and affirmed by the number of times colonial massacre punctuated European history.

Subsequently, Nazi perpetrators became part of an expanded group of historical perpetrators of oppression. These two expansions of victim and perpetrator produced a related inference that Polish experiences under the Nazis were expressions of colonial intent whose antecedents extended back to the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Likewise, African experiences in GSWA reflected a similar colonial intent, so that colonialism became the unifying narrative whose multiple objects were sutured together through the shared designation of 'inferior'.

To buttress the inference, Zimmerer revived a model of ‘space and race’, well known to Holocaust historians, and tied it to colonial massacre.¹⁵ His justification for why historians had objected to the coupling was due to ‘the singularity of the Holocaust … intrinsically linked to identity politics’.¹⁶ There were two groups holding the field back from reaching his conclusion: one that supported the ‘uniqueness’ of the Holocaust and who considered ‘comparisons as a blasphemous mockery of the Holocaust’s victims’, and the other who argued that ‘the uniqueness of the Holocaust’, or ‘the singularity thesis’, was a ‘denial of all other genocides’.¹⁷

Since the Holocaust was associated with one particular group of victims, the Jews, they occupied the ‘uniqueness’ side of the dichotomy. Their ‘association’ had precluded the Holocaust from being compared to other mass murders.¹⁸ The other side of the dichotomy became more diffuse, since it represented communities whose long tenure with persecution had been either excluded outright from the United Nations (UN) Genocide Convention (1948), like slavery, or had been perceived as ‘lessened’ because of a focus on Jewish victimization, like colonialism in the Americas.¹⁹ This polarized dichotomy made Zimmerer’s intervention a critical one because it changed the debate’s stakes within genocide studies by identifying a new theory of causality behind Hitler’s ‘general plan’.²⁰ Hitler colonized the East because territorial expropriation was his primary goal.

In very broad terms, Zimmerer determined ‘race and space’ to be the conceptual ‘structures’ that unified the ‘different dimensions’ of ‘Nazi policy in Eastern Europe’.²¹ The phrase referred to the Nazis’ *Lebensraum* scheme in which the German ‘race’ needed ‘living space’. This linkage set the terms for understanding *Lebensraum* as exclusively territorial expansion. The physical expropriation of territory became the primary marker in Zimmerer’s thought of genocidal intent. This unified foundation of ‘race and space’ framed, then, the Nazis’ overall aim for Eastern Europe into a progressive series of interrelated steps that Zimmerer characterized as ‘war of annihilation, occupation policy, and genocide’.²²

The Nazis’ intense investment in that series was marked by the implied weight of Zimmerer’s concluding term of ‘genocide’. Zimmerer proposed that these steps moved the entire Nazi strategy towards genocide as its *telos*.²³ Genocide’s antecedent became ‘occupation’; occupation’s antecedent became the ‘war of annihilation’.

The first term, the ‘war of annihilation’, echoed Isabel V. Hull’s thesis regarding Clausewitz’s ‘battle of annihilation’.²⁴ Hull argued that Clausewitz’s concept derived from a military *ethos* that emerged after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1.²⁵ Germany’s victory over France had solidified the Reich’s imperial resurgence in Europe. The victory had corrected a narrative of German victimization in which, surrounded by external enemies, Germans had violently broken out of their encirclement. The German military waged a decisive ‘battle’ in which soldiers fought with reckless and ruthless vigour, ‘risking it all’, so to speak, for the glory of the Fatherland.

With Germany at peace after 1871, there were no longer venues for expressing this military *ethos*.²⁶ Woodruff Smith suggested that it became displaced on to colonial experience because the colonies offered modes of advancement unavailable in Germany.²⁷ The displacement encouraged Germans to see colonies as sites for potential expressions of German dominance,²⁸ and opportunities to correct physically

a list of perceived injustices.²⁹ Colonies were also places where Germans experimented with social ‘reforms’, a social engineering they could not impose within Germany.³⁰ Therefore, the pursuit of colonies, both real and imagined, saturated popular culture to the extent that ordinary Germans became subjects of empire, that is, what had been a constitutive experience for Germany’s soldiers was now ‘shared’ via identification by its citizens.³¹ It effectively freighted the army, then, as a key institution for the creation of a new, loyal citizen, a new German identity, so that subsequent wars were fought by the truest articulation of German being, the soldier.³²

Zimmerer’s second term, ‘occupation policy’, became, then, an intermediary step that led necessarily to genocide. Using the Poles’ experience during the Second World War, Zimmerer argued that to Hitler’s thinking, the ‘idea of the survival and rise of the German Volk’ was contingent on ‘the struggle for existence understood in Social Darwinian terms’³³ Germans became ‘German’ through their struggle to survive in the competition of war and their ability to settle territory. This second term made ‘occupation’ the goal of the ‘war against Poles and Russians’.

German occupation of ‘the East’ acquired through the ‘war of annihilation’ set up necessarily a military move to ‘clear out’ offending populations that remained obstacles to pending new settlers.³⁴

What the Volk, whose viability lay in the number of its ‘racially healthy’ members, lacked above all was ‘living space’.³⁵ The conception of space was thus directly associated with the racial ideology. … The idea of a settlement area for Germans … was to be found in Poland or Russia where they would find the living space they supposedly lacked.³⁶

In Zimmerer’s summation, the Volk’s ‘viability’ was exclusively land based. They had to settle the expropriated land; furthermore, as they expanded outward from the old Reich, they restaked their outer boundaries to previously forfeited territories because ‘viability’ was to be measured in a future quantity, ‘the number of its racially healthy members’.³⁷ These members reclaimed the land for a future settlement. ‘Racially healthy’ was contingent upon the occupation of space, and nothing else.

The trajectory of Zimmerer’s formula began with a war that not only defeated but also ‘annihilated’ the structure of the previous society. It moved, then, to a second step, in which an ‘occupation policy’ mapped future settlements’ needs. Speculation about future need articulated the necessity of the formula’s third term, ‘genocide’, as the means to make the space available for projected German settlers. Genocide was simply the culmination of a land-grab policy: it signified expropriation.

It was a necessary outcome for the realization of the ‘occupation policy’. If Germans were to live in the newly acquired territories, the populations that preceded them there had to be disposed of, and here Zimmerer did not distinguish between victims during the Second World War. The starvation of Ukrainians and Russian prisoners of war was akin to the shooting of Jews by *Einsatzgruppen* and their gassing in death camps, because the perpetrators not only expressed the same attitude towards their victims, but also levied the same outcome, death.³⁸ Zimmerer contended that the Nazis’ overall aim targeted all populations equally for genocide: only the means of that genocide differed

from group to group. The means itself was unimportant to the series and suggested that the Nazis used whatever strategy was viable and whatever instrument was at hand. Intent was posited as the same for every group. Consequently, all populations shared an experience that was linked, objectively, through ‘race and space’: ‘The methods of destruction were shared by all victim groups.’³⁹ It was a *sensus communis* of colonization, and it was expressed as ‘shared structures’.

Zimmerer speculated that if ‘race and space’ became unmoored from the Holocaust, the policy could be seen to motivate colonial massacres throughout history. ‘Race and space’ were structures that gave evidence of other genocides, both diachronically and synchronically. Discerning such a precedent in the Herero-Nama insurrections of 1904–8 in GSWA, now known as Namibia, he noted that these ‘structures’ coalesced around the concept *Untermenschen*, or ‘subhumans’, used to depict Africans throughout European colonialism.

With this designation, Zimmerer posited that the Herero and the Nama had been placed in a position akin to that one levied on the Poles, not only during the war, but also in discussions regarding Germany’s eastern borders in the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ He also noted that the kinship between Pole and African suggested a European perspective on indigenous groups, since colonial powers had often speculated that indigenous groups would eventually become extinct because of civilization: it was inevitable. Indigenous being was not to survive modernity.

Indigenous extinction in Africa was a key term for Zimmerer because it resonated with the plans of the Nazis some forty years later to push Poles and Slavs to ‘extinction’ by starvation and slave labour. Poles and Slavs were also ‘indigenous beings’ who had, likewise, been targeted for extinction. It echoed previous narrative ideologies of European colonial powers who, on arrival in the Caribbean, the West Indies, the United States, Australia and Africa, concluded that the indigenous peoples there were stuck in a state of unevolved existence.⁴¹ Their lack of ‘development’ signified to Europeans the necessity of their disappearance. It was an evolutionary ‘good’.

Since the Herero-Nama genocide was undisputed as a colonial war, the presence of such linkages in the event provided a way to construe the Holocaust as a colonial war, too.⁴² It was the ‘new basis’ that Zimmerer demanded scholars take because ‘knowledge of the Third Reich and colonialism has changed’ by providing a ‘continuity’ between previously unassociated events.⁴³ The series became a formula in which war and occupation equalled genocide.

The importance of Zimmerer’s project lay, then, in the new causality with which he revalenced the Holocaust. He contended that in Namibia, when the Germans broke ‘the taboo against destroying entire peoples, it showed that a colonial war and a war of extermination could be the same’.⁴⁴ The Holocaust became a radicalized form of colonialism, and this form had developed in tandem with other European colonial endeavours. Additionally, he contended that the Nazis’ colonialism had not been aimed at Jews exclusively, but had encompassed an extensive field of victims across Eastern Europe. The move placed Jews within a continuum of victims.

A. Dirk Moses continued this analysis and deemed the Holocaust a ‘subaltern war’.⁴⁵ A freighted term, ‘subaltern’ linked colonization to imperialism, because through colonization, empires absorbed their victims and offered them either a ‘subaltern’ or

a subjugated status. The phrase not only had the immediate example of India under British colonization, but it could also be pressed as far back as the Roman Empire.

In Moses' argument, the phrase pertained to Germans' sense of being 'colonized', not only generally, by the other European powers after the First World War, but particularly, by the Jews who lived among them and whom they blamed for Germany's defeat.⁴⁶ Thus, Hitler engaged in an act of rebellion intended to overcome Germany's perceived victimization, its perceived 'subaltern' status, by 'colonizing' Europe for German settlement and by eliminating all Jews from the newly expanded Reich.

The use of 'subaltern' to depict the national participants of the Second World War signalled, though, another aspect of Moses' thesis: if scholars hoped to understand the Holocaust, they had to accept colonialism's relevance to its analysis, rather than the specificity of Jewish victimization.⁴⁷ In a later essay, Moses stressed that to determine how colonialism 'enabled the Holocaust', scholars had to examine Europe's 'imperial centers and their colonial peripheries'.⁴⁸

To understand how the guerilla wars, racism, colonial rule, and settlement patterns of the imperial era are related to the Nazi conquest of Europe and the destruction of Jews, Roma, and Slavs entails examining German expansionism in relation to European empire in general, as well as determining the colonial and imperial features of the Holocaust.⁴⁹

On the one hand, Moses argued straightforwardly about *German intentions to regain territory* via a colonial campaign in the East. Like Zimmerer, he maintained that the Germans' intent to establish German colonies with native speakers on its eastern borders was meant to displace Poles with German settlers. Like Zimmerer, he reminded readers that Germans had historically considered Poles 'an inferior people'.⁵⁰ He, too, identified colonial rhetoric demeaning Poles in the nineteenth century as evidence of a link between European theories of racial difference and the radicalization of colonialism.

His argument coalesced around the premise that state-sponsored and non-state-sponsored violence, as well as cultural and religious persecution, should be subsumed under a category of genocide. Whether or not perpetrators were sponsored by a sovereign state or acted as its unofficial representatives, the perpetrators of such violence were agents of genocide. In this regard, he added subtly to Raphael Lemkin's initial definition of genocide in *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944).⁵¹

Lemkin had argued that genocide signified 'a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves'.⁵² These two ostensible aims to genocide were related, specifically, because sovereign states as agents were the only power who could 'coordinate' these discrete, destructive actions. To Lemkin's thinking, the Nazi state endeavoured consciously to destroy an entire species, through the eradication of every means of the species' potential re-emergence. This meant that the people, in conjunction with their social institutions, had to be 'foundationally' erased. To achieve these ends, the state 'coordinated': it united multiple actions across every level of its jurisdiction in order to achieve erasure as its aim. Legally, Lemkin had to distinguish between pogrom, the angry mob, with its unconscious motivations, and the state

consciously marshalling its resources against a minority, so that the unprecedented role that state-sponsored violence had gained under the Nazis was legible.

On the other hand, Moses' inclusion of a second agent of genocide who operated without state sanction elevated the role of agent of genocide to encompass both active and passive participants. A passive agent included individuals who observed genocide and did nothing, as well as those who 'obeyed orders' – they perpetrated, but did not share in, genocidal sentiment. They could occupy the collective subject position without necessarily investing in its values, because the state 'coordinated' its actions regardless of its intent. In this shift, Moses weighted the acts of persecution to the extent that the actions themselves became evidence of a collective position for which all were guilty, implicated, at the very least, through tacit acceptance.⁵³ The acts indicated, now symptomatically, a historically active colonial and imperial consciousness that pre-existed the Holocaust.⁵⁴

For Moses, the 'coordinated plan of different actions' resembled Zimmerer's set of 'structures', united through 'race and space'. These 'actions' or structures were 'aimed' at the destruction both of the culture and of the social identity of groups, in addition to their mass murder. In this aspect, both scholars agreed with Lemkin's intent. Lemkin had included 'cultural genocide' as a part of 'the coordinated plan' because it was one of the multiple ways that the Nazis intended to transform Europe into the Reich.

The question became, though, how to formulate the relationship between these 'different actions'? Did Lemkin intend these 'actions' to be detachable 'structures'? Were they to be severed from their immediate contexts, and applied diachronically and synchronically throughout history, in order to indict a variety of actors and agents, or did he see them tied necessarily to the Holocaust as a specific kind of crime that had not emerged before? An adjunct to this question concerned, as well, Lemkin's exclusion of war as genocide. Was Zimmerer justified in making 'war of annihilation' the first structure in the chain of events leading to genocide?⁵⁵

Moses argued that Lemkin had wanted to apply genocide retroactively to multiple colonial and imperial events, and that this retroactive application proved that the context of the Holocaust was secondary to Lemkin's intent.⁵⁶ Moses posed it, initially, as whether or not colonialism had 'an inner affinity with genocide', how genocide was defined, how 'exterminatory intention' was conceptualized and, finally, how scholars identified 'the agent that can possess' such intention.⁵⁷ The question itself revealed that Moses, like Zimmerer, looked at 'structures' too, since the 'exterminatory intention' could be the property of an overarching narrative, and it could be disseminated by agents that did not necessarily plan on killing anyone. The point where he differed from Zimmerer hinged on the subjects who possessed 'exterminatory consciousness', because if the consciousness itself as a structure was detachable, it suggested that the attitude was not necessarily an effect of modernity – a Lemkin condition – but, rather, that it extended retroactively throughout history. Furthermore, these 'structures' were not disembodied forms; they had to be embodied.

This relevance brought him to a critique of previous scholarship within genocide studies. Since 'structures cannot exist without their embodiment in human beings', it was 'misleading' for scholars to designate 'non-deliberate causes of indigenous death – massacres (!), appropriation of land, introduction of diseases, and arduous conditions

of labor' as 'genocidal processes', or actions without agents.⁵⁸ Moses' line of reasoning had several immediate effects. First, it expanded agency, so that lack of intent became interchangeable with commitment to genocide. The weight of wrongdoing was in the effect: if an agent did not intend genocide, but participated in actions that 'enabled' it, then the agent was implicated in the crime as well. The agent who appealed to a lack of intention was as guilty as one who had endorsed and participated in genocide enthusiastically.⁵⁹

Second, such agents were understood to 'possess exterminatory consciousness'. Whether or not intent was there, their association with and observance of genocide made them culpable of such a social project. Third, their actions were 'criminal' instances of genocide. Finally, each element in Moses' series of 'non-deliberate causes of indigenous death' became detachable and singularly weighted. The presence of one of these items was evidence of genocide's past or imminent occurrence.⁶⁰ In this respect, he anticipated, if not shared, the global perspective on the UN Genocide Convention's guidelines.

In this way, Moses added an element either missing from or submerged in Lemkin: the sense of participation in the 'coordinated plan' without intent. The addition resonated with Zimmerer's shift in agency, from Nazi to German, because it permitted both scholars to see an overarching consciousness geared towards persecution throughout history. That collective subject position 'coordinated' discrete events, 'structures', in order to articulate genocide; hence, individual agents within those discrete events, unconscious about their roles within this 'coordinated' collective position, were secondary in importance. Consequently, they expanded agency to include so many collective historical actors that in order to indict the many, they ended up ignoring the few.⁶¹ By this, I mean that in casting so wide a net, Moses and Zimmerer encouraged global condemnation of colonialism and imperialism while, simultaneously, foreclosing attention to specific instances of criminality or victimization under Nazism. In their categorization of the Nazis' 'crimes' as colonial ones, acts that exceeded or fell outside colonization became marginal to it.

Their scholarship reflected two inherent shifts in the final adoption of the UN Genocide Convention in 1948, that is, shifts that exceeded Lemkin's purview.⁶² First, UN members had removed 'cultural genocide' from the convention's list of genocidal 'actions', and this omission warranted correction. Second, the convention had broken genocide down into its constituent parts so that 'any' one 'of the following acts' was proof of genocide.⁶³ The book burnings throughout the Reich and the destruction of synagogues throughout Germany prior to the mass murder of the Jews existed as instances of the angry mob, but not necessarily precursors to genocide. When these events were detached from their historical context in the Holocaust, they became indicators of genocidal intent.

With the omission of 'cultural genocide', the committee had removed what had been, to Lemkin's mind, a key signal of genocidal intent. Moses correctly identified the effects of the committee's omission in terms of Lemkin's thought. Without 'cultural genocide', the 'subaltern' position remained socially intact and outside the UN's legal jurisdiction. In other words, Moses understood the tenor of Lemkin's argument because it aligned with a collective position in which Lemkin, as an individual, was incorporated into a

non-specific, collective subject position that condemned oppression. It was a critical and neutral position that suppressed Lemkin's identity and personal experience of what had happened and was happening to Europe's Jews in favour of a collective and anonymous position that collected all victims within it, pressed into service in the disruption of the collective historical position of oppression.

However, Lemkin had been directly affected by the Nazis' criminalization of Jewish identity; a Polish Jew, he had witnessed the Nazis' ascension in Germany. The reverberations of book burnings, destruction of Jewish shops and Jewish religious buildings, the *Kristallnacht* attacks, echoed throughout Europe. As a jurist, he had observed the Nazis' reformulation of German jurisprudence in 1933 as well as the coalescence of German social institutions around the persecution of the Jews as a fundamental aim of Nazi policy.⁶⁴ In other words, Lemkin was not only uniquely positioned as a jurist to comment on the implications of Hitler's persecution of Jews in Europe and its impact globally, but he was also a member of the victim group, targeted by the Nazis.

In his characterization of Lemkin's intent, Moses read him through Walter Benjamin's 'Theses on Philosophical History'.⁶⁵ Moses argued that Benjamin had called for another response to the Nazis' actions, 'an *anamnestic* solidarity with [Europe's] victims as a way of interrupting the supposedly ineluctable and necessary "progress" of civilization'.⁶⁶ Individual identification with a broad coalition of victims was to 'interrupt' the 'progress of civilization' so that a collective position came into being, and this position subverted the collective position of persecution. Moses summed up Benjamin's appeal to remember victims collectively, as one that demanded a lack of specificity because he questioned whether or not 'the European civilization that produced colonial violence and the First World War' could 'be the greater good that redeemed the immeasurable suffering it caused'.⁶⁷

For Moses, Benjamin saw the roots of persecution within the timelines of colonialism and imperialism. Moses read the tension between 'civilization' and 'barbarism' in 'Theses' as Benjamin's resignation that redemption would never come from Europeans, since they had historically been the agents of oppression. To withstand Europe, victims had to join together to disrupt colonial persecution, sacrificing their own histories in order to stop 'progress'. Moses implied that Benjamin, like Lemkin, displaced his community's as well as his own experiences of persecution, in order to critique a generalized form of oppression and persecution. Since victims' individual memories would never succeed in dislodging the oppressor, victims had to forfeit their specific claims of damage in order to disrupt the larger purposes of victimizers.⁶⁸

To emphasize his conclusion, Moses had to displace other aspects of the essay. The 'Theses' concerned the tasks of the materialist historian; Benjamin presented this historian's aim as a search for the 'monad', a 'structure he recognizes'. In the 'monad', Benjamin wrote, the historian saw 'the sign of a Messianic cessation of happening or ... a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past'.⁶⁹ The historian became cognizant of the 'sign' instead of 'a historical subject' in order to 'blast out' a 'specific life' from within the 'homogenous course of history'.⁷⁰ The historian preserved the evidence of a life, a disruption of the 'homogenous course of history', by a 'violent ... recollection' of data.⁷¹ The *recollected* data would be a container of 'time' 'historically

understood ... as a precious but tasteless seed.⁷² The life rendered lacked specificity, even though ‘violent ... *recollection*’ had blasted it out of history. Never known again, individual victims existed in a ‘tasteless’ and objective preservation in order to be recollected as a ‘barbarian’ disruption of the European drive for ‘progress’.

The very terms Moses plucked out of Benjamin’s text to identify a collective position of Europe’s victims as a ‘messianic’ drive against European civilization were conscripted by Benjamin himself to suggest that the recollection of a life in history left the individual ‘as a precious but tasteless seed’. The stress in Benjamin was on the loss of the subject rather than the materialist historian’s need for collected objects to be united as a disruptive entity that promoted revolution.

Benjamin wrote this essay in 1940; it was his last publication, and it reflected his realization that after his death he, too, would be ‘blasted out’ of history, his work would become a ‘structure’ (*Struktur*) to be read as a ‘sign’ (*Zeichen*) of a ‘repressed’ (*unterdrückte*) past (*Vergangenheit*).⁷³ What was ‘revolutionary’ about this ‘sign’, what ‘stopped thought’, was the trace of a past that had been covered over, ‘repressed’.⁷⁴

Benjamin’s life would become a container of ‘time’ ‘historically understood ... as a precious but tasteless seed’.⁷⁵ Evidence of his existence, the ‘sign’ was an object of knowledge that no longer had anything specific to it because ‘this method ... “preserved”’ a ‘being’ in the text ‘and at the same time canceled’ (*aufgehoben*) it out. In Benjamin’s description of the ‘method’, preservation as data still erased the human subject.

By the end of September 1940, Benjamin was dead. In flight from the Nazis, Benjamin, the German Jew, committed suicide after he was refused entry into Spain.⁷⁶ Moses severed this detail from Benjamin’s texts because he presupposed that Benjamin’s Jewish identity, his membership in the victim population, did not intrude on Benjamin’s thought. His thought superseded his own experience of persecution; it could be detached from it.

In this detachment, Moses did not take into account the historical challenges Benjamin confronted as a German Jew under the Nazis and how these challenges had affected both the scholar’s intent and work. For Benjamin, the 1939 pact between Hitler and Stalin was not only ‘a shock’ and a betrayal, but it also forced him to the conclusion that Moses had referenced: ‘the European civilization’ that had historically oppressed had proven that it would never ‘be the greater good that redeemed the immeasurable suffering it caused’.⁷⁷ However, elided within Moses’ argument was any reference to the details of Benjamin’s reality. Coinciding with his detention as a German national at Clos St Joseph, Nevers, the pact reinforced for him the hopelessness of his position. With the Nazis’ conquest of most of Europe by 1940, Benjamin recognized that even exile within Europe was an impossibility. This context motivated his crossing of the Pyrenees on foot from Occupied France, in ailing health, only to be denied entry to Spain at Port-Bou. When the group was denied entry, he returned to his hotel room and took morphine tablets.⁷⁸ Benjamin recognized that his life had already been lost to ‘the homogenous course of history’. Effectively, he intuited that Europe would never be the ‘greater good’ that would endeavour to save him and other Jews.

The example of Benjamin suggested, essentially, that as a member of the victim population and a critic of the culture preparing to destroy him, Benjamin occupied two positions simultaneously. One position, a collective position, obligated him to

think beyond the concepts deployed against him; this is the position that Moses so carefully outlined. The other singular position was tied intimately to his particularity. In this position, he realized that the hope for his escape had already been foreclosed; ‘there was infinite hope, but not for us’.⁷⁹ This position required him to preserve, *in text*, his being, always with the awareness that his memory would be preserved not by the historian outsider but, rather, by those individuals who knew how to read him, the insiders of his ‘tradition’.⁸⁰

Lemkin felt his life constrained by these two same positions, a collective position and an individual negotiation of that position. What made his collective position so compelling was his insistence on reshaping legal space to address mass extermination, a fate he had escaped, but his family had not.⁸¹ This recognition prompted his determination to induce a global and legal reaction to the Nazis’ destruction of the Jews. The same pessimism about sovereign states’ reticence to save the Jews pushed him to link what sovereign nations lost – their territories – to what national subjects lost – their identities. Loss was multidimensional; it could not be reduced to only mass murder. It had to address how much more there was in humanity than simply bodies as objects. In the Lemkin registry of losses, he emphasized the Nazis’ intent to restructure the entire European continent, through physiological and psychological engineering. In other words, Lemkin was a member of the victim population who had escaped and, from the safety of the United States, plotted a legal strategy to criminalize a crime for which ‘there was no name’.⁸²

Most Lemkin scholars pegged his intervention to the Nazis’ revision of the German legal code in 1933.⁸³ Samantha Power offered, though, a gloss to that intervention that began with Lemkin’s perspective on the Armenian genocide of 1915–22.⁸⁴ At the time, as a university student, Lemkin was troubled over a newspaper account of the arrest of Telirian, a survivor of the genocide, who had assassinated its architect, Talaat, in 1921.⁸⁵ In Lvov, Lemkin ‘brought the case to the attention of one of his professors’, questioning ‘why the Armenians did not have Talaat arrested for the massacre?’⁸⁶ Lemkin’s question likened the Armenian ‘massacre’ to the crime of murder. By analogy, if Telirian was guilty of murder, then Talaat was, likewise, guilty of murder, of many murders. The same rule applied.

The professor responded that Talaat’s victims were without legal protections. Theirs was an existence that excluded them from the legal protections of citizenship. The international community was not obliged to intervene, because ‘there was no law under which he [Talaat] could be arrested. “Consider the case of a farmer who owns a flock of chickens,” he said. “He kills them and this is his business. If you interfere, you are trespassing.”’⁸⁷ Resorting to the analogy of a farmer and his chickens, Lemkin’s professor used an argument, familiar to both colonialism and slavery, that privileged sovereign entitlement. It restated the chickens’ existence as the farmer’s chattels. He had the right to kill them; furthermore, he did not have to account for why he killed them. Sovereign entitlement stipulated that as the territory or nation belongs to a sovereign, its contents also belong to the sovereign. This construction shifted Armenians to property so that the protections of citizenship were no longer relevant.

Lemkin’s professor framed the problem, then, in terms of its flawed legal underpinnings: it was the sovereign’s right to dispose of his own property. From this position, Lemkin confronted a conceptual and political problem that posed people as

things that could not possess themselves. The Armenians were subsumed under the category of *res nullius*, ownerless things that Talaat controlled.

In presenting the legal structure of the problem, Lemkin's teacher echoed a perception, emblematic of global powers; for Europe, Turkey and the Americas, it expressed the intimacy between the legacies of slavery and colonialism. At a very early point in his studies, Lemkin realized that, rather than protect the rights of individuals within the state, state sovereignty had been licensed to harm them. It was 'a crime for Tehlirian to kill a man, but ... not a crime for his oppressor to kill more than a million men'⁸⁸

Lemkin appeared to draw a similar conclusion as that judgement attributed to Benjamin by Moses. Lemkin concluded that 'states would rarely pursue justice out of a commitment to justice alone. ... If the international community ever hoped to prevent mass slaughter of the kind Armenians had suffered, he insisted, the world's states would have to unite in a campaign to ban the practice.'⁸⁹ Lemkin the jurist recognized that remedy would not be adopted globally if solely framed for the sake of 'justice' and defenceless victims.⁹⁰ The unresolved issue for Lemkin's scholarship was whether or not the weight of his intent was on 'the slaughter of the kind Armenians suffered' or on the chattel analogy articulated by his professor. Did Lemkin see the root of the problem in the status of Armenians as 'chickens', or was it exclusively in their massacre?

Although the Armenian genocide had receded from public attention, Power asserted that Hitler and his Nazi Party were linked in Lemkin's mind with that precedent.⁹¹ Her assertion suggested that Lemkin understood the possibility of mass murder tied to the absence of legal restraint from the moment he witnessed the Nazis' revision of legal code. It also implied that Lemkin recognized slavery and colonialism as key legal steps in the articulation of massacre.

In 1941, as Jews were collected from all over Europe for extermination, Lemkin heard Winston Churchill describe 'a crime without a name'.⁹² He recognized that a large legal net had to be around key protections for populations at risk. His goal became the identification of this new set of crimes so that the law could address genocide's preliminary steps at their earliest occurrences.

Thus, the Nazis had to constitute a particular threat for governments in two major ways: (1) they had assumed 'the role of supreme arbiters in European territorial problems' and, hence, redefined European territories throughout Europe until the Reich had absorbed the majority of land extending its sovereignty East and West; and (2) with this absorption, 'The Hague Conventions in 1899 and 1907' became delegitimized.⁹³ The statutes that 'sought to diminish the evils of war by placing the inhabitants of occupied territories under the protection and the rule of the principles of the law of nations, as they result from the usages established among civilized peoples' lacked jurisdiction.⁹⁴ The Nazis had made all of Europe the Reich's territory and all of its many nationalities subject to the Reich. All of its inhabitants became 'chickens'. Consequently, international law had lost its legitimacy and applicability.

Lemkin identified, for a global audience, that the Nazis sought a political disestablishment of state sovereignty. The Nazis had 'colonized' both objective and subjective spaces. These two vectors enabled Lemkin to define the Nazis' actions in excess of mass murder. They were perpetrators who were consciously committed to go beyond the crime of mass murder. He was building a legal argument whose constituent elements had to work with pre-existing case law.

In this respect, Moses is right to call the Holocaust ‘a subaltern war’, since Hitler had put into motion a project that not only delegitimized the colonial powers of Europe before the Holocaust, but also recolonized Europe for the Reich.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the leader of this ‘delegitimatization project’ was a self-proclaimed ‘victim’ of the super powers emerging after the First World War.⁹⁶

For Lemkin, though, it was important to include the implications of the Nazis’ revision of the European map. By redrawing their geographical boundaries through invasion, annexation and occupation, Hitler displaced inhabitants’ legal ‘protections’; inhabitants of the new territories no longer relied on the protections of the ‘law of nations’ because they had been conscripted into the Reich like ‘chickens’. They had lost national sovereignty, replaced, intentionally, by ‘personal sovereignty’. Their loss presented itself as a reconfiguration of physical space in which the jurisdiction of the international community’s representatives – sovereign states – no longer had authority. The upshot of this reconfiguration was the disentitlement of citizens throughout the new Nazi Reich. They became subsumed as bodies and subalterns, social subordinates to the German ideal. There was one law, the law of the Reich, and its rights did not extend equally to the absorbed populations.⁹⁷ By pointing out the legal implications of the Nazi project, Lemkin was careful to not identify any specific group of victims because, as he had learnt from the Armenian example, the world did not indict Talaat, and it did not intervene to save Talaat’s victims.

Lemkin identified, then, the countries ‘the Axis … occupied or otherwise disposed of’ to underscore that Hitler engaged in two different actions. Since Hitler had expanded on the *res nullius* doctrine, implied by the ‘chickens’ analogy, he had to transform Europe into *terra nullius*. In this way, he took the entire continent as Reich land under the terms of *dispositive acquisition*, in which land was conclusively owned through conquest. Conquest ‘renewed’ European territory and revised European cartography as ‘ownerless’ space. In this way, Zimmerer’s thesis would seem reasonable in its use of Lemkin, too.

Hitler’s revision of the European map produced familiar coordinates for European sovereignty. It declared Europe to be ‘ownerless’, and because the Nazis had the power to take it, Europe was theirs: its populations were theirs to relocate, to govern and, if desirable, to destroy. It resonated with the traditional colonial project that Europeans had deployed around the world. If one focused exclusively on the map Hitler drew, and not on the specificity of his victims, Moses’ designation of the Second World War as a ‘subaltern war’ was apt.

However, Lemkin clarified, for an international community, that Hitler’s plans for a new Reich were not simply military operations among European sovereigns over territory; they were a specific form of criminality that gathered up a history of oppressions and persecutions, pressing them all into the service of one aim, genocide. The new term was freighted with so much more than English could bear.

Genocide reflected a new legal language that Lemkin believed had to come into being in order to address a new political problem.

New conceptions require new terms. By ‘genocide’ we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. This new word, coined by the author to denote an old practice in its modern development, is made from the ancient Greek word

genos (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing), thus corresponding in its formation to such words as tyrannicide, homicide, infanticide, etc.⁹⁸ ... It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.⁹⁹

By joining ‘*genos* (race, tribe)’ to ‘*cide* (killing)’, Lemkin constructed a new category on an ancient foundation; it was ‘an old practice in its modern development’. Moses and Zimmerer interpreted ‘old practice’ to indicate that Lemkin pointed to a history of European persecutions against indigenous peoples. Lemkin hinted at this likelihood himself: by genocide, he meant a practice that had moved through history, until it had taken hold of, broken out in, a modern new form.

While mass murder had happened before, Lemkin, the polyglot and jurist, used *genos* to imply that the human species was at risk of elimination because of the Nazis. It was a modern phenomenon that encompassed state-sanctioned acts ‘intended ... to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves’.

Each discrete ‘action’ fulfilled a part of a ‘coordinated plan’ to destroy the entire genus. Appearing as unrelated, discrete actions – multiple fronts, annexation of bordering regions, starvation, torture, mass killings, medical experiments – were intentional components of the Nazis’ ‘coordinated plan’. He underscored, for a global audience, that the Nazis conceived of persecution as an international ‘good’ that cleansed German blood of a pollution extending as far back as the Thirty Years’ War.¹⁰⁰ In other words, Lemkin knew that he had both to give a precedent and to construct a narrative regarding the implications of the Nazis’ ‘coordinated acts’ for sovereign states because, without such a narrative, the events appeared disconnected from a coordinated vision.

Thus, from the Nazis’ ‘coordinated acts’, a narrative of belonging followed in which human diversity had been linked to the destruction of the Aryan community, implied in the ‘constitutive side’ of mass murder.¹⁰¹ It was necessary for all of the targeted groups to disappear to enable the new Aryan world to come into being. Furthermore, these activities were linked through the signifier of an imagined threat whose elimination was necessary for the mental and physical health of the community. Their mental and physical viability was contingent upon persecution of the targeted groups.

The Gestapo and SS were organizations whose ‘purpose’ was ‘the commission of crimes *in genere* ... directed not only against municipal law of the occupied countries, but also against international law and the laws of humanity’.¹⁰² In other words, the Gestapo and SS were constituted solely to violate the law ‘*in genere*’; while individual crimes differed, the whole purpose of such associations was to commit such crimes, to carry out the eradication of diversity on a global scale.

Lemkin’s appeal to ‘international law’ was at the core of his understanding of what genocide, as a category, had to do. The Nazis had undertaken a project of annihilation that violated the *sovereignty of the international community*. The ‘Gestapo and SS’ were deployed specifically to achieve this aim through their concerted actions. While they appeared unrelated, detached from each other, and even irrational,¹⁰³ their actions

remained constitutive components of a plan to eliminate physical populations and the subjective experiences of those populations. It was a restriction on human diversity.

Lemkin's claim incorporated legal precedents from colonialism and slavery in order to put before a global community the unarticulated risks of enabling Hitler to act unimpeded. Rather than focus on individual nation states and the specific victims within his own community, Lemkin construed the world as 'owned' already by an international sovereignty; therefore, all peoples were obligated to oppose the Nazis. Lemkin used the infringement of state sovereignty to compel an international community to criminalize the idea of a race designated as property to be disposed of according to the whims of sovereignty. He rethought existing legislation and constrained it to condemn the new category of genocide.

As he listed and described each country absorbed into the Reich, Lemkin constructed an epistemology of Nazi actions: the phenomena of genocide, paired with their conceptual underpinnings, the new objects of knowledge produced in the world and their proposed effects for the future.

The picture of coordinated German techniques of occupation must lead to the conclusion that the German occupant has embarked upon a gigantic scheme to change, in favor of Germany, the balance of biological forces between it and the captive nations for many years to come. The objective of this scheme is to destroy or to cripple the subjugated peoples in their development so that, even in the case of Germany's military defeat, it will be in a position to deal with other European nations from the vantage point of ... superiority. Despite the bombings of Germany, this German superiority will be fully evident after hostilities have ceased and for many years to follow.¹⁰⁴

Essentially, the Nazis aimed to dominate its 'captive nations ... for many years to come' and 'to destroy or to cripple the subjugated peoples in their development so that ... German superiority will be fully evident' after the war and into the future. Lemkin accounted for peoples who would be destroyed and peoples who would be subjugated. To achieve this complete social and biological transformation, all actions had to resonate with the Führer's plan. Everyone had to 'work towards the Führer'.¹⁰⁵ As biology changed collectively, each Aryan individual became capable of articulating the Führer's ideal in daily life.

The mundane became an echo of the monstrous, so that 'genocide as composite and manifold' relied on an infinite number of movable pieces that appeared to observers, then and now, uncoordinated and unrelated, accidental in function as these actions moved the Nazis towards the aim of extermination, an appearance that suggested 'functionalism' motivated extermination rather than espoused intent.¹⁰⁶ The Germans were accidental murderers who did not begin the Second World War with the intent to exterminate the Jews.¹⁰⁷ Hitler could have identified any group within the Nazis' many victims. Lemkin anticipated this conclusion; hence, he insisted that the agents of genocide were state sovereigns.

Since Lemkin leveraged ontological insecurity to compel international intervention against genocide, his argument suggested that all sovereign entities benefited from

being obligated to protect those who could not constitute ‘sovereignty’ themselves, those individuals and groups who had not the means to possess their ‘sovereignty’. This issue had confronted Europeans and Americans repeatedly for over four hundred years as it was, in fact, the foundational narrative underwriting the abolition of slavery. It had also been an ostensible concern of modern political policy and colonialism.¹⁰⁸ In other words, Lemkin recognized that he was not able to compel an international community to legislate against colonialism *per se*, but he was able to enlist them to attack a related element, their loss of sovereignty. The pessimism that pushed Benjamin into suicide was strategically instrumental for Lemkin’s legal argument.

What to do with peoples who existed as minority stakeholders in the national unit? If this minority group crossed multiple national boundaries and found itself without any civil protections from any government, Lemkin suggested, it became akin to a citizenry of the world. Such ‘citizens’ could expect international protection, and it was in the best interests of the sovereign states to ensure this protection. Lemkin’s effort was a desperate attempt to make the protection of a minority a legal obligation. In order to get the world to address persecution, he had to frame the problem, for a global audience, in terms of a challenge to sovereign entitlements.

Due to the breadth of his legal project, a secondary consequence of Lemkin’s multivalent strategy emerged: the study of genocide as an epistemological category. Moses’ and Zimmerer’s arguments intervened in how the category of genocide collected and identified its objects. A defining feature of the category expressed itself in expansiveness; it accommodated a wide range of diverse contents so that ‘cultural genocide’, broadly understood, colonialism, indenture, slavery, political violence triggered by a state’s ‘ontological security’ and violence against women became included with and weighted epistemologically in similar terms as Lemkin’s description of modern acts of genocide. All of these items signalled discrete steps that articulated the category as a whole. Like the 1948 UN Genocide Convention’s suggestion that any one of its listed actions indicated the crime of genocide, the expanded epistemology of genocide promoted a similar action. Each one of the aforementioned items was a metonym of the whole.

Within this aggregate of interchangeable objects, colonialism appeared as a common denominator. Colonialism incorporated many, if not all, of these steps so that genocide’s collective experience began with ‘dispossession’ and ‘population transfer’, making these characteristics the category’s chief defining features. Zimmerer’s formula reiterated the category’s tendency to hew towards ‘occupation’ as its chief example.

In the expansion of the category to encompass multiple forms of persecution, all of the category’s contents became mediated by their proximity to dispossession and population transfer. Thus, although the category of genocide had been built, ostensibly, on the shared traits of the experiences of persecution, it repeatedly hews today to the experiences of dispossession and exile as its emblematic objects, symptoms of genocidal intent, in order to make the steps leading to genocide intuitible. This was Lemkin’s legal strategy, to magnify for an international court the potential ways that genocide impinged on their sovereign interests by drawing attention to dispossession and exile as genocide’s preliminary steps. It also became genocides studies’ epistemological strategy.

Inevitably, though, it produced an interchangeability of victims: victims of violent murder, victims of dispossession and victims of cultural disenfranchisement became

equivalent in a narrative about persecution, so that the category's inclusiveness was more about a class of victimized individuals than any one victim's experience. Individual subject positions were subsumed under the collective subject position, now represented as an effect of colonialism.

With its freighting of dispossession as the emblematic experience, the collective subject position of victims of genocide has been almost entirely understood since the late twentieth century as a description of the victims of colonialism. In this way, a boundary was imposed around the category's objects: individuals, whose primary experience exceeded dispossession as an organizing feature, became outliers, if not altogether marginal to the new majority of individuals aligned under the category of genocide, their experiences made to conform with the narratives of colonialism.

This is the reality of the epistemological project of genocide studies today. Categories are designed to weight their objects equally, making them interchangeable in form. It is a commonplace of epistemology to deal in equivalencies, and it has left scholars of genocide studies with the question, who commits genocide? In other words, once the object of knowledge has been established as the same throughout the category – it has been stabilized – one must identify who constructs and controls those objects: the subject of genocide becomes the most important concern.

This desire to find the collective and individual subject positions of genocide has been a particular focus of Moses. In 'Conceptual Blockages' (2002), he gave an early definition of the phenomenology of 'an exterminatory consciousness' that inhered in European imperialism.¹⁰⁹ An important aspect of the concept hinged on a perpetrator's imagined experience of persecution that motivated the individual to avenge himself on his victims. It was a pathology of historical injury, and it pushed, according to Moses, victims into victimizers.¹¹⁰

The convergence between victim and victimizer enabled him to pinpoint imperialism as the Holocaust's underlying cause and to subsume diverse groups of victims within the Holocaust all within one category of genocide. In this way, the new causality, imperialism, displaced the 'stalemate' between 'different victim groups' who 'make incommensurable, indeed competing claims' about victims and perpetrators, in favour of a shared history of 'victim objects'. However, this 'shared history' only existed, to quote Benjamin, as a 'precious and tasteless seed'; that is, it had lost what was specific to it.¹¹¹ In this respect, the 'exterminatory consciousness' was an integral component of 'a new critical perspective that transcends' the 'identity politics' of these polarized groups.¹¹²

The upshot of this excursus into genocide studies was the realization that in order to build a shared history of persecution, genocide scholars posited 'victim objects' rather than specific subjects. Victims became silenced in the name of historical dispassion and objectivity. Simultaneously, the need to find an agent and to identify causality displaced victims in favour of perpetrators. Perpetrators remained subjects over silent victims.

Since Moses and Zimmerer staked their arguments to colonialism's shared structural links to the Holocaust, I followed in this book one of their main examples, the genocides of 1904–8, committed in GSWA, to look at persecution in these two contexts. I added slavery to this comparison because of its intimate link to colonialism in which transatlantic slavery emerged as colonial powers could not subdue indigenous polities in their newly conquered lands. In the case of the West Indies and the Caribbean, the colonial powers' failure to subdue the Caribes triggered the slave trade in the islands.

There have been scholarly attempts to compare these discrete moments, but these have been epistemological projects, in which victims are counted as objects and, inevitably, scholars end up with a hierarchy of victims.¹¹³ However, my analysis does not compare persecution's victims as such objects, but as subjects. Consequently, I have taken Seymour Drescher's contention that 'philosophers, theologians, and politicians' have been seduced into analysing the Holocaust and slavery in terms of a 'competition over victimization' quite seriously.¹¹⁴ I have not attempted to hierarchize victim experience, to build one epistemology to contain all three groups.¹¹⁵ I have, instead, focused on individual narrative extracts of slavery in the Americas,¹¹⁶ of German colonialism in Southwest Africa and of Nazi death camps during the Holocaust in order to propose the 'worlds' and the subsequent 'futures' of these three social visions. In other words, I followed the trajectories given in Zimmerer and Moses, but with a view to gauging how individual agents' accounts corresponded to those of their victims.

Within these three broad 'enclosures', three groups emerged, in particular, because of the extremity of their experiences: slaves captured and sold in the Americas, the indigenous African groups forced into the German colonial army in GSWA and members of the *Sonderkommandos*, those Jews conscripted by the Nazis to prepare Jews for the gas chambers, to remove their corpses afterwards, to burn their bodies and then to dispose of their ashes. In other words, I follow the contours of thought in these three groups of victims to discuss a 'shared sense' of victims.

The 'shared sense' of victims

Within this narrowed focus, and through a montage of narrative extracts, I have emphasized persecution's effects on victim phenomenology in the construction of both individual and collective subject positions. My analysis presumes that the phenomenology of the subject was intimately linked to the awareness of a personal social transformation, and if surviving, the subjects endeavoured to address the most pressing, residual elements of their experiences through a range of conscious and unconscious practices. These surviving subjects contributed to the collective 'social memory' of their descendants. Their narrative accounts illustrated how individuals recognized themselves becoming enslaved, suborned or eliminated by their persecutors, if they created a world in spite of the one imposed on them. I use montage to get at the ways victims' faculties both accommodated and negotiated persecution, to determine a possible outline of a *sensus communis*, a 'shared sense', within victim experience.¹¹⁷

A foundational principle of Europeans' beliefs in their entitlements, the 'shared sense' reached its definitive articulation with Kant when he posited it as the principle by which individual subjects constituted themselves within the universal community.¹¹⁸ They imagined a state of belonging to a group, sutured through 'the shared sense' of the legitimacy of their aesthetic judgements. It was the threshold discovery of an intersubjective relationship, a constitutiveness between the individual and the group, a subject position that an individual intuited without the necessity of verification.¹¹⁹ Arendt added that Kant's principle had always demanded 'communicability' so that the subject experienced 'an enlarged mentality' that worked in conjunction with the Kantian idea of 'a united mankind living in perpetual peace'.¹²⁰

Lyotard argued that *sensus communis* was not triggered for political, ideological or even moral reasons; it was not a matter of ‘project’ or ‘structure’ but, rather, it came into being to short-circuit the epistemologies by which the subject positioned himself or herself.¹²¹ This aspect of the aesthetic experience was, for that thinker, a moment when subjects came into being, liberated from an organization of knowledge that confined them. In that moment, Lyotard hypothesized that the subject felt the pleasure of a sublime experience, judged it as ‘universally valid’ and then posited that if anyone was a subject as he or she was, he or she would confirm the validity of the judgement. As the subject moved through this step in the experience, the subject became keenly aware of the *sensus communis* and that he or she was not alone in being.

This element is critical for the problem of comparative histories of persecution, because it broaches the questions of scholarly entitlement. Are scholars entitled to invalidate the collective and individual subject positions of survival in order to force events into epistemology, grounded in the ‘disinterestedness’ of causality? Should scholars even seek a new footing for victim experiences that neither reduces the experiences to interchangeability among objects nor suppresses the uniqueness of each group’s subject position?¹²² This question remains of great importance for the descendants of indigenous victims of German colonialism in Namibia today.

While conceding that victims experienced ‘a trauma of virtually metaphysical proportions, a defining rupture of personal and collective with world-historical significance’, Moses proposed that victims forswear their ‘uniqueness’ in persecution for a new orientation of connection.¹²³ Victims needed to understand that they ‘shared’ victimization precisely in its lack of specificity. With this move, he proposed the suggestion of a new *sensus communis*, one whose membership posited a calculus of the shared experience of mass murder and persecution.

To some degree, he suggested that an answer to persecution was to be discovered through a new valancing of ‘shared sense’. Therefore, I have asked what the ‘shared sense’ of victim experiences might look like and how that principle contrasts with the ‘shared sense’ of the perpetrators? In other words, I examine the ‘constitutive side’ of victimization in relation to the ‘constitutive side’ of persecution. Consequently, the worlds of the perpetrators are important to my analysis, to the extent that they propose collective subject positions, ideological positions and individual sensibilities that victims confront.

Since I posit that all three groups of victims were part of a *sensus communis* prior to persecution, I demonstrate that this experience was still integral to the formation of communities within persecution and that the remnants of this foundation enabled some individuals to imagine reconstituting themselves within a group. They could integrate these fragments within the structures used to persecute them, and it would provide a momentary displacement of oppression. However, I also show that in some experiences, the intuition of a missing *sensus communis* debilitated survival so that victims found themselves caught up hopelessly in the epistemologies of persecution.

The book is divided into three sections: Slavery, Colonization and The Holocaust. Each section gives an overview of the historical context for its chapters. In the first section, the first chapter, ‘A World of Slaves’, identifies how slaveholders imagined slaves, the imagined contexts they created for them and the ‘world’ they produced. While

the focus is primarily on West Indies planters, I expand this field somewhat to show how a ‘shared sense’ or *sensus communis* developed around slavery as a key subjective entitlement available via identification to a range of subjects with or without slaves. Through narrative accounts from individuals, both sympathetic and unsympathetic to slavery, I outline the foundational experiences that observers believed were integral to slavery’s social agenda in order to posit ‘a world of slaves’ that seeks to make visible the boundaries of the constitutive aspects of the planters’ subject position.

In Chapter 2, ‘The Formula and “the Being of Slavery,”’ I juxtapose these constitutive elements to the intuition of a “being” a slave. Through narrative excerpts from slavery’s victims, beginning in the West Indies, and extending outwards to related experiences in the Americas, I examine how the foundational experiences that slavery imposed, ‘the Middle Passage’ and ‘the Slave Auction’, became core events in the slave’s individuation process, marking the slave’s psyche to the extent that the slave’s faculties not only harmonized around the imagined experience of freedom denied them – the idea of freedom and the possession of one’s body – but also disharmonized around the experience of being chattel.

From the imagination of and desire for freedom, I move to an analysis of the structures and mechanisms that slaves constructed and adapted in order to establish collective spaces for and subjective representations of the exhibition of freedom.¹²⁴ In this way, I join the ‘being’ of slavery to a discussion of *res nullius* in order to get at the phenomenological experience of human chattel. While the concept of *res nullius*, the ‘ownerless thing’, underwrote the phenomenology of the collective slaveholding position because it posited Africans as beings that could be possessed if one had the power to take them, it was also the first term of a formula that concluded in chattel slavery, the form of slavery that dominated the English-speaking world, that is, it was a ‘shared’ term, but it elicited very different responses.

British law classified slaves as chattels, and this classification derived from the initial state in which the British determined their slaves were discovered. The slave in his or her natural state was *res nullius*, or the ‘ownerless being’, akin to horses and other kinds of stock, before capture. If the finder of such beings had the power to take them, the finder owned them.

Ownership was conferred in two primary ways: (1) through the initial capture by force and transfer by sea, ‘the Middle Passage’; and (2) by auction or sale at ‘the Slave Market’. While their forced migration was to institute, in their minds, a detachment from their previous history, the market was to make the slaves aware of their position as chattels.¹²⁵ Consequently, *res nullius* justified slavery after the fact, so that masters’ ‘natural inclinations’ towards and their ‘intuitions’ about their chattels found confirmation in their laws.

For ‘beings’ of slavery, *res nullius* had to be negotiated intuitively and in relation to individuals’ positions as merchandise, and slave. They were ‘ownerless beings’ without the capacity to own themselves; they became ‘ownerless merchandise’, available to anyone with the funds to buy them. Finally, they became private property. These three aspects of the formula pushed the ‘beings’ of slavery to form judgements derived from having to negotiate these markers’ boundaries. Thus, this chapter concludes with the constitutive aspects of ‘being’ a slave.

In the second section, 'Colonialism', Chapter 3, 'A World of Colonies and the Evolving Colonial Consciousness', tracks the development of a 'colonial consciousness' among Europeans, through narrative excerpts, over a period of two hundred years. It begins with the earliest Dutch representatives of the East Indies Company, at the Cape Colony in South Africa, and ends with Lothar von Trotha, the German general who was tasked with suppression of the Herero polities at any cost in 1904. Within this chapter, I introduce the elements of the formula of colonialism and its particular relationship to the concept of *terra nullius*, the Brink map of 1761 and the Berlin Conference of 1884–5 in order to discuss the constitutive elements of a colonial phenomenology.

In 1761, the company sponsored the Hop Expedition into the African interior adjacent to the Cape; this time, the map and survey of the area was depicted as empty. When the English took over the Cape in 1806, they found its coastline to be barren and the Nama settlements in ruins because of the persecution levied on the natives by Dutch settlers. German missionaries declared the land infertile because of the Africans' lack of civilization and Christian revelation. By the mid-eighteenth century, Andersson, one of several European traders in the region, looking out at Lake Ngami, in the hinterland of Southwest Africa, imagined he had discovered an Edenic paradise. He saw unlimited and boundless profit.

Whereas the slavery section demonstrates the masters' cathexis on the slave's body, this chapter identifies that with the abolition of slavery, European powers fixated on the discovery of uncharted and 'ungoverned' spaces. This fixation realized a displacement of the slave's body on to the colonist's obsession with land. As colonial armies moved across Africa, claiming large swaths of territory, colonial powers used *terra nullius*, or 'ownerless land', to justify Europe's claims after the fact. Furthermore, it folded into colonialism an unarticulated, but nevertheless imagined, expectation about the ownership of entities existing within *terra nullius*.

These narrative experiences furnished the representational scaffolding for European cartography, transforming *terra nullius* into territory that Europe's empires 'effectively occupied'. The plans for such transformation were laid out during the Berlin Conference of 1884–5, when European powers drew up a new map, establishing the boundaries of their different territories.¹²⁶ Germany annexed Southwest Africa at this time, and they justified it because of the treaties that German merchants had issued to Nama *kapteins* in the southernmost regions of the territory in the previous year. This chapter concludes with a sketch of the indigenous polities in Southwest Africa prior to colonization.

Chapter 4, 'The Empirical Colony in German Southwest Africa and a Formula of Colonization', begins by tracing the policies of the German *Schutztruppe* in the nascent colony; it concludes with the experiences of the Nama and Herero groups as they learn the terms and conditions of their new identities in the annexed territories. This chapter introduces key events in the life of Nama leader Hendrik Witbooi, when he had to choose between becoming the Germans' subaltern or remaining outside of German 'protection'.

Unlike slavery, with its arsenal of individual punishments meant to 'teach' slaves their places, colonialism identified the need for collective punishments as a means of communicating Europeans' power over their subalterns. German colonial power expressed itself in the massacre, the execution and imprisonment. These three

punishments ‘taught’ compliance to the remaining indigenous groups. However, German colonial policy shifted its focus in 1904, and in this chapter I map what elements of the old colonial policy were abandoned in favour of the new strategy imposed by Berlin and how this policy related to Lemkin’s formulation of genocide.

Chapter 5, ‘From a Formula for Colonization to a Formula of Extermination and Victims’ “Shared Sense”, concludes the section with a comparison of the two German colonial projects deployed in GSWA and the narrative accounts from victims and survivors of the Herero and Nama genocides of 1904–8. As each victim of German persecution illustrated, there was a fundamental break between the German colonial policies of Theodor Leutwein, the military governor in charge of the colony between 1894 and 1904, and the genocidal project of General Lothar von Trotha, Leutwein’s successor, in 1904.

In the third section on the Holocaust, Chapter 6, ‘An Aryan World and the “Worldlessness” of Jews’, begins, like its predecessors, with narrative excerpts from perpetrators in order to reconstruct the Nazis’ ‘exterminatory consciousness’. Using extracts from the accounts of Nazis and Nazi sympathizers about the need to restore a world cleansed of Jewish impurity, I produce a montage of the collective subject position, the ‘shared sense’ of extermination. In this regard, I add substantially to Moses’ term, ‘exterminatory consciousness’, in order to show how the Nazi subject differed from past agents of persecution and why that difference matters. I seek not to hierarchize the Nazis’ victims in relation to other victims of genocide, or even to place Jewish suffering above that of Poles and Slavs, but rather, in the spirit of Lemkin, to make legible a new subject position that designated a new victim, *ens nullius*, ‘ownerless beings’, or perhaps, ‘beings that must not be’.¹²⁷ In this way, humans subsumed under *ens nullius* ceased to be humans.¹²⁸ The narrative excerpts in this section demonstrate that in order to accomplish extermination, the Nazis turned inwards to imagine the transformation of their own being, their transcendence.

Chapter 7, “Being” Exterminated and the Formulas of Extermination, uses narrative accounts by survivors, primarily from the *Sonderkommandos* from the three Reinhard death camps, but including statements from survivors at other death camps, to show how the Nazis’ victims internalized extermination. I demonstrate that extermination, even among the survivors, had a subjective imprint, a ‘shared sense’ uniting its victims. Through their narrative accounts, I trace a phenomenology of the subject constructed through ashes. The section concludes with how *ens nullius* produced two subject positions for victim and perpetrator, grounded in the idea of apodeictic extermination.

With the conclusion, I juxtapose the formulas of persecution in these three events, anchoring them to what victims saw, imagined and thought about their experiences. My hope is to show that while victims and victimizers ‘shared’ the data of persecution, victims experienced these ‘shared structures’ in extremely heterogeneous ways, and these responses matter precisely because they are tied to victims’ specificity. Therefore, to get to the stakes of this juxtaposition, I end the book with an analysis of three images. One is the book’s cover, the ‘Bussa Monument’ in Barbados; the second is the ‘Brink Map of 1761’, from the Hop Expedition in South Africa; and the third is a photograph from Yad Vashem of Treblinka’s ash pit, a death camp analysed in the third section. These images imposed themselves on survivors and their descendants, and I examine their implications for the future.

In terms of methodology, I focus almost exclusively on memoirs, diary entries and letters. I realize that these ‘narrative bridges’ can never span the entirety of these losses, and this realization has imposed certain limitations. Full narratives from slaves on West Indies sugar plantations have yet to be located. As Nicole Aljoe reminded her readers, scholars have had to look in court depositions, legal contracts and other kinds of materials in order to find any kind of narrative voice.¹²⁹ Likewise, narratives from Herero and Nama victims of the 1904–8 genocide are limited to the depositions taken by the British for their *Blue Book* (1918), several years after the described events. As I related already, both Herero and Nama communities have been hesitant about making their traumatic pasts available as objects of knowledge. While Holocaust narratives have extensive archives internationally, the number of these narratives from survivors of the Reinhard death camps is also affected by an absence of material. For example, in the case of Belzec, the first Reinhard camp, until recently, scholars knew only about two of the five survivors among the 600,000 people who were killed there.¹³⁰ These camps were closed prior to the war’s end because they had fulfilled the liquidation of Jews in their particular regions of the General Government. Furthermore, since these camps were exclusively death camps, the only way to survive them was to escape them.

Thus, I did not conduct a comprehensive analysis of victim experience that linked these three events through the kinds of ‘shared similarities’ that Zimmerer proposed. I did not attempt to unite them under a ‘continuity thesis’ in which each event was arrayed as a node on an imperial timeline, expressions of an imperialist drive, as Moses suggested. I did not want to impose on these three events an underlying causality that eclipsed a victim group in order to posit a ‘shared sense’ among perpetrators. I contend that the perpetrators of each event had very different goals for what they did and that their victims responded with very different strategies. Thus, while the objective data of extermination might be shared in the quantity of death, torture and persecution, I did not give a quantifiable justification that would adumbrate these events as part of an overall desire to subjugate or exterminate in history.

My project utilizes victim and perpetrator narratives, to hone in on a quality of victimization often overlooked: its subjective experience. In other words, statements by victims, like Primo Levi, who recalled seeing trains, ‘filled with ashes’;¹³¹ like the Herero chief, Daniel Kariko, who lived with the absence of his people after Waterberg and the Herero flight into the deserts;¹³² and like Sibell, the West Indian slave of whom we know so little but who demanded that her audience recognize her history even as they represented her an abject slave, are given in context so that the historical details that are known provide the boundaries of their subjectivities.

Thus, I have consciously traced victim phenomenologies in order to define a horizon of victims’ visibility within persecution. Perhaps Moses and Zimmerer are right to displace victims’ perspectives in order to get at a greater causality behind victimization, but that project seems to withhold from persecution’s victims the one weapon they had for survival – their individual memories. When survivors from all three groups are still among us, and their memories of victimization still punctuate the experiences of their descendants, it seems premature to ask them to remain silent while we analyse their oppression.

Part One

Slavery



A transnational social institution for almost four hundred years, transatlantic slavery covered four continents. It began in the Americas with Spain in 1501, and it ended with Spain in Cuba in 1887.¹ Of the twenty-four million enslaved Africans, 50 per cent were transported to the Americas.² Of that 50 per cent, slave economies anticipated three million deaths because of the Middle Passage.³ It was an acceptable loss for a workforce of nine million.

David Eltis and David Richardson observed that ‘every nation that had an Atlantic coastline, and merchants involved in Atlantic trade participated in the transportation of slaves from Africa to America during the slave trade era’.⁴ Sue Peabody posited that ‘as European maritime activity transformed the Atlantic Ocean from barrier to facilitator of conquest, migration, and commerce over subsequent centuries, slavery became central, or at least implicitly related, to nearly every society’.⁵ ‘Nearly every society’s’ social institutions were compromised by slavery; its breadth extended into the world. Peabody pointed to the idea that slavery’s breadth indicated a global phenomenon.

My study focuses on how slaves and slaveholders developed attitudes about this ‘peculiar institution’ at its inception in the West Indies and how these attitudes radiated outward to encompass other regions. To put it another way, I examine the constitutive sides of being and owning a slave.

The story begins with the islands of Barbados and St Christopher, now known as St Kitts. The English claimed both islands in the 1620s, their ‘first two possessions in the Caribbean’.⁶ On both islands, settlers attempted, at first, to grow tobacco, as in Virginia, but that experiment failed in Barbados, and while it succeeded in St Christopher, the island could not compete with Virginia.⁷

On Barbados, with the failure in the 1620s to grow an acceptable quality of tobacco, settlers shifted their interests in the 1630s to the production of cotton; but their success in cotton was short-lived. European markets had become ‘saturated’ by American cotton, and its price dropped dramatically.⁸ This last market disappointment coincided with colonists’ interest in sugar.⁹ By 1640, Barbadians had taken their first steps towards becoming the dominant sugar producers in the Americas.

Sugar and the ensuing plantation culture drove the economies of both the West Indies and, later, the Caribbean. In the seventeenth century, Barbados produced more wealth for the British Empire than all of its colonies combined. In the eighteenth century, that distinction became Jamaica’s to claim. By the nineteenth century, Britain’s West Indian colonies dominated sugar production globally, only receding in importance after abolition. For almost three centuries, planters’ overwhelming investment was in sugar and its export. It enabled West Indian planters to develop extensive relationships with their counterparts throughout the Americas, and this economic relationship also reflected a social and cultural kinship, if not actual familial ties between the planters.

Thus, Western societies did not participate in slavery discretely from each other; in the case of the ‘sugar islands’, this claim was certainly true. The planter class, whether in Barbados or in the Carolinas, Martinique or Virginia, shared certain core beliefs about their rights over their chattels, expressed through their legal codes and national legislations. Slavery’s breadth pointed to its imbrication within Western social institutions. Everyone participated in the practice of slavery, either directly or indirectly, so that Western values of state sovereignty, citizenship, ownership of property and the

definition of territory reflected attitudes and sentiments grounded in the ‘exceptional’ entitlements of those planters, who represented civilization in the colonies. Its practice was so compelling that law developed around it. It extended slavery so that it mimicked a sovereign state with its own ‘sphere of influence’.

Slavery’s global reach remained intact even while slaveholding societies fought war after war about their many colonies and territories. Extending to both the ‘metropoles and colonies’ of four continents, individuals and groups found their actions towards slaves not only circumscribed by custom, but also guaranteed by law.¹⁰ Thus, all slave codes defined slaves either as individuals who, by virtue of their race, were understood to exist as another’s property,¹¹ or as inferior beings who needed enslavement.¹² These designations underpinned all New World slavery.¹³ They could be seen as ‘shared structures’ or as producing a ‘shared’ sensibility.¹⁴

The legal codes’ uniformity regarding the acceptance of slavery implied complex relationships between planters in the French Caribbean, the British West Indies, the Spanish New World and the US colonies. As Karen Kupperman pointed out in her study of the failed Caribbean colony of Providence Island, slavery was part of ‘an intergrated colonial vision’, whose numerous points of contact between the mainland and island slave-owning societies reinforced standard assumptions about how slaves were to be treated.¹⁵ Planters from the West Indies had significant economic, cultural and familial ties to slaveholders in the US colonies; development in the islands was often promoted, staffed and funded by planters living in the colonies of Virginia, Rhode Island, the Carolinas and the deeper South, as well as Britain.

Sally Hadden continued this theme of the legal kinship between planters with the example of South Carolina’s planter class. When ‘emigrant Barbadians began arriving in South Carolina in the 1670s, they set out to craft laws that drew on their Caribbean experience’.¹⁶ Peabody further explained that ‘in practice these laws generally resembled one another through the mid-eighteenth century.... For example, in the 1690s, South Carolina imported the mature Barbadian slave code wholesale’.¹⁷ The planters expected to use the legal codes of the islands from which they had come; consequently, ‘slave codes shared certain characteristics’.¹⁸ Thus the ‘striking fact about slavery in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries was its universality. Enslaving humans was legal throughout the western hemisphere in the early modern period, sanctioned by every major legal system in operation there’.¹⁹

Slavery’s extension into all Western legal codes reflected a tacit acceptance of the practice. Its tolerance outlined a collective subject position in which identification with the subject of the law produced a ‘shared sense’. Specifically, they imagined themselves working together to subdue nature in order to reap its benefits. Slaves, as part of nature, were subdued, likewise, in order to glean from their labour expected profits. The law acted as a supplemental means for the control of nature’s many bodies.

Whenever colonialists felt the need to increase control over their slaves, they enacted new legislation.²⁰ Consequently, slavery’s legal development was not systematic, organized and coordinated. In fact, Hadden demonstrated that each formal slave code demanded substantial supplementation from local idiosyncratic state and colony practices as well as national laws.²¹

Slave law evolved more or less at will, through invention, imitation, and appropriation from a variety of legal sources. Municipal ordinances, individual

laws, and criminal codes, rather than case law, dominated its development. Widespread acceptance encouraged laws about slavery that were drawn originally from numerous fragmented sources – Spanish, English, and French – to commingle slowly in more unitary statements about the permissible behavior of bondsmen.²²

By highlighting the extremely ‘fragmented’ nature of the slave codes, Hadden illustrated the ad hoc ways in which the codes developed a ‘unitary statement’ about the rights of masters.²³ Personal ‘opinion’ and customs demonstrated that the various slave codes reinforced ‘a continuity of principle’ in relation to each other.²⁴ The upshot of this collective position was that even later, in the absence of slavery, its ‘principle’ remained a cornerstone of civilization’s social institutions. The persecution of slaves depended upon retaining a narrative of master entitlement as part of the public good, a ‘shared sense’ of the right to own people as property.

Consequently, slavery’s legal codes were not passive tomes, mouldering unknown in royal archives, but active instruments in the hands of slaveholders for the persecution of their unwilling victims. Since they were authorized to do so, citizens imagined new contexts for slavery’s development, in addition to identifying actions they could and could not sanction for the enslaved. Case law furnished a wealth of opportunities to accomplish this expansion.

In this way, slavery was not a political accident, whose secondary effects took society by surprise. It was, rather, a complete social investment that proceeded incrementally and in an ad hoc fashion. As Betty Wood underscored, ‘wholesale enslavement by Europeans of West and West Central African peoples throughout the Americas was neither predetermined, nor was it the outcome of a series of “unthinking decisions.”’²⁵ It proceeded because of a series of ‘self-conscious, pragmatic and forward-looking assumptions about the likely profits to be derived from the exploitation of this particular form of labour’.²⁶ Societies’ social investments in slavery enabled the practice.

The New World constituted, then, for both actual slaveholders in the colonies and their non-slave-owning counterparts in the metropole, a social experiment for societies dependent on slave labour. The effects of imagined and actual ownership of slaves on individuals established an intersection between legal codes and social convention. Social convention, the custom of the land, had enabled Old World sentiments to migrate into New World entitlements.²⁷ As Matthew Parker remarked, it was ‘a safe generalization ... that the system, whenever or wherever it was found, relied on violent coercion to function and on the continuing degradation of its victims’.²⁸

This mental ‘migration’ later produced a tension between metropole subjects whose tacit acceptance of the law had made them complicit in slavery indirectly and colonies that had actively endorsed slavery, expecting all members to recognize the necessity of this ‘peculiar institution’.²⁹ However, the initial collective subject position of slave ownership did not, as a rule, mark the difference between tacit observance and active participation. From its very inception, the position demanded identification with a social class. Eventually, social class would be displaced by race, but what never changed was the principle of identification ‘shared’ among the group’s members.

A World of Slaves

If one is to understand the world of slaves, then one needs to look at the world of their masters, not only because the purpose of enslavement was to make masters' lives easier, but also because slavery tended to be an intensely personal institution. One particular set of masters and mistresses deserves close study if we are to understand the distinctive features of slavery in the Americas. This group was planters, the owners of large-scale agricultural establishments, populated by enslaved people through whose labours tropical produce was made that was transported throughout the world, especially to Europe. The planter class of the Americas was a New World invention.¹

Trevor Burnard observed that in order to 'understand' the subjective experiences of slaves, one also had to determine the subjective experiences of slavery's perpetrators, as they forced twelve million Africans into the cargo holds of slave ships, manacled and reducible to raw phenomena.² He presumed that the 'constitutive side' of being a slave was intimately related to the 'constitutive side' of being a slaveholder. The two sides formed a master-slave dialectic, in which their relationship was ordered and organized by the power of the master.³

Slaveholders imagined that the objects of their actions, their slaves, were calibrated ontologically to fit masters' ideas about slave conduct and orientation. Slaves had no interior life of their own; they existed permanently fettered to their master's desires, whims, judgements and fantasies. The logic was grounded in the belief that slaves lacked the capacity to understand freedom, in the same ways Europeans understood it, so slaves did not know to miss it.

Discrete observers realized, almost from the moment of early modern slavery's inception, that individual slaves did not conform to the dialectic; that they were committed to freedom. Both individual slaves and groups of slaves devised ways to think through their enslavement to other ends unanticipated by their persecutors. These unanticipated ends produced a tension between master and slave, so that slavery's supporters had to produce narratives in justification of their activities. While the narratives encompassed a wide range of justifications for slavery, their earliest iteration began with Richard Ligon, whose *A True and Exact History of Barbados* (1657) chronicled his exile from Britain and his three-year tenure in Barbados from 1647 to 1650.

The ‘shared sense’ of slavery

Richard Ligon neither held a prominent political position in Barbados, the island to which he fled, nor did he inform British colonial policy. He did not own slaves, and he was not wealthy. His only property was a portion of the contested ‘fen lands of Lincolnshire’.⁴ In her ‘Introduction’ to his text, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (1657), Karen Kupperman reckons that had Ligon not penned it, no one would have heard of him.⁵ His text has remained, though, a persistent reference for four centuries of the nascent attitudes, culture and practices of the British in the West Indies.

Ligon’s arrival coincided with the beginning of the ‘sugar boom’ in Barbados in the 1640s.⁶ By his own account, his text offered a ‘how-to guide for sugar production’, so that potential planters knew the demands of the plantation and island life. For British readers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, his detailed descriptions of Barbados’s flora and fauna, and even exotic recipes from the islands, presented, as Kathleen Donegan observed, ‘a place of astonishing but intractable extremes’.⁷ Keith Sandiford added that Ligon hoped to ‘stir the hunger of prospective settlers’ so that they would invest in the colonial project.⁸

In this way, his text represented an imagined journey, not only one that any Englishman could accomplish, but also one whose accomplishment constituted a part of English entitlement. Entitlement, will and ability fused together in the British imagination to produce a sense of individual imperial identities. In the comfort of home, the British subject imagined heading to sea in search of wealth in the West Indies. In subsequent generations, as Ligon’s readers inserted themselves into his text, they identified as British subjects abroad on adventure, rather than in relation to Ligon’s own biography of a dispossessed royalist, fleeing Cromwell.

As he stood on the deck of the *Achilles*, headed for the West Indies, and surrounded by a cohort of defeated royalists, Ligon saw himself in the throes of a peripatetic transformation: he had been harassed by the courts, unruly peasants, a public that embraced Cromwell over the crown. He was now liberated from England and its laws, on his way to a new society where his identity would be valorized and even desirable. His innate worth was destined to reveal itself in the islands. He drew this conclusion as he watched a ‘carvil’, a small, insignificant fish leaping in the waves. As it rose to the surface, ‘smaller’ than its peers, Ligon surmised that he, too, would rise ‘to the top’.⁹

When the *Achilles* anchored at St. Jago in the Cape Verde islands in 1647, Richard Ligon saw Africans for the first time.¹⁰ The *Achilles* had stopped to buy slaves, stock and supplies for setting up a plantation in Antigua.¹¹ While there, Ligon met the African mistress of the Portuguese ‘commander’ of the island of Soll, Padre Vagado. On his return to his ship, he imagined that Vagado’s mistress ‘would pleasure’ him if he wanted her.¹²

A few days later, Ligon next saw ‘Negro virgins’, while the *Achilles*’ sailors drew water from a well on the other side of the island. They wore ornaments on their ankles designating them as ‘free’.¹³ He found them in the ‘valley of pleasure’; they were ‘wanton, as the soil that bred them’.¹⁴ He imagined that they ‘raped’ his sensibilities.¹⁵ The first encounter had made him desirable; the second threatened to make him their pawn and

victim. The African women in their 'natural state' overwhelmed the man whose 'heart had beaten well over sixty years'.¹⁶ In the space between these two encounters, African women had shifted from entities that made him feel powerful to entities that made him aware of his powerlessness.¹⁷

In Barbados, 'negroes' became slaves for the sugar plantations, chattel. Male slaves were 'very well timbered ... broad between the shoulders, full breasted, well filleted, and clean legged'.¹⁸ Planters bought slaves 'out of the Ship, where they find them stark naked, and therefore can't be deceived in any outward infirmity. They choose them as they do Horses in a Market; the strongest, youthfulest, and most beautiful, yield the greatest prices'.¹⁹

Ligon's description provided the first assessment of the transformation that had taken place. On the boat, 'negroes' existed as ownerless merchandise; hence, they were exhibited in their 'natural state', in order not only to protect potential buyers, but also to suggest the stock's natural inclinations for specific tasks. Assessing the bodies' use value for potential kinds of labour, buyers chose the best stock for their plantations. After purchase, 'negroes' became their masters' chattels, private property.

While male slaves were 'well-timbered', Ligon considered female slaves to be 'faulty', since after 'five or six Children, their breasts hang ... almost down to the ground'.²⁰ The female slave's existence was constrained by her usefulness to male slaves and in the reproduction of future slaves for her master. As he described these entities who from a distance appeared to have 'six legs', Ligon presented them as beings who came exclusively into existence on the plantation; they bore no resemblance or relationship to the African women of Cape Verde.

Like the prospective buyers, Ligon fixed his attention on slaves' bodies, measuring their value in shape, size and 'timber'. In this way, Ligon suggested that planters had developed an epistemology around the care of their chattels so as to 'prevent mutinies'.²¹ In other words, the epistemology of care for chattels aimed at preservation of masters' control over slaves. Ostensibly, the epistemology required slaves to be 'employed according to their abilities'. It also required masters to feed and shelter the chattel, as well as to provide male slaves with female slaves to satisfy sexual instincts for reproduction.²² To determine the proper jobs for each slave, planters hierarchized slaves' bodies, then, not only according to the value of their labour, but also in relation to the planters' belief that slaves were animated by animal instincts. If the planters addressed those instincts, they had fulfilled their 'obligations' to their chattels.

Against this supposition of fulfilled 'obligations' to slaves, and his general assessment of the slaves' bodies, Ligon perceived the planters as 'wise and provident men'.²³ His emblematic example was Colonel Humphrey Walrond, who 'being a Gentleman ... bred with much freedom, liberty, and plenty, in *England*, could not set his mind so earnestly upon his profit, as to forget ... his friends'.²⁴ Walrond was the ideal planter because Ligon identified with him, and Walrond had included Ligon as one of 'his friends'. Extending his judgement about Walrond to planters as a class, Ligon declared them to possess 'piercing sights and profound judgments'.²⁵ They were 'industrious and painful', exceptional and 'great men', who 'tilled and loved the earth'.²⁶

In light of Walrond's particular 'charity', his paternalism and the general exceptionality of the planter class, Ligon puzzled over Walrond's slaves' inclination to kill themselves even though Walrond provided for them. He believed that they hung themselves because they both were afraid of the masters and believed that, in death,

they returned to Africa, 'their youth renewed'.²⁷ Walrond 'lost three or four of his best Negroes this way'.²⁸ For observers, like Hans Sloane, a doctor and the personal physician to the governor of Jamaica, slaves 'often cut their own throats' because they were incapable of valorizing life.²⁹

Ligon related how Walrond taught his 'negroes' why slavery was better than suicide. He took one of the corpses and cut off his head, impaling it on 'a pole a dozen foot high'.³⁰ He then 'caused all his Negroes to come forth, and march round about this head, and bid them look on it, whether this were not the head of such a one that hanged himself'.³¹ Forcing them to acknowledge that the head belonged to the suicide, he lectured them about the error of their belief.³² The severed head proved that their bodies were forever bound to Barbados: they would never return to Africa. Ligon concluded that this lesson had been successful: Walrond's slaves no longer committed suicide.

Ligon's sympathies were with the poor British servants who were worked harder, 'kept and preserved' with less care than the slaves because the servants were indentured for a finite period, usually five years.³³ They had value for the terms of their tenure. He underscored, for his readers, that British servants were the most ill-treated population of Barbados; in terms of persecution, these indentured servants were the only group justifiably at risk for suicide, because they had the capacity to know they were disenfranchised. They had been British subjects.

While intrigued by individual male slaves and their capacities for 'uplift', Ligon recognized the danger posed by slaves as a group, conscious of their own existence.³⁴ He considered them a 'bloody people', who, 'being more than double the numbers of the Christians that are there', constituted a social threat to the public order.³⁵ Ligon repeated the planters' fears that slaves would 'commit some horrid massacre upon the Christians, thereby to enfranchise themselves, and become Masters of the Island',³⁶ that is, they feared that slaves would take their places.

In 1660, as governor of Barbados, Humphrey Walrond was so concerned about the possibilities of revolt that he enacted the 'Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes' (1661), under which extreme punishments were meted out for any slave or freed person who might encourage it.³⁷ Although Ligon omitted punishments, planters' fears about control generated a scale of punishments for slaves who rebelled against being chattel.

Sloane added that to maintain control, slaves needed punishments, and these punishments were calibrated to three criminal acts: collective rebellion, the fugitive runaway and individual negligence in labour.³⁸

The Punishments for Crimes of Slaves, are usually for Rebellions burning them, by nailing them down on the ground with crooked Sticks on every Limb, and then applying the Fire by degrees from the Feet and Hands, burning them gradually up to the Head, whereby their pains are extravagant. For Crimes of a lesser nature Gelding, or chopping off half of the Foot with an Ax. These Punishments are suffered by them with great Constancy.

For running away they put Iron Rings of great weight on their Ankles, or Pottocks about their Necks, which are Iron Rings with two long Necks riveted to them, or a Spur in the Mouth.

For Negligence, they are usually whips by the Overseers with Lance wood Switches, till they be bloody, and several of the Switches broken, being first tied up by their Hands in the Mill-Houses. ... The Cicatrices are visible on their Skins for ever after; and a Slave, the more he have of those, is the less val'd.

After they are whip'd till they are Raw, some put on their Skins Pepper and Salt to make them smart; at other times their Masters will drop melted Wax on their Skins. ... These Punishments are ... merited by the Blacks, who are a very perverse Generation of People, and though they appear harsh, yet are scarce equal to some of the Crimes, and inferior to what Punishments other *European* Nations inflict on their slaves in the East-Indies.³⁹

Since slaves' bodies were property, masters had 'virtually unlimited' power over them.⁴⁰ Bad property had to be tamed, and if the marks of subjection remained afterwards, these marks reminded slaves of what awaited them should they attempt 'Rebellion', 'running away' and 'Negligence'. Even if these punishments seemed 'harsh', Sloane assured his readers that British masters were not the worst and most ruthless among the Europeans.

Sloane's punishments illustrated the importance of their exhibition for other slaves. In order to prevent mutinies, rebellions and collective resistance, punishments were meted out to individual bodies, but they were exhibited to the remaining group. The collective body had to witness the punishments, to internalize an intended lesson and reject identification with the victim. This premise underpinned Walrond's severed head, and it demonstrated that each one could be separated from the group in similar exhibition. Although slavery's punishments were primarily for individual infractions of the law, their ends were always presented as 'lessons' for the whole.

The British practised this method of exhibiting the bodies of rebellious slaves throughout their colonies. Punishment required rebels not only to be hung, but also to have their bodies quartered and exhibited on a gibbet, and often to have their severed heads impaled on posts for the remaining slaves to see. In 1760, when Tacky, Fortune and Kingston led thousands of mostly 'Coromantee' slaves in rebellion against Jamaica planters, these punishments were viscerally applied.⁴¹ Tacky's severed head was exhibited on 'a pole' in Spanishtown; Fortune and Kingston were hung on a gibbet in Kingston.⁴²

Sloane added that since Africans practised 'no religion', their wildness was unmediated by Christian principles. Social welfare demanded slavery and its punishments to control 'the perversity of this Godless people', whose population far outnumbered their masters. Punishments were calibrated in ruthlessness to 'match' an imagined 'Godless people', who, in quantities, were necessary to the colonies' economies.

He reminded his readers that 'Blacks' were 'a very perverse Generation of People'. The shift between African and black was not arbitrary.⁴³ On the decks of slave ships, they were Africans from many 'Countries', being prepared for slavery. In the West Indies, they became interchangeable 'blacks'. African diversity was recalibrated under slavery as a singular race, the 'negroes', another identity altogether. However, in their 'natural state', they could overcome whites at any time; thus, these 'negroes' that slavery created became, in British thought, a 'perverse Generation of People' who required 'seasoning' and constant punishments to compel them to adapt to their new statuses.⁴⁴

They had to be forced to abandon their diversity as human beings and to adopt the singularity of the new identity of ‘negro’.

The constitutive side of the slaveholder consciousness in this early modern iteration was focused on slave bodies – how to use them for the maximum profit, and how to punish them for being an obstacle to that profit. British entitlement derived from the brute exercise of power over the slaves’ bodies and minds. Slaves rarely existed as individual entities, but were perceived as a group that could be controlled through the threat of punishment.

The slaveholder consciousness, 1784–1831

In 1772, when St Vincent erupted in slave rebellion, even though the British military would suppress it, singular voices in Parliament lobbied for support of slaves in revolt. Colonel Isaac Barre’s declaration that ‘They were “fighting for liberty … and every English heart must applaud them” suggested that the planters were invested in a social project that no longer resonated with the metropole’s subjects.⁴⁵ The shift in British political opinion had developed because of the constant attempt by slaves to rebel against their masters, seeking freedom. In the West Indies, slave codes were preoccupied with rebellion’s prevention, prohibiting slaves from congregation on and off the plantation, meeting with freedmen. Even knowledge of such meetings warranted punishment.⁴⁶

It remained a problem for slavery’s entire existence.⁴⁷ The abolitionist Henry Schroeder, under the pseudonym William Butterworth, wrote of one such rebellion he witnessed at sea. In 1786 as a young man, he and a friend had set off for a sailing adventure. He ended up, instead, on a slaver, the *Hudibras*, where he watched an unsuccessful slave rebellion that led the surviving slaves to mass suicide. Shackled to each other, they leapt over the side of the boat. They preferred ‘struggling in the agonies of death, rather than prolong a life of slavery’.⁴⁸

The scene was truly affecting; many of the killed were still fettered by the leg to living slaves, in which case they assisted each other to lift the dead incumbrance on the gunwale, whence both were plunged into the water, never more to be cooped up in the ‘loathsome hull of a slave ship’, or to be subject to the severity of unfeeling task-masters … about one third of the males were in the sea, some drowning, with apparent exultation at their deliverance from slavery.⁴⁹

Butterworth estimated that ‘one third of the males’ died with ‘apparent exultation at their deliverance from slavery’. Their choices remained life in shackles or death at sea, and they chose death. Only Butterworth noticed their affect, their ‘exultation’ in freedom.

As slaves were returned to the ship, the captain ordered the living and the dead to be stowed together in the hold, ‘concluding that such a spectacle would intimidate the rest, so as to prevent in future a recurrence to similar acts of hostility’.⁵⁰ The captain’s actions were part of his cargo’s preparation for enslavement. It reinforced in his cargo’s minds that outside of slavery, their existence lacked meaning. They became interchangeable

with the corpses next to them. Since the loss of 'one third' of its cargo to death had already been factored into the *Hudibras*'s profits, the unsuccessful rebellion did not change the quantity of slaves the captain expected to sell.⁵¹ More importantly, the captain, like Sloane, and like Walrond, believed that as a group, slaves learnt their places through physical and psychological abuse. Abuse was the blunt truth of 'seasoning'. Butterworth observed that although the slaves 'were overpowered by severity', and 'reduced to subordination', their hatred for their condition 'was rankling in the minds of those coerced Africans'.⁵²

When the *Hudibras* arrived at Grenada, the crew prepared the remaining slaves for auction. They groomed the aged and sick, applying 'a blacking brush' to the skin so that infirmities were masked; they rubbed palm oil on slaves' bodies to make the skin appear glistening and healthy.⁵³ All of these activities were designed to increase their cargo's value for prospective buyers at market. The captain's preparation of the slaves for market entailed more than physical or cosmetic staging. Slaves had to be controlled and docile for new owners. They could not be led to the correct action through religion or education; they had to be 'broken' like wild beasts.

As the boat anchored off the coast of Grenada, Butterworth speculated that the slaves were happy at the sight of their countrymen working on the island's shores, 'picking cotton' or harvesting sugar cane. When the slaves were finally transported to the island, he thought 'them ready to kiss the ground on which they landed'.⁵⁴ They were eager to work and 'happy' to prove their value as slaves.

Slaveholders held their positions through class, wealth and brute power over chattels. The extent of their power was unlimited, and until the late seventeenth century, they did not see the need to justify their power beyond ad hoc laws. Their slaves were 'ownerless' beings, and because they had the power to possess them, they owned them.

By the late eighteenth century, this attitude had been challenged by abolitionists and former slaves. In his *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies*, the Reverend James Ramsay, an abolitionist from St Christopher, challenged planters' claims that race precluded understanding freedom, and Christian redemption. Ramsay argued that slaves deserved 'improvement' rather than the punishments meted out to 'a half-starved Negro', who 'for breaking a single cane ... may be hacked to pieces with a cutlass'.⁵⁵ His experiences with slaves and masters in his parish for twenty years offered evidence that slaves' 'improvement' was a Christian's obligation, and he adumbrated ways to enhance slaves' becoming 'more useful to themselves, their masters, and the State'.⁵⁶

If slaves experienced conversion, they would become their own 'strict overseers' and learn 'their duty'. In other words, through conversion, they would police themselves, and British masters would no longer need to resort to brutal punishments, especially since the 'harsh' nature of these punishments made some question Britain's capacity to represent European civilization.

In this respect, Ramsey's argument alluded to earlier discussions about the merits of the conversion of slaves. Ligon had tried to convince one planter in Barbados that his slave 'had desired to be made a Christian. But the planter had answered that the people of the Island were governed by the laws of *England*, and by those laws, we could not make a Christian a slave ... being once a Christian, he could no more account him a slave'.⁵⁷ Ligon's interlocutor argued that the entire category of slaves was undermined

by individual conversions to Christianity, because individual slave conversions transformed slave ontology. Instead of a class of beings whose ontology was calibrated as ‘capital equipment’ on a plantation, they would have the souls of Christians, and Christians were not to be enslaved.⁵⁸

In fact, the stakes of individual conversion threatened to undo not only the category of slave, but also the hierarchical position of the master. If a slave adopted Christianity, the slave could no longer be encompassed within a category of chattel, because the object had become de facto a subject through conversion.

Thus, Ramsay determined to give an account of the ‘Negros … natural capacity, … proving them to be on a footing of equality in respect of the reception of mental improvement, with the natives of any other country’.⁵⁹ In this brief statement, Ramsay identified the stakes of slavery to be imbricated with the slaves’ ‘natural capacity’. From the planters’ perspective, once the slave experienced spiritual freedom through conversion, the ‘being’ of such an object changed automatically, and this ‘revelation’ necessarily set up the conclusion that a slave who was freed mentally was no longer a slave physically.⁶⁰ Slavery hinged on the belief that ‘negroes’ as property were ‘beings’ suited only for labour. They possessed a chattel ontology.

Ligon had recognized this aspect when he noted that planters identified the labour best suited for their slaves. Seven years after Ligon’s departure, in 1661, Barbadian planters enacted law that prohibited Christians from being enslaved, and the scope of that legislation was to impose non-Christian ‘origins to identify who might be enslaved’.⁶¹ Sloane voiced a similar conclusion when he declared that slaves lacked religion, and that lack proved their value as chattel.

Ramsay’s contention that slaves shared the same being as ‘natives of any other country’ meant that slaves had the capacity for ‘mental improvement’.⁶² Still, Ramsay did not demand slaves’ complete liberation, only that the ‘yoke of slavery’ was ‘made to fit more easy on their necks’ so that slaves were ‘taught to think more justly of themselves, more moderately of their masters’.⁶³ He proposed ‘amelioration’ as a means of ‘improvement’.

Amelioration worked by economic principle.⁶⁴ Island economies were dependent on ‘expensive inputs’ or imported chattels from the American colonies.⁶⁵ Amelioration was to correct that situation through the alleviation of masters’ abuses so that an acceptable minimum of care was established, with the end result that it would ‘improve the lot of the existing stock of slaves in order to induce them to breed their replacements’.⁶⁶ After such ‘improvement’, slaves would ‘admit the enjoyment of the common conveniences of life; they would ‘be found capable of arts … useful in society’.⁶⁷

In 1784, Ramsay’s critique of planters’ treatment of slaves was published in the island newspaper, the *Saint Christopher Gazette*. The Island’s planters responded with their own 105-page tract, *An Answer to the Reverend James Ramsay on the Treatment and Conversion of Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies: By Some Gentlemen of St Christopher* (1789). They contended that Ramsay, as an abolitionist, had misunderstood – at best – and misled – at worst – the British public about the nature of slavery. Their slaves enjoyed their status in comparison to British servants in the very empire that both depended on West Indies sugar yet still mounted such a vigorous attack on its producers.

They claimed that Ramsay, who had never owned slaves, was incapable of understanding slavery. He wrote about the island’s ‘masters’ without ever having

been a master.⁶⁸ To add to this presumption, he had asserted ‘as an uncontrovertible maxim, that “the relation of master and slave [was] unnatural and to be traced to the infernal enemy of all goodness.”’⁶⁹ However, the planters argued that slavery was ‘not only expressly allowed, but commanded by God.’⁷⁰ God was the planters’ benefactor because sugar, a divine gift, made them wealthy.

Their treatment of slaves was, furthermore, characterized by ‘humane care … for our fellow creatures’, and the planters, ominously, warned that slaves were ‘at present … useful members of society, but would not continue such in any other rank of life’.⁷¹ Damian Alan Pargas noted that planters framed ‘their peculiar institution as a form of human interdependence whose abolition would lead to the extinction of the black race’ so that ‘they stubbornly believed that their society was humane and superior to every other even when they contradicted themselves in their own behavior’.⁷² They justified their paternalistic behaviour because ‘liberty’ for slaves was ‘dangerous, absurd, and equally detrimental to the slave as well as the master’.⁷³ It went against God’s will since, if ‘manumitted’, these ‘creatures’ existed without meaning in the islands. They had no purchase in the world unless their masters gave them the honour of enslavement. The colony’s social institutions would founder because of manumission.

Ramsay’s accusations were not only without merit, but also ‘without his appearing to understand the first principles of the subject’ he discussed.⁷⁴ His ‘impracticable scheme’ censured unfairly, and disenfranchised, the planters who served the public good.⁷⁵ He acted without the ‘mildness’ of ancient legislators, preferring instead a ‘system of severity’.⁷⁶ He persecuted them under the guise of social reform because ‘of his own failure’.⁷⁷ He had projected on to them his missteps. Finally, since Ramsay had ‘quit’ St Christopher, he had no right to comment on their actions because at his departure, he ‘had carried off a genteel fortune’ from St Christopher’s coffers.⁷⁸ He had profited from them, yet he attacked their business. They considered his ‘liberalism’ evidence of his corruption; as they denounced him for using anecdotal evidence against them, they produced what they believed indicated his true motive: he was in league with Jews and ‘negroes’, bearing an innate bias against British subjects, England and commerce.⁷⁹

The same year of the planters’ rebuttal, Joshua Steele, a Barbados planter, released a series of depositions that he gave before the island’s governor. Steele had arrived to Barbados in 1780 to take over the administration of several of his plantations.⁸⁰ Steele’s “‘rational’ approach to plantation management on the island’ included the ‘first arts society within the West Indies colonies’ in which the amelioration of slaves’ lives was a major focus.⁸¹ Culture was to transform the epistemology of slavery, because culture constitutively shaped subjects around British values. Implicitly, Steele drew attention to slavery’s culture as a negation of British values. Ramsay had intended to use Steele’s depositions to prove that slavery in the West Indies remained brutal, callous, unchristian and not British.

The depositions presented planters as engaged in an exercise of ‘an unlimited power of maiming or killing’ that they often required their ‘white servants’ to do on their behalf – those same servants that disparate narrators declared the real victims of the West Indies.⁸² Just as St Christopher’s planters and, by extension, the entire class of planters had pointed to their legal endorsement of amelioration, Steele underscored

that legal amelioration was displaced on the plantations because of the way planters possessed slaves. The remedy of amelioration did not fit the crime of chattel slavery.

At the first interview, Steele was asked, ‘What is the legal power which Masters have over their slaves in Barbadoes?’⁸³ His response underscored the continued privilege that masters still exercised over slaves.

The general power which a Master exercises, and permits to be exercised over his Slaves, is rather by implication (from Slaves being bought as chattels, in the same manner as horses, or other beasts) than by any positive law defining what the power of a master shall be, in this island: but by practice it appears to be unlimited, and that practice is supported indirectly by statutes made in the colony, repugnant to the laws of England.⁸⁴

To rule slaves ‘by implication’ meant that masters derived their power over slaves from slaves’ identities as ‘chattels’ and from masters’ privilege, that is, not from ‘any positive law’. As such, slaves were subject ‘in the same manner as horses, or other beasts’ to laws governing ‘stock’. The planter class intuited its privilege in its ability to enslave.

In his juxtaposition of ‘implication’ to ‘positive law’, Steele presented the ad hoc ways in which slaves were controlled by masters.⁸⁵ Steele’s depiction of slaves’ lives on the plantations of Barbados reinforced the disconnection between the legal amelioration planters had promised, and the image of slavery they retained mentally as the template for their prosperity.⁸⁶

When Steele died in 1796, David Lambert described him as isolated among the planter elite in Barbados. His desire to transform the ‘institution of slavery’ was dismissed as a radical, ‘impractical’ project that ran counter ‘to the wisdom and experience of local planters’.⁸⁷ The planters had already accomplished ‘moves toward “amelioration” of slavery’ and ‘they saw and promoted themselves as enlightened masters’.⁸⁸

The ‘enlightened’ planter perspective continued with Bryan Edwards. In 1792, Edwards, ‘fearing the spread of slave revolution to Jamaica (little more than 100 miles from Haiti), … returned to Britain … to publicize the planter view, and confront the abolitionists’.⁸⁹ Haiti’s successful rebellion had begun in 1789; it would conclude in 1804, and Edwards, like planters throughout the West Indies and the Caribbean, feared that every island within Haiti’s proximity was at risk of slave rebellion. Furthermore, Jamaica had experienced its own failed Tacky Rebellion thirty years earlier. The memory of thousands of slaves in open revolt increased planters’ anxieties.

Edwards blamed the abolitionists who had convinced the British citizen that the ‘New World environment led to degeneration’, that ‘Creole whites … were physically weak and lacked intelligence’ because island economies relied on slavery.⁹⁰ Even more unsettling, as Olwyn Blouet observed, Edwards argued that abolitionists imagined that ‘an Atlantic voyage could affect human faculties’⁹¹ Abolitionists had implied that slavery not only deformed the faculties of the subjects who enslaved, but also invalidated previous English sensibilities. Slaveholders no longer adhered to British values.

Edwards sought to restore the idea of owning slaves to British sensibilities. He further reasoned that slavery was, for the moment, ‘a necessary evil’, and ‘many planters

relatively innocent' of the charges levelled against them by abolitionists.⁹² Slavery's alleged 'necessity' became its justification.

Since planters had to justify their subjective experience of slaveholding, the slaveholder consciousness hardened around 'natural right', Christian entitlement and race. They were signifiers intimately linked to 'Britishness'. John Poyer confided to his readers that 'the negroes are not possessed of those religious sentiments which can inspire them with a just sense of the sacred obligation of an oath'.⁹³ Echoing Sloane, Poyer further argued that 'negroes' were a 'savage multitude' who were an 'ignorant, superstitious, vindictive race' and that 'no religious or moral obligation' could compel them to tell the truth. Nature had 'strongly defined the difference not only in complexion, but in the mental, intellectual, and corporeal faculties of the different species'.⁹⁴ Slaves were a different 'species' from British planters, and that difference was marked by their lack of religion, expressed in their race.

When Matthew Lewis arrived at his Jamaican plantation, Savannah la Mar, on 2 January 1815, 'everything that had life came flocking to the house from all quarters: and not only the men, and the women, and the children, but ... the hogs, and the dogs, and the geese, and the fowls, and the turkeys, all came hurrying along by instinct'.⁹⁵ Lewis made no distinction between his slaves and the plantation's animals. The entire world of Lewis's plantation hinged on their pleasure in service to him.

Like slaves elsewhere on the island, 'who appeared to be so unaffectedly happy',⁹⁶ Lewis took great pleasure in 'the consciousness that all these human beings were my slaves'.⁹⁷ One female slave held up her 'little naked black child to me, grinning from ear to ear', exclaiming 'Look, massa, look here! him nice lilly neger for massa!'⁹⁸ Even 'the old people, they were all in one and the same story, – now they had lived once to see massa, they were ready for dying to-morrow, them no care'.⁹⁹ Lewis believed that his slaves' happiness was contingent on his existence: they not only wanted to be enslaved, but they also wanted their children to share in its legacy. As their master, he gave their life meaning. His paternalism articulated a purpose for their existence.

Their happiness confirmed, for Lewis, that his slaves had lives superior to Britain's working classes. Slavery was a social good that he was obligated to provide.

I never saw people look more happy in my life, and I believe their condition to be much more comfortable than that of the labourers of Great Britain; and, after all, slavery, in *their* case, is but another name for servitude, now that no more negroes can be forcibly carried away from Africa, and subjected to the horrors of the voyage, and the seasoning after their arrival.¹⁰⁰

Lewis was convinced not only that slaves were satisfied with their statuses, but also that they preferred enslavement to freedom. With neither the Middle Passage nor 'seasoning after their arrival' to endure, slaves were 'free' to enjoy their enslavement. Consequently, he declared that his slaves existed at a higher level than servants in Britain. Using affect as a measurement, Lewis presented slavery as an evolving principle. Its abuses had been necessary, because in the production of an enslaved class of beings accustomed to their status, their race had become 'elevated'. The unfortunate events of the Middle Passage and 'seasoning' created new beings who not only saw slavery's benefits for their masters, but also benefited themselves from being enslaved.

Thus, the Jamaican planter asserted that his slaves preferred slavery under him than manumission without him, offering the example of the poor ‘manumitted’ Mary Wiggins, who confronted him on his return from Montego Bay.

She now threw herself in my way to tell me how glad she was to see me, for that she had always thought till now (which is the general complaint) that ‘she had no massa’; and also to obtain a regular invitation to my negro festival tomorrow. By this universal complaint, it appears that, while Mr Wilberforce is lamenting their hard fate in being subject to a master, their greatest fear is the not having a master whom they know; and that to be told by the negroes of another estate that ‘they belong to no massa,’ is one of the most contemptuous reproaches that can be cast upon them.¹⁰¹

Emphasizing that slaves feared ‘not having a master whom they know’, Edwards argued that manumission left slaves without the ‘protections’ of the plantation. Without a plantation to which Mary could belong, she existed without a social position. Essentially, she was an ‘ownerless’ being, pushed into the status of the fugitive. She remained a slave in being, even though she had legal emancipation. Liberation had only removed purpose and meaning from her life because she had neither the capacity to understand her status nor the capabilities to physically sustain herself.

Due to manumission, she became homeless and abandoned by the community of slaves as well the master’s society. He suggested that her community rejected her because they had no interest in freedom. ‘Negroes’ without masters existed without a function in the island economy: they did not belong. That several centuries of legal slave codes in the islands had made it illegal for slaves to interact with freed men and women had no significance for Edwards; his perspective was grounded in what he believed he knew about his chattels. In 1831, the ‘happy slaves’ in the parishes from Savannah la Mar, Montego Bay and Lucea erupted in rebellion, and the parishes became rebel territories.¹⁰²

In 1830, on the cusp of abolition, the Standing Committee of the West Indies Planters’ Association published *An Abstract of the British West Indian Statutes, for the Protection and Government of Slaves*, which outlined a series of measures they had taken ‘for the improvement of the Slave population’.¹⁰³ They had intervened already because without their input, they argued, ‘any plans of amelioration would be ... injurious to the Slaves themselves than to the Proprietors’.¹⁰⁴ The standing committee accepted a form of amelioration, as long as they controlled its expression and its representation in the law. Law was not to disrupt custom or business. Planters agreed to amelioration, as long as its forms did not intrude on the running of their plantations. In 1833, Britain abolished slavery, and the *Abstract* reflected planters’ anticipation of this event.

Over the period from 1647 to 1830, planters and masters held resolutely to their right to enslave. They justified that right in remarkably static ways. They were Christians, and God sanctioned enslavement of pagans; it was a ‘natural right’ perspective. Slaves did not possess the ability to enjoy civilization, freedom or even leisure. Africans in their ‘natural’, unenlightened states posed great danger and threat to Europeans. Thus, slavery taught them the benefits of enlightenment, in which they were prepared to live as new beings, a species of chattel, in the New World. It was the key mechanism for

allowing the ‘ownerless’ and diverse Africans to become ‘blacks’ and exist within the universe of the white, Christian and European world.

For slavery’s advocates, the planters, a group that included Lewis, Edwards and Poyer, slavery was critical to sugar production and the empire’s profits. It was an important key to the organization of island societies, and it advanced the planters’ values – values they attested were ‘learned in England’. It had a social function. Their perspectives also conveyed a significant amount of threat. The repeal of slavery injured the public good; abolition was a reform movement that enabled the metropole to advocate freedom for blacks in the distant colonies rather than attend to domestic abuse of its white servants at home. Furthermore, the continued ‘persecution’ of the planters would result in a loss of income both for planters and empire.

Observers like Ligon and Sloane, who tacitly accepted slavery, still reflected the planters’ perspective, although they were not slave owners themselves.¹⁰⁵ Even as they speculated about discrete ‘negroes’ who showed the capability for ‘improvement’, they held firmly to the belief that, collectively, the slaves posed a threat to colonial societies and that they were a ‘bloody people’. Narrators sympathetic to slavery’s victims, like Butterworth, identified with slaves because they had been indentured themselves. For narrators like Ramsay and Steele, slavery deformed Christians through its practice. Withholding Christian revelation from God’s creatures, masters condemned these beings to hell when they had the opportunity to redeem them.¹⁰⁶

These diverse perspectives agreed universally on the nature of entitlement that the masters possessed and exercised, whether or not they endorsed slavery as its expression. From as early as the mid-seventeenth century, Ligon articulated a belief that British colonists were akin to Adam, entering a phenomenal paradise, with the explicit mission of identifying, naming and constructing a new world of objects that reflected old world values. For Ligon, his gospel of business and common sense helped build an orderly ‘little England’ in paradise.¹⁰⁷ His moment of revelation took place on the deck of the *Achilles*, when he was transported into sublimity as he looked at the shoreline of Barbados, marvelling at its majestic palms. He realized how very exceptional he was to be standing on the deck of the *Achilles*, staring out at the coastline of Barbados. In this way, the planters’ perspective took on an exceptionalism that the British fulfilled uniquely in history.¹⁰⁸

By the mid-eighteenth century, British planters still strenuously maintained that they held their positions by divine mandate.¹⁰⁹ The social good demanded that they enslave, but these mandates were applied retroactively to legitimate the practices that had already been adopted, the custom of the land. At that century’s conclusion, planters argued that slavery’s repeal was aimed at the empire’s most loyal of citizens, those who had filled the empire’s coffers with the profits of sugar, and who had vouchsafed Britain’s colonies from foreign intruders. The instigators for abolition did not grasp the social good that slavery performed, because neither had they been ‘masters’ nor did they understand the true nature of the slave’s being. In the early nineteenth century, prior to abolition, planters like Matthew Lewis warned that slaves lost community and became self-conscious of their meaninglessness and lack of place because of manumission. Liberation would condemn them to wander outside the plantation’s paradise.

As these narrative excerpts illustrate, the planters’ *sensus communis* was derived from a sense of their own ‘natural’ superiority. Their entitlements were evidence of

their own destinies; consequently, they ‘shared’ a sentiment regarding the obligations to, and expectations of, their slaves.

Their judgements about their slaves shaped legal discussions called into being in order to justify slavery as a practice. As Elsa V. Goveia put it, ‘slave laws were essential for the continued existence of slavery as an institution. Before the slave laws could be made, it was necessary for the opinion to be accepted that persons could be made slaves and held as slaves.¹¹⁰ Once opinion became articulated as custom, laws had to be determined that legitimated the planters’ opinion. In other words, law affirmed the rights and entitlements of the planters’ perspective. To accomplish this affirmation, legal enactments were calibrated according to an epistemology of slavery already operative in the islands. In this regard, legal enactments were only useful to the extent that they held one part of slavery’s formula in place; they kept the planters’ privilege of designating human beings as chattel intact.

In the context of slavery’s legacy, the planters’ subject position was not simply an ideological deception that dissipated because of slavery’s abolition. In fact, the position not only anticipated its demise, but it also encoded its ‘principle’ so that ‘negroes’ after emancipation remained restrained within a shadow epistemology, the social bonds of slavery within the marketplace. In other words, slavery’s future was contingent on a collective subject position in which individuals tapped into the benefits of slavery without necessarily being slaveholders or belonging to the planter class.

Ligon was an emblematic example of this position. His tacit acceptance of slavery underwrote his significance for British subjects who did not own slaves, but who certainly benefited directly from enslavement and persecution. Ligon would have been an unemployed royalist, a ‘Stranger’ in his own country, if he had not joined Modyford, his patron, aboard the *Achilles* to Antigua. Thus, he represented an individual position that anyone was able to adopt, even if they were not part of the transnational elites, planters like Byrd, Poyer, Lewis, Edwards or Walrond, referenced by Burnard.¹¹¹ Individuals could share the position ambivalently and temporarily; they could also make it their defining identity.

Slaveholding’s collective position was held in place by a web of seemingly endless legislation that increased every year.¹¹² In some cases, they were ad hoc laws pertinent only to local areas.¹¹³ As the West Indies examples proved, these laws conformed to the practices of the masters – masters did not conform to law. Steele put it bluntly when he corrected his examiner and said that masters had ‘unlimited power’ over their chattels, and this power derived from ‘implication’ rather than any ‘positive law’.

At other times, government officials introduced legislation meant to demonstrate that the modern application of the law followed precisely from legal precedent, even when that precedent derived from Roman times.¹¹⁴ These laws allowed slaveholders some latitude in their practices so that even in the escalation of slaveholders’ abusive behaviour, their actions were still subsumed under the justification of a very ancient law. It was a tradition inherited from antiquity. Consequently, the collective subject position of owning slaves offered both a rhetorical and a legal position in which each enhanced the perception that a subject had absolute authority over its object, the slave, and such a position was a historical tradition.

For disparate groups, the collective position enabled them to rely on its entitlements, even if they chose to adopt more palatable roles for self-representation when outside

the boundaries of slaveholding societies. This rationalization produced a system able to control slaves through its ‘impersonal power’.¹¹⁵ It called into being, then, the coordinates for a partner position that the slave was required to inhabit. The trajectory of *res nullius*, ‘merchandise’, chattel formed the core of the planter class’s subjective experience: they had understood it as their ‘right’ and entitlement. It constituted a ‘shared sense’ for all of its members, regardless of the degree of their investment in slavery. Without it, their world existed in a state of anarchy. However, while it suggested the planters’ *sensus communis*, it also acted as a ‘shared’ formula between slaves and slaveholders.

The Formula and ‘the Being of Slavery’¹

The consciousness of being a slave

William Butterworth’s account (1831) in the previous chapter of ‘dying slaves, and corpses ... stowed below deck, next to the mess tubs’ introduced a new calculus to slavery’s victims. Below deck, and prior to their purchase, they were interchangeable with waste. As ‘ownerless beings’, even their death was insignificant; their bodies could be ‘stowed away’ until a convenient disposal method became available.

Slave economists anticipated this collateral death. Of the 12.4 million Africans imported to the colonies and who ended their ordeals as New World slaves, approximately 3.4 million of their companions died because of the journey itself.² Sailors and captains of slave vessels described the loss of one-quarter of all slaves as necessary, an inevitable outcome in the production of a large population of working slaves.³ Secondarily, Africans’ ‘forced migration’ in the cargo holds of slavers was to sever the surviving population of ‘ownerless’ Africans from their pasts.

The Africans’ confinement below deck, akin to stock, forced their minds to suture self-consciousness to an ‘unknowable dying’, and, as Handler noted, they made ‘the transatlantic crossing ... usually ... in a state of nudity or, at most, in ragged or tattered loincloths, breechclouts, or some form of genital covering’.⁴ It transformed them from people with history to a transitional class of beings. That transformation caused some to suicide, jumping ship when the boat came within sight of landmasses. They preferred their destinies with the sharks, ‘the inhabitants of the deep’, that followed the slavers, rather than continue as slaves.⁵ When corpses were eventually ‘thrown overboard ... almost instantaneously, the surrounding waters broke, swirled, and reddened’,⁶ and the sharks claimed these bodies, as if nature’s entire system depended on slavery’s tithe of bodies.

In *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano* (1789),⁷ Olaudah Equiano described his confinement in the cargo hold of a slave ship with other Africans while the crew awaited delivery of more cargo. The hold’s ‘stench’ made it ‘dangerous to remain there for any time’, its ‘air soon became unfit for respiration ... and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died...’.⁸ He added that ‘the galling of the chains’ and ‘the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated’ produced a phenomenal condition in which life became ‘insupportable’, bracketed by the ‘shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying’.⁹

In this way, ‘dying’ and madness formed the boundaries of Equiano’s initial victimization. The phenomenology he constructed began with the horror of being alone and isolated, but ended with his intuition of death or madness as the only remedy for captivity. Such an experience evoked in him the secondary fear that his captors intended to eat him, to consume him.¹⁰

Equiano was perceived by the crew to be valuable stock. Thus, when he succumbed to sickness in the hold, the crew brought him topside where he ‘began to hope [death] would soon put an end to my miseries. Often did I think many of the inhabitants of the deep much more happy than myself. I envied them the freedom they enjoyed, and as often wished I could change my condition for theirs’.¹¹ Equiano’s imagined identification with these ‘inhabitants of the deep’, his hopes for a watery death, were more preferable choices than a being sutured to slavery, even if he had the privilege of the deck and was ‘free’ of the hold.

As Equiano continued to stare out at the sea, three slaves were brought on deck; two were shackled together.¹² The two threw themselves overboard; the third, who had been ‘too sick to be shackled’, followed them.¹³ The crew was only able to recover one of the three men, and that survivor was ‘flogged … unmercifully for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery’.¹⁴ Slavery was held out as an existence that they should embrace because its absence was their death. Equiano’s account resonated with Butterworth’s earlier observations about the *Hudibras*’s cargo’s preference for death at sea rather than life in chains.¹⁵

Equiano was conscripted into the position of witness: he had to watch the other slaves around him dying. His position was not unique; slaves were often required to see the punishments for attempted rebellion. It was a subject position in which they were to internalize intimidation, isolation and coercion, but he concluded that the unknown ocean into which the corpses were flung after death was preferable to his current status: better to be an ownerless corpse in an unknown place than a body constrained by force, in the hold of the ship. In fact, the realization that the slaves’ torment was in dying, and *not in death*, moved him to imagine that the ‘creatures of the deep’ possessed better existences than slaves. Death, there, had a dignity that life in chains did not. Freedom had been a characteristic unconsciously possessed, akin to the unconscious sharks trailing the ship. Equiano considered unconscious freedom a mode of being preferable to the conscious existence of the slave.

Marcus Rediker observed that the hold’s accomplishment was its destruction of the Africans’ former identities.¹⁶ The Middle Passage was both to accomplish the forced migration of slaves’ bodies and to impose on slaves’ minds a social amnesia. Slaves’ mental states had to be reconfigured around the ever-present ‘trader’ and ‘the slave pens’, simultaneously reshaping the faculties’ purchase around the phenomenal world of captivity.¹⁷ It was a ‘social death’ imposed on slavery’s victims.¹⁸ For Equiano, the hold remained a place of unarticulated loss. To avoid it, he used the slaver’s calculus: those deemed inconsequential or ‘value-less’ ended up with the waste. For the remainder of the voyage, the sailors taught him navigation, a skill that allowed him free access to the boat and increased his potential value.

While the ‘world of the hold’ consisted of incomprehensible death, topside, he was ‘freed’ psychologically from the scenes unfolding below. What did not change was his

status as valuable ‘cargo’. The deck was a flurry of labour, the sea an unending vastness before him. Both required a new orientation; knowledge shifted from an unimaginable condition below deck to his navigation of the New World. Labour kept him free from the hold. The epistemology of the ship and sea, with its infinite possibilities of labour, operated as an alternative to the epistemology of the hold.

The crew’s activities around him became familiar and redemptive skills. Labour displaced the hold’s terrifying effects. This displacement underwrote these nascent slave economies, because slavers exposed their victims to just enough death during the Middle Passage to make their survival contingent on their resigned transformation into a helot class of docile, mute beasts of burden. If the Africans’ identities ended in the hold, the slave’s identity most certainly began there with the realization that he or she no longer had a history, a family, a community. It was a cognitive transformation from the diversity of African peoples to the reducibility of slavery’s interchangeable units. In fact, the marketplace was to be the site of their purported ‘redemption’ from the hold’s captivity, where they would finally gain their new identity. Butterworth concluded as much when he escorted the captives from the *Hudibras* to Grenada and observed their ‘happiness’ at becoming slaves.¹⁹

For Equiano, new skills translated into multiple subject positions for him to inhabit: each one took him further away from the hold. He did not perceive slavery as an opportunity to become a better ‘being’; instead, these new skills, learnt on deck, gave him the possibility of survival. When he arrived at Barbados, he was not sold because he had become too valuable to work as a field hand on a sugar plantation.²⁰

‘You see me here now’

In an unpublished manuscript, ‘The 1799 Narratives of Sibell and Ashy’, ‘two female slaves at Barbados’ recounted their experiences to John Ford.²¹ He characterized the women as ‘an old African female slave named Sibell … [and] an old female slave named Ashy of the Fantee tribe’²² Jerome Handler, the scholar who discovered Ford’s manuscript in a box at the Bodleian Library, did not find anything conclusive about the women’s ‘amanuensis’. Ford’s only ‘footprint’ was the overt literacy of his transcription of their narratives.²³

Beyond the recognition that they existed, and that their narratives preserved Barbadian Creole patois, the women provided insight into how they organized knowledge before their enslavement and the new categories they used as slaves to describe New World phenomena. They both remembered Africa; they remembered their personal histories prior to enslavement. They were also keenly aware of the subjective effects of becoming human chattels.²⁴

Sibell recounted her life in Africa as a child of ‘a great man in my country and called Makerundy, he have great many slaves, and hire many man … my Daddy nebber want – he have ground two, tree miles long and hire as many man dat he put de vittles in large tubs for dem’²⁵ Her narrative stressed that her father was ‘a great man’, that he ‘nebber want’, that he owned extensive grounds and he hired ‘many man’, and he possessed a ‘great many slaves’ himself. Her awareness that slavery existed in Africa was mediated

by her father's generosity to his slaves; he had 'so muchee'.²⁶ Sibell focused her listener's attention on a master who provided in abundance for his slaves and his servants. He was great because he gave freely. In the life she remembered, her father's generosity extended to slaves and servants, and he did not abuse them.

Sibell's memory of Africa was tied to signifiers of plenty; she had free access both to food and 'strong' drink, whenever 'we wanted'. In the West Indies and the Caribbean, the slave owner determined when to give 'strong drink' and food. He had control over when, what and how much the slave ate. This control calibrated slaves' diets according to slave occupations, so that planters quantified the amounts of food necessary to specific tasks. From the 1600s to the 1800s, planters' manuals listed the best African groups to enslave by the measurement of how much meat they had been accustomed to eating prior to enslavement. Consciously, Sibell framed her memory of Africa as an Edenic land in which Africans took whatever they needed whenever they wanted.

She described, then, her intense fondness for her sister, and how that fondness translated into her vulnerability to her kidnapper, her brother-in-law.²⁷ Sibell's memory stopped her narrative; her resignation and despair interrupted her story as she addressed her amanuensis directly, 'Ah! Budder (me beg pardon for calling you Budder, Massah) you see me here now but dere has bin grandee fight in my country for me'. Conflating 'Budder' and 'Massah', Sibell drew attention to the kinship between the brother-in-law who sold her and the 'Massah' who bought her, even that master who transcribed her story. The syntactical weight of 'you see me here now' freighted the end of the sentence, juxtaposing the present tense of Sibell, an elderly slave at the end of her life, to the story of a beloved child for whom a war was fought, who became 'ownerless' in the hold and then existed as 'chattel'. She lived her life as a slave holding these extremes together mentally.

Quite consciously, Sibell was aware of her transformed status as the slave before the master, but she did not want to leave her narrative there. Even though she was, presumably, an ageing and devalued slave before John Ford, her worth to her family was measured by her memory of the 'grandee fight' that ensued because of her absence.²⁸ The value of her recovery suggested another narrative thread: Africa could not recover until she was restored to her people. She belonged to a people, even if that 'belonging' was not a part of the slave's history.

Her status as chattel did not negate her memory of a family and a history, even though the 'Massah' was unaware of her real identity. He only saw a slave without history, reproduced solely as his property. No matter how sympathetic John Ford presumably was, he still occupied the 'Massah' subject position to her, his assumed sympathies calibrated to the victim of slavery before him. Consequently, Sibell remained a slave dialectically in relation to him.

As she continued her narrative, Sibell explained that her brother-in-law had sold her to 'de Backerah people' for a gun and powder.²⁹ He not only participated in, but also benefited from, the crime of her sale. Her simple juxtaposition of being an important member of a socially significant family to her reducibility to gun and powder underscored her own consciousness of the complicity of injustice. She organized her narrative consciously around a split between who she had been and what she was forced to be.³⁰

After the ‘Backerah’ people took possession of her, she was ‘stored in a Long house’ with many different captives, from different tribes. The sounds of so many languages frightened her, increasing her isolation. This moment became associated with her awareness of ‘White people’. They were the people who collected all of these different groups, reduced them to a singular identity of slave, and then shipped them away from their peoples and to their deaths.

Me nebber see de White people before, me nebber see de great ships pon de water before, me nebber hear de Waves before which me frighten so muchee dat me thought me would die.³¹

For Sibell, ‘de White people’, ‘de great ships pon de water’ and the noise of ‘de Waves’ signified her immediate death. They were all unfamiliar and unknown phenomena. She had never encountered them before; they all seemed equally dangerous, poised to destroy her. As she moved from these apprehensions of phenomena external to her, to unfamiliar objects, she made a series of startling conclusions. The ‘Backerah’ were white people. Their boats and the waves were signifiers of her death. All three colluded to kill her, and they presented a phenomenological existence in which terror reproduced this given reality. Terror was to be the cognitive condition of her existence.³²

The sailors collected two to three new Africans daily and brought them to the long house where she was kept. Their captors lied to them, telling them they were going to a good master, they would work and they would never be hungry.³³ Sibell underscored, for Ford, the amount of deception the slave traders used to control their captives. Even in this deception, they reduced their captives’ needs to physical sustenance. If they fed them, gave them work, they would accept their transformation to slavery.

Finally, Sibell and the others were loaded on to the ship, and there she discovered ‘[my] country woman Mimbo, my country man Dublin, my Country woman Sally’, but they were sold, prompting John Ford’s interjection, ‘Here she burst into tears and could say no more’.³⁴ For Sibell, the memory of her people, and her life, ended with the boat. The only way to represent her response was in the speechlessness and sobbing its memory produced.

The hold placed Sibell in a phenomenology of the unknown; all phenomena were marked as threats, and absolutely outside her knowledge. Instead of being able to reproduce objects of knowledge according to *a priori* concepts – an epistemological necessity for determining where she was and how she was there – she became forced to produce new concepts grounded in the epistemology of her enslavement – its terror giving shape to slavery’s unique phenomena. She existed in a ‘new world of slaves’, and to know herself in this ‘new world’, she had to internalize how she was an object of slavery. Against these new concepts and objects, she fused together a narrative of her former identity and the ‘grandee fight’ to restore her. Sibell’s narrative ended in the reaffirmation of her value as a person.

The other narrative, Ashy’s brief account, began, like Sibell’s, with a memory of Africa, but explicitly juxtaposed the superiority of ‘my Country’ over ‘Barbadus’ because when drought occurred in Africa, her God answered her people’s prayers. She also stressed that she knew she belonged to the ‘Fantee’.³⁵ Ashy emphasized, for Ford, that if a slave in her former ‘Country’ ran away from his master, ‘if dey run away and

stay long time, when dey come back dey no hurtee dem'.³⁶ Ashy contrasted the position of the 'Massah' with the 'Grandee' man to indict, by inference, the 'Massah' who did not allow runaway slaves to return without punishment. Africa was 'a boon Country' because the 'Grandee' was compassionate towards runaways. Ashy's narrative ended with an appeal for compassion for the fugitive slave.³⁷

Taken together, these two narratives presented a subject position in which the slave possessed a deeper awareness of obligation to others, a realization that the slave mattered, even if unobserved by their masters. Furthermore, both women were particularly concerned with contrasting the treatment of slaves in Africa with their treatment in Barbados. For Sibell, it was a matter of sustenance; for Ashy, it was the treatment of the runaway. Ultimately, for both women, Africans were the exceptional people, whether it was Sibell identifying for her listener that a war had been fought over her capture or Ashy noting the efficacy of her people's prayers, the power of its leaders and its god.

Essentially, these two brief excerpts provided insight into the implicit givens which the narrator wanted the listener not only to identify with but also to contrast with the realities of the slave's current condition. They demanded Ford's synthetic judgement. Both women forced him to compare their present circumstances with the stories of their pasts.

For Sibell, this occurred as she described her kidnap from her family, her isolation among other Africans and her transformation into human chattel. Her experience began with familial dislocation and ended with the narrative of labour that underpinned her new identity as property. Finally, her attempt to represent the transitional period of the cargo hold triggered her loss of voice. She wanted her amanuensis to reproduce this tension. Interposed though with these givens, Sibell sutured narrative strategies that insisted on her previous history in Africa, the significance she had to her family, the abundance of her previous life so that she could eat and drink as much and whenever she liked, and the recovery of direct address, 'you see me here now'.

For Ashy, the recovery of voice began, likewise, with her memory of Africa. Rather than focus on the givenness of being a slave or chattel, though, Ashy exchanged the slave's given position of chattel for that of the representative of a powerful god. Her god listened to prayers and was compassionate to runaway slaves. Her god did not ignore his people. Consequently, Africa remained integral to their life stories. Both women belonged to a people. They were not the class of commodities or properties into which they had been made. Their memories testified to a missing community. They were able, furthermore, to reconstruct the social relationships they had lost.

Their faculties harmonized around representations of past lives; both women exhibited themselves as subjects in their histories. Their narratives were cognitive first steps towards expressing lost subject positions. Furthermore, both narratives disrupted any attempt to unify their personal histories with their present slave status. They did not see their experiences as slaves as effects of their previous lives in Africa. These women existed as subjects before their capture, and they continued to imagine themselves as subjects after their capture. Enslaved as objects in an epistemology of slavery that could only reproduce slave objects, the women preserved narrative proof

of their existences as subjects.³⁸ The tension between subject and object positions was a constitutive element of their existence.

Handler recognized that although accounts by enslaved Africans reference briefly authors' lives in Africa, the majority omitted their forced migration by boat and focused on their New World experiences.³⁹ The boat itself was a traumatic space, unlike anything else the slaves would encounter in the New World, because it was a moment unconceptualized by language, remaining in the zone of unrepresentability. For Sibell, that boat forced her to lose a key link apodeictically between her history as an African and her identity as a slave. Her history below deck, though remembered, remained unrecoverable and silenced her. Her only recourse was to make a subjective leap away from the slave object position by declaring, 'you see me here now'.

Slaves' subject positions

British abolition of the slave trade in 1807 forced slave boat captains to operate as smugglers. Targets for British patrols off the coasts of Brazil, West Africa and Cuba, as well as throughout the West Indies, large slavers could not outrun these patrols, so the nineteenth-century slave ship became smaller, lighter, faster. It had to be capable of navigating smaller waterways to get to ports where the captains could sell their 'cargo' surreptitiously.

In 1822, the *London and Paris Observer* reported that slaves were stowed 'in sort of a hold' but less than three feet in height. In 1833, upon the capture of the boat, *Desengaño*, the British military noted that 'the height was only twenty-eight inches'.⁴⁰ The slaves on these Spanish ships often jumped to their deaths in the ocean even after their 'rescue' by the British. They did not distinguish between their 'liberators' and their captors.

Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua was kidnapped from West Africa sometime in the mid-nineteenth century. His experience was unique in that he survived the passage from Africa to Brazil in one of these smaller cargo holds, and he had the means to describe his circumstances. He was a literate Muslim who had been kidnapped by traders.

We were thrust into the hold of the vessel in a state of nudity, the males being cramped on one side and the females on the other; the hold was so low that we could not stand up, but were obliged to crouch upon the floor or sit down; day and night were the same to us, sleep being denied us from the confined position of our bodies, and we became desperate through suffering and fatigue.

Oh! The loathsomeness and filth of that horrible place will never be effaced from my memory. ... The only food we had during the voyage was corn soaked and boiled. I cannot tell how long we were thus confined, but it seemed a very long while. We suffered very much for want of water, but was denied all we needed. A pint a day was all that was allowed, and no more; a great many slaves died upon the passage. ... Some were thrown overboard before breath was out of their bodies; when it was thought any would not live, they were got rid of that way.⁴¹

‘Stripped of their clothes prior to embarkation’, the slaves became aware immediately in the ship’s hold that they no longer had dimensions; they were to ‘fit into’ the hold as cargo.⁴² Baquaqua internalized the experience as humiliation, sleeplessness and the reduction of personal space. There was also an awareness that they were kept without water purposely, even though ‘a great many slaves died upon the passage’ because of it. They were denied sustenance intentionally, and this realization produced in Baquaqua’s mind the conclusion that slavery was a system designed to kill them in spite of their potential value.

Baquaqua contemplated his losses as he sat below deck in the hold with the other enslaved Africans. When they arrived at their destination of Pernambuco, in Brazil, the boat did not anchor until after dark. The slaves were forbidden to eat or drink during the day; they had to remain silent. They were hidden cargo, sold under the cover of darkness. Prospective buyers boarded the boat, then, to inspect the ‘merchandise’⁴³.

After the initial inspection, slaves were then transported from the boat to a market. At the market, they recognized their value as chattels, their worth quantifiable in terms of the labour that slave owners imagined they were to perform. Baquaqua recognized that his value was contingent on the market’s demand for him.

When a slaver comes in, the news spreads like wild fire, and down come all those that are interested in the arrival of the vessel with its cargo of living merchandize, who select from the stock those most suited to their different purposes, and purchase the slaves precisely in the same way that oxen or horses would be purchased in a market; but if there are not the kind of slaves in one cargo, suited for the wants and wishes of the slave buyers, an order is given to the Captain for the particular sorts required, which are furnished to order the next time the ship comes into port.⁴⁴

Like Ligon in the seventeenth century, and Steele in the eighteenth century, Pernambuco’s nineteenth-century buyers assessed the captives’ bodies according ‘to their different purposes’; they were purchased ‘precisely in the same way that oxen or horses would be purchased in a market’.

Brought ashore, Baquaqua only thought that he had finally ‘escaped the ship’.⁴⁵ His response echoed Butterworth’s observation that when the *Hudibras*’s slaves reached Grenada, they were ‘happy’. Butterworth assumed they were grateful to be slaves, that their ‘kinsmen’ were alive and that they would not be eaten. However, Baquaqua was conscious that he ‘cared but little that he was a slave’.⁴⁶ His only joy was his liberation from the hold.

The despair at his capture, transport and eventual sale to a series of cruel masters brought him to the point where he considered that he had only three options. He could try and force his sale by exhibiting himself as a valueless slave, always drunk and dishonest. He could become a fugitive slave, preferring to be a criminal, homeless and in hiding; or he could suicide. Drinking had only brought him floggings; opportunities to run away never presented themselves. Thus, he attempted to drown himself, only to be fished out of the water by strangers.⁴⁷ At the prospect of losing his investment to suicide, his master sold him to a Brazilian captain transporting cargo to New York. Baquaqua found freedom at that port.

Mary Prince's narrative, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave* (1831), reflected the shifting conditions for slaves who were born in the West Indies, known as Creoles. From an enslaved family in Bermuda, Mary Prince was one of ten children; her mother raised the children on one plantation, and her father lived and worked on another. Instead of the boat serving as the defining moment inaugurating the slave's existence, like Sibell, Equiano and Baquaqua, for Mary Prince, the slave market was the foundational experience. Whereas the cargo hold was to erase the memory of freedom in Africa, the auction experience was to erase the memory of the slave's family. It reiterated that the 'ownerless being' was now definitively chattel.

In the absence of the Middle Passage, slave societies used other mechanisms that destroyed, fundamentally, they hoped, the tendency of humans to make communities and families. Orlando Patterson argued that 'it was necessary continually to repeat the original, violent act of transforming free man into slave' and, while such an act of violence was at the core of all prehistory societies, it was uniquely 'both the prehistory and (concurrent) history of slavery'.⁴⁸ Patterson highlighted the need to repeat the traumatic break of 'forced migration' in the slave's life through a range of experiences that coalesced around the slave's chattel status.⁴⁹

Mary Prince described this 'original, violent act' in the context of her mother's preparation of Mary and her sisters for their sale at auction.

Whilst she was putting on us our new osnaburgs⁵⁰ in which we were to be sold, she said in a sorrowful voice, (I shall never forget it) 'See I am shrouding my poor children; what a task for a mother!' She then called Miss Betsey to take leave of us. 'I am going to carry my own little chickens to market' (these were her very words) 'take your last look of them no more.' 'Oh my poor slaves! My own slaves!' said dear Miss Betsey, 'you belong to me and it grieves my heart to part with you.' – Miss Betsey kissed us all and when she left my mother called all the slaves to us to bid us goodbye. ... The slaves could say nothing to comfort us; they could only weep and lament with us.⁵¹

Conscious that she was 'shrouding' her three daughters, Prince's mother associated the market with the preparation of her children for burial, while Miss Betsey considered them part of an unfortunate, but necessary, economic trajectory. The root of familial dislocation was this 'social death'. The auction was the mechanism by which children ceased to exist, replaced by adult slaves, ready for labour. Prince described it as an experience held in place both by a 'sympathetic' owner, the 'mild' Miss Betsey, and the impersonal slave trade.

Even though Mary and her sisters already existed as slaves, as children of the sympathetic 'Miss Betsey', they had been kept from some of its extremities. However, whenever slaveholders' financial situations required more capital, their slaves were systematically sold off as 'property'. For all her sympathies concerning her 'playmates', Miss Betsey still described them as 'chickens' delivered 'to market'.⁵² There was an inevitability about their currency as slaves that Miss Betsey's rationalization underscored. Mary and her sisters were always subject to sale.

Mary insisted that she repeated Miss Betsey's words exactly, 'these were her very words'. Authenticity enabled her to present her story as an emblematic tale for all of

slavery's victims, so that her memory was freighted with an obligation to speak both for her own victimization and for the victimization of her community. She declared that her mother's voice and the words she spoke to her were never forgotten; they compelled her to tell her story.⁵³ Her memory of the auction became the impetus for her narrative, and her narrative became the larger story of slavery's victims; it was her only recourse.

She underscored this reality in the realization that the slaves were without language to comfort the girls. They remained without words to address the loss of a mother's children. They could 'only weep and lament with us'. The despair of enforced familial dislocation abutted the edges of an experience similar in intensity to the hold of the slave vessel, and slaves still lacked a vocabulary for its depiction, even though they lived fully within the epistemology of slavery. It remained unresolvable in much the same way as Sibell's account of the Middle Passage.

With her three daughters, Mary, Hannah and Dinah, Mary's mother arrived at the Hamble Town's slave market, 'where she placed us in a row against a large house, with our backs to the wall, and our arms folded against our breast ... our mother stood beside crying over us'.⁵⁴ At that moment, Prince recognized that her pain was invisible to her potential buyers.

But who cared for that? Did one of the many by-standers, who were looking at us so carelessly, think of the pain that wrung the hearts of the negro woman and her young ones? No! No! They were not all bad, I dare say but slavery hardens white people's hearts towards the blacks.⁵⁵

Lined up for sale, filled with terror, her mother sobbing next to her, Mary realized that the 'by-standers ... looking at us so carelessly' did not possess a similar depth of feeling. The whites, even those who 'were not all bad', were still incapable of feeling slaves' pain. The slave market hardened the buyers and 'by-standers' to human suffering; it made them incapable of empathy. Slavery transformed white people, as well.

Handling her 'in the same manner that a butcher would a calf or a lamb he was about to purchase, and who talked about my shape and size in like words – as if I could no more understand their meaning than the dumb beasts', Mary contrasted buyers' sensibilities with hers.⁵⁶ She felt terror, but they were oblivious to her terror. Her mother sobbed next to her; they heard nothing. They spoke about her, but presumed Mary was incapable of self-consciousness.⁵⁷ They treated her like 'a butcher' would treat 'a calf or a lamb'; the intuition of being their meat evoked in her the sense of being consumed by her captors. As the buyers receded into the inanimate walls against which she and her sisters stood, the children and their mother became the only living beings in the tableau of the market.

The slave market's destruction of her family left an indelible impression. She was forty-three years old when she narrated her story. Of her ten siblings, she was able to reconstruct only the briefest details of her eldest sister, taken by her master to Trinidad, and her youngest sister, who remained enslaved in Bermuda. She was never to see any of her family again.

The sale of slaves' children became part of the collective lament of a subjugated people. Social institutions formed around the inevitability and necessity of destroying the slave's family in pursuit of profit. Whether stowed in a cargo hold, or held in the slave market, exhibited for hours, while strangers 'handled' and examined the slave

and assessed the slave's desirability for labour, the slave's foundational experience was the severance of the being from home, community and family.⁵⁸

Familial dislocation also distorted emancipation for slaves throughout the New World. With freedom often posed as an experience only available in Britain, France or 'the North', slaves had to accept freedom in exile against staying with their families in slavery, even though their family members could be sold, piecemeal, at any time. In fact, Mary Prince gained her freedom because her owners brought her to England as a slave, believing, cynically, that she would never abandon them because her husband remained on their island. When she sought assistance from abolitionists, her owners threatened her with homelessness, penury and abandonment. They reminded her that freedom would preclude her from ever seeing her husband again.⁵⁹

Familial dislocation was integral throughout 'the world of slaves'. It was a mechanism of control. John Thompson described watching his sister's sale and the events that finally led her to abandon her child for freedom in the North.⁶⁰ Thompson highlighted how liberation was associated with the family's necessary forfeit. One could not be free unless one abandoned family. Slavery's distortion was the implicit link between liberation and the loss of family.

My sister, whose name I must not mention, as she is now in the North, and like myself, not out of danger ... was given to Mrs Thomas as her maid, and was much prized, because a gift from her mother; but especially because she knew her to be a virtuous girl.

She had found it impossible to long keep a maid of this stamp for none could escape the licentious passions of her husband, who was the father of one-fourth of the slaves on his plantation, by his slave women. ... One day during his wife's absence ... he tried to force my sister to submit to his wishes. This she defeated by a resistance so obstinate, that he, becoming enraged, ordered two of his men to take her to the barn ... there to strip off her clothes and whip her ... until the blood stood in puddles under her feet.⁶¹

Thompson framed his sister's story with the realization that she had to remain anonymous because she was 'like myself, not out of danger'. They were both fugitive slaves, transgressively present in freedom. Freedom for slaves was not a static entitlement that, once won, became the possession of its holder in perpetuity.

After the death of Mrs Thomas, his sister 'ran away, leaving behind her husband and one child, and finally found her way to the North'.⁶² Years later, Thompson met her 'accidentally ... on the streets of Philadelphia'. He learnt that she had married again and 'lived in prosperity'.⁶³

Thompson outlined carefully that even sympathetic masters were still complicit in slavery's abuses. There was no middle ground in which good slaveholders made slavery palatable by 'gradually' ameliorating its evils.⁶⁴ In this way, he noted the many excuses used to justify his sister's persecution. Masters forced themselves on their slaves because the women were not 'virtuous'; flogging slaves was 'necessary', since slaves 'neglected' their duties.

Like his sister, Thompson ended up 'being a fugitive slave'. After being sold and rented numerous times, he was bought by 'Master Richard' who treated him as a valuable

investment until he discovered that Thompson could read and write.⁶⁵ As long as the differences between Thompson and his ‘master’ were overt – Thompson was unable to read or write – Richard felt safe and inclined to protect his investment. Thompson’s literacy triggered Richard’s violence, prompting Thompson to become a fugitive.

Although Thompson established himself in Philadelphia, joined a church, found work and got married, he lived with the knowledge that his freedom was contingent.⁶⁶ A home and family made him vulnerable to capture. Subtly, Thompson revealed a core experience of slavery, the belief that ‘free’ social institutions, family and home, did not belong to him in the ways they belonged to white people.

In fact, numerous slave accounts depicted the tenuousness of the slave trying to hold on to freedom. Just as slave owners repeatedly sought social mechanisms to continue the enslaving process in the absence of the Middle Passage,⁶⁷ the freed slave was required to negotiate liberation with a view to its fragility. It was a fluid, constantly endangered experience. Moreover, ‘freed’ proved to be never very far from ‘fugitive’. Individual manumissions were not necessarily binding if the freed man or woman happened to cross a geographical boundary, or a militia group revoked the terms of manumission.

Ashton Warner was born on St Vincent island, at Cane Grove plantation, sometime between 1806 and 1807. When Cane Grove’s owner died, and the estate was to be sold after his death, Warner’s aunt, Daphne Crosbie, purchased Ashton and his mother. Warner lived with his aunt and his mother freely for ten years before he ‘was claimed as a slave belonging to Cane Grove by Mr Wilson,’ the plantation’s new owner.⁶⁸ Wilson came for Warner, accompanied by island police, but he was unable to pick Warner out of a lineup of slaves before him. He had to ask for Ashton to identify himself, and then the police grabbed Warner to transport him directly to the plantation.⁶⁹

His sale to Crosbie was invalidated by the planter’s ability to take possession of the young man. Since Wilson refused to even look at the documents that proved the validity of Crosbie’s purchase, she asked that Warner be taken to jail until a magistrate could evaluate the bill of sale, a plea that was rejected by the police. Warner was brought back to Cane Grove as a slave.

Eventually, Warner ran away from Cane Grove, with his manumission papers in hand, but even after his documents were validated, the spectre of forcible return to Cane Grove haunted him throughout the Caribbean and West Indies until, finally, he gained passage from James Fox to sail on one of his boats to England. Through the courts, he hoped to compel Wilson to pay him for his three years’ unlawful tenure as a slave at Cane Grove. While waiting on the outcome of the legal proceedings, and shortly before the publication of his narrative, Warner died at twenty-four years of age.

A free man from the West Indies, George Lycurgas (1936–8) was falsely arrested during the Civil War and ended up becoming a fugitive, too.⁷⁰ He explained that although runaway slaves had many reasons for ‘running’, they all shared one basic perspective.

Some was trying to get North and fight for de freedom of they people; others was jes runnin’ way cause dey could. Others didn’t had no idea where dey was goin’ and told of good marsters. But one and all dey had a good strong notion ter see what it was like to own your own body.⁷¹

All of the fugitive slaves shared one ‘good strong notion’ of imagining ‘what it was like to own your own body’. As a free man, forced to live as a fugitive, George internalized the desire for freedom and ownership of the body as a cleavage between the mind and the body. The imagined consciousness of ‘what it was like’ motivated runaways more than any of the ostensible reasons behind where they aimed to go. It was the one central feature of all slaves’ subjectivity, the fantasy of owning ‘your own body’.⁷²

Ronald Judy remarked that the slave experienced ‘reality as given’;⁷³ in other words, the slave’s reality was understood by both slave and master as a reflection of the slave’s ontology.⁷⁴ The ‘given’ was the critical component, since it called to mind the Kantian ‘manifold of raw intuition’. With Kant, subjects came into being through aesthetic judgements; they literally ‘pressed themselves out’ from the ‘manifold of raw intuitions’. It was the birth of the subject. However, if the slave constituted himself as a subject against the backdrop of slavery and subjugation, the slave’s ‘raw intuitions’ united around the awareness of one’s body as somebody else’s property. The slave’s body was always external to the subject within. As Judy asserted, ‘the manifold of raw intuitions’ had been replaced by a ‘manifold of apprehensions of “being chattel.”’⁷⁵

Lycurgas posited a horizon of hope in a future of multiple subject positions, multiple ways of not ‘being a slave’, of narratives that rejected a reduction of being. ‘To imagine being free’ equated to the imagination of multiple predicates attached to ‘one’s own body’ so that one was no longer fettered physically to being a slave, but instead was a father, like George; a sailor, like Equiano; a ‘princess,’ like Sibell; a child of a powerful god, like Ashy; a free woman, like Mary Prince.⁷⁶ Hardwired into this ontology was the need to prove the legitimacy of one’s freedom, every single day.⁷⁷

As long as slaves remained within slavery’s universe, they were interchangeable units of labour. For every individual slave who imagined freedom, he or she imagined it alone. Enslavement’s underwriting principle was the belief that slaves were not to be allowed to define their own collective subject positions. They were not communities; moreover, the foundational experiences that had created this helot class of labouring property – the Middle Passage, the slave auction, the ‘seasoning’ of their bodies and minds – had been intended to erase from their subjective experiences any reference point or recollection of histories prior to slavery. They were not entitled to a history that did not begin and end with their usefulness to their masters.

James W. C. Pennington recounted in his narrative, *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, that he published his text because there was, he argued, an ‘increasing disposition to overlook the fact, that THE SIN of slavery lies in the chattel principle, or relation.’⁷⁸ His fellow Christians believed that under ‘kind masters’ – ‘Christian masters’ – slaves enjoyed ‘the mildest form of slavery’ in which they were ‘well fed and clothed’.⁷⁹ He wondered what was gained by diminishing the evil of slavery, by pointing to the base fulfilment of slaves’ physical needs. For Pennington, this argument did not realize the effects of chattel on subjects.

The being of slavery, its soul and body, lives and moves in the chattel principle, the property principle, the bill of sale principle; the cart-whip, starvation, and nakedness, are its inevitable consequences to a greater or less extent, warring with the dispositions of men.⁸⁰

Pennington sketched, for his readers, the stakes of slavery for its victims. They became ‘beings of slavery’. They existed permanently sutured to a trajectory where they never actually began as free individuals. They were ownerless beings, powerless in a world where their development ended with the chattel principle.

The intuited formula of slavery

Michael Craton made the important observation that when ‘the ruling class formed itself into a plantocracy, legislating in its own self-interest’, there emerged ‘a dangerous lack of articulation between the politicolegal system at the center and the functional slave society based on individual plantations’.⁸¹ Craton identified a tension within a ‘ruling class’ whose espoused laws stipulated a set of behaviours that were undermined consciously by practices on specific plantations, that is, the laws did not necessarily reflect the custom of slavery on plantations, even though the ‘plantocracy’ was perceived as ‘legislating in its own self-interest’. To that end, each planter imagined and understood his power over his slaves to supersede any legal constraint or enhancement that the law mandated from the planter class collectively.

This tension had been one of the implications behind Joshua Steele’s affidavits in 1784.

‘What is the legal power which Masters have over their slaves in Barbadoes?’

The general power which a Master exercises ... (from Slaves being bought as chattels, in the same manner as horses, or other beasts) ... appears to be unlimited.⁸²

Steele corrected his examiner’s statement by shifting ‘legal power’ to ‘general power’. The practices on ‘individual plantations’ were underwritten by masters’ beliefs in their own absolute ownership of their property. Steele’s affidavit provided a context for a key concept underwriting slavery’s legitimation in the early modern and Enlightenment eras because he identified that slaves, as chattels, had no rights in the governance of their bodies. To get at the significance behind Steele’s description, the trajectory of African to chattel had to follow its own conceptual route.

Africans began, in European minds, as ‘ownerless’ phenomena, elements within raw, untamed nature; they existed in a world of *res nullius*. Phenomena could not exist without mediation in European epistemologies; they had to be constituted as objects of some kind, within an appropriate category. The trajectory of that constitution required phenomena to be schematized to a concept by which they could be known as objects. Since they were ‘ownerless’ beings, the concept under which they would be subsumed was chattel. The chattel concept added to Africans as phenomena produced slaves.

However, ‘ownerless’ phenomena did not volunteer for slavery. Europeans had forced ‘ownerless’ beings to be their instruments, to serve as their beasts of burden. The earliest form of *res nullius* articulated at the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 suggested that any ‘ownerless thing’ could be possessed and controlled by anyone with the power to take it. It was a thing, empty, *nullius*, of possession. At the time of Tordesillas, there were only two imperial powers in Europe, Spain and Portugal; between the two of them, the world was divided by an imaginary line.

In this way, *res nullius* underwrote Europeans' imagination of a world of chattels and masters. The ownerless phenomena could be converted, through capture, auction and seasoning, into chattel so that cheap labour emerged in the form of slaves, that is, as Eltis and Richardson declared, 'there was nothing moral about it'.⁸³ It was based purely on economic greed. This conceptual route of ownerless phenomena to chattel proceeded, undisturbed, for four centuries, in tandem with the physical development of slavery.

Ligon confirmed this perspective in his discussion of the Macaw episode in which Macaw's master rejected Christian conversion for slaves.⁸⁴ Planters achieved their prosperity in the historic modality of the use of force, becoming rich through the possession of chattels.⁸⁵ This perspective was intimately related to the planters' belief that they had been ordered by divine right to profit, since they were the Adams of God-given civilization and progress. Ligon certainly believed this himself when he stood on the *Achilles* in sublime reverie, thrilled by the notion that the subject position he occupied at that moment could never be the possession of those who remained in England.

By the eighteenth century, planters saw themselves akin to civilization's 'patriarchs', existing in an Eden before the Law. They were 'liberated' from England's laws, and they possessed the revelation of their own exceptionalism. This perspective continued to develop until some planters argued that they had been inspired to enslave, both by biblical commandment and philosophical tradition. Theirs was a revelatory entitlement.

Trevor Burnard argued that revelatory entitlement characterized the planter class in both the West Indies and the United States; that is, it was constitutive of a planter's identity.⁸⁶ Using the example of Virginia planter William Byrd II, Burnard noted Byrd's belief in the plantation as 'an idyll and the planter ... God's representative on Earth. He described himself as living "like one of the patriarchs, I have my flocks and my herds, my bondmen and bond-women, and every soart [sic] of trade amongst my own servants, so that I live in a kind of independence on every one, but Providence." In Byrd's vision, the planter was at the top of a harmonious social hierarchy, where he assumed individual, personal authority over all people below him, especially servants and slaves.'⁸⁷ In their desires to maintain their 'tribes' of slaves, planters determined an epistemology of obligations in which slaves never communicated their desires, but were reproduced as 'happy', in need of nothing but their masters' benevolence. Byrd's master-as-patriarch resonated with planters like Lewis and Edwards.

Philosophically, such masters took great pleasure in the general belief that slaves did not possess faculties akin to their masters, and did not share a *sensus communis*, that principle which both Kant and Burke had determined grounded European communities. If slaves did not possess the same faculties as their masters, they could not reason, imagine or even understand what it meant to possess one's body. If they did not share in *sensus communis*, they could not constitute communities foundationally, that is, they could not form a competing group with rights that could be expressed.

These narratives regarding subject and community formation, though, needed legal legitimacy. They required the law to venture into a definition of human chattels, to adumbrate planters' rights and 'obligations' towards these chattels, as well as the acceptable modes of disposing of them. Since 'the slave was not regarded as a subject, but as a property', Elsa V. Goveia reasoned that a slave's life encompassed two phases,

‘merchandise when bought and sold in the course of the slave trade’ and ‘private property’ when ‘acquired by a planter … regarded in part as a chattel, in part as real property’.⁸⁸ ‘Ownerless phenomena’ became objects of knowledge, known as chattel through a legislative concept of ‘merchandise’.

However, ‘merchandise’ and ‘private property’ were the two last nodes of the slave trajectory. There remained an occluded third term, and this term had been expressed as *res nullius*, the being without possession in itself. Beings identified as *res nullius* through capture became merchandise after such capture.

An analogy of Goveia’s argument was illustrated by Butterworth’s description of the slave revolt on the *Hudibras*. In the aftermath of the revolt, when the *Hudibras* captain stowed the living slaves with the corpses below deck after the failed rebellion, he not only reinforced the futility of attempted resistance, but he also signalled that living or dead, the slave’s body was his ‘merchandise’ to control. He taught the slaves that they occupied space at his discretion. Just as one stored faulty ‘merchandise’ next to its functioning replacement in a warehouse, the living ‘merchandise’ shared the same space as the corpse, the unrepaired or maimed ‘merchandise’. When the slave was eventually sold, he or she became ‘private property’. As such, the slave’s value was recalculated according to his or her worth as chattel. Chattel was part of the planter’s entitlement and legacy. Thus, the slave had a new role to play in the increase of the estate’s wealth. The slave was obligated to increase an estate’s value.

Put another way, slavery’s philosophical bases were quite clear: unrepresented phenomena became the possession of a subject who named such phenomena, who gave them existence as objects of knowledge and who controlled them through representation.⁸⁹ This unacknowledged philosophical underpinning freighted representation and social institutions with a means to prolong slavery’s effects long after its abolition. Goveia designated it a ‘continuity of principle’ that persisted in animating legal codes, social institutions and the cultural life of the West Indies after slavery’s repeal.⁹⁰ It was a formula whose last two terms were identified, but whose first term’s epistemic occlusion enabled slaveholders to posit a longevity for slavery’s values in space and time.

Walter Johnson linked the ‘principle’ to ‘the idea of slavery’s future’, sutured through the concept of chattel.⁹¹ Johnson pointed to how the ‘slave market’ extended slavery into space and time, how it gave slavery’s principle an extension that did not necessarily need slavery to continue.

In its capacity to sell both the hope of a self-reproducing slave force and its replacement – its capacity, that is to reformulate (or negate) over time the gendered meanings and reproductive capacities of the bodies of the enslaved men and women – to produce a slaveholding legacy from the broken pieces of a slave family and to broaden slavery’s hold over space and extend its history through time, the trade was, most of its opponents and many of its defenders would have agreed, the market of slavery’s future.⁹²

Johnson’s thesis identified the intention of slaveholders to keep the practice, its ‘legacy’, going through the reproduction of chattels, while simultaneously stripping from slaves’

bodies 'gendered meanings and reproductive capacities'. The future slave force was a 'reformulated' class of beings that existed exclusively for labour, without the subjective experience of the social institutions of family. Moreover, that future force reproduced interchangeable replacements, bodies without meaningful social differences.

It was the foundational experience as far as planters were concerned, and it took place either in the cargo hold of a slaver, at the slave market or in the one to three years' 'seasoning' that broke the individual's spirit, obliterated past memories and resigned the subject to the new chattel status, without hope.⁹³ This foundational experience encoded into being the object's revelation of subjectivity without the hope, the means and the support for liberation.

Slavery's legacy rested on the consignment of peoples to the status of unrepresented phenomena who came into existence as a class of objects. It required subjects, their masters, to posit an epistemology shaped around phenomena and objects of knowledge that routinely resisted existence in the chattel category. In other words, categories collected objects of knowledge. Objects of knowledge represented phenomena after concepts identified them. One might have apprehensions of phenomena, but apprehensions remained diffuse and unconscious. Subjects knew objects within their categories and by their concepts. Thus, phenomena did not intrude in categories. Slaves existed, though, both as unrepresentable phenomena and as objects of knowledge: both statuses could rebel against these designations at any time. Goveia summed it up as the moment when 'mere property' acted instead as 'a creature possessing volition', whose 'capacity for resistance ... must be checked, indeed crushed, if the society were to survive'.⁹⁴

In other words, masters' fears of slave rebellions, the African body, the unruly object, the runaway slave, the ameliorated or 'improved' slave, the idle slave, the slave playing drums,⁹⁵ the noisy 'blacks' at their Sunday markets,⁹⁶ slaves communicating with each other,⁹⁷ the invisible threat of an African existence before enslavement, the unarticulated menace of 'blackness', lurking in nature – all of these aspects contributed to masters' sense of being at the precipice of their societies' ruin unless more extreme forms of control over these bodies were applied. This reaction appeared to be endemic to slaveholding colonies throughout the Americas.⁹⁸ In the West Indies, and the Caribbean, planters' fears became laws. These laws were built around the formula of *res nullius*, merchandise, chattel.

This reality freighted the slaves' existence even after manumission. Edwards took great comfort in knowing that slavery's imprint would make freedom unbearably difficult for the 'liberated'. Slavery's self-contained universe had transformed liberation, in any expression, into a transgressive act. With all the social institutions coalesced around the idea of enslavement, manumitted slaves routinely appeared criminal to their former masters. Even as amelioration gained ground, the only subject positions available to slaves outside of slavery teetered between the liberated pariah and the fugitive criminal.

Part Two

Colonialism



A World of Colonies and the Evolving Colonial Consciousness

Germany's colonial period encompassed only about thirty years.¹ It began with Bismarck, a leader who had little desire to invest time, money and people in a colonial project, and reached its apex in German Southwest Africa (GSPA) with the Herero-Nama genocides between 1904 and 1908, at which time the remnant of the Herero-Nama indigenous tribal groups subsisted either in concentration camps as slaves or as exiles in Botswana and South Africa. From 1909 to 1918, Germany's colonial presence in GSPA was marked by German settler prosperity. The Herero-Nama groups were reassigned to reserves and engaged as indentured servants attached to farms, mines and missions. Finally, Germany lost its colonial possessions as a consequence of its defeat in the First World War. In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles stripped Germany of its entitlement to colonies; by 1920, the treaty was in effect on the ground.² Germany's colonial enterprise had officially ended.³

The story of German colonialism in Southwest Africa (SWA) is imbricated with British and Dutch colonialisms. To get to GSPA, Germans had to go through South Africa, and this journey required that they use the routes that Dutch and British traders had used before them. It was both a mental and a physical journey.

The emerging colonial consciousness, 1440–1800

In the fifteenth century, Europe's relationship with Africa was primarily characterized by Portuguese ships sailing around the Cape on their way to and from Asia. When they did establish settlements in Africa, they confined themselves to areas where they could buy slaves and barter for gold.⁴ By the sixteenth century, other European powers on their way to and from Asia had adopted the Portuguese route as well.

In 1649, a Dutch crew found themselves stranded at Table Bay in southern Africa for the winter after losing their ship; they recommended the Cape as a temporary settlement for the Dutch East India Company (VOC), because the location was well suited for Dutch ships en route to the VOC's holdings in Batavia.⁵ Since the Company dominated European commerce in the seventeenth century, it needed a way station for its very large fleet.⁶ Leonard Thompson described the Company as 'a State outside a State'.⁷ It operated as if it was a sovereign entity; its employees were its agents.

In 1651, Jan van Riebeck arrived with a cohort of eighty Company employees, whose only purpose was to resupply company boats.⁸ In 1657, several of these employees were ‘released from their contracts’ and given land, subsequently becoming ‘free burghers’.⁹ These ‘burghers’ were to farm and sell their crops to the company at a reduced price. By 1658, the Dutch had imported the first shiploads of slaves to work for their former employees, transforming the way station into a slaveholding colony.¹⁰ The VOC would send more and more low-level employees, cashing them out when it became profitable to do so. They swapped contractual obligations for free land. The primary groups in the colony consisted of poor Dutch and German VOC employees, and then a large number of French Huguenots from the Netherlands.¹¹ The Boers, or Afrikaners, formed from these three groups.

In 1685, the last company commander and the colony’s first governor, Simon van der Stel, left the Dutch colony at the Cape in South Africa with ‘an exploration party’, in order to find the ‘pure copper ore’ that local Nama tribes had shown him.¹² Van der Stel described the Nama he had met in the Cape as ‘very friendly’; relations were so amenable between the Nama and the Dutch settlers that the Nama treated the colony to a musical ‘exhibition’ for the governor’s birthday.¹³

However, as Thompson suggested, van der Stel was a company employee and not a reliable witness. With the introduction of slave labour, and increasing numbers of Dutch settlers sent by the VOC, who claimed more and more land, tensions escalated between the ‘happy Nama’ and the Dutch colonists.¹⁴ Due to wars from 1659 to 1660, and 1673 to 1677, then a smallpox outbreak, the majority of the Nama left the region.¹⁵ Those who stayed existed as ‘detribalized indigenous peoples’.¹⁶

In 1761, Carl Brink, a German surveyor, was commissioned by the VOC, the ‘rulers’ of the Cape Colony, to accompany Hendrik Hop’s expedition into Namaland ‘for the purpose of proving if and what advantages might thereby be gained for both our Ruling Masters and this Colony’.¹⁷ The VOC had already imagined annexing Namaland as an adjunct to its colony. Brink was to draw a ‘suitable map of the undiscovered unknown country and keep a journal of daily occurrences’.¹⁸ The product of this expedition, Brink’s *Land Caarte van een Gedeelte van ZuydAfrika of 1761* (Figure 2), is reportedly the oldest map of SWA.¹⁹ The map had very little information on it because, as Heinrich Vedder, a German missionary with the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS), later concluded, the results of the expedition ‘were not important’.²⁰

The Dutch colony’s interest in an expedition stemmed from Jacobus Coetse’s description of shooting a giraffe in the southwest interior,²¹ but this reason was not part of the official record of the VOC. Unofficially, the expedition sought the giraffe, ‘a certain animal never known in this country’.²² Hop was to ascertain if the ‘natives employed’ giraffes as ‘beasts of burden’, underscoring Africa’s potential as a repository of raw materials, unknown treasures and untapped resources.²³ The Cape governor felt Hop to be particularly suited for this expedition because he was both a ‘farmer’ and an officer, born and raised in the colony. Moreover, he had laboured on his father’s farm as well as his own. He understood the colonists’ needs.

Vedder added that the Cape governor had another concern. He had heard stories of a ‘mythical black people’ with ‘long hair’ who wore ‘linen clothes’.²⁴ His curiosity about this people prompted him to authorize Hop’s expedition. The ‘Minutes of

Council', at which the authorization was recorded, stated that the expedition intended to discover 'a certain Nation ... who it must be supposed are a civilized People'.²⁵ If such a 'civilized People' existed, then, the space was not as empty as the Europeans had imagined. The link was already forming in the colonists' minds between the need to prove the absence of a 'civilized people' that would invalidate the VOC's acquisition of Namaland and the area's potential wealth.

Thus, two competing interests underwrote the Hop expedition: the search for a 'beast of burden' to work the farms of the Cape Colony and the possibility of discovering 'a civilized People'. The Hop expedition never found these mythical 'civilized black people', and the map reflected the Europeans' belief in a vast emptiness that lurked between the edges of their settlement and wild beasts.

The Brink map (Figure 2) was the foremost one of three panels. Read from top to bottom, the whole map showed an outline of 'natives' and beasts, constructed as boundaries of discrete areas. In his description of the map, Vedder found Brink's sketches of elephants and isolated Nama villages, with figures performing 'rituals' and dancing happily, its most compelling details.²⁶

However, what was really novel about the map was its depiction of SWA as *known* blank space.²⁷ The map depicted the entire region to be primarily empty; it contained no 'advantages'. At the boundaries of Europe's knowledge, this unmarked space, sat four animals, isolated from each other by topographical obstacles so that nature appeared to segment its terrain. With a lion at the top, an adjacent zebra, a horse slightly lower and the desired giraffe at the bottom, each animal was stationed in its own preserve. Brink had conceived of SWA as having 'naturally' occurring boundaries that segregated each beast within its own domain. Vedder supposed the Nama settlements to be organized in 'natural' preserves that separated the Europeans from the 'natives'.²⁸

Furthermore, these domains even suggested a hierarchy of beasts, since the lion sat atop the map, demonstrating that topography maintained the taxonomy. One could infer that the conquest of Africa only required the Europeans to make the boundaries clearer, more legible. In two of the map's panels, one did not see any populations already there; the only thing looming on the horizon was 'empty space'. The map would most certainly be revised when Europeans had something to put on it, but for now, the region, with its neatly drawn preserves, its natural boundaries of rivers and mountains, sat silent.²⁹

Brink's map resonated with European sensibilities, even though the map never circulated publicly and remained the private property of the VOC.³⁰ It spoke to how European epistemologies had transformed vision, changing the terms of visibility and the designation of value. Since Hop had sought 'a certain animal never known in this country', any other entity was unimportant and had to be excluded from representation. The sensual world had shifted from what was felt to what could be seen and depicted.³¹ In other words, the purpose of the expedition produced, its own terms, a 'tunnel vision'. Everything else was eliminated from sight.

Brink's surveyed blank space signified the land's lack of value, for the moment.³² The remaining African phenomena stayed outside the frame of the surveyor; this 'manifold' of emptiness did not constitute any worthwhile objects of knowledge. Receding into darkness, the continent's emptiness became synonymous with an 'uncivilized' state.

When John Barrow was remanded to the Cape of Good Hope in 1798, the British had just taken possession of the Dutch colony for the first time.³³ Barrow saw himself as a reformer in comparison with the Boer ‘burghers’ and government officials whose embrace of slavery, and land grabs, had destroyed not only the Nama tribes living near them, but also the land itself on which they staked their farms.³⁴ Barrow was to assess the possibilities of repairing the damages done by Boer farmers on the local populations of Nama living in proximity to them. He described a radical transformation among the Nama; no longer the ‘friendly natives’ of van Stel’s era, Barrow described them as enslaved to the VOC.³⁵ The damage of this transformation had, likewise, seeped into the territory itself.

These plains are now desolate and uninhabited. All those numerous tribes of Namaquas, once possessed of vast herds of cattle, are, in the course of less than a century, dwindled away to four hordes, which are not very numerous, and in a great measure are subservient to the Dutch peasantry, who dwell among them. The latter, who have seized upon the choicest part of their country, allow them to erect their huts in the neighbourhood of their farms, on condition of their furnishing a certain number of people to protect their cattle against the attacks of *Bosjesmans*, or wild beasts of prey. A dozen years more, and probably a shorter period, will see the remains of the Namaqua nation in a state of entire servitude. Such are the effects of an encroaching peasantry, sanctioned by the low policy of a government that could descend to employ agents to effect the purchase of whole herds of cattle for a cask of brandy ... it authorized those agents, for the greater convenience of transporting their brandy, to make an expensive road across a point of the Khamies berg, which still bears the honorable name of the Company’s road. The government having fixed no limits to their colony, nor their subjects to their avarice, the latter found it still more convenient to settle themselves in the midst of the harmless Namaquas, who considered them as the most acceptable neighbours in the world. For a bottle of brandy, which cost sixpence, they willingly exchanged an ox; and such is still the infatuation of this people for the noxious liquor, that they will even now exchange a sheep for the same quantity of it.³⁶

The Namaqua plain had been emptied of its inhabitants, the Nama transformed into an indentured class. Under the Dutch, the Cape Colony had fostered a system that allowed its ‘subjects’ no limit ‘to their avarice’, so that the Nama tribes on the plain had been absorbed into the colony as individual units of labour. They existed in a state of ‘detribalization’.

Barrow speculated that if the Boers continued to trade ‘brandy’, a cheap European commodity, to the Cape Nama for valuable stock, ‘the remains of the Namaqua nation’ would be ‘in a state of entire servitude’ within the next decade. The signifier of their transformation was, furthermore, the presence of the ‘Company’s road’ across the ‘Khamies berg’, the major Nama territory of the Cape Colony. From Barrow’s perspective, the easy transport of brandy to and livestock from Nama settlements had completely altered their social organization. The previously independent Nama now served as ‘not very numerous hordes’, dependents ‘subservient to the Dutch peasantry’.

Consequently, some Nama abandoned the Cape Colony to reside at its fringes; they settled around the Orange River, the boundary between South Africa and SWA.

Absorbed into the Orlam groups, they existed as herders and ‘outlaws’, conducting raids on Boer farms.³⁷ From these ‘fringes’, individual Europeans informed the colony of other Nama groups beyond their boundaries in SWA.

Europeans imagine Southwest Africa, 1806–60

In 1806, SWA’s ‘first white persons’ were German missionaries, working under the auspices of the London Missionary Society. They arrived to the Cape Colony, eager to plunge into SWA’s ‘emptiness’ in order to find and redeem ‘the natives’. Vedder, himself a German missionary, emphasized that his predecessors followed the Orlam groups with the intent of ‘gathering the stragglers together and getting them to settle down’.³⁸

To that end, the missionaries founded ‘collecting stations’, with mission fields or territories.³⁹ The mission was to inhibit the perceived ‘nomadism’ of the Orlams, getting them, instead, to adopt permanent settlement at these stations. The Cape encouraged this strategy as well, by granting ‘land to the mission station for the purposes of cultivation’.⁴⁰

What both the missionaries and the government did not understand was the role that climate would play in their miscalculations about imposed indigenous settlement. An absence of rainfall would push the Orlams to move into the territory of the Red Nation Nama to the north of the Orange River. Missionary efforts to settle and civilize these ‘natives’, to save ‘their heathen souls’, failed, although they did manage to convert one Orlam *kaptein*, Jäger Afrikaner, the father of Jonker Afrikaner.⁴¹ By 1840, the Wesleyans had taken over this mission.

Reverend Tindall, the Wesleyan missionary stationed with the Nama, at Naosanabis, reported that the land was ‘barren’. Its inhabitants were ‘stupid, ignorant, and yet conceited people. ... Souls are perishing. Plunder, murder, and a darkness that may be felt’.⁴² Associating ‘barren’ with a ‘darkness that may be felt’, Tindall identified SWA’s ‘inhabitants’ as explicit expressions of that ‘darkness’. Lamenting that the Nama were more sinful after his years among them than when he first arrived, he returned with his family to the Cape Colony in 1848.

In 1842, Carl Hugo Hahn arrived, under the auspices of the RMS in SWA. The RMS would be the most visible missionary group working in SWA prior to, during and after the German colonial period. Hahn, too, wanted to bring ‘civilization to the Natives’.⁴³ Writing in his diary, Hahn described the challenges he confronted because the largest and wealthiest indigenous group, the Herero, remained unconvinced of his holy mission.

Murder, immorality, lying, the three banners of Satan’s empire waved freely here. The Hereros from Chief to servant, from rich to poor, are unashamed beggars and thieves. Polygamy, adultery, and whoring are regarded as perfectly natural.⁴⁴

Africa and its emptiness, it seemed, had revealed itself to be the site of ‘Satan’s empire’. The indigenous exhibited their allegiance to Satan through their behaviour; furthermore, the missionaries regarded their behaviour as proof that they were beings ‘naturally inclined’ towards depravity.

The comforting empty spaces of Brink's map were now understood not only as 'barrenness' but also as evidence of sinful heathens and chaotic violence. This world needed to be returned to order, the order of the map, so that nature could be productive again. For Hahn, the German missionary, African 'nature' doubly articulated 'the fall', both in the physical environment and in Africans' physical bodies. Since the Herero did not have a concept of 'the fall' of humankind into 'sin', their bodies reflected it as their being's 'natural state'. To his missionary sensibilities, the Hereros' attitude was reinforced by their aversion to labour: they did not 'labor by the sweat of their brows'; that is, they did not farm. Work required permanence and stability, but the Herero refused to remain in one place. The lack of farms and inclination to farm was evidence that they had violated divine law.

For Hahn, the biblical logic was very simple: God had cast humans out of the Garden of Eden because they had sinned. The land into which they were cast was 'barren', and in that imposed exile, God condemned them to 'labor by the sweat of their brows' in order to return the land to fertility. Through hard work, and business, humans were to prove that they had abandoned sin; through work, they would regain the possibility of Eden: they would be set free. The proof of their labours was its physical expression in farms, gardens, churches and the roads that enabled trade. Humans were commanded to fill in the space of 'barrenness' with the evidence of their redemption. They had done it in Europe, and so Europe was 'civilized'. Africans had not, and Africa remained 'uncivilized'.

In fact, for the German missionaries who settled in SWA in the nineteenth century, Africa represented a continent abandoned to sin. This is what would happen to humans who, being exiled from the garden, had eschewed labour by 'the sweat of their brows'; they would stay mired in a world where life had ceased to be meaningful, where the 'bleak and unforgiving' landscape taunted civilized human existence. 'Darkness' covered them, literally. The RMS missionary, Krönlein, who worked among the Nama in the south, summed it up with 'The Nama does not want to work but to live a life of ease. But the Gospel says he must work in the sweat of his brows. He is therefore opposed to the Gospel'.⁴⁵

Missionary reports to the RMS, as Jon M. Bridgman pointed out, presented their work as necessary, because 'they were responsible for improving the conditions of native life, in that they "made" roads, kept up communication with the coast, built houses, churches, schools, introduced agriculture'.⁴⁶ The fruits of their mission were physical improvements; their 'superior civilization' elevated 'the conditions of native life', in terms of infrastructure and buildings.

The mental connection in the missionaries' minds between 'the civilized world' and 'houses', 'churches', 'roads', 'agriculture', resonated with the deliberations that were occurring all over Europe and the Americas. Civilization's emblems were architecture, permanent structures, visible 'improvements', lines of communication, rather than abstract, intangible or hidden enhancements. Furthermore, these permanent structures were to save 'the natives' from 'their abominations and vices', enclosing and keeping them from polluting the land any further. In the Cape Colony, this redemption had been accomplished by the simple act of detaching the 'native' from his environment; by forcing him inside, the 'detribalized' African learnt his proper place.

In SWA, the strategy proved to be more difficult. Beyond the Cape, Africa signified a ‘barrenness’, expressed in ‘darkness’. The boundaries of ‘darkness’ surrounded them with unknown phenomena. Shapes and beings existed without ‘light’. If the Europeans were to make their settlements permanent there, they would have to transform the ‘darkness’ into white, ‘empty space’. The first step towards this conversion reflected an aesthetic trajectory well known to Europeans.

In July 1853, Charles John Andersson, a trader at the Cape, dreamed of a route through SWA to Lake Ngami. Such a discovery would enable unfettered trade for the Europeans.⁴⁷ In previous journeys, he had repeatedly been prevented from crossing Ovamboland to get to the lake by Namas, Afrikaners and the Ovambos themselves, all of whom claimed ownership of the land and routes to the fabled lake.⁴⁸

On this last journey, Andersson had made up his mind to find his lake. After subsequent misleads, Andersson and his ‘natives’ finally came upon their desired destination.

There, indeed, at no very great distance, lay spread before me an immense sheet of water, only bounded by the horizon – the object of my ambitions for years, and for which I had abandoned home and friends, and risked my life.

The first sensation occasioned by this sight was very curious. Long as I had been prepared for this event, it now almost overwhelmed me. It was a mixture of pleasure and pain. My temples throbbed, and my heart beat so violently that I was obliged to dismount and lean against a tree for support until the excitement had subsided. The reader will no doubt think that thus giving way to my feelings was very childish; but ‘those who know that the first glimpse of some great object, which we have read or dreamed of from earliest recollection, is ever a moment of intense enjoyment’ will forgive this transport.⁴⁹

Lake Ngami appeared ‘only bounded by the horizon’, ‘an immense sheet’ of blue water. Andersson’s sensibilities were liberated at its sight, so much so that he had to ‘lean against a tree for support’. The ‘unboundedness’ of the lake ‘almost overwhelmed’ him and suggested a ‘mixture of pleasure and pain’. There were no ‘natives’ prohibiting him from crossing the territory to get to the lake; he had overcome every obstacle. Nature had rewarded him: it ‘lay spread’ before him.

There were no restrictions to his imagination. Overcome by Africa’s limitless possibilities, the trader ‘against a tree’ waited ‘until the excitement had subsided’. Andersson described a familiar experience to his readers, a subjective experience of ‘transport’ that they could forgive in him, since it resonated with the Europeans’ experience of the sublime, a transcendence usually associated with ‘reading’, that is, an effect of art and literature.

Africa had to be reimagined as a ‘manifold’ of possibilities, so that European subjects felt ‘liberated’ by its immensity and dynamism, rather than tormented by its ‘barrenness’. Standing within view of Lake Ngami, Andersson realized his moment of ‘liberation’; it was contingent on his determination to find and possess the paradise in his imagination. Later, his account and sketches of these phenomena provided Europeans with objects of knowledge that ‘enabled a glimpse ... of the manner of

life amongst these peoples in the interior of Africa.⁵⁰ Andersson enlarged ‘knowledge of Africa’s flora and fauna’; he also forged a route to Lake Ngami that provided him unfettered access for trade with the ‘natives’.⁵¹

Inspired by Andersson’s trek to Ngami, Vedder characterized the Europeans’ early explorations and contact with the Africans as a ‘gift and a task’.

It is the gift and the task of Faustic man that he should restlessly strive, explore, elucidate, conquer, and force his way onwards, in eternal dissatisfaction, whether it be in science or in business, in private undertakings, or in the conquest of nations. He marches always in the van of mankind’s slow ascent, breaks loose from it now and again, and presses forward alone, to be the first to hear something, which he had never heard before, and to see something, which has never been seen, and to make himself master – if he can with his fists, but if he cannot, then by applying his mind to it. This is his fate, his reward, and his risk. He breaks the trail and finds the road in every province of life; where there is a new country he is the one who does the pioneering work; the first furrows to be ploughed are generally made by him. ... South West Africa has much to be thankful for to people who were Faustian by nature. Eighty years ago it was still to a great extent an unknown land, and it is still today a new country. The history of South West Africa cannot possibly pass the men by, who forced their way along untraveled roads into its unknown regions and unveiled their hidden secrets.⁵²

Using Faust to bracket German colonialism, Vedder joined the Germans’ drive to colonize with these early narrators’ ‘breaking of trails’ and the ‘finding of new roads’. Goethe’s Faust leveraged his soul for the brief possibility of transcendence. In order to gain this transcendence, Faust committed theft and murder. In Book II, he and his lover, Helen of Troy, desirous of a new home, a house in paradise, killed its inhabitants, an elderly couple, in order to take possession of it. In order to gain transcendence, prosperity and their future, they had to be willing to kill paradise’s inhabitants.

By the end of Goethe’s text, Faust not only knew of his transgressions, but was also confident in divine redemption for his ‘sins’. God forgave murder because Faust pursued transcendence. The narrative implied that God understood and condoned the human drive for transcendence, even when transcendence demanded the slaughter of innocents. If Germans were willing to risk it all, to breach ‘thou shalt not kill’, in order to achieve transcendence, God did not condemn them. All transgressions were tolerated if the end goal was paradise’s possession.

When Vedder considered Andersson’s sublime ‘discovery’ of Lake Ngami, he joined it to this discussion of Faustian desire within German colonists. Andersson exemplified Vedder’s vision of the colonial man whose values the earliest European ‘explorers’ maintained while they trekked through SWA. Just as Andersson had to manipulate, deceive and even force his way past all obstacles to get to Lake Ngami, including recalcitrant indigenous peoples, German colonists had to be able to exclude any concerns that might take them away from their aims for paradise.⁵³

To Vedder, an RMS missionary who came to GSWA in 1905, a definitive ethnography about the noble Europeans and the ignoble Africans in GSWA had to be

written; ethnography had to establish the redemptive mission in which the RMS and, by extension, the Christians before them had been instrumental. The missionaries' goal had to be legitimated and contextualized as the only way to save the continent from ruin, to redeem Africa and Africans. Thus, Vedder imposed a continuity between what he did in his lifetime as a missionary in GSWA and what the Europeans who preceded him had done. It was important to make legible, retroactively, a clear line of thought between Vedder, his struggles with the heathen Herero and the conclusion that the Herero damaged themselves because they had not adhered to Christian teaching. They were to abandon their former lives, in the face of the grandeur of civilization, expressed by the powerful Christian God and the purposeful expansion of trade.

The subject positions of these discrete individuals hinged on their unwavering belief that they were necessary to correct Africa's disorder and 'barrenness'. When they had completed their tasks, Africa would become productive and useful. It would be redeemed and civilized. They looked at no other task but the reclamation of African land for the redemption of the continent. Souls would be saved if they persevered in their quests.

The 'world' before colonies

To that end, Vedder reproduced an account by an aged Herero after the genocide whose description of Herero life prior to the Germans' arrival, he believed, proved the necessity of German intervention in GSWA.

Have not the Hereros been cattle-breeders ever since God created them? As a cattle-breeder, does not one always live in the selfsame way? One treks with the herd wherever water and grazing are to be found and, in the meantime, the cattle increase. Sometimes they are stolen by our enemies; sometimes no thefts take place for many years at a time. That is the life of a Herero; that was the life my great-grandfather lived, that was the life my grandfather lived, and my father lived it too. When we all live in exactly the same way there is not much to be told. Some people are surprised that we have so little to tell about our leaving the Kaokoveld, but I am not a bit surprised about it. Was not the whole land actually one land? The people of old trekked about just where they pleased. Wherever water and grazing were plentiful they stayed for some considerable time, but when these were scarce they soon trekked away. They, therefore, drove their cattle southwards, out of the Kaokoveld and, when it did not suit them there any more, they often trekked back to the Kaokoveld again. When it was no longer convenient for them to stay there, they came back into Hereroland until, at last, they stayed here for good. So it never really occurred to the old folk that anything great had occurred when they left the Kaokoveld and sought new pastures here. The country had no owners then, unless we are to regard the Bergdamas and the Bushmen, who lived in the veld like wild animals, as owners?⁵⁴

Vedder related the previous account from an 'eighty year old Herero of Otijimbingwe' to emphasize that Herero history was reducible to a 'primitive' nomadism.⁵⁵ There was nothing very important about it, and it proved that the Herero lived in an 'unevolved'

state until the Germans came to redeem them.⁵⁶ For his purposes, the excerpt reflected Herero wandering, caught perennially between the need for pasture and its lack. Vedder, like the German missionaries before him, understood Africa's tribes to be 'static' in the sense that they were trapped in an endless cycle of wandering, until their 'encounter with Europe in the seventeenth-century'.⁵⁷ Vedder reinforced, retroactively, that the Herero knew the land to be 'ownerless': all the land was 'one land'; 'the country had no owners then.'

However, the Herero speaker emphasized that 'Since God created them, they had been 'cattle-breeders'. They were predisposed ontologically to wander with their cattle.'⁵⁸ Their 'trekking' from pasture to pasture was not the consequence of an innate need to forego permanent settlements, as the Europeans suspected, but because of their obligation to their cattle. They had been commanded to herd. Thus 'it never really occurred to the old folk that anything great had occurred when they left the Kaokoveld and sought new pastures here'. History had not been measured in terms of their migration from one place to another. It was not quantified by the time they spent in a 'settled' place. Instead, it was qualified by their fulfilment of this command to breed and herd cattle.

The Herero marked time and history according to the increase or decrease in their herds. If the Kaokoveld no longer supported the tribe and their herds, then, the Herero 'sought new pastures', wherever those pastures might be. The group's settlements and movements corresponded to the resources available around them. Their obligation to their herds not only circumscribed their history, it indicated ancestral intervention: if the cattle herds increased, the ancestors guided them. Vedder and his RMS colleagues took the cattle to be signifiers of wealth and power.⁵⁹ The Herero, they concluded, were only interested in maintaining their wealth and power; hence 'they did not respect others' boundaries'.⁶⁰

Prior to establishing themselves in Hereroland, the central part of what is today Namibia, the Herero occupied the Kaokoveld in the north. Scholars believe them to be originally one of two Bantu-speaking tribes who migrated into the region from the northeast.⁶¹ The Herero speaker quoted previously, though, did not give a date or a reason for migration beyond the cattle's need for pasture and water.

Otjimbingwe, a key tribal centre of the modern Herero, at which Vedder's narrator resided, did not become a settlement until the mid-nineteenth century. Vedder accounted for Herero settling there because of 'the missionary Rath's' efforts. He persuaded the tribe that they needed a stable, tribal centre from which to govern. In Vedder's account of Otjimbingwe's history, the Herero remained at Otjimbingwe because their missionaries led them there. The missionaries had founded a preserve for them, and the Herero recognized that they belonged within this place.⁶² They recognized the need for their own confinement.

Herero cultural and religious life revolved around their cattle. They had the largest herds of any of the indigenous groups in the region; consequently, they were always in search of pastures and water for their herds, and, as the aforementioned Herero narrator explained, this 'pastoralism' demanded they move further and further south to accommodate their herds. For at least two hundred years, the Herero had traversed between the Kaokoveld and Hereroland, moving their cattle from pasture to pasture in areas that they believed were theirs to use because 'the country had no owners then'.

Like the other indigenous groups in the region, the Herero lived grouped together in *werfts*, or villages, punctuated by *pontoks*, or huts.⁶³ The Herero *werft* usually comprised individuals related to each other. The *werfts* were structural placeholders that were portable, that is, they could be dismantled and reassembled wherever and whenever necessary, so that the 'people of old trekked about just where they pleased'. Europeans considered their constant movement to be evidence of their nomadism.⁶⁴ The Herero believed that migration was necessary for their herds and a part of their entitlement as a people.

Europeans identified the Herero grouped into nine main tribes, and within those tribes, there were 'about twenty different *oruzo* or paternal derivation groups', with a chief who usually inherited his position as leader.⁶⁵ The chief was responsible for protecting the 'sacred cattle', the cattle only used for sacrifice. Since 'sacred cattle' belonged to the tribe, they could not be purchased or sold. The remaining Herero herds that could be sold 'in payment of debt' belonged to the *eanda*, or the maternal derivation groups. The *eanda* were parallel to the *oruzo* in each tribe.⁶⁶

The *oruzo* and *eanda* were also relevant in terms of succession and inheritance. At the death of a Herero chief, these two lines determined inheritance of cattle and the chieftancy. In fact, these 'guidelines' established 'the religious group (*oruzo*) to which the father belonged and the socio-economic group (*eanda*) to which the mother belonged' so that through these divisions the chief's 'legacy was divided'.⁶⁷ Gerhard Pool noted that these divisions had the effect of fixing the identity of the polity's leader around specific filial relationships that often perplexed European observers.

During the 19th century a Herero had two channels through which his legacy was divided. The first followed the line of his head wife's *eanda*. This meant that the deceased's wife and her heirs, for example, inherited a large part of the cattle herd. The second channel followed the line of the male *oruzo*. Aspects such as leadership and everything having to do with religion came under this heading. Accordingly, only someone who belonged to the same *oruzo* as well as *eanda* as the deceased could inherit the full estate.⁶⁸

With these restrictions, succession occurred only if the aforementioned requirements were met in the heir. If they were only partially met, the claimant was unqualified; he could only take the portion allowed to him by community law.

Pool hinted at the unarticulated element of this tradition: when the Herero looked at his cattle, he saw family relationships that extended back well before him. He saw a visible representation of his family's history, articulated in the herds, and he felt an obligation to protect that legacy and history. The cattle were imbricated with the obligation he felt towards his ancestors and to history. They were a constant reminder that his place in history depended on the herds before him. If the herds increased, his history increased; likewise, with their decrease, his place in history slipped away.

The RMS missionaries in the region failed to understand the significance of the *oruzo* and *eanda* lines for Herero subjectivity, what their indigenous interlocutors identified as 'deep Herero'.⁶⁹ They concentrated on number, and quantification, but they had no idea of the valences these numbers implied for the Herero.⁷⁰ For them, 'deep Herero' signified pagan belief.

By the mid- to late nineteenth century, a chief's power could be increased in two primary ways – through an increase in cattle and an increase in followers. Influence and power was further extended if the tribe's village or *werft* grew too big, forcing the chief to permit 'one of the young men to leave' in order to establish a new *werft*. The new *werft* was then governed by an 'under-chief', who remained a 'dependent' of and aligned with the 'original chief'.⁷¹ This political arrangement suggested that the Herero had a 'sphere of influence' defined by *werft* and the maintenance of kinship loyalties. These loyalties were doubly reinforced by the significance of the *oruzo/eanda* lines and *werft* organization.

The other Bantu group, the Ovambo, similarly, migrated from the northeast around the same time as the Herero, but they remained in the northernmost part of the country. The Ovambo were farmers, and their farms required permanent settlement. Their prowess as warriors discouraged both German settlers and German missionaries from occupying Ovambo territory even though, eventually, Germany claimed sovereignty over the tribe.⁷²

Consequently, until 1904, the Ovambo remained marginal to the interests of German colonialism.⁷³ At that time, the Ovambo joined the insurrection, and attacked 'Fort Namutoni, which was defended by seven German soldiers. These seven soldiers managed to defend the fort; only one of them was wounded'.⁷⁴ Of the 500 Ovambo warriors who engaged in the attack, 150 were killed; Jeremy Sarkin reasoned that their defeat caused them to 'withdraw from further participation in the rebellion'.⁷⁵ They would remain at the margins of the German colony. The Ovambo were one of the two indigenous groups to retain their land and independence continuously, throughout the colonial period, and into the modern Namibia era.⁷⁶

While the Herero and Ovambo settled the northern parts of the country, small bands of the Cape Khoisan – the Europeans called them 'the bushmen' – were already in the south and central parts of the territory.⁷⁷ A third group, the Berg Damaras, lived in its mountains.⁷⁸ The German missionaries applied to these groups, unilaterally, the moniker 'bushmen', because they believed them to be 'hunter-gatherers', they constituted a 'racial type' and they borrowed the term from the Cape Colony.⁷⁹

Related to the Khoikhoi group at the Cape, the Nama had settled in the southwest part of Namibia as well as the Richterveld and portions of the Northern Cape in South Africa.⁸⁰ They comprised two different groups, the Great and Little Nama.⁸¹ The Great Nama territory extended from the northern shore of the Orange River; the Little Nama territory extended from the river's south shore.⁸² Both the English and the Dutch referred to the Cape groups of Khoisan or Namas as 'Hottentots', a name that was applied by Germans to the Nama in SWA.⁸³ The Great Nama, also known as the 'Red Nation',⁸⁴ had control over the majority of the south. They represented six of the eight tribes that 'crossed the Orange River' into Namibia in the eighteenth century. The Little Nama, comprised of the two remaining tribes, retained their independence from the 'Red Nation', signified by their own respective settlements, 'the Bondelzwart of Warmbad and the Topnaars of Zessfontein'.⁸⁵

The last group, the Orlams, migrated from the Cape Colony into Namaland and came to be a significant subgroup within the Great Nama because of their considerable skills with guns and horses, as well as their knowledge of the Afrikaans language derived from Dutch. Although there were several tribes who shared Orlam origins, the

dominant group among them was known as 'Afrikaner', and its leader or *kaptein* was Jäger Afrikaner.⁸⁶ The Orlam groups migrated to SWA during the nineteenth century.

The Orlams were, as Bridgman characterized them, 'detribalized Namas who had lived for several generations in close proximity to the Dutch at the Cape – in some cases as bonded servants, in some cases as slaves', living 'just beyond the fringe of the civilized area of the Cape' in 'a precarious existence' operating 'sometimes as nomadic herdsman, sometimes as outlaws, usually as both'.⁸⁷ With the ability to speak Afrikaans, they established supply routes with and roads to the Cape from its outlying regions so that they interacted directly with traders, Cape officials and missionaries. Due to these interactions, and their existence at the Cape's 'fringes', they had unfettered access to guns, ammunition and horses, in addition to other European goods. They also had their own territories.

Although some scholars have debated the extent of Orlam enslavement under the Boers, and the amount of 'detribalization' that actually occurred in the Cape, Thompson demonstrated that the colony did engage in a concerted effort to detach individuals from the tribal group, to 'detribalize' them through labour, either through indenture or enslavement.⁸⁸ Thus, 'detribalization' produced a new class of labourers who no longer identified with communities external to the colony; they no longer had leaders or *kapteins*. They were 'detribalized' individuals. Missionaries contributed to this detribalization by suggesting Christian membership in place of tribal coherence.⁸⁹

Brigitte Lau underscored that the Orlams came into being through processes of 'social disintegration'.⁹⁰ Lau's conclusion corroborated Bridgman's thesis of 'detribalization', and both theses resonated with Leonard Thompson's description of the conditions of slavery at the Dutch colony historically.

Although the slave was incorporated into the stem family, that incorporation was deliberately limited. The owners attempted to infantilize their slaves with dress, naming patterns, and ordinary language.⁹¹

Slavery's internalized effect on the Cape Khoisan was 'infantilization'. If the slave was 'infantilized', and the slave joined the Orlams as a 'fugitive', the slave brought with him the memory of this infantilization, associating slavery not only with the absence of a community, but also with the prohibition against even its formation.

In other words, 'detribalization' encompassed not just the physical process of political and cultural dissolution within the Cape Colony, but also the subjective awareness that the polity was forbidden for individuals trapped within, or even in proximity to, colonialism and slavery's orbit outside the colony. The Dutch not only wanted to destroy the physical polities of indigenous tribes among or in proximity to them, substituting them with a docile class of labourers, but also wanted them to forget, completely, their prior existences as 'independent' peoples. The colony's 'health' depended on the removal of independent tribes and, in their stead, the visibility of the 'detribalized' servant.

Consequently, 'infantilization', its memory and its threat triggered in Orlam communities a desire to resist Dutch enslavement by forming, as Thompson explained, 'a self-conscious community in Cape Town and its neighborhood ... organized groups'

who ‘maintained relations with slaves who remained’.⁹² In this way, the Orlams began to coalesce around new leaders forming polities.

When they regained control of the Cape in 1806, the British confronted, then, these ‘fugitive groups’ at the ‘fringes’ of their colony. Like the Dutch, they, too, undermined the legitimacy of the *kapteins*, whose existence enabled the ‘outlaw’ groups to operate. Thus, they mounted their own campaign, revoking ‘all vestiges of *kapteinship* among the Hottentots in the Colony’.⁹³

A critical step towards making the indigenous servants a part of the British Empire, the revocation of the *kapteinship* pushed even more ‘detribalized’ individuals to join the ‘fugitives’ already established at its margins, and their numbers were ‘periodically strengthened by the addition of more fugitives from the Cape’. These nascent polities offered the Orlams tribal coherence.

The importance of this link between ‘independence’, an indigenous polity and the *kaptein* marked Orlam experience intimately. While many observers, after Orlam integration into the Nama tribes, commented on the ‘liberty-loving’ Nama, they had always linked their ‘independence’ to the nomadic pastoralism they attributed to the group. In other words, Europeans presumed that the Nama were nomads: their desire to wander was due to an ontological predisposition that reflected the Nama existence as a primitive ‘state of being’.⁹⁴ Europeans presumed that the Orlams’ decision to reestablish as tribes at the ‘fringes’ was a further expression of their nomadic orientation.

However, the Orlams’ experience with Boer enslavement and indenture, at least its threat, and to whatever degree, was an unarticulated condition compelling Orlam migration to the Cape Colony’s fringes. Lau designated these groups as ‘commandos’ because the Orlams ‘collected’ people ‘with diverse origins’, who were unrelated to their *kapteins*.⁹⁵ The diversity of the ‘fugitives’ from the Cape meant that membership in the commandos developed around a rejection of the roles afforded the indigenous in the Cape Colony. As Boer farmers repeatedly annexed more land, and moved closer to the ‘fringes’, Orlam migration even further away from these ‘masters’ became a necessity.⁹⁶

The groups saw themselves ‘in resistance’ against the Boers. This resistance, moreover, produced within the Orlams a ‘higher degree of social and political centralization’ than their Nama counterparts.⁹⁷ Hence, as Melber and Lau emphasized, the heterogeneity of the Orlams meant that without traditional ‘tribes’ with whom to identify, and without ethnic homogeneity, these new groups unified around the figure of their *kaptein*. The Orlams invested in the *kaptein*, a centralized authority unlike any traditional Nama tribe at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁹⁸ When Orlam tribes asserted themselves at the Cape’s fringes as independent groups, these *kapteins* emerged, who ‘owned some property, were of “mixed” descent and were baptised’.⁹⁹

Independence signified the ability of these ‘fugitives’ to reform as polities, or commandos, in direct rejection of their disenfranchisement with the Boer. It intensified the role of the *kapteins* and their relationship to traditional Nama structure. Specifically, the institution of a *kaptein* meant that Orlams were not ‘dependent’, infantilized beings or children, but ‘independent’ adults who determined their own fates. The commando’s cohesion, its organization around the *kaptein*, was an explicit sign that Orlams had the capacity to throw off subjection, to reestablish themselves as

an indigenous polity. In fact, Lau suggested just this claim in her recognition that the Orlams were not pastoralists, and they supported themselves through the raid and the exacting of tribute from weaker polities.¹⁰⁰ Under their *kaptein*, the commando proved, repeatedly, that Orlams had the physical power to repel any attempt to disband them as a polity. In this way, the role of the *kaptein* was vested with much more psychological importance than his counterpart among the traditional Nama tribes. British and Boer prohibitions on the *kapteinship* must be understood against this significance.

The increase in Orlams stressed the outlying areas of the Cape Colony. 'Scanty rainfall' and 'successive periods of drought' severely curtailed hunting, and pasturing stock. As resources dried up in each area, the Orlam groups encamped there found it necessary to cross the Orange River. One by one, each group requested permission to enter SWA from the 'Red Nation' or the Great Nama, those six tribes who had established a confederation and had preceded them.

According to Bridgman, when the Orlams entered Namaland, the traditional Nama tribes preferred 'pacifism' to conflict.¹⁰¹ There were five main Orlam polities that made their way to Namaland: the Boois under Jan Booij (1815); the Berseba/Karrasberg groups, who divided themselves under Paul Goliath and Dietrich Isaak, respectively (1816); the Bethanie/Gobabis tribe under Amraal Lamberts (1815); the Afrikaners under Jäger Afrikaner (1820); and finally, the Witboois, under Kido Witbooi (1851).¹⁰² These groups transformed how the Nama perceived themselves in relation to the Herero, who had moved into the region, and in relation to the traders and missionaries who accompanied the Orlam groups.

These five Orlam tribes were eventually integrated into the Nama tribal structure until, finally, Orlam signified diversity within the Nama group.¹⁰³ From these groups, a Nama polity emerged headed by Kido Witbooi's grandson, Hendrik Witbooi. By 1880, he had asserted himself as the strongest leader of the Nama polities.

A Christian, Witbooi saw his *kapteinship* over the Nama as a divine mandate. He held his *kapteinship* because God had revealed to him that he was to defeat the Herero and lay claim to SWA. This revelation came to him when he ventured into Herero territory and survived where other Nama had been killed previously. When the missionary Olpp wrote him asking why he had left his grandfather Kido's settlement at Gibeon and established the Witboois at Hoornkrans, he disclosed that on his return from Hereroland on 23 August 1880, he 'received three amazing words from a voice'.

1. The time is fulfilled.
2. The way is opened.
3. I lay a heavy task on you.¹⁰⁴

Describing the experience in biblical terms, Witbooi believed that God had given him a 'mission', and he, as God's servant, was obligated to fulfil it.¹⁰⁵ Like the apostle Paul on his way to Damascus, Witbooi heard a voice declaring him to be the Nama's redemption.

The Empirical Colony in German Southwest Africa and a Formula of Colonization

The colonial consciousness on paper, 1880–5

Bismarck's ambivalence towards German colonies has been well documented.¹ His biggest concern was Germany's territorial entitlements in relation to the other European powers, specifically Britain, which he believed intended to secure, to the exclusion of other trading countries, the majority of Africa.² Colonies would extend Prussia's influence and prestige; colonial resources – its treasures – would stimulate the Prussian economy.³ As relative newcomers to the European powers cohort, with the Second Reich in existence only for thirteen years,⁴ Germans felt some insecurity about their neighbours to the west, Britain and France,⁵ as well as their neighbour to the east, Russia.⁶ Hence, Bismarck adopted a limited colonial strategy.

The leader, who was 'no man for colonies', authorized them.⁷ Since the chancellor 'was reluctant when it came to the expensive deployment of troops in Germany's African territories' he envisioned, instead, a protectorate.⁸ The 'ideal German colony ... would merely maintain internal peace and prevent other European powers from taking over'.⁹ He assumed that German colonies would mimic their British counterparts.

Bismarck's perspective did not account for an indigenous claim to the territory. Only a small governmental presence was necessary in order to 'maintain internal peace' and to prevent 'European powers from taking over'. 'Internal peace' implied disputes between traders and missionaries, that is, disagreements between Europeans. Since objections to imperial sovereignty by local populations were inconsequential when juxtaposed with German military power, competing claims for African territory by 'uncivilized tribes' were not a real threat. African colonization began and ended within the European powers. In fact, Bismarck's perspective was neither surprising nor even novel in relation to the other colonial powers.

In German Southwest Africa (GSWA), the Germans imagined preserves for the indigenous; however, they were not to preserve indigenous life but, rather, to hasten its extinction in order for their colony to prosper.¹⁰ To the Germans, the majority of SWA's indigenous groups appeared 'stuck' in a 'primitive' stage of evolution vis-à-vis modern Europeans. Their 'primitive' condition reinforced that Africans' lack of 'civilization' stemmed from the absence of European values. They did not practice European forms of sovereignty. Therefore, Africans had to be taught 'civilization' through labour. These new values would save the Africans and bring them forwards into modernity.

Since the local populations were inconsequential placeholders, only a minimal cohort of Prussian personnel in the territory was necessary. German colonies were to be administered through the indirect rule of German commercial interests. Thus, the only people in SWA were the isolated German missionaries and traders who had attached themselves to the British protectorate at the Cape. While the Germans had ceded colonial endeavours to private traders under Bismarck, different sectors of the public began to demand a larger stake. They wanted a German ‘sphere of influence’ that had more substance than ‘a paper occupation of Africa’.¹¹

In 1882, newly returned from the United States, Bremen tobacco farmer Adolph Lüderitz requested Bismarck’s permission for ‘any acquisitions he might make on the coast of West Africa’.¹² In America, Lüderitz had become excited over the riches gained through colonies.¹³ His request included the need for German military protection from Boer and British encroachment, since his proposed site, Angra Pequeña, was proximate to British and Boer settlements at the Cape, and such riches would be a target of the Boer commandos, unscrupulous traders and, perhaps, an encroaching British navy.

Even before Bismarck’s approval, in May and August of 1883, Lüderitz’s agents were in Angra Pequeña, issuing two contracts with the Nama chief, Josef Frederiks of Bethanie. These contracts entitled Lüderitz not only to ‘the adjoining territory to the extension of five miles in all directions’ around Angra Pequeña, but also to the majority of coastline, bays and resources ‘from the Groot to the Orange River’.¹⁴ On 31 December 1883, Bismarck inquired as to British intentions for SWA due to the British presence at nearby Walvis Bay. If they had such a claim, Bismarck expected them to ‘protect’ Lüderitz’s business.¹⁵ The British waived their interests to and withdrew from the area, prompting Bismarck’s approval of Lüderitz’s request in 1884.¹⁶

On 24 April 1884, Bismarck telegraphed the German consul at Cape Town that Lüderitz’s territories were officially under German protection.¹⁷ On 28 October 1884, the first Protection Treaty was issued between Lüderitz and the chief of Bethanie. In addition to the extensive coastline territories that Lüderitz now ‘owned’, the treaty also ceded to Lüderitz ‘the exclusive right to construct and administer the roads, railways, and telegraphs: to dig and work mines, and in general to carry out all public works’.¹⁸ These small details of ‘roads, railways, and telegraphs’ and their German ‘administration’ were important, because they regulated the mobility of products, people and information between the centre of the proposed colony and its peripheries. They proposed an infrastructure previously unknown to the region.

As such, they represented sanctioned and necessary ways of being in the country and were recognizable as the official boundaries governing space between individuals and groups. These modes of communication and travel formed, for Europeans, lines of connection that conquered ‘the thorny bush’ so that nature’s ‘primitive’ obstacles became visible, controllable, regulated and legislated. They suggested the necessary scaffolding of civilization through the imposition of authorized lines segmenting the landscape.

Since Lüderitz speculated that copper would be discovered in SWA, he requested a small protection detail that enabled the company to protect its investments. The Bremen trader imagined a German infrastructure comparable to Andersson’s route from Lake Ngami, and the Company road of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the Cape. Such infrastructure demanded a police force to protect traders’ interests.

German authorization of the Lüderitz settlement in SWA coincided with Portugal's objection to a French incursion in the Congo, in which France had issued treaties with tribal chiefs from 'the bow of the ship sailing down the Congo river even though Portuguese settlements were visible on its shore'.¹⁹ The Portuguese demanded meetings among the European powers to discuss these actions.²⁰

With Bismarck's offer to convene the meetings in Berlin, he assumed the role of global mediator within the European powers.²¹ Since Germany had no colonies, he presented himself as a neutral party in the meetings. Known as the Berlin West Africa Conference, or the Berlin Congo Conference, the meetings took place between late 1884 and early 1885, and included fourteen powers, 'the plenipotentiaries of Europe, the Porte, and the United States met in the Reich Chancellery'.²² These meetings were the occasion for divvying up 'the dark continent'.²³ The conference's participants, emboldened by the conference's 'General Act of 1885',²⁴ the new document in which their sovereign rights to Africa were adumbrated, outlined their intentions to preserve global 'free trade'.²⁵ The auspices under which the conference met were focused on how to protect present and future colonial economic interests.

In the conference's 'General Act', the European powers proposed a formula for colonization by agreeing to three basic mandates: (1) countries had to establish 'effective occupation', ensuring that they would settle in regions they claimed; (2) new colonies would have to be declared as protectorates, and the colonizing empire would have to announce its intention to the other powers; and, finally, (3) the African continent was defined according to European claims about the rights of individual sovereign states to acquire legal ownership of African lands.²⁶

As a document, the 'General Act' had to do more with the development of how Europeans conceived of themselves in the world than with actual, enforceable claims. Its importance resided in its 'transmissible meaning rather than with the concrete modalities of cause and explanation'.²⁷ In this way, Africa's 'chaos' – its lack of 'sovereignty' – became mediated by a set of categories, represented by grids, maps and paradigms, as the cohort of leaders determined to justify a 'world of colonies'.

While these policies were espoused by the 'General Act', individual claims were 'settled' through bilateral agreements taking place 'in the lobbies'.²⁸ The bilateral agreements set the territorial markers and boundaries that all parties had to respect. As Ronald Robinson summed it up, 'while they decreed an international free trade regime in the treaty, in the bilateral settlements, they partitioned the area politically into exclusive spheres of influence'.²⁹

The 'sphere of influence' had been a contentious marker previously, for Bismarck. He conceived of it as a signifier for British privilege at the expense of the German empire, in which 'the right to colonize, which England exercises most extensively', was 'denied to us'.³⁰ He focused on Angra Pequena, specifically, and its relationship to British claims of all coastal areas extending out from the Cape to be their territory because they were within Britain's 'sphere of influence'. Bismarck called it 'the abnormality in international law of the Monroe Doctrine ... applied on the African coast for the benefit of England'.³¹ His objections were linked to Britain's extension of its entitlement of *res nullius* to areas they had never intended to occupy and in which Lüderitz had established German business. To Bismarck's mind, *res nullius* and the 'sphere of influence' had been applied unfairly to suborn Germany's right to trade,

to increase its wealth, because Britain claimed all the 'prizes' or wealth of a territory without any intention to settle there. Territory became British because of its imagined proximity to a British colony.

Res nullius had stipulated that within 'boundaries of territory', the sovereign power, in this case Britain, had the 'power of disposal over things'. In Bismarck's criticism of *res nullius* to describe an international legal problem, he moved the discussion to *terra nullius*.³² *Terra nullius* shifted ownership from discrete objects to the actual places where they were found. Bismarck contended that if Britain's claim of a 'sphere of influence' ceded the entire coastline of Africa to British control so that its contents became British property, the portable wealth transported back to England, the seizure was akin to Britain colonizing the other powers. Thus, while the conference was ostensibly concerned with the Congo, Bismarck convened it both to displace a British 'sphere of influence' stemming from the Cape to SWA, and to ensure that Germany's 'new occupations' went unchallenged by British claims.

At the conference, the 'sphere of influence' expanded so that it reflected the boundaries of new and old European possessions; in other words, the only significant change from its past usage was the expansion of the cohort of agents capable of claiming African territory. The term enabled one empire to issue a territorial boundary after another empire had waived its interest or 'influence' in the area. With the waiver of British interest around Lüderitz's settlement, SWA became known as *terra nullius* or 'empty land,' that is, 'ownerless'. Bismarck annexed and extended it to include a sweeping region of SWA's interior.

A major achievement of the conference, the General Act codified Africa's transformation into a conceptual *terra nullius*, silencing native resistance through the subordination of their claims to sovereignty and providing, in the process, an effective ideology of colonial rule politics of contemporary Africa.³³ Whereas Brink's map of 'empty space' masked the unarticulated claims of the VOC, the conference map made legible the dreams and ambitions of Europe's leaders.

With *terra nullius*, settlements emblematically underwrote sovereignty, because they demonstrated the 'effective occupation' of an empty, ownerless land. 'Effective occupation' guaranteed, for Europeans, that a claim was not made on territory without the intention of settlement. 'Effective' connoted farms, gardens, roads, railways, even postal service.³⁴ For Bismarck, GSWA had to remain 'ownerless' on Europe's map, and Berlin had to demonstrate that Germany had not only the power to take it, but also the power to settle it.

Bismarck's participation in the Berlin Conference established that no other European country claimed ownership of specific territories in which Germans had a potential interest. The only entity that could claim ownership over these diverse African spaces, furthermore, had to be one of the powers at the conference. Local or indigenous groups were neither imaginable as political powers nor visible as peers or subjects of European sovereigns. They were not only absent from 'the conference table',³⁵ but they were also invisible to the European powers' conceptualization of territory. They were not 'on the map'.

Their lack of visibility had many underwriting reasons, of which one derived from Europeans' definitions of 'property and sovereignty'. Andrew Fitzmaurice explained the complex relationship in which these two ideas developed, historically,

into a legal position where sovereign states or legal subjects could not see groups or individuals understood as non-European peoples outside the status of property.

While many were prepared to concede that non-European peoples possessed forms of sovereign civil society, they claimed that those sovereignties were ‘personal’ and thus comparable with the feudal societies of medieval Europe. Territorial sovereignty, they argued, was only to be found in history and therefore possessed superior rights, just as seventeenth-century Europeans had argued that agricultural society possessed superior rights to people living in a supposed state of nature. Having thus extended the progressive theory of history, these jurists argued that it would be possible to occupy the territorial sovereignty of lands where such sovereignty had not already been ‘taken’, including over the ‘personal’ sovereignties of Africa and Asia. This understanding of occupation was closely tied to and extended by the unequal treaties employed in the nineteenth century.³⁶

Of the many nuanced shifts that Fitzmaurice tracked, the two most important elements concerned African ‘sovereign civil society’ as ‘personal’, akin to the serfdom of Europe’s medieval past, and the insistence on the farm as proof of colonial intent as well as evolutionary superiority. In the medieval example, jurists likened Africans’ legal status to indentured servants. They were phenomena of the land, and owned as objects of the sovereign. In the staking of the farm as juridical proof of ‘effective occupation’, jurists suggested that the ‘farm’ not only expressed the civilizing mission of the sovereign, but also provided the means by which servants learned the sovereign’s values. In this way, the General Act produced an unarticulated expectation that the Africans owed Europeans service.

The kinship between serf and African added, though, another dimension to ‘territorial sovereignty’. Africans became attached to territories in a manner resembling property. The claim to rule territory implied, so the jurists argued, that historical ownership of its objects underwrote sovereignty.³⁷ An adjunct of political power, historical ownership became codified as precedent.

If one pressed the logic of the serfdom precedent further, one concluded that the ‘lord’ who owned such property continued to own it unless the property was forfeited by choice or by war.³⁸ This was the articulation of imperial interest and its waiver. Europeans had imposed the dialectic of colonialism on the law, the land and its unknown phenomena. Additionally, the historical claim to rule became associated with a new demand, the recognition that European history had unfolded so as to institute European ‘progress’ as civilization’s only trajectory. European civilization was constitutive of ‘human history’. Thus, ‘the progressive theory of history’ marked its development according to a move away from ‘nature’, emblematically identified by the ‘farm’, because ‘agricultural society possessed superior rights to people living in a supposed state of nature’.

In this way, Europeans declared ‘the territorial sovereignty of … Africa and Asia’ up for grabs, since these territories ‘had not already been “taken”’; indigenous inhabitants had neither farms nor ‘agricultural societies’ already established; that is, they had no pre-existing commercial interests, either.³⁹ Folded into this revelation of territorial emptiness was the entitlement of Europeans to rule ‘over the “personal” sovereignties

of Africa and Asia'. The 'farm' became the signifier not only for European civilization, but also for an evolutionary stage that Germany had already articulated and proposed to inaugurate in its new territory of GSWA. Through colonization, Germany acted as the agent of evolution.

Simply put, Africa's emptiness needed Europeans to redeem it; the idyllic farm and garden were divinely sanctioned structures whose absence impeded Africa's progress in becoming a modern Eden. The Berlin Conference concretized the individual subject positions of isolated traders and missionaries, converting these perspectives into a collectively endorsed position. In this way, Germany perceived its own interests within the doctrines of the 'General Act'.⁴⁰ 'Effective occupation' anchored the largely abstract concept of the 'sphere of influence' around the very visible boundary as it appeared on maps and was referenced in treaty and contract.

Occupation 'required a skeletal grid of regional administration' that enabled trade to 'flow' to the empire, in exchange for 'order'.⁴¹ Mapped according to its routes and 'revenues', the African landscape became visible as the properties of European powers; the roads between properties became sanctioned modes of social orientation.⁴² Everything that was to be known about these properties was apparent on the new map crafted at the 'conference table'.

Unknown and 'empty spaces' became territories, staked by empires, with neat colour-coded boundaries. Although, in 1880, there had been attempts to represent Europe's increasing claims on Africa, much of its region had remained 'unknown'. After the Berlin Conference, these unknown spaces were converted into deeds of title. Maps and atlases represented African spaces as imperial properties. Europeans held titles, essentially, to the entire continent. These 'titles' were signified as commercial interests and settlements, underwritten through contracts and treaties with indigenous chiefs, the continent's surface reducible to the property deed.⁴³

The new cartography of European territories had more reality in Germans' minds than Lüderitz's actual settlement.⁴⁴ Even without the possession of colonies, Germans fantasized about them and the 'prestige' they garnered from them. From 'chocolate bar wrappers' to novels about 'noble German soldiers' bringing 'civilization' to 'the natives', the German public was eager to assert their empire's claim to colonies.⁴⁵ In tandem with their fantasies of African territories, Germans imagined that its 'aboriginal inhabitants' were a 'primitive' or 'savage' people whose lack of care for natural resources demonstrated their inferiority.⁴⁶ Africans were 'uncivilized': they had not managed, and were incapable of managing, natural resources.⁴⁷

These perspectives constituted, as George Steinmetz noted, a 'rule of difference' in which an 'incorrigible inferiority of the subject population' was 'structurally inherent in the modern colonial state'.⁴⁸ The system itself fettered Africans' lack of prosperity under its laws to their imagined ontological incapability of articulating European sovereignty. It was 'a defining characteristic of modern colonialism ... the assumption of an unbridgeable difference between themselves and their subjects and of the ineradicable inferiority of the colonized'.⁴⁹ Thus it 'justified ... subjugation of the colonized', because the colonized existed as an obstacle to progress and evolution.

African differences were 'unbridgeable' and Africa empty, then, of beings who could be thought equal to Europeans. The law codified European fears so that the

colonized's 'state of being' expressed an 'ineradicable inferiority'. Europeans justified 'the seizure of sovereignty' by referring to unmediated African existence as a phenomenality that could never be constituted as an object of knowledge without European intervention.

At this early stage, Africans could not appear except as unknown phenomena. Their identities had yet to be affixed to cartographical spaces, bound epistemologically as objects of knowledge to categories, and hierarchically exhibited in a taxonomy of race. Instead, they were an unrepresentable nomadic horde of apprehensions that ran across Europe's territories.

However, Europeans' concept of Africa's profound 'darkness' did suggest itself as a boundary, a line between Africans and Europeans that signified the 'rule of difference'. It was the 'paramount' boundary, an epistemological marker that was easily seen and intuited by Europeans, associated in European thinking with the primacy of European history and development. Europeans had farms, they built settlements and they exploited nature's resources. Before their consciousness of their own whiteness, Europeans were conscious of the superiority of their developmental 'progress'. Moreover, the experiences of the farmer and the trader not only reflected the initial experiences of the first Europeans to settle in Africa, but also spoke to a deep-seated sense of these vocations as 'original' expressions of 'civilized beings'.

'Savages' had temporary huts; they roamed the countryside. They were incapable of using nature appropriately. The colour of their skins condemned them. In other words, European epistemology was overwhelming what could be seen and understood in relation to Africa. As a concept, race took on a dramatically freighted valence in which it became reducible to territorial boundary. Germany could only see the boundaries of its occupation of SWA and the revenues that its farms and businesses were to provide as evolutionary givens. They were necessary steps in the transformation of SWA from an empty, 'uncivilized' space to the fertile and 'civilized' GSWA, awaiting, as Vedder described it, a multitude of Fausts to lead it to transcendence.⁵⁰

For the Prussians, the outcomes of the conference concentrated around the 'farm', the 'contract' and the cartographical boundaries necessary to establish a German presence. The 'farm' populated the German map, proving 'effective occupation'. The 'contract' established, for Europeans, their 'rights' to the property underneath the farm. Signifier and signified blended together to produce the new sign of GSWA. That all of these items did not actually exist in their 'territory' was secondary to German concerns.

The cartography of empire, exemplified by its contracts, established Germany's claims to SWA in Berlin, but these claims had yet to be imposed in Africa. They were settlements 'floating in the air'.⁵¹ Since 'civilization' could not be a passive experience, awarded by contract, it would have to be 'won' on the ground, and by Germans willing to 'give the sweat of their brow'.⁵² However, empire's cartography provided the nascent German colony with a discursive infrastructure as well as new coordinates for its orientation. It also brought into play new modes of periodizing history: precolonial and colonial eras. Precolonial SWA signified an 'uncivilized' era without successful European intervention.⁵³ Colonial GSWA signified the 'civilized' era's beginning in the territory. Time gained a new valence there; its clock moved to the time and measurement of European footsteps.

Colony by contract, 1884–9

Brigitte Lau contended that while ‘1884 was the year of annexation … the whole north of the territory remained largely uncolonised’; German settlers only began to arrive in numbers after Hendrik Witbooi, the leader of the Witbooi Nama, had ‘negotiated a peace treaty in 1895’.⁵⁴ In other words, in the eleven years preceding that ‘negotiated’ treaty, colonialism ‘may have been real enough in the minds of German politicians, and capital interests like the *Kolonialgesellschaft*, but not in the country itself’.⁵⁵ GSWA remained an empty signifier for the traders, missionaries and African polities living in the new territory. Germany’s official presence ‘amounted to three officials’ and a handful of representatives from the Colonial Company between 1885 and 1889, a period Lau designated the ‘first stage of German colonization’.⁵⁶

German colonial efforts were reducible to ‘six contracts’⁵⁷ extended by private individuals acting initially for Lüderitz and then for his successor, the Colonial Company.⁵⁸ Lüderitz’s agents were unauthorized to act for the German government, so that the contracts at face value were legally unenforceable.⁵⁹ Of these six contracts, the first four had been issued, moreover, between 1883 and 1884; the first three concerned enormous parcels of land, ceded from the Bethanie *kaptein*, Josef Frederiks, to Lüderitz, giving the German trader not only ‘control over much of the area’s southern coast’, but also control of an area over ‘twenty geographical miles wide’.⁶⁰

As a result, massive amounts of land came under the purview of a handful of agents associated with German commercial interests.⁶¹ Even with their dubious legality, for Berlin, the contracts established where the boundaries of the German empire began and the British Empire ended. To the Europeans, the boundaries signified both intention and entitlement. In fact, the legitimacy of the early contracts never resided in their legality with indigenous partners but resided, rather, in their ability to construct, for their European readers, a discursive ‘sphere of influence’.

These usufruct arrangements created uniquely different perspectives about the obligations of the parties bound to the agreements. Lüderitz’s agents and, subsequently, the Colonial Company believed that the contracts gave them individual ownership over land and resources. Indigenous groups in the new German territory were part of the region’s ‘natural resources’.⁶² After all, this was an unarticulated effect of the shift from *res nullius* to *terra nullius* in the ‘General Act’.

Germans had already identified the need for a helot ‘native’ workforce to serve them in the region.⁶³ Like the Dutch had earlier in the Cape Colony, the Germans imagined conscripting indigenous peoples for labour.⁶⁴ The terms of the unauthorized contracts of purchase became the foundation for the protection treaties extended, later, to the indigenous chiefs.

Contract and treaty took on a new dimension that led to the subordination of tribal partners in exchange for ‘German imperial protection’. Lau asserted that ‘these agencies effected purchase and Protection Treaties with a number of chiefs’ in order to produce contractual obligations ‘aimed at creating dependency on and subordination to the German empire of independent rulers’.⁶⁵ The contracts introduced a symbolic and legal step towards the transformation, then, of the independent African polities into dependent, detribalized units of labour, subject to Germans. The contracts

themselves were meant to produce the subaltern, at best, and the slave, at worst. It was a similar strategy deployed at the Cape by the Dutch.

Indigenous signatories remained without knowledge of this unarticulated dimension of the contracts during the first phase, for the simple reason that Germany's pretensions were expressed only at the Berlin Conference, only to other European powers and, usually, in German: Africans became dependent on the missionaries who acted as mediators and translators to inform them of these underlying conditions.⁶⁶ Thus, they did not know that their world had been transformed. As a result, 'since neither the treaties nor the regulations could be enforced or implemented by the three [official agents], the treaties remained abstract and largely irrelevant' during the first phase of German colonialism.⁶⁷ However, they did not remain 'irrelevant' in its second and third phases.⁶⁸

As Lau argued, the critical element was not the documents' content but, rather, what the Germans gained symbolically from them. The treaties enabled Germans to imagine a helot class of African labourers stationed in preserves at the colony's margins. Germans would have the title to all of the territory, and Africans would acquiesce to their ownership, even becoming their willing servants.⁶⁹ Thus, even though these 'three officials' could not implement the contracts' scope in any way, they still retained the idea that the territory and all of its resources had become German property.⁷⁰

Since the General Act mandated that empires prove 'effective occupation', Germany sent a 'protection troop', or *Schutztruppe*, to its colony.⁷¹ With the introduction of a military presence, Bismarck's 'classic trading colony' shifted from an imperial protectorate to a nascent occupation.⁷² Under Captain Curt von François, a small German military force, or *Schutztruppe*, of twenty-one soldiers was assigned to serve as the settlement's 'police force'.⁷³ When von François arrived in GSWA in June 1889, he was not only to govern the new colony, but also to implement the contracts issued by the Colonial Company in the previous years.⁷⁴ Consequently, von François was given unique powers to bring the indigenous groups under German control 'by offense or defense'.⁷⁵

In order to get indigenous groups, Boers and the European powers to respect the 'German sphere of influence', von François had to convince each African polity to 'return' to their original and assigned places at the colony's margins, freeing up the desirable and fertile land in the central part of the country for settlement. Additionally, von François had to maintain peace in the colony so that German settlement could proceed without obstacles.

However, the central Herero tribes, 'nominally' led by Maharero Tjamuaha, had been at war with the Witbooi Nama, led by Hendrik Witbooi, for nine years.⁷⁶ Witbooi's repeated raids on Herero cattle had led Maharero to sign an initial treaty in 1885, with the Colonial Company's three agents, Göring, Nels and von Goldammer, but these 'three agents' had failed to enforce the promised protections, and, subsequently, Maharero had them expelled from his territory.⁷⁷ With the memory of the failure of the initial treaty to protect them, the Herero were disinclined to accept von François' similar proposal of protection in 1889.⁷⁸

The 'three agents' were also unsuccessful with Hendrik Witbooi and his father, Moses. The British noted that the Witboois rejected 'from the outset to make any

Protection Agreements with Göring or to encourage a German influx'; their rejection of the Germans culminated with the expulsion of the missionary, Rust, who had attempted to broker a conciliatory agreement between Witbooi and the Germans.⁷⁹ During these failed negotiations, Witbooi continued to raid the Herero *werfts* and to take their cattle.

Von François spent the first two months of his tenure in SWA identifying individual leaders among the Herero, whom he could manipulate, as well as allies among the traders, and missionaries, but with no success. His failure to bring the territory to 'internal peace', as Jan-Bart Gewald noted, 'so irritated and exasperated the inhabitants of the territory that he and his troops were forced to withdraw to Tsaobis, a waterhole on the edge of the desert on the wagon trail that led from Otjimbingwe to Walvis bay'.⁸⁰ Even the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) missionaries doubted von François' capabilities for fostering peace; they requested British protection as late as 1892.⁸¹

From the Tsaobis 'station', von François gained, though, a vantage point whereby he could 'police the traffic to the coast', and, consequently, he designated Hendrik Witbooi as the Germans' rival to 'peace' in their territory and Maharero as the leader of a potential German helot class. If he could control Witbooi, Maharero would accept the Germans as the 'paramount power' in the territory and resign the tribes to German control as it was articulated in the Protection Agreements. To gain control over both Maharero and Witbooi, he had to subdue Witbooi, either with treaty or with force.

For von François, the contracts imposed a mental blueprint of the colony.⁸² Indigenous polities were to be relocated to areas no longer contiguous to proposed German settlements; their removal would enable the 'settlement zone' to be under direct German military control. In order to achieve these aims, von François had to cut off Witbooi's access to firearms and coerce him to return to Gibeon. Witbooi's success in raiding Herero *werfts* appeared to be the foremost obstacle to the officer's objectives. Moreover, this success had prompted Witbooi to announce in 1890, to the missionary Olpp and, by extension, to Namaland, his epiphany and transformation.⁸³ Witbooi acted under divine mandate in his raiding.

If von François could subdue Witbooi, his example would allow the Germans to promote the rest of their social aims in GSWA.⁸⁴ As the first phase ended, von François began to push indigenous population transfers throughout the territory and to develop the logistics of a military strategy to subdue Witbooi. His strategy began with Ernst Herman's wool farm. Thus, von François inaugurated the second phase of German colonialism, 1890–3.⁸⁵

The colonial consciousness, 1890–3

In early 1892, Ernst Herman moved to !Nomtsas, on the Bloomfish River, an area claimed by Witbooi as part of his territory surrounding Hoornkrans. Herman had formerly been at !Khubub, a property ceded by Frederiks to the Germans in 1884, and at which he had established 'an experimental wool farm', funded by the German Reich.⁸⁶ Ostensibly, he intended to relocate his operation to !Nomtsas and to live

there.⁸⁷ Lau argued that it was a ploy devised by von François in which Herman ‘spied’ on the Nama *kaptein* in order to identify Witbooi’s gun suppliers.⁸⁸

In his letter of 20 May, to Herman, Witbooi requested that ‘his dear friend, Herman’ leave !Nomtsas immediately, because Witbooi did not ‘grant permission’.⁸⁹ Herman was not to attempt to ‘undertake big works there’ because Witbooi intended ‘to settle his people there’. In their exchange of letters, Witbooi claimed !Nomtsas as part of a Nama ‘sphere of influence’. Shortly after Witbooi sent his letter to Herman, von François requested a meeting with the Nama *kaptein* at Witbooi’s permanent settlement of Hoornkrans.

At their meeting, on 9 June 1892, von François outlined where the Witbooi Nama ‘fit in’ to German plans for the region.⁹⁰ Witbooi’s honesty, fine reputation and military prowess were impressive in relation to the ‘stupid and unlawful acts’ of the Herero, who were already under German protection.⁹¹ He noted that Witbooi was the real indigenous power in the region, and that recognition prompted his offer of protection to the Nama *kaptein*. Witbooi inquired, then, about from whom he would need protection, and von François responded with an imagined host of enemies, led by Boers from the Cape.

From the Boers and other strong nations who wish to have their way into this land. They wish to come and live here and work and do as they please, without asking permission from the chiefs of the land. Even now on my journey I met Boers who have already arrived and wish to approach on the side where Willem Christian is.⁹² But because they know that his land is already under Germany’s Protection they have neither power nor right to enter; and chief, you must clearly understand that the chiefs will not be deprived of their rights and laws.⁹³

In his reference to a Boer threat, von François stressed that peoples larger and more powerful than the Witboois were only dissuaded from occupying the region because of ‘Germany’s Protection’. In the existential threat von François postulated, the Witboois were subject to conquest inevitably, and already, by larger, more powerful entities. Thus, they needed the Germans.⁹⁴ By referencing the ‘Boers’ specifically, von François also alluded to the Witboois’ Orlam origins; without the Germans’ ‘protection’, the Boers would regain control over their former ‘slaves’ and servants.⁹⁵ In this way, the officer categorized the Witboois as defenceless in their independence.

Von François, then, promised that although he would become a subject of the kaiser, Witbooi would not be diminished in the exercise of his tribal power as *kaptein*. Nama ‘rights and laws’ would not be violated. He buttressed the promise with a reference to other tribal chiefs, because ‘all the other chiefs of this land’ had signed.⁹⁶ He followed the demand with a warning that the next ship had German settlers aboard, who were guaranteed protection by the military.⁹⁷ Couched within his demands, von François had referenced an entirely different set of boundaries circumscribing GSWA. These new boundaries had already defined Witbooi’s existence within the territory.⁹⁸

Witbooi was a dependent of the kaiser, a ‘German subject’⁹⁹ with or without his agreement, or even his knowledge. Conceptually, he was the kaiser’s property. Either he remained a ‘savage’ or he accepted an offered subaltern rank. Even at this early negotiation, von François intended to detach the Witboois from the other indigenous

groups by proffering an allegedly privileged place, a hierarchical position, in return for compliance.¹⁰⁰ Detachment worked in tandem with compliance to impose subjugation.

Compliance included Witbooi's return with his people to Gibeon, the site of their initial settlement in Namaland and their residence when the initial contracts between Lüderitz and Frederiks were issued.¹⁰¹ Although Witbooi claimed Hoornkranz as his permanent settlement, one that Witbooi's ancestors had 'paid for in blood', it belonged to the kaiser and was destined for German settlers.¹⁰² For von François, the meeting ended with Witbooi's rejection of the Protection Agreement.

Colonial massacre and colonial consciousness

Since the meeting with Witbooi had failed to bring about the intended outcome, von François developed another strategy – the colonial massacre. He would attack Witbooi at Hoornkranz. At this point, the new German chancellor, Leo von Caprivi, reiterated that von François was empowered to act in whatever way he saw fit to accomplish the subjection of all indigenous peoples.¹⁰³

Hoornkranz became the signifier of illegitimate occupation and Hendrik Witbooi, its illegitimate *kaptein*. Additionally, the Nama leader became the Germans' most feared enemy in GSWA. Under Witbooi's command, the group operated as a unified force, routinely successful against the German troops.¹⁰⁴ With his repeated rejection of German peace treaties, he became a symbol of indigenous resistance: if the Herero, a much larger group, inspired by Witbooi's example, challenged their social transformation into a helot class, a subject workforce, or aligned themselves with the Nama, Germany would confront the combined forces of over 100,000 enemies, 'encircling' them.¹⁰⁵

Thus, Witbooi had to be eliminated. The massacre of a few Africans was acceptable if it ensured the success of the empire. The logic underpinning this acceptability made the tribes interchangeable entities in a colonial epistemology where the defining category of 'African' absorbed the loss of some of its 'unruly' members or phenomena, in order for the category to maintain stability and its remaining objects to know their places. The elimination of one group exhibited, for the remaining groups, their new positions and roles. The attack was a categorical necessity in order to preserve the overall health and viability of the helot class, the Witboois' destruction in order to 'save' the Herero.

In conjunction, then, with the Colonial Office, the Germans planned the 'humiliation', capture and execution of Hendrik Witbooi. As Theodor Leutwein, von François' replacement and the next German officer to oversee the colony, later analysed it, the attack on Witbooi was 'a defining moment' in German colonial policy, because it offered the empire an opportunity to exhibit its superior power while, simultaneously, clearing aside an obstacle to its plans.¹⁰⁶ However, von François had to wait for troop reinforcements before he could attack. After those recruits arrived 'on the next boat', the 'settlers' that von François had promised were on their way, the German officer attacked.

Before dawn on 12 April 1893, while the Witbooi Nama were 'peacefully sleeping'¹⁰⁷ at Hoornkranz, Captain Curt von François, with a troop of two hundred men,

surprised the sleeping group and began firing, indiscriminately, on the people in their huts. Hendrik Witbooi and most of his warriors were able to flee. Women, children, the elderly and the injured all stayed behind. Realizing that Witbooi and his warriors had eluded him, von François massacred the remaining Nama. The Germans used approximately 'sixteen thousand rounds of ammunition in thirty minutes'.¹⁰⁸

In the British account of the massacre, 'the White civilized nation' had presented itself to Witbooi as an orderly, regulated business. Its ultimate goal was the safety of trade in the colony.¹⁰⁹ This protection had been, after all, the ostensible reason for the Berlin West Africa Conference in 1884–5. The Germans had reiterated this policy; their treaties were allegedly to stop the slaughter of the tribes, and to allow all groups to coexist; at the same time, colonial prosperity was to be promoted.

With the massacre at Hoornkrans, von François intended to make three definitive statements to Witbooi and the rest of the African polities: (1) the German empire was now at war with him;¹¹⁰ (2) the attack itself was an exhibition of the Nama leader's insignificance in relation to the German empire; and (3) Witbooi's escape from the melee had caused the ensuing massacre of women and children.

These three messages confirmed Witbooi's illegitimate status and presence in the territory. For the Germans, the role of the *kaptein* offered legitimacy to competing polities that the Germans refused to recognize. Since the polities were barred from constituting European sovereignty, the Germans felt entitled to debar the authority of the *kapteins*, even amid promises of respect for their authority.

With the German empire's 'declaration of war', Witbooi became an enemy combatant. As the attack unfolded, the rest of the indigenous polities were supposed to recognize, simultaneously, in the massacre itself, indigenous obsolescence. They were to be so in awe of German military power that, as Witbooi was killed at Hoornkrans, they learned the futility of their stage of existence. It was to be a decisive spectacle of Prussian military planning. In this way, Witbooi and his people would become 'naturally' extinct. The Prussian military had merely encouraged modernity's 'progress'. Furthermore, a successful campaign reaffirmed indigenous weakness – they had to be massacred because they had rejected subaltern existence and, hence, demonstrated that they were not 'fit' for a German modernity.

Massacre taught the remaining indigenous groups the reality of German superiority and exhibited the unacceptability of their autonomy within German territory. In this respect, colonial massacre was conceived as 'a punitive raid' that was meant 'to impress a tribal population with the overwhelming force at the government's disposal to thereby gain their "cooperation."'¹¹¹

Since the Germans imagined that the Nama were incapable of articulating German values, proven by their rejection of German agreements, Germans were not culpable in their 'destruction'. Indigenous tribes were not subject under international law to the 'rights' of sovereignty, because they could not constitute European sovereignty. The General Act outlined Europeans' legal obligations so that the Germans were not liable to the Africans in any way. The Africans existed as 'ownerless' and belligerent phenomena in the *terra nullius* schema.

German soldiers were no longer bound in their conduct to the 'Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field (1864)',¹¹²

because Africans were neither ‘citizens’ nor soldiers of any European country; they were de facto ‘illegitimate belligerents’. In fact, even after the insurrections’ end by 1906 and 1908, and with full knowledge of what the Germans had done and continued to do to the Africans, Karl Dove declared, ‘leniency towards the natives is cruelty to the whites. ... As to the ideas for justice, these are based on false premises. It is incorrect to view justice in regard to the natives, as if they were of the same *kultur-position* as ourselves. They have no conception of what ownership of ground means’.¹¹³

As his brother, Hugo, confirmed, Curt von François’ perspective reflected similar attitudes within the German military and among the colony’s governors and its settlers.¹¹⁴ It was a ‘shared sense’ to which all colonial agents appealed for legitimization. Von François assumed that if Witbooi had been captured or killed at Hoornkrans, the Nama would have been absorbed completely and without difficulty into the German scheme. The time for independent ‘primitives’ was over; modern Germany’s ‘progress’ as an empire would go on without them. If they accepted ‘dependence’, they would learn civilization through the labour they performed for the Fatherland.

According to Jörg Fisch, this attitude underwrote the Berlin Conference’s designation of Africa as an object with discrete entities within it.¹¹⁵ It factored in the Europeans’ determination that ‘the world was intended to be ... covered with states by mankind’.¹¹⁶ Every premise of the colonial perspective pointed to the Africans as a group incapable of being a sovereign people according to European standards.

A week after the massacre, Witbooi wrote in a letter to Hermanus van Wyk, the Baster *kaptein*, that von François’ actions were ‘in a manner as I would never have thought a member of a white civilized nation capable of – a nation which knows the ways and rules of war’.¹¹⁷ He continued, then, to give an account of how von François had carried out the massacre.

But this man robbed me, and killed little children at their mother’s breast, and older children and women and men. Corpses of people who had been shot, he burned inside our grass huts, burning their bodies to ash. Sadly and terrifyingly, Captain went to work in a shameful operation.¹¹⁸

Witbooi had relied on a ‘shared sense’ of how ‘nations’ behaved in war, but the Germans had acted outside the boundaries of his expectations. They had turned corpses ‘to ash’, and the Captain ‘went to work in a shameful operation’. Witbooi wanted to know if Hermanus van Wyk was still ‘a friend to the Germans as their subordinate’ or was he willing to ‘oppose them?’¹¹⁹

The same day, Witbooi wrote another letter to the German missionary Heidmann.¹²⁰ He related that von François had informed him at their meeting that ‘many complaints to Germany’ had been made about Witbooi by the German ‘missionaries and traders’.¹²¹ Thus, ‘the Government ordered him to destroy me’.¹²² Witbooi ‘did not believe’ von François’ implication that missionaries had triggered the attack, but after it, he considered all possibilities. The idea that von François murdered women and children in rage, because he had failed to defeat Witbooi and his warriors, was an action for which he had no conceptual precedent.

From the date of the massacre, von François engaged in twenty skirmishes with the Witbooi Nama, but failed each time to subdue Witbooi.¹²³ His decision to kill

Witbooi prompted his promotion to major, but his repeated failure to subdue him forced the officer's recall to Germany in 1893.¹²⁴ His departure signalled the end of the 'von François era', or second phase of German colonialism. By that time, Witbooi had become an indigenous hero, and Bismarck's successor, Chancellor Caprivi, had sent Theodor Leutwein to the colony.¹²⁵

The colonial consciousness, 1894–1903

Theodor Leutwein was ordered to the colony on 20 November 1893.¹²⁶ As he stated in his memoir, Leutwein received the posting to GSWA, initially, because Chancellor Caprivi desired more consistent information about the colony from von François beyond the major's decision to 'humiliate and kill Witbooi'.¹²⁷ Specifically, he was 'to proceed to SWA and to send a report of his own observations'.¹²⁸ Chancellor Caprivi determined to control the colony 'from Berlin'.

Due to von François' failure, the chancellor changed Leutwein's orders, from governmental observer to commanding officer; he was to consolidate German 'power over the natives'.¹²⁹ The subtle shift from von François as the agent of massacre, determining his own strategy of conquest, to Berlin as an empire at war with insurgents and led by Leutwein, introduced the third phase of German colonialism from 1894 to 1903. Wallace summed it up as the moment that Germans dominated the territory.

The balance of power was now to swing decisively in favor of the colonizers for the first time. By the end of 1896, Leutwein had quelled immediate opposition to German occupation, concluded agreements with those groups that had previously held aloof from Göring and von François, and began to set up the structures of colonial rule. ... Thus the conditions for colonial development were created: for the first time, German settlers arrived in South West Africa in numbers, and an infrastructure of roads, railways, and harbours began to be created.¹³⁰

Due to Leutwein's ability to stop 'immediate opposition to German occupation' and to obtain 'agreements' with the African tribes, he was able to impose an infrastructure on the territory, converting it from a settlement 'on paper' to the secure colony where 'German settlers arrived ... in numbers'.

The links, in Leutwein's mind, between security, control and the lines of communication back to the chancellor became evidence that the Germans had 'civilized' the area with 'roads, railways, and harbours'. In this way, the outlines of the colony, traced on its maps, were visibly expressed in GSWA. Scholars designated the third phase the era of 'the Leutwein system', since Leutwein's values shaped German thinking on the role of GSWA in the German colonial constellation.¹³¹

Leutwein's new position required him to plot the structure of the colony and to revalue the significance of the Hoornkrans massacre in relation to Berlin's overall colonial policy. Instead of von François' discrete 'punitive raid', Leutwein constructed a counter-narrative about the massacre in which it became a necessary response to Witbooi's 'first' rebellion and part of a concerted effort by the empire to rid the colony of its enemies.¹³² Witbooi's annihilation was necessary, because Berlin had determined

that (1) Witbooi challenged German honour and sovereignty by declaring war on the Second Reich; and (2) now, committed to war, Berlin no longer felt compelled to negotiate with him. Consequently, Hendrik Witbooi became a key enemy whose defeat in battle ensured the colony's 'internal peace'.

Leutwein's account of this decisive first 'battle' stressed Witbooi's lack of preparation for and recognition of the power the kaiser possessed.

Under preservation of the greatest secrecy, the troops ... attacked Hoornkrans, the location of Witbooi. The chief reckoned on a formal declaration of war, and was completely taken by surprise; he was peacefully drinking his morning coffee.¹³³

Leutwein's counter-narrative revealed that Germans had misled the *kaptein* about their plans so that he never suspected an attack without 'a formal declaration of war'.

In spite of the 1893 Hoornkrans attack, Witbooi rejected subsequent overtures made by Leutwein throughout 1894. With Witbooi's prestige increasing among the other indigenous groups,¹³⁴ Leutwein realized that he had to regain control over the situation that von François had left him. Over a series of letters to Witbooi, beginning a few months after Leutwein's arrival, the German officer laid out, then, the consequences of the Nama leader's choices in relation to the German emperor's future actions. With each letter, Leutwein characterized Witbooi's actions as an even greater offence that demanded an equally greater imperial response and escalated the degree of the *kaptein's* punishment.

Almost a year after the Hoornkrans massacre, on 9 March 1894, Leutwein wrote to Witbooi for the first time to reinforce for the Nama *kaptein* that Leutwein had the ability both to end and to continue further attacks. He emphasized that 'His Majesty the German Kaiser has sent me with specific orders to carry on the war to your destruction, unless you surrender. I do not know you and have no personal enmity against you at all, but shall carry out my orders to fight you to the death'.¹³⁵ The letter established that, while committed to Witbooi's destruction, Leutwein the colonial agent had no personal bias against Witbooi. The Witboois would be slaughtered without passion and with indifference. There would be no sense of shame or regret over their deaths.

Furthermore, 'developing (historical) events' had brought about the kaiser's position as 'paramount sovereign' of Namaland. In this little detail, Leutwein cited progress as the reason why Witbooi could no longer be 'independent'. The kaiser held the territory as its new historical owner: Africa's history now began with the Europeans' determination of their ownership of the land. Everything else was prehistory.

Therefore, Witbooi's persistent rejection of the kaiser required Leutwein to 'carry on the war to your destruction' and 'to fight you to the death'. Destruction signified an evolutionary necessity. Leutwein used the German word *Vernichtung*, translated as 'destruction', to describe what was to happen; it was the same word that would punctuate von Trotha's 'Extermination Order', or *Vernichtungsbefehl*, in 1904.

Isabel V. Hull has argued that the German military used the term to signify a quick, reckless, but decisive offensive.¹³⁶

By the 1890s *Vernichtung* had developed into a specific dogma that called for swift, offensive movement, if at all possible culminating in a single, concentric

battle of annihilation. Whereas the ‘cult of the offensive’ was characteristic of most European military cultures at this time, the single battle of annihilation was most peculiarly German.¹³⁷

Referring to von Clausewitz’s ‘cult of the offensive’, Hull charted a shift in German thought about military obligation, its ‘dogma’, shifting subtly from ‘the destruction of the enemy’s military forces’ to a broader ‘destruction of the enemy’ in all of the enemy’s iterations. What Hull depicted was a movement away from an acceptable terrain of war, the engagement of another army, to the designation of an entire group, indiscriminately known as ‘the enemy’.

For the Prussian military, *Vernichtung* as ‘destruction’ meant an overwhelming display of German military superiority as that superiority defeated a non-specific enemy. For Leutwein, the Hoornkrans massacre not only expressed that ‘dogma’, but it also reflected Prussian fears of an unspecified and interchangeable African enemy that surrounded them.

Hull posited that the Prussian military rationalized its actions because of the constant threat of ‘encirclement’ by its enemies, the fear of becoming colonized by the other European powers.

The dogma was a response to perceived German weakness: on land, in response to ‘encirclement’ by France and Russia, at sea, in the face of the world’s greatest naval power, Britain. Extreme offense, the simultaneous concentration of all one’s forces, the hope of one’s technological and technical prowess might overcome numerical weakness, the daring (even foolhardy) risking of one’s troops and sailors, and the discounting of logistical limits and of the enemy’s possible responses – all these features of the dogma were required to transcend Germany’s inferiority and to permit it to behave like a world power, a paramount power, instead of merely one of the five European ‘Great Powers’.¹³⁸

Vernichtung’s primary use to signify a singular, German military action that would cause its enemy’s defeat supplemented, then, the symbolic language of honour and sacrifice. German soldiers – at all ranks – were to identify with the necessity of their risk in order to ‘annihilate’ the enemy. They were justified in their actions because of ‘the threat’ of ‘encirclement’.¹³⁹

This identification of the necessity of risk in order to ‘win the day’ produced a powerful tension within the ranks themselves by which the kaiser’s military was always threatened by a virtual Goliath, whose ‘philistine’ practices were contrasted to the Reich’s noble and redemptive values. Simultaneously, the German military’s *ethos* represented itself as a ‘paramount power’ whose unquestioned dominion made its enemies cower before it. *Vernichtung*, or destruction, embodied these two values so that the German army was never guilty of ‘killing the innocent’ because they were obligated to protect the empire at all costs. It absolved imperial agents of any wrongdoing. They were to ‘risk it all’ on the battlefield, a moment of military transcendence, and all of the empire’s enemies would fall, in their weakness, before them. The military *ethos* ‘liberated’ the colony from the penalties and the constraints of international law.

The tenor of Leutwein’s correspondence did not change in his next letter to Witbooi of 5 May 1894, with the exception that, instead of emphasizing Leutwein’s actions in

Witbooi's 'destruction', Leutwein identified the kaiser as the real power.¹⁴⁰ Leutwein was the kaiser's instrument, and it was 'the duty' of the German emperor to attack Witbooi, because 'he takes his protection duties very seriously. He is the emperor of all of Namaland'.¹⁴¹ In this way, Leutwein implied that agency belonged with the emperor. Witbooi's challenge of a power much greater than his own required a decisive act of 'protection'. Consequently, 'protection' and *Vernichtung* were linked in the German officer's mind.

For a long time, his Majesty looked upon you in patience, but finally when you persisted, ordered an attack. ... Had you quietly remained in Gibeon, peacefully ruling your people, we would not have attacked. That you never did us Whites any harm, I know very well but it was not for our sake that we attacked you, but as I said for the sake of calm and peace in Namaland.¹⁴²

Leutwein's emphasis reiterated that Witbooi's subjugation benefited the other tribes, since his independence undermined German authority, violated the German contract and challenged German cartography. The Germans acted as though the Nama's return to Gibeon, their original settlement, was an agreed-on outcome, a fact Leutwein underscored by reiterating where Witbooi's proper place appeared on the German map. Leutwein alluded, as well, to Ernst Herman's response to Witbooi concerning !Nomtsas: Witbooi occupied Hoornkrans illegitimately. He had no jurisdiction to any place beyond Gibeon.

An indigenous challenge to German colonial policy – its epistemological anchor – had several registers. Dominick Schaller asserted that the Witboois had subverted a German claim regarding the 'culturelessness' of the GSWA African groups.¹⁴³ The Nama 'had contact with European ideas, values, and not least, technologies', and they 'wore Western clothes ... had modern rifles at their disposal'.¹⁴⁴ While the claim appeared to overstate some aspects of the similarity, reducing likeness to a modernist register of detachable and purchased items as the signifiers of kinship,¹⁴⁵ it was, in fact, the same logic put forward by Karl Dove. Schaller repeated Dove's term, 'culturelessness', so that one very real implication of the Namas' contact with 'European ideas, values, and technologies' was the idea that German and Nama shared a *sensus communis*.

The Nama elite, coming from the Orlam side, had converted to Christianity and had adopted the 'civilized' values and practices they supposedly lacked. In any case, an imagined kinship between Nama Christians and their German counterparts suggested that the land was occupied already by people, whose values mirrored those of the Germans.¹⁴⁶ The land was not *terra nullius*.

For over a year, the correspondence between Leutwein and Witbooi continued; Leutwein repeated his demands, and Witbooi rejected them. Leutwein had made the Naukluft campaign his main strategy for overcoming the Witbooi problem, but, like von François, he had been unable to defeat him. Eventually, after a bitter campaign for both sides in the Nauklauf Mountains, Witbooi offered peace, with conditions, and he was the only *kaptein* to secure a 'negotiated peace' from, rather than an unconditional surrender to, the Germans. He signed a protection treaty in 1894.

The terms of the treaty permitted the Witboois 'to keep their horses and rifles', and they 'were enlisted as trackers and sharpshooters in the colonial army. As a result of their cooperation, the Witbooi were no longer described as abject "Hottentots"'¹⁴⁷

They had gained a foothold in the German colony as ‘soldiers’ in the *Schutztruppe* with a measure of autonomy.

Witbooi’s agreement, as Memory Biwa noted, represented a serious undermining of Nama resistance to German incursion into Namaland.¹⁴⁸ With the majority of Nama and Herero polities discretely at war with the Germans, beginning in 1893 and continuing every year thereafter, the Germans used Witbooi, along with the Baster *kaptein*, van Wyk, extensively. The constitutive side of Witbooi’s subjective experience, to this date, hinged on the preservation of his polity from German forces. Believing himself to be destined to lead the Nama, he resigned himself to a subaltern status. Hendrik Witbooi remained under this agreement until he joined the Nama uprising in 1904.

Europeans had taken many incremental, epistemological steps as they moved across the globe, but all of these steps articulated a basic formula of colonization: posited as a *terra nullius*, Africa acted as a category, represented on a map of empty spaces; its phenomena appeared on the map as discursive icons, signifiers of boundaries between what was known and what was unknown. These representations enabled the possessors of the map to determine both the extent of their represented possessions, explicitly marked as their territory, and the extent of their imagined possessions, implicitly understood as the territory’s objects. ‘Natives’ were part of the territory. They existed as unruly phenomena who, without civilization and defined under the ‘rule of difference’, were reclaimed as objects. Their lack of a civilizing, legislative place on the map was illustrated by the colour of the skin. Thus, even with conversion, their subjection was still warranted. Settlers could train and cultivate phenomena or stow them away in preserves at the margins of the colony. In this way, Africans as phenomena became associated with the hard, barren and unproductive African terrain, waiting for Europeans to redeem them and it.

If such phenomena became impossible to subject, and resisted being removed from European space, then, the offending entities were subject to elimination or colonial massacre, because they had kept the land in an unevolved state. Wiped clean of competing claims, territory was emptied, physically, to conform to its representation as empty space. The calculated elimination of a minority from the category was a necessary action in order to keep them from influencing the other phenomena.

None of these intermediary steps distinguished German colonialism from other European forms of colonialism. Where German colonialism did differ was in the constitutive experience of the German colonial subject. With other forms of colonial subjects, the presumption of the subject was a given. For the Ligons and the Kitcheners, the Modyfords and the Codringtons, they were subjects of the empire automatically. They did not become subjects; they were subjects. The threshold of their constitution, as such, began in consciousness, and it was static, unchanging entitlement.

However, within German theories of subject constitution, the subject of empire leaned heavily on aesthetics, so that the subject came into being through a process of discharge or elimination, formally understood as *catharsis*. Whatever was an impediment to the process of constituting the subject had to be cathartically discharged. In this respect, the Germans were never just about land grabbing, although the vulgarity of Fausts and Helens traipsing across Namibia looking to steal

paradise through murder and theft was certainly true. Rather, there was an ideological component, and in that way expropriation fulfilled an ideological, if not an aesthetic, imagined need, but the Germans still reserved a specific place for Africans in their paradise. Displacement did not prevent Africans from being useful as German labour in all three phases of German colonialism.

From 1885 to 1904, German colonialism and, specifically, the Leutwein system measured success in the Germans' ability to impose an infrastructure of roads, railways, telegraph lines, farms, churches and gardens on the 'barren' land, returning it to order and fertility. This infrastructure was based on the treaties initially issued to the Nama *kapteins*. The behaviour of the settlers towards the territory's African inhabitants mirrored colonial attitudes globally.

However, when Heinrich Vedder characterized the period, German colonialists became 'Faustic' individuals who risked everything in order to subdue Africa. GSWA was a space in which German colonizers expressed a racialized 'transcendence'.¹⁴⁹ To articulate that goal, the Germans had to prepare the land: they had to move the obstacles to their own constitution as subjects in the land out of the colony's centre and to its peripheries.

As Leutwein lamented later, the Germans did not colonize with a view to protecting trade, or even to fostering it, as much as *they colonized for the purpose of subject constitution*.¹⁵⁰ In other words, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Germans were interested not in the British model of a trading colony but rather in a concept of colonial space that had been liberated from Africa's 'fetters', a conversion to 'Reich land'.¹⁵¹ The whole continent had been shackled, 'barren' and unproductive, because of the 'native' Africans. These 'aboriginals' had prevented Africa from evolving appropriately, because they were incapable of articulating the subject position of the Germans. The Germans had come to correct this oppression of the land.¹⁵² Vedder's accounts presented SWA's earliest explorers as men who lived by this ideology, so that the colony's future actions against the Africans were understood and justified as necessary to the colony's protection, to the colony's ability to produce European subjects, who were constitutively German.

Like the continent itself, Africans had to be subdued, and then, as part of its resources, they were to be repurposed, as labour on farms, in the mines or with the troops. Since time in the colony became tethered to the increase in the colony's visible signs of infrastructure, history became a narrative of the markers that Germans, and Europeans, considered important. The formula for colonialism had construed Africa as *terra nullius*, with an innate chaotic emptiness, but through Europeans' efforts, it would become a model of European civilization, German territory.

Steeped in traditional colonial ideology, Leutwein had described the Herero and the Nama as needing 'paternal correction' and 'parental punishments'. His reports to Germany referred frequently to all the indigenous groups as 'children' in need of 'lessons' – lessons the Germans gave them by flogging, torture, imprisonment, murder, discrete massacres and humiliation. His strategy in war against the Witboois and subsequent indigenous polities reflected his colonial orientation.¹⁵³

From a Formula for Colonization to a Formula of Extermination and Victims' 'Shared Sense'

The Leutwein system

In 1904, the colonial programme of German Southwest Africa (GSWA) reflected the values of its governor, Theodor Leutwein. Leutwein's system mandated that Witbooi accept that he had been the instigator in the massacre of his people, complicit in the massacre itself. By extension, Africans became complicit in the destruction of their own communities, and their belligerence towards settlers prompted modern peoples to drive them to extinction.

Leutwein held out the possibility of Witbooi's redemption from destruction if Witbooi resigned himself to his new identity of subaltern and his people acquiesced to the role of dependents. The Germans' proposed redemption introduced a shift common to colonialist thinking. Ashis Nandy described it as the second condition of European schemes for 'managing' dissent among the colonized.¹ The first required a 'code' or narrative shared by 'ruler and ruled' that was 'to alter the cultural priorities' of the colony; once the code was in place, the second aspect became necessary, in which colonial 'culture' created the temptation among the colonized 'to fight their rulers within the psychological limits set by' the rulers.² Von François had attempted to construct this process when he offered Witbooi money, food and prestige as incentives for Witbooi to sign the protection treaty, but he had only introduced its socio-economic compensations. Leutwein understood that to produce the colony, both colonizer and colonized had to 'share' a common narrative about their states of existence.

The narrative reinforced indigenous illegitimacy. Witbooi was the illegitimate ruler of an insignificant people, who had offended the 'paramount power'. The German subject position coalesced around the formation of a 'code' between 'ruler and ruled' that enabled colonialism to persist even after the achievement 'of formal political freedom', that is, Leutwein imagined a moment when the helot force had experienced enough 'uplift' to garner some aspect of liberation.³ However, 'uplift' never made the colonized Africans equal to their German colonial rulers, although as Vedder later declared, it did make them 'equal before the law'.

Several elements underpinned Leutwein's thinking generally. First, the indigenous occupied phenomenal space; they were 'unknown' to the Europeans. This conclusion followed from the 1761 'Brink map', through to the Berlin Conference's determination

that while Africans had ‘sovereign civil society’, that society was ‘personal’. It could not emerge or press itself out (*darstellen*) as a real sovereign state. Since ‘few Europeans had set foot’ in much of ‘tropical Africa’, Africans remained in that ‘dark’, empty space, awaiting Europeans to identify them, to give them real existence.⁴

This positioning constituted a hierarchy, within which the Africans could never gain ‘territorial sovereignty’.⁵ They would always be incapable of ‘owning’ the land on which they lived.⁶ They possessed huts, *pontoks*, animals and other phenomena, but they themselves were unentitled to occupy any space outside of that which had been assigned to them.⁷ Furthermore, these assigned preserves did not belong to them but, instead, were the territory of the German empire.

Witbooi’s attempt to constitute himself as a subject in a discourse of sovereignty was unacceptable for ‘natives’. He was a phenomenon who refused to become known as an object in the colonial archive. Witbooi’s actions had broached an epistemological crisis that could only be handled in one of two ways. Witbooi either became, willingly, an object of knowledge, locatable at Gibeon, defined as the Germans’ ‘dependent’; or he remained the ‘unruly’ and unwilling phenomenon that had to be destroyed: an aspect of nature, whose rejection of German exploitation, if left uncontrolled, threatened to derail German progress. In other words, Leutwein understood massacre as a strategy of limitations; his aim was always to convert the ‘aboriginals’ in the territory into willing labourers, identifying the occasional subaltern who warranted special benefits. For Leutwein, colonies were supposed to increase wealth for the Reich.

Years later, when Leutwein criticized the Germans’ colonial strategy with the ‘aboriginals’, he explained that the colonies failed to produce wealth because the settlers let their ideology of ‘superiority’ overtake their sense of profit. In this way, settler violence and humiliation of the ‘aboriginals’ had derailed the colony. It had forced Germans into the role of ‘landlords’ whose enterprises had foundered and faltered because the settlers attended to personal bias rather than the business of the colony.⁸

Leutwein did not dispute the validity of their beliefs, only how violence expressed those beliefs. The kaiser’s attitude was, likewise, never in question. Leutwein accepted the need to destroy discrete groups of Africans within German territory if they could not be subdued and would not return to their mid-nineteenth-century ‘preserves’. In this case, Hendrik Witbooi was the target, but throughout 1894–6, Leutwein attacked and executed several of the Nama *kapteins* and Herero chiefs for failing to sign the Protection Agreements, continuing to import ammunition and rejecting German demands of relocation.⁹

To make GSWA successful, colonialism would have to be ‘stripped’ of ideological bias because it was ‘just a business’.¹⁰ In this respect, Leutwein sought to emulate the British model in the Cape Colony. It might deprive ‘the aboriginal population of this colonized country’ of ‘happiness’, its ‘place in the sun’, but this deprivation was acceptable, because business had to seek ‘its own advantage’. It derived from ‘human self-interest … according to Nature’.¹¹

Anchoring colonialism to ‘national Darwinism’, Leutwein linked the Germans’ desire for colonies to a ‘natural’ inclination, an ontological disposition that ‘the aboriginal population’ did not possess.¹² They wandered the land, but Germans colonized it. The logic reflected the implications of the ‘General Act’.¹³ In Leutwein’s estimation,

'business' was part of the 'civilizing process'.¹⁴ Through the forfeit of their autonomous collective identity, the Nama would be absorbed into the German empire as a new class of beings within 'the German sphere of influence'. Leutwein's understanding of the relationship of business to 'the aims of the German colonial mission' was, as Zollman surmised, 'manifold', and the 'manifold' required each being to articulate the general aim of 'civilizing ... bringing order into chaos', so that the colony evolved 'into something resembling a state'.¹⁵

This 'evolution' brought the indigenous up out of their 'primitive state of being', into labourers in service to German citizens and the German state. The colony articulated its 'civilizing mission' through the transformation of the phenomenal native from a 'manifold' of untamed forces and 'vices', in 'chaos', into an object within the well-ordered and delimited 'state'.¹⁶

Armed with the same calculus that slavers used for the Middle Passage, 'the Leutwein system' banked on the remnant of the indigenous groups' submission to the 'will of the emperor'. Their submission was the colonial governor's 'greater good'. The number of deaths that ensued because of this calculus was only significant for Leutwein if it prevented German colonial progress. Consequently, he endorsed massacre as an educational instrument in the promotion of the indigenous peoples' social transformation into the colony's workforce. Africans needed to accept that they were incapable of independent existence in their historic territories and that tribal differences were no longer significant. Even more strikingly, Leutwein hoped to achieve a moment when the indigenous transformation erased all memory of independence and collective ethnic diversity.¹⁷ In fact, he later remarked, 'the old independence must no longer remain in memory'.¹⁸ It constituted a prehistory insignificant for indigenous existence going forwards into a German modernity.¹⁹

Victims of persecution

Under the Leutwein system, the indigenous polities had come to expect certain attitudes and responses from colonial officers. By 1903, both Nama and Herero believed they knew the extent of the Germans' racism and capacity for social injustice. With the settlers' exploitation of the *rinderpest* epidemic, traders' inflated terms of credit and the inevitable seizure of Herero cattle as payment for credit, as well as settlers' continued abuse, culminating in legislation designed to give persecution legal footing, Herero chiefs met with Samuel Maharero in January 1904, angry and intent on insurgency.

After the meeting, the Herero conducted surprise attacks on German settlements, railway lines and post offices in Southwest Africa. These sites all constituted boundaries imposed on the environment, and they were not only the visible signifiers of German occupation, but they were also signifiers of the transformation of the territory that the Germans imposed, cognitively, on the Herero. Samuel Mahahero timed his attacks to occur when the majority of the German troops, normally there to protect the settlements, were in the south, fighting the Bondelswarts War.²⁰

The fighting between Samuel Maharero and Leutwein's troops continued from January to April, but even with their superior weapons, the Germans did not have the manpower to defeat the Herero. The Herero attacks shocked the German military

command as well as the settlers. Scholars postulated that it ‘radicalized’ the Germans so that there were increased appeals to the military to destroy the Herero.²¹

Limiting their attacks to small, isolated settlements and the destruction of railroad tracks and telegraph lines, the Herero appeared to be rewriting the topography of German infrastructure; they aimed precisely at those visible traces of German cartography, treaties and epistemology imposed on them. For the most part, the different Herero chiefs respected Mahahero’s injunction to not attack missionaries, British, Boers, women and children.²² In contrast, German soldiers had already begun a policy of not taking prisoners; some even wrote home about their ‘glorious attacks’ on women and children.²³

By April, though, the Herero had moved with their cattle and their families to the Waterberg, a large region with extensive supplies of water.²⁴ With this move and the relative quiet of the camp, the Herero signalled an end to the attacks. They also stayed away, inexplicably, from the major German settlements. Gerhard Pool observed that the Herero leader, Samuel Maharero, believed Leutwein would make an overture to him similar to the gesture Leutwein had made in 1894 to Witbooi.²⁵ He relied on his previous experience with the colonial governor in the formulation of his strategy.

When Leutwein notified his superiors in Germany of the possibility for a ‘negotiated peace’, he was ordered to halt negotiations: Germany was no longer interested in peace with the Herero. There were new troops and firepower coming to decide the Herero’s future. He was to stall Samuel until these troops arrived.

In May, Lothar von Trotha was appointed to lead the troops in GSWA against Samuel Maharero. With recent postings to German East Africa and China, von Trotha had distinguished himself as a ‘ruthless war hero’.²⁶ Replacing Leutwein, and ‘the Leutwein system’, von Trotha, as well as Kaiser Wilhelm, believed that Leutwein had failed his empire precisely because he remained committed to the preservation of the Herero as a helot population; he had been invested in a project analogous to the British colony, but that colonial project was no longer in Germany’s interest.²⁷

As governor of the colony, Leutwein intended to locate the Herero on preserves and, eventually, transform them into labour for the German settlers. However, von Trotha surmised that ‘preservation of the Herero’ had fettered the German empire to the notion that it needed slavery to function as a successful colony in modernity, that its expansion needed to correspond to British and European antecedents.²⁸ He posited, instead, that ‘Leutwein’s system’ like the ‘dying race’²⁹ of the Herero, had passed; it was an obsolete calculus for a modern world.³⁰ In other words, von Trotha had already dismissed colonialism as a social project in GSWA.

The ‘exterminatory consciousness’, 1904–5

This shift in German colonial policy marked the fourth phase of German colonialism and coincided with Lothar von Trotha’s arrival in June 1904 to relieve Leutwein of his position. In an echo of von François’ failure to subdue Witbooi, Leutwein had failed to suppress the Bondelwarts rebellion in 1903 in the south and had been surprised by the Herero insurgency in the north in January 1904. His ‘system’ did not produce

a resolution to indigenous conflicts with the German military. Berlin ordered von Trotha to bring the colony under control.

From 1904 to 1905, the ‘von Trotha era’, Germany ceded to its military’s general command the government of the colony. Von Trotha was enjoined to impose control by any means, and he interpreted that order to mean he was exempt from treating Africans according to civil, international and, fundamentally, German law. This shift implied that individual soldiers were, likewise, liberated from civil, moral and legal constraints.³¹

Instead of Leutwein’s paternalism, von Trotha recast the Herero as ‘rats with their tails entangled in the vicinity east of Okihandja’, that is, the colony’s health was imperilled because of ‘vermin’.³² In fact, the image of vermin produced in von Trotha’s mind the idea that their extermination improved the health of the colony because it ‘prepared’ the land for German settlement.

Consequently, two competing perspectives emerged: the reconstruction of indigenous identity around the concept of a helot class – what we could call the traditional ideology of colonialism – and the notion that the robustness of modern German society depended on its elimination of potential, imagined threats from the Reich’s physical spaces. While both perspectives incorporated, as well, elements derived from military thinking in which the colony’s security overrode any other considerations, von Trotha’s attitude extended that concern to entail complete annihilation of the enemy.³³

Since von Trotha’s ‘rats’ mandated that the territory itself had to be ‘cured’ of its taint, all traces of Herero life had to be erased in order for colonial space to be made ‘white’ or ‘blank’; it had to be empty of colour. Von Trotha superimposed, then, cartographic outlines on the colony’s terrain for a ‘Police Zone’ that would become a key colonial marker for Namibian history.

These two perspectives had very different underwriting cognitive valences. On the one hand, Leutwein believed in ‘salvaging’ the Herero.³⁴ If the Herero were ‘freed’ from their ‘primitive’ social organization through labour, they would become new subalterns, no longer distinguished by their tribal affiliation, and they could be absorbed into and serve the German empire.³⁵ His vision considered all indigenous life to be subsumable to this aim. Figures like the Nama leader, Hendrik Witbooi, bore witness to this possibility.³⁶ The ‘old Afrikaner’ not only tolerated the limited use of massacre as a pedagogical lesson, but also imagined discrete subalterns in service to the Fatherland as a consequence of their ‘improvement’.

On the other hand, von Trotha considered this espoused need for a helot class to weaken the ontology of the German people at its core. They ‘no longer worked for themselves’. By fettering themselves to Leutwein’s failed colonialism, the Germans were forced into a war of concessions for a reward that made them indolent. Leutwein’s colonial policy had encouraged this injury to German ontology, and von Trotha was required now to end the war ‘in a modern way’. Additionally, he would produce the conditions for a renewal of the vitality of German existence and the land’s return to its previous ‘emptiness’.³⁷ Von Trotha concluded that Leutwein’s ad hoc and protracted approach had fostered within the Herero the illusion that they still had a future as an autonomous nation living among the modern Germans.³⁸

Since the Herero had rejected an earlier offer of 'complete submission', von Trotha determined that they had to be removed from among the Germans. He declared 'a state of emergency' in the entire colony, even though *he had yet to arrive there*.³⁹ He had already interpreted the kaiser's demand for 'submission' as signifying the extermination of the Herero, and he reckoned on a quick resolution to the war.⁴⁰ Subjugation referred euphemistically, now, to genocide and not enslavement. His perspective on the role of GSWA for Germans represented a significant cognitive shift from previous colonial governors, all of whom had intended to incorporate the Africans into the colony as labour.

Arriving at Swakopmund on 11 June, von Trotha reiterated that if the Hereros were to be employed as a subaltern class in the German territory, then Leutwein's plan was 'the correct one'; however, he had already decided the Herero were not to be colonial labour. Instead, von Trotha imagined Southwest Africa to be a 'colony where the European himself can work to support his family, free from interference, but with a fair amount of security'.⁴¹ Leutwein and the other *alte Afrikaner*, like the barbarian Herero, represented an irrelevant social project whose obsolescence damaged not only the German colony, but also German ontology. Since segregation and subjection had failed, the next step had to be hastened extinction or, failing that outcome, the exile of the African remnant to British territories.

On 11 August 1904, von Trotha and his army encircled their Herero 'enemy' at Hamakari in the Waterberg. With his superior firepower, von Trotha anticipated a quick, decisive victory over the indigenous armies; the siege proved ineffective, though, as Samuel Maharero's warriors were able to escape, that is, the anticipated quick and efficient victory never happened. Von Trotha pursued the Herero from Waterberg into the Omaheke where he intended that they would die of thirst and starvation. Those who were unable to flee remained at Waterberg, eventually to be taken prisoner.

For several weeks, von Trotha and his troops pushed the Herero further into the desert. His troops stopped up the watering holes and prevented them from refreshing their horses, cattle and people. The effects of this policy produced desperate acts among the Herero stragglers trying to get to British territories.⁴² Unexpectedly, von Trotha's troops began to suffer starvation, thirst and disease, too. Their susceptibility to the desert caused him to leave the battle on 30 September.⁴³ He retreated angry, sick and resolute that he would not be defeated again because of human weakness.

Shortly after returning to Osombo-Windimbe, on 2 October 1904, von Trotha issued the 'extermination order', translated into Herero as well as read in German.⁴⁴ It 'was read to the German troops after a religious service on the border of the Kalahari desert'.⁴⁵

The Herero are no longer German subjects. They have murdered and plundered. They have hacked off ears, nose, and other organs from wounded soldiers.⁴⁶ Now out of cowardice they want to give up the fight. ... The Herero nation must leave the country. If it will not do so, I will compel it by force. ... Inside German territory every Herero tribesman, armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot. No women or children will be allowed in the territory: they will be driven back to their people or fired on. These are the last words to the Herero nation from me, the Great General of the mighty German Emperor.⁴⁷

Asserting that the annihilation order had been issued because of the Herero's actions, von Trotha claimed his response was a reaction to the atrocities committed by the Herero. In this way, he justified his actions militarily, using the same language as his colonial predecessors, Leutwein and von François, before him. He moved, then, from their plural 'atrocities' to his singular response, declaring that he no longer accepted any kind of peace with the Herero. He prohibited them from remaining in Hereroland, and if they attempted to stay, they were to be shot.

He literally mimicked, in his syntax, the outcome he hoped to achieve in war. Framed in short, active voice, declarative constructions, he declared the Herero guilty; consequently, von Trotha's punishment for their crimes was the dissolution of their group. By the end of the proclamation, the Herero no longer existed as active agents, but instead were transformed into passive objects whom the Germans were compelled to eliminate from their property.

The next day, von Trotha penned another letter to his superior in Germany, explaining his actions further.⁴⁸

I believe that the nation as such should be annihilated, or if this was not possible by tactical measures, have to be expelled from the country by operative means and further detailed treatment. ... Because I neither can nor want to negotiate with these people ... a certain rigorous treatment of all sections of the nation is absolutely necessary, a treatment which I have put into practice for the time being. ... My intimate knowledge of many central African tribes has everywhere convinced me of the necessity that the Negro does not respect treaties only brute force ... to accept women and children most of whom are ill is a serious danger to the troops ... for this reason, I find it most appropriate that the entire nation perishes rather than infecting our troops.⁴⁹

Escalating the rhetoric, von Trotha cited his 'belief' that the Herero ought to be 'annihilated' because they were only capable of respecting 'brute force'. As a people, he no longer wanted to negotiate with them, and he designated them a 'contagion'. Annihilation included, now, a social obligation. Extermination was his civil duty, a political act, in which his push of the Herero into the Omaheke and the Kalahari deserts merely assisted nature in its elimination of a weaker and unnecessary people. It was no longer colonial massacre, but an action tied to the imagined ontological and cultural benefits Germans gained from the absence of the Herero.⁵⁰

Extermination and extinction were paired processes, a relationship he indicated to Leutwein. As he put it, 'having failed to destroy them with guns, I will have to achieve my end in that way', that is, he would force them to extinction in the desert. If nature acted too slowly, then the German military had to encourage the process through annihilation with their weapons.

Annihilation had become necessary because of his 'intimate knowledge' of 'central African tribes'. It enabled him to see clearly that 'the natives' were a 'dying race'. He added that he could not spare women and children because they threatened the Germans with their 'infection'. He later pointed to their contagion as the reason behind his soldiers killing discrete groups of women and children in the Omaheke desert. He likened these acts to 'mercy killings'. In this vein, von Trotha posited that 'this revolt

is and will remain the beginning of a racial conflict.⁵¹ Thus, von Trotha summed up a critical aspect of his overall schema; he envisioned a space that was, ultimately, one race; all others had been eliminated.⁵² Extermination was evidence of the Germans' 'necessary' evolution in modernity with Herero resistance, the last gasp of 'a dying race' on the verge of extinction. Furthermore, their 'revolt' augured the first moment of a 'racial conflict' that, should the Germans ignore it and still attempt to control through forced labour and preserves, would end in German losses.

Von Trotha's perspective was grounded in a series of premises. The colony's health was contingent on racial purity; it had to be white, and it had to be European. These were the two markers of civilization, expressed in labour, peace and stability. Modern society, specifically German colonial society, had worked towards the expulsion of racial difference from within its polis as a consequence of evolution. The persistence of racial difference was a sign of infection that warranted 'surgical removal'.⁵³

While von Trotha's actions were not unique in GSWA, as many scholars have noted, his perspective reflected, still, a different orientation towards the Africans. When Africans were recognized as useless to the colony, they also became useless existentially. Other voices echoed von Trotha; they understood the dangers of colonial life to lure the German settler away from the 'culture' and 'thinking' of the Europeans, transforming them into 'true Afrikaners'.⁵⁴ This abandonment of German 'culture' would force GSWA to lose its purpose as a site for social engineering, a place where the purity of German blood could be preserved. The preservation of the white, German minority in GSWA had to come at the cost of the African majority.

Von Trotha operated according to a calculus in which the world of *terra nullius* had to be made empty, cleared out of beings whose 'personal sovereignty' differed little from the *res nullius* beings of slavery. Under these expanded terms of *terra nullius*, Germans were constrained to fulfil their destinies not only in the absence of indigenous claims on the territory, but also in the absence of indigenous beings within the territory. Their entitlements hinged on settlement without obstacles. Whether bodies or settlements, they were all 'structures' that had to be cleared away. Leutwein's calculus had also used *terra nullius*, but his insistence on the colonies' profitability included the territory's inhabitants, with their 'personal sovereignties', because these resources were necessary to the colony's structure. The colony could not exist without them.

The 'shared sense' of genocide

Eyewitness accounts by Herero survivors of their experiences during and after the Battle of Waterberg are few and come mainly from the British *Blue Book* of 1918.⁵⁵ These collected narratives described the dispersal of small groups trying to cross the Omaheke desert, in order to enter Bechuanaland, now known as Botswana. Among the handful of groups who were successful, the survivors told the British that they had seen the Omaheke filled with the corpses of their people.⁵⁶ Others were interned at the concentration camps of Windhoek, Shark Island and Lüderitz Bay.⁵⁷ Depositions from survivors of the camps and the treks through the deserts to non-German territories were, for obvious reasons, only given more than a decade after the events, when the British collected their evidence.⁵⁸

Daniel Kariko emerged as a key witness about what was known by the Herero of von Trotha's policy towards them in 1904, and at the Battle of Waterberg.⁵⁹ While the British were only interested in Kariko's experiences at Waterberg, the Herero chief's biography prior to Waterberg reflected his experience with German colonial policy.⁶⁰ The Germans had stripped him of his authority over the Berg Damara and had limited his territory considerably. For Kariko, these past experiences kept him, as well as other Herero, from anticipating von Trotha's *Vernichtungbefehl*, because the Herero chiefs expected 'a negotiated peace' since they had been forced to comply with dispossession.

Kariko's testimony included the timing of Samuel Maharero's declaration of war against the Germans, the subsequent events after Waterberg and his flight with five other chiefs and their families through the Omaheke, to get to the British in Bechuanaland.

The result of this war is known to everyone. Our people, men, women, and children were shot like dogs and wild animals. Our people have disappeared now. I see only a few left; their cattle and sheep are gone too, and all our land is owned by the Germans ... after the fight in Waterberg we asked for peace; but von Trotha said there would only be peace when we were all dead, as he intended to exterminate us. I fled to the desert with a few remnants of my stock ... in 1915 they told me that the British were in Hereroland, and I hurried down to meet them ... I was allowed to return to Hereroland after 10 years of exile.⁶¹

Kariko related what he knew with certainty. It was 'known to everyone'. The Germans indiscriminately shot 'our people', like 'dogs and wild animals'. The Germans constructed them as external threats preying on settler safety, who were killed as 'wild animals' who roamed the region. Kariko's emphasis on their transformation into 'animals' signalled his realization that he and his people had been recast as part of nature that had to be subdued so that killing produced their tangible absence. Their disappearance required him to mark their existence by the fact of their absence: the only 'fact' left to him was their disappearance.

Kariko would never know where their bodies were located; without knowledge of the ancestors' graves, Herero prayers would be ineffective. There would be no redemption of the people after this loss, because the absence of knowledge of where the ancestors' graves were destroyed both the 'sense of their being' and the ontology of the present people. The Herero had lost the dimensions of their community, severing modern Herero from their histories.⁶²

After adumbrating his people's losses, he shifted to 'we asked for peace' and repeated von Trotha's rejection. The statement implied that the Herero approached von Trotha as an equal partner in war, as another nation. They expected to be treated as conquered peoples, a practice both they and the Germans had employed previously. In their recent memories, the chiefs fell back on Leutwein's use of it with Witbooi and Samuel Maharero.

Kariko understood von Trotha's rejection as a distributive statement, denied to all Herero simultaneously. Neither truce nor mercy was offered. They were an undefined group, without exceptions, each Herero body interchangeable with any other Herero body. The Germans had already made the Africans indistinguishable and undifferentiated from each other.

Von Trotha's rejection freighted another aspect of this determination. He did not believe any of the African polities could be absorbed by the German settlements

without peril to Germans themselves. German being was at stake if Africans were allowed to live in proximity to or among the German settlements. The attitude reflected an intensification of military thinking about colonial administration. The colony had to be a zone exclusively for German settlement.

Kariko's realization of all these implications indicated that destruction at Waterberg and the subsequent flight into the deserts were intuitively constructed around the shared experience of a delegitimized, 'detribalized' existence, defined by their persecutors as their exclusion from an epistemological category of 'peoples'. This had been reinforced in their experiences leading up to Waterberg and had been one of the causes for their rebellion. The two concepts of absence and rejection became paired in Kariko's thinking, internal boundaries for structuring his memory. By the end of the deposition, Kariko asserted that the Herero knew their exile into the desert was their death sentence, a cognitive conclusion of von Trotha's policy.⁶³

Salatiel Kambazembi, who with his brother, David, served as chiefs of the Herero in Waterberg and its environs, made a similar overture of surrender to von Trotha. He let it be known through von Trotha's officers, von Estorff and Böttlin, the *alte Afrikaner* officers or 'old Afrikaners',⁶⁴ that he was inclined to terms with the Germans; but von Trotha rejected his appeals, too.⁶⁵ Kambazembi fled with Samuel Maherero into the Omaheke. When von Trotha learnt that the *alte Afrikaner* officers had 'welcomed' Kambazembi's overtures, he made his intentions clear. Kambazembi's flight with Maherero into the desert would 'hardly help him: fought together, caught together, hanged together'.⁶⁶ For these two survivors of Waterberg, von Trotha exemplified a position unlike any of the previous colonial governors they had known.

The headman of the Herero at Windhoek, Hosea Mungunda, echoed Kariko and Kambazembi.

We were crushed and well-nigh exterminated by the Germans in the rising. With the exception of Samuel Mahahero, Mutati, Traugott, Tjetjoo, Hosea, and Kajata (who fled to British territory) all our chiefs and leaders died or were killed in the rising and also the great majority of our people ... when General von Trotha took command no prisoners were taken. General von Trotha said, 'No one is to live... ? We can't say how many were killed.⁶⁷

Mungunda added, though, that the people themselves experienced dissolution in the deaths of their 'chiefs and leaders'. With their deaths, 'the majority of the people died'. He identified this loss with certainty, although he did not quantify his knowledge according to a precise number of corpses. He retained the sense of its enormity through the signifier of their absence. Essentially, the memory of the massacre coincided with the outlines of this immense loss that resided outside of quantification. It was uncategorized loss. While Mungunda remembered the names of those who fled with them, their memories remained tied to an uncategorized loss. This loss was outside of Herero categories; it exceeded them.

The Herero had found themselves increasingly subjected to a German organization of knowledge prior to the insurrection, an epistemological grid, represented in the imposition of physical boundaries and infrastructure into which they were either compelled to fit or excluded from benefit. Like the Nama, the Herero had a collective

experience of unbounded space. They were not consigned to preserves; they did not need sanctioned modes of connection to move through terrain.

After Waterberg, its survivors saw a new unboundedness, an immense loss, and they experienced that quality of loss as both collective and individual violations. Instead of unbounded territories, filled with cattle, ancestors, families, they were forced to see unbounded blank space, intuited as their uncategorized loss. It was a profound emptiness, in which they were severed from their own concept of historical being. The Germans had sutured the comfort of unbounded space to indigenous tragedy. In this way, the massacre of the Herero was intuited by a surviving remnant as the loss of the whole. The loss of their chiefs and headmen implied the collective dissolution for all. If they wanted to survive in any way, they had to be folded, quite literally, in to British colonialism. They had to remain ‘the colonized’, abject beings of German intent. That realization did not negate the intensity of the Herero’s loss, but it did speak to the nature of the recollections that the British archived and subsequent interviewers collected.⁶⁸

Going into the insurrection, the Herero’s military strategy of cutting the lines of communication that traversed Hereroland resonated with a desire to destroy the ways the Herero were transformed into objects of knowledge. Coming out of the war, the few survivors, resigned to being a captive people, recognized that they were no longer even objects of knowledge. German epistemology had eliminated them from a category of the known. However, due to von Trotha’s policy, the surviving Herero accepted their assignment to preserves, something neither Leutwein nor von François had been able to accomplish, in order to continue at least as objects.

The Herero position comprised both a physical and mental rebellion. In their attempt to rise up against the Germans, the Herero cut the lines of their communication, the railroad tracks. They aimed at the vectors of German cartography, the boundaries of the preserves and the signifiers of German epistemology, the farms that Germans were so eager to introduce. They destroyed the lines that connected the German settlements and gave shape to the colony. Symbolically, they attacked colonial cartography. In the destruction of these lines, the Herero did not attack all of the German settlements, only those associated with the active abuse of the Herero. In fact, Samuel had signified early on that Germans could live contiguously to them, without fear.⁶⁹ After Waterberg, the group realized that the Germans killed them as predators, and rejected them as human beings. Finally, the survivors of the group were overwhelmed by the absence of their communities.

After von Trotha’s pronouncements, the German public became offended by lurid newspaper accounts of the behaviour of its soldiers in GSWA, so that Berlin required von Trotha to rescind the ‘extermination order’ two months after its issuance. While the war continued under other German officers, von Trotha returned to Germany in 1905.⁷⁰

The German General Staff published its own ‘two volume study of the wars’ in 1906 and 1907, while the war continued. George Steinmetz noted that the study ended ‘with the pathetic image of “the death rattle of the dying and the furious screams of madness” that “faded away in the sublime silence of infinitude.”⁷¹ The German soldier’s sublimity had been triggered by the sight of ‘the dying’ and the sounds of ‘the furious screams of madness’.

The aforementioned sublime experience was very different from the national tradition inspired by Kant. This soldier’s senses registered an intense affect ending in

'sublime silence' while contemplating the Herero 'dying'. The similarities between this experience and Andersson's were striking. Both confronted the immensity of the scene before them and plunged into a reverie; the only difference was that instead of the 'sheet of blue' spread before the trader, it was a scene of death, screams and corpses exhibited to the soldier.

The connection between 'the sublime silence of infinitude' and the 'death rattle' of the Herero was, however, derived from an extended passage in which an unnamed 'campaigner' described his 'months' in the desert 'cordoning off' the waterholes from Herero stragglers. The soldier's account became necessary, because Von Trotha's reports to Berlin lacked the soldier's subjective experience, how the soldier personally 'completed the work of extermination'. The General Staff included it to illustrate the personal benefits the soldier gained in the field. The account was evidence of the subject position intuited by the noble German recruit on the 'battlefield' of the Sandveld.

"The drama took place on the dark stage of the desert ... when the rainy season came the stage gradually lightened and our patrols were advancing to the frontier of Bechuanaland. ... It revealed itself to our eyes as the gruesome image ... the rattle of the dying and the cries of rage of madness ... they echoed in the sublime silence of eternity" – The criminal court had come to an end. The Hereros had ceased to be an independent tribe.⁷²

Likening the moment to a stage, the soldier concluded that enlightenment allowed him to understand what he had seen and heard. Illumination occurred because he had completed von Trotha's orders, and he now knew that the process in which he had been engaged was both aesthetic experience and 'criminal court'. The judgement he levied was the end of Herero independence. This was their punishment for an existence unrecognized by Europe.

When the Germans declared the 'war' ended in 1907, the Herero, defeated and no longer recognizable as a polity, were dispersed within South Africa and Botswana, living as refugees. The few remnants of the Herero in GSWA were housed in concentration camps and work details throughout the region.

They joined a remnant of Nama also collected in these camps. The Nama had been led by Hendrik Witbooi, who came to the realization after Waterberg that the Germans intended to destroy indigenous life within the colony. In a letter dated 1 October 1904, Witbooi notified the *kaptein* of Rehoboth, Hermanus van Wyk, that he intended to leave the Protection Agreement. Van Wyk and Witbooi had served together under the Germans for the entire period of Witbooi's agreement. He had notified van Wyk of the Hoornkrans massacre in 1893. In both the earlier correspondence and this letter, Witbooi was aware that van Wyk remained the Germans' subaltern.

However, the Germans' destruction of the Herero at Waterberg, in April, coupled to the missionaries' sermons declaring God's punishment of Witbooi and his followers, inspired him to leave his agreement. Witbooi explained his thinking in terms of a divine mandate.

As you are aware, I have for a long time been abiding under the law and in the law, following it, as have we all, in obedience – but also in hope and in the faith that God our Father would in the fullness of time deliver us from the wretchedness

of this world. So far I have borne the burden peacefully and meekly; whatever wrenched my heart, I have let pass, trusting in the Lord.

I shall not write at length – merely this: My arms and shoulders have grown weary, and I perceive that the time is now at hand when God the Father shall deliver the world by His grace.

When you read this letter, know that you shall appear as you must appear. I trust you understand this message well.

I tell you that I have given up my position. That is the main point: I have come to my end. I shall also write to the Major, to tell him what I have done; I have also written to all the other chiefs that the time has come.⁷³

Although elderly, Witbooi returned, in his letter, to his former role as the leader of the Nama people, a redemptive force for all of the African polities in the region. Noting for van Wyk that in previous years he, too, had been ‘under the law’ and had served ‘in obedience’, he had, likewise, witnessed German abuses but had chosen to let them ‘pass’ because he believed that God had willed a specific time for the Africans’ redemption. Witbooi declared ‘that the time is now at hand’. He was to be an instrument in his world’s ‘deliverance’ from the Germans.

This last missive to van Wyk was to encourage the Baster *kaptein* to abandon his Protection Agreement as well, although Witbooi surmised that van Wyk would ‘appear as you must appear’. The last phrase hinted that he knew the Baster *kaptein* remained ‘loyal’ to the Germans.

Additionally, he recognized the singularity of his decision. He had forfeited his position, with all that the benefits it entailed, because ‘I have come to my end’. In this solemn statement, he indicated that at ‘almost eighty years’, his own death was imminent, and he would not die a subaltern subject, actively assisting the Germans in the destruction of African polities. Witbooi informed van Wyk that he had ‘written to all the other chiefs that the time has come’. He had returned to his precolonial role of independent *kaptein*, even if he died in its expression.

On 2 October, another Nama *kaptein*, Christian Goliath, of Berseba, one of the three southern Orlam polities of which the Witboois had been part, wrote entreating him to ‘end the remainder of your days in peace’.⁷⁴ Goliath warned Witbooi that he would neither break the agreement nor ‘be at war with the Government’. He begged him ‘to desist’, because war would ensue from Witbooi’s actions. Furthermore, since Goliath was not to join Witbooi’s efforts, he underlined for the Gibeon *kaptein* the conclusion that at least one Nama group and the Basters did not support his withdrawal. Witbooi became the de facto leader of the rebellion until his death during the insurrection in 1905. Goliath’s polity, as well as the Rehoboth Basters, remained subject to German law. Hendrik Witbooi died as a result of a gunshot wound during the war; the Nama leader had been successful against the Germans until his death.

After Witbooi’s death, the Nama War continued with skirmishes until 1908. The Nama were led by Simon Kooper. Kooper’s territory included ‘the border regions, between the Auob River, near his headquarters of !Gochas and the Nossob River’; it ‘was part of the traditional land of the !Khara-khoen community’.⁷⁵ His territory and people ‘moved’ across three national boundaries, ‘Auob and Nossob Rivers in South Africa, north and east of the Nossob in Botswana and north and west of this same

river in Namibia,' and they had been there for generations.⁷⁶ To bring the war to a close, Kooper had to accept that he would never cross these boundaries again without German permission, and that he would be relocated to a preserve in Botswana.⁷⁷ In order to save his people from the mandatory concentration camps, he accepted these terms, but 'he did not understand how people across the seas would draw lines on the map, demarcating who's land is who's'.⁷⁸

Kooper's perspective reflected the Nama's general sentiment that their war with the Germans continued although the Herero war had ended. Consequently, German patrols still hunted Nama indigenous fighters for several years after the end of the formal war against the Herero.⁷⁹ For the remaining Herero and Nama survivors in GSWA, it was the beginning of their new existence as a helot class. They were to become a social entity for which only the social institutions of their captors could prepare them, since those institutions had, effectively, erased their former identities.

(Re-)iterations of the colonized consciousness, 1904–8

A new identity emerged at the German concentration camp. Gewald noted that prior to Waterberg, German settlers had sent repeated requests to the military for 'allocation of Herero prisoners of war' for the purposes of using them as 'slave labor'.⁸⁰ After von Trotha's extermination or expulsion ultimatum, the 'flight of an entire nation' had left these settlers with 'a dire shortage of labor'.⁸¹ The camps came about because, as Gewald argued, 'Leutwein had foreseen and feared' that the war would produce a 'shortage of labor'.⁸² The camps were to preserve some portion of the survivors for labour.

To address this shortage, Chancellor von Bülow, the fourth German chancellor during the colonial era, determined that Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) agents should go into the Omaheke desert and encourage the remnant of Herero still alive 'to surrender and that those Herero who surrendered were "to be placed in concentration camps [Konzentrationslagern] in various parts of the country where, under guard, they could then be used for labour."'⁸³ The missionaries 'enticed' this remnant who had been 'starved, pursued and hunted like animals' to come 'out of the desert' and to be 'placed in holding camps, from whence they were then redistributed to smaller camps all around the country'.⁸⁴

Samuel Kariko, Daniel Kariko's son, described the experience of coming to the collection sites.

When von Trotha left, we were advised of a circular which the new Governor von Lindequist, had issued, in which he promised to spare the lives of our people if we came in from the bush and mountains where we lived like hunted animals. We then began to come in. I went to Okambahe, near my old home, and surrendered. We then had no cattle left, and more than three-quarters of our people had perished, far more. There were only a few thousands of us left, and we were walking skeletons, with no flesh, only skin and bones. They collected us in groups and made us work for the little food we got. I was sent down with others to an island far in the south, at Luderitzbucht. There on that island were

thousands of Herero and Hottentot prisoners. We had to live there. Men, Women and children were all huddled together. We had no proper clothing, no blankets, and the night air on the sea was bitterly cold. The wet sea fogs drenched us and made our teeth chatter. The people died there like flies that had been poisoned. The great majority died there. The little children and the old people died first, and then the women and the weaker men. No day passed without many deaths. We begged and prayed and appealed for leave to go back to our own country, which is warmer, but the Germans refused. Those men who were fit had to work during the day in the harbour and railway depots. The younger women were selected by the soldiers and taken to their camps as concubines. Soon the greater majority of the prisoners had died, and then the Germans began to treat us better. A Captain von Zülow took charge, and he was more humane than the others. After being there over a year those of us who survived were allowed to return home. After all was over, the survivors of our race were merely slaves.⁸⁵

Kariko's memory identified critical elements to the camps' function and purpose: to preserve African lives, they had to accept their existence as 'slaves'. After a year, the 'slaves', if they survived their previous treatment in the camps, were allowed to take their new statuses 'home'. In other words, the camps were designed to produce a people without the memory of autonomy. They could then return to the preserves as these new beings, ready to work for the Fatherland.

Vedder, the RMS missionary responsible for so much of the earlier anecdotal information about indigenous history prior to German colonization, speculated that the 'war' was necessary for the German colony to articulate these 'noble' aims.

The Hereros, driven from fixed localities, congregated with their cattle at Waterberg, where they awaited the German troops. A decisive battle was fought on the 11th and 12th August, 1905.⁸⁶ The Hereros broke through the surrounding troops towards the east and got into the waterless desert of Omaheke, where many of them perished, while Samuel Maharero traversed the desert with his men to Union territory. ... Single and straggling groups of Hereros were pursued and disbanded by the German soldiers and many prisoners taken, bringing 3,000 Herero prisoners-of-war from the field. The missionaries of the Rhenish Mission, who had laboured for so many years amongst the Hereros and had gained their confidence, undertook the work of gathering them together again. With the support of the Government they established three concentration camps and gathered together an additional number of about 12,000 Hereros, all of whom were distributed over the country as labourers. The chieftaincies were abolished. Now there were only Herero labourers, for the Herero nation existed no longer, and strict but just laws regulated native affairs

The Hereros consequently adopted Christianity *en masse*, especially since the rigid discipline of the congregations served as a substitute for their broken tribal discipline.⁸⁷

No longer was Andersson, the trader-explorer, the only 'Faustian' hero. Vedder's German missionaries had saved 'the natives' for this purpose. Their good services included helping German soldiers identify the locations of the Herero 'stragglers' so that

they could, with the government's 'support' be collected. He linked the missionaries' 'work' to the establishment of the concentration camps, notorious in Namibian history. Vedder claimed that the war's eventual outcome, the destruction of the Herero tribe, was a good that enabled the Herero to join the German colony as 'equal before the law'.⁸⁸

He lamented, though, that the Herero only imitated Europeans because the Herero had not 'given up his old civilization ... and adopted western civilization'.⁸⁹ He offered the funeral of Samuel Maharero in 1923 as evidence. Samuel's body was returned to Namibia to be buried next to his father, Maharero, and his grandfather, Tjamuaha, in Okahandja. At his funeral, Vedder officiated a Christian service, but few Herero attended. They preferred, instead, to gather at the Mahereros' graves according to the traditional religion. The Herero men paraded in 'military review' before the three gravesites 'in all their glory'.⁹⁰ For Vedder, the Herero 'had to allow themselves to take the place assigned to them' so that 'they could rank as the foremost people, amongst the native races'.⁹¹ He outlined that in a category of Africans, they could be ranked higher than others if they had accepted their places, but their inability to abandon pagan religion and the idea of an autonomous people forced them into their own 'extinction'. They did not recognize the redemption inherent in what the Germans offered them.

The concentration camps lasted between 1905 and 1908. Even by the end of this last phase, the fifth phase of German colonialism, the era of 'concentration camps', colonialism had provided another narrative by which its agents had 'papered over' genocide. It had been folded into the narrative of a 'war of annihilation' in which the concentration camps had been the only mode of 'rescue', of African 'salvation', and in which they emerged 'equal before the law', 'seasoned' and prepared for their participation in the German Reich.

The 'shared sense' or 'constitutive side' of their victimization was concentrated between two concerns: their interchangeability as units of labour in German epistemologies of the colony until 1918 and the absence of traditional Herero and Nama polities after 1908.⁹² The Herero and the Nama went from the largest polities within GSWA to its smallest remnants. In Namibia's 1989 census, the Herero were listed at 7.5 per cent and the Nama at just under 5 per cent in the current population.⁹³ In the 2011 census, recipients were no longer asked to identify their traditional backgrounds.⁹⁴

Part Three

The Holocaust



The Holocaust lasted twelve years, from 1933 to 1945. It affected every country in Europe, from Britain to Iceland, Russia to Greece. It crossed the Strait of Gibraltar into North Africa; it moved into India, and China.¹ The Americas were also pulled into its orbit. In other words, the Holocaust was not limited to Europe, but its path traversed any geography where Hitler imagined that the presence of Jews threatened Germany, where space had to be *Judenrein*.

Before the Nazis could implement a *Judenrein* Europe, they had to ‘coordinate’ discrete actions and processes in preparation for their ‘thousand year Reich’. These processes began with the enactment on 7 April 1933 of the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums* (BBG) or the ‘Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service’. The law permitted Nazi functionaries both to identify professions prohibited to Jews and to demand documentation certifying professional ‘purity’. Alan E. Steinweis observed that while the tenor of the law was to promote ‘the dismissal of most “non-Aryans” from government positions’, it ‘simplified the assault on Jewish artists employed by state-run cultural institutions’ so that the BBG enabled a cultural purge of Jewish writers, intellectuals and artists in 1933.² By 1939, Hitler had assumed unfettered control of all of Germany’s social institutions. This control had been nurtured by the unprecedented revision of the German legal code, of which the BBG was only a first ‘shot over the bow’.³

The revision of Germany’s legal codes from 1933 to 1938 immediately restricted the visibility, presence and movement of Jews throughout German public spaces, its cultural, political and civil expressions. The laws had the same effect in the smaller towns and cities of the Reich, but the effects on Jewish life were particularly pronounced in its metropoles, precisely because Jewish life had flourished in these large urban spaces over three centuries.

For Jews of the eighteenth century, the promise of *Haskalah*, the Jewish Enlightenment, offered the possibility of social advancement, previously unimaginable. This hope fostered the perception that, as the novelist, Jakob Wasserman, declared, the nineteenth century lacked the overt anti-Semitism to which his parents had been subjected.⁴ It enabled Jews in the first decades of the twentieth century to be anonymous in the crowd, to walk with Walter Benjamin ‘aimlessly’ through the crowds and streets of Germany’s cities, in a reverie about modernity’s meaning for Europeans.⁵ When the BBG first identified Jews as a civil and social threat that lived among Germans, it transformed the Reich, immediately, into a place where Jews’ absence was not only the desired goal but also a social good. In a handful of years, 1933–8, legal persecution of Jews became the norm within the Reich.

Germans were encouraged to associate the signifiers of Jewish life with the signifiers of their oppression, something that had always simmered within the pre-Nazi state.⁶ As German law cleansed public spaces, discursively and socially, the effect of this association became palpable, expressed through sanctioned attacks on Jews throughout the Reich. It culminated with *Kristallnacht*, on 10 November 1938, so that riots, destruction of Jewish property and businesses as well as attacks on Jews became acceptable catharses for the cognitive pressure that had built up for five years within Germany.⁷

From 1939 to 1940, the Nazis moved, then, to remove Jews from proximity to Reich homes, in countries including Germany, Austria and the Sudetenland or Czechoslovakia.

Jews were to be collected and resettled within ghettos and concentration camps. The early scaffolding for the plan had been part of Himmler's overall goal for Germany; he had envisioned camps that would remove criminals, asocials and deviants from German streets – all terms that acted as ciphers for Jewish identity. To that end, Nazis had already set up a rudimentary concentration camp network by 1933, with Dachau, followed by Sachsenhausen in 1936, and with the successful annexation of Austria, they added Mauthausen in 1938. As the Nazis shored up their social project of the 1930s, Jews became the criminal element, whose necessary detention was to save the Aryan race.

At Mauthausen, residents watched prisoners as they were tortured and, in one case, related by Saul Friedländer, murdered. Friedländer described one such incident when, in 1941, a resident complained by letter to the camp's commandant of being 'an unwilling witness' to the execution of inmates.⁸ If these 'inhuman deeds' continued, she demanded, they must be 'done where one does not see it'.⁹ The German public did not object to the punishments of the camps, only to their exhibition, because if these acts were visible, their viewers became complicit in their perpetration. Additionally, the vulgarity of the criminal pollutant's destruction was to be accomplished privately. Thus, the camps became places where Nazi torture and murder were 'hidden' from Reich citizens.

Since the camps were originally criminal detention centres, Jews' detention in them codified, for a German populace, the association of Jews with inherent criminality. Jews possessed, in excess, all of the traits previously linked to the asocials, deviants, criminals, the mentally ill and the physically handicapped. Their exclusion was intuited as a social necessity; their isolation ensured that their pollution, their infection, did not seep any further into either the German body politic or the literal bloodlines of the future Reich. Likewise, as Steinweis noted, the cultural purge that began in the 1930s under Hans Hinkel was to accomplish a similar purification of the *sensus communis*.¹⁰ Claudia Koontz observed (2003) that Nazi theorists used a 'language of parasitology to describe a danger *within* the ethnic organism' in order to create the conditions in which the removal of the Jews constituted a national and biological threat.¹¹ Their removal signified, according to Friedländer, a 'redemptive anti-Semitism'.¹²

By 1940–1, 'redemption' required Jewish blood. 'Killing' was revealed as a mandated predicate to the collection process. It was the explicit articulation of an implicit tendency.¹³ The killing phase coincided with the need to take back German territory, properties and people cut off from the Reich after the First World War. These territories extended east and west. Although the Nazis had 'coordinated' discrete murders and massacres of Jews before this time, the intent to murder the entire Jewish people became an explicit practice. The Nazis did not intend to let the Jews go 'extinct' through starvation, neglect or even forced labour. Every day that Jews occupied space in German territories was a day that Jews had polluted and stopped the restoration of the Aryan subject and people.

Concerted killing began in 1941, as Nazi troops pressed east into Russia during Operation Barbarossa. *Einsatzgruppen*, or mobile killing units, followed the Reich troops towards the Russian Front, massacring Jews wherever they were found. They were *kommandos* with specific orders to execute Jews. Although Hitler was to give the Final Solution order to his inner circle in the latter half of 1941, the order merely

formalized a policy that had already begun with these mobile death squads. Nazis collected Jews, contained them in ghettos, transported them to remote locations and shot them, disposing of their bodies in huge pits that the victims had been forced to dig. If more convenient, they herded the Jews into the symbols of their existence, their synagogues, and burnt them alive, orchestrating cultural and physical genocide in one efficient action.¹⁴

The apex of the 'Final Solution' was a refinement of the killing process; it was the era of the death camps from 1941 to 1945.¹⁵ While the concentration camp network extended into all sectors of the Reich, and included some 20,000 camps, this period initiated the use of the single-purpose death camp to destroy Jews.¹⁶ Initially, these camps were a systematic way to dispose of Jews for the long term after Operation Barbarossa's anticipated successful conclusion. With Barbarossa's failure, the Nazis shifted from a long-term goal of making an extended Reich *Judenrein* to a short-term project that not only made the General Government *Judenrein*, but also furnished an infrastructure for the Reich's long-term goals.¹⁷

On 20 January 1942, in Berlin, the Nazi high command and German government officials met at the request of Reinhard Heydrich, to discuss the best implementation of the Final Solution. Known as the Wannsee Conference, this meeting articulated the need for a network of death camps to eventually replace the *Einsatzgruppen*. The anticipated quick subjugation of Russia was supposed to create a territorial corridor 'in the East' where Jews from all over Europe were to be 'resettled' after the war, but when Russia's subjugation failed, the Nazis shifted their 'sphere of influence' from Russian to Polish soil.

The meeting outlined the various methods the Nazis had employed up to that time to address the Final Solution and the Reich's projected future plans for dealing with the Jews. Jews' encouraged 'emigration' from the Reich had 'been superseded by a policy of evacuating the Jews to the East'.¹⁸ 'Evacuation' signified deportation to transit camps, where Jews were divided between worker and nonworker. Even though deportations had been ongoing throughout 1941, Heydrich argued for a more permanent solution for Jews if *labour failed to kill them*. They could not delay resolution of the problem of Jewish existence until after Russia's defeat.¹⁹ Peter Longerich observed that while the minutes of the meeting were recorded purposely to occlude their meaning, their euphemisms still suggested the Nazis' plan to exterminate the Jews.

'Jews fit for work will be led into ... areas as road-builders, in the course of which, no doubt, a large number will be lost by natural wastage'. The 'remainder who will inevitably survive' will, 'since they are the ones with the greatest powers of endurance', 'have to be dealt with accordingly' to prevent their becoming 'the germ cell of a new Jewish regeneration'. Initially the Jews were to be taken to 'transit-ghettos', from which they were to be 'transported further towards the East'.²⁰

Heydrich's 'transit-ghettos' were collection points for Europe's Jews, from which they would be sent in transports to 'transit camps in the East' – in reality, death camps. These death camps received designated *Stücke*, or 'raw material', from the ghettos and detention centres of the General Government, for destruction. The shift from Jews to

Stücke in the meeting's minutes reflected not only the Nazis' need for secrecy, but also their inherent belief that Jews reflected, at their base, an illegitimate genetic material.

The method of destruction was gas. The conceptual scaffold for these camps had already been in place with the experiments in euthanasia under the T-4 programme.²¹ The initial victims had been the disabled and the mentally ill within Germany, but the programme never found traction with the German public. It was shelved until experiments on Russian prisoners of war at Auschwitz enabled the Nazis to imagine killing centres.²² The successful murder by gas of Russian soldiers demonstrated that the Nazis could still realize their goal of Jewish extermination if they built new sites dedicated to that end. With Operation Barbarossa's failure, the *Einsatzgruppen*'s effectiveness was undercut. However, new collection depots, filled with Jewish material, could replace discrete massacre with systematic and comprehensive killing.

T-4 staff and doctors were assigned to these new sites, with the sole purpose of implementing the Final Solution.²³ Although Chelmno was the first death camp, and became active in 1941, three more were envisioned.²⁴ After Heydrich's assassination on 27 May 1942, in Prague, Hitler named these three death camps the Reinhard camps, in tribute to Heydrich and his project.²⁵

At the first Reinhard death camp, Belzec, outside Lublin, Poland, between 500,000 and 600,000 Jews were gassed. At the second Reinhard camp, Sobibor, 167,000–250,000 Jews were murdered. Both camps dumped the bodies of their victims in pre-existing trenches or pits dug especially for the victims. At the third Reinhard camp, Treblinka, the Nazis gassed 925,000 Jews; their corpses were also taken from the gas chambers and carried to a pit outside the camp, hidden in the forest. Jews arrived at these camps primarily in freight cars, called transports. The Nazis gassed the majority of Jews from the transports, but a small minority was kept alive to serve in work details associated with the killing process; these work details included the *Sonderkommandos*, special units tasked with the loading of the gas chambers, the clearing out of the chambers and the disposal of the bodies.

As the bodies piled up in the pits, they emitted gases, effluvia and blood, until the land itself changed. It began to heave, to exhale the bodies' gases as well as the gas used to kill them. Himmler ordered the bodies to be burnt, and excavators were sent to the camps to dig up the bodies that had been buried there for several months.²⁶ The *Sonderkommandos* excavated the bodies from the pit, layered them on grates and then burnt them. The Nazis instructed them to mix the ashes with soil and return them to the pit. After each of these camps was dismantled, the Nazis ploughed the ground over the pit and transformed the camp buildings into a 'farm', with one of the Ukrainian camp guards installed there, posing as a farmer. In the case of Treblinka, shortly after the war's end, residents from the area began sifting, digging and excavating the area in search of gold.²⁷ A picture of one of these pits of ashes (Figure 3), with the scribbled note on its back, 'dug out of a mountain', was all that remained of Treblinka's murdered Jews after the war.²⁸

Although the General Government had liquidated Poland's Jews, Hitler's plan for a *Judenrein* Europe demanded more death camps. Auschwitz emerged as a supplement to the Reinhard camps. It was a large complex that included a labour camp for Jews, a labour camp for Polish political prisoners and several satellite camps.

Eventually, several camps were reconfigured to accommodate gas chambers after the Reinhard programme ended, most notably Majdanek, Stutthof, Sachsenhausen, and Ravensbrück.²⁹

The mass killing of these death camps intensified over a short period of three years, from 1942 to 1945, and even that range is inaccurate, since the Reinhard killing centres had been dismantled by 1944: they had completed their segments of the disposal of Jews. It had taken so little time to destroy an entire species, of the human race.

An Aryan World and the 'Worldlessness' of Jews¹

The 'exterminatory consciousness' before 1940²

In 1924, in his jail cell, Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*. The text detailed his ideology and described his unfair incarceration due to the 'lies of the Jewish press'.³ When the book was published in 1925, it included several posters with text that Hitler had written to promote his ideology. The posters contained the key ideas, the talking points that Hitler wanted his followers to endorse. One example depicted Jews in a concerted attack on German being.⁴

The eternal peace has turned into an eternal war. If, instigated by the Jewish agents of stock exchange capital and the Entente, Germany continues to lacerate herself in the interior, then after a few years our people will be able to celebrate instead of the *International May* festival its national memorial service. In the most critical hour of our people, in the moment when we, practically abandoned by all the world, made defenseless by our own fault, have to watch France setting out to occupy new territories, while African negroes rape our women and children, while in Upper Silesia bands of Polish murderers and arsonists slaughter German workers, we turn to those who alone will be able to redeem Germany from misery and misfortune. We turn to the German worker and the German youth!⁵

The trajectory of Germany's downfall began with Jews, who threatened Germans 'without mercy'. Jews had forced Germans from their homes and their lands into a colonial gambit where they had been exposed to Africans. Germans were driven to the colonies because they needed to rid themselves of Jews. According to Hitler's logic, Jews had 'pressed the Germans', and in this simple verb, Hitler identified the real wrong with Jewish existence in the Reich. Jews had 'pushed themselves out' (*darstellen*) into the German world.⁶ They became subjects by affixing themselves to German ontologies, an act that resulted in Germans' exile from the Fatherland into distant colonies. Jews had pushed Germans into the disaster of German colonies.⁷

That disaster was even more pronounced when the European powers at Versailles stripped Germans of their colonies, the places where they had been able to recover a semblance of their former Aryan being, and, simultaneously, had permitted France to colonize Germany. France's 'new territories' had been encouraged by 'Jewish agents of

stock exchange capital and the Entente', while Germany continued 'to lacerate herself in the interior'.⁸ Portraying the country as a helpless woman, forced to maim herself, Hitler's intent was clear: Jews had used 'capital' and the 'Entente' nations, the victors, to press Germany towards self-destruction, social suicide. The other European nations, acting at the behest of the Jews, aimed to bring the German people to extinction.

Since German self-destruction had not proceeded fast enough for its enemies, Hitler pointed to France's occupation of the Rhine and French troops that included 'African negroes who rape our women and children'. In his reference to rape, Hitler reiterated how the French had put German bloodlines at risk: they were complicit with Jews against Germans.⁹ Their complicity expressed itself in miscegenation.

While Germans' suspicions of a link between Jews and Africans predated Hitler, Hitler conflated France, Jews and Africans as forces that had already mixed with German blood, producing a debased form of German existence. This debased German existence required a new German state to emerge, in order to correct the unnatural expression of German humiliation. The 'state' Hitler posited only existed in order 'to make the free development' of a 'racially uniform nucleus'.¹⁰ Since 'the German nationality' no longer had this foundation, Hitler asserted that Germans had experienced a 'blood-poisoning', active since the Thirty Years' War.¹¹

With the reference to the Thirty Years' War, Hitler linked the presence of Poles and Jews within German territory to the reason German 'blood' and 'soul' were in a state of 'decomposition'. Germany had not evolved, because 'the various primal constituents' had been impeded in their development by these two foreign pollutants. Moreover, Jews had targeted, purposely, these 'primal constituents'. A 'world of Germans' was unavailable under these terms. The evolution on which Europe had relied was, in fact, an abomination of miscegenation. This screed not only exploited decades of German fear and anger, but it also tapped into a social belief that a leader was needed whose 'personality' articulated 'the living incarnation of the nation's yearning'.¹²

Peter Fritzsche remarked that 'in the 1930s ... most Germans identified with the Third Reich, and most believed that the Nazis had healed the wounds of German history'.¹³

The Nazis believed that Germany was mortally threatened by a cluster of military and geopolitical dangers, by Poland, and by the Treaty of Versailles, which had redrawn Germany's borders to Poland's advantage, but also by political and social conflicts and racial degeneration that Germany's unexpected defeat in 1918 had exposed. National Socialism believed its historical mission was to revitalize Germany as a racial compact in order to make permanent the nationalist solidarities of 1914 and thereby check the 'stab in the back' that it had suffered in 1918.¹⁴

Fritzsche demonstrated that Hitler had used Germany's 'redrawn ... borders' to suggest a continuity between a Polish incursion to the east and the new 'military and geopolitical dangers' of France and Britain to the west. These enemies encircled Germany, and they worked at the behest of the Jews.

Hitler came to power in 1933 and began immediately to transform Germany's legal code to justify the removal of Jews from German public spaces. Germans had to become accustomed to a *Judenrein* public sphere; their public institutions had,

likewise, to be liberated from a Jewish presence. In this early stage of the Third Reich, Hitler authorized new laws to coincide with a socio-political plan to erase Jewish visibility in civil service.

Many of these freedoms dated to Jewish emancipation in 1871, when Germans, optimistic about their futures and victorious in their war against the French, removed the last obstacles to political reform and Jewish emancipation. Some had even dated back to the Stein-Hardenberg reforms of 1808. In fact, Jews had gained new rights almost every decade after Stein-Hardenberg. Thus, Hitler sought to repeal legislation that he deemed tainted by Jewish interests.¹⁵ All of these ‘reforms’ were done to inaugurate the restoration of an Aryan ‘shared sense’.

In 1933–4, Heinrich Himmler introduced his policy of ‘social cleansing’ with his new office of ‘police president’ of Munich.¹⁶ This policy was to achieve the ‘eradication of the criminal class’; it was a ‘priority’ and a duty. Himmler envisioned a string of camps for ‘detention, retribution, and correction’ to achieve this ‘eradication’.¹⁷ Police were encouraged to detain and imprison classes of people at these camps, under the rubric of ‘criminal’, either in practice or in being. Classified as ‘asocials’ and ‘social deviants’, they ‘did not fit into the mythical national community’.¹⁸ If someone practiced criminality, they were more likely to be rehabilitated; their incarceration was temporary. However, if someone was inherently ‘criminal’, there was no possible rehabilitation.

In Himmler’s vision, Dachau was the model camp. Established in 1933, the camp received ‘the first alleged criminals and vagrants’.¹⁹ As raids of ‘deviants’ across Germany increased, these ‘criminals’ were sent to Dachau. By 1934, the Bavarian governor, von Epp, ‘protested’ to Himmler about this increase and inmates’ incarceration for crimes that either had no legal basis, or that had exceeded ‘the purpose of protective custody’.²⁰ As Nicholas Wachsman demonstrated, Himmler’s response not only articulated a vision of what the Führer demanded of the body politic, but it also illustrated that ‘sentiment’ was the constitutive aspect of the collective subject position of the Nazi leadership as well as the basis for the revision of German law.

The observation that imposition of protective custody for alcoholism, firewood theft, embezzlement of moneys belonging to organizations, immoral lifestyle, work shirking, etc., do not quite correspond to the letter of the valid regulations, is entirely accurate. They do however correspond to National Socialist sentiment.²¹

For Himmler, the ‘courts did not deal swiftly and firmly with asocials and criminals’; thus the courts’ delay and leniency required the police to incarcerate before a crime had been committed. They acted on behalf of the endangered German populace. Himmler’s social vision had, from the very beginning, drawn a boundary around the Aryan people so as to identify who did and did not belong to the group. The scope of this boundary began with an expanded criminal class in order to remove those who were criminal in nature, even if the law had yet to specify the crimes they had committed.

In 1934, Herman Göring was the benefactor for the Heck brothers’ ‘back-breeding project’, a eugenics experiment.²² The project was to recover the traces of a mythical DNA in three extinct ‘Aryan’ animals, the auroch, the wisent and the tarpan.

Under Göring's patronage, the Heck brothers scoured zoos throughout central Europe and Germany, looking for animals that retained genetic links to this DNA.

Beasts identified as potential carriers of Aryan DNA were carefully identified and separated from offensive and impure animals and then sent to the Berlin zoo where they were to be 'mated', eventually 'back-breeding' through reproduction until the extinct animals returned to existence. At the same time, Göring and the Heck brothers speculated that the recovery of Aryan being was contingent on the destruction of impure beasts who illegitimately 'mated' with these Aryan animals, eroding Aryan essence. Göring understood these experiments as potentially valuable for the future of the German Reich, because they demonstrated how the Aryan species could be restored, once certain obstacles had been removed.

In 1935, Hans Globke, in the office of *Regierungsrat*, with his superior, Stuckart, wrote the commentaries that German jurists consulted in order to determine the meaning of the Nuremberg Laws.²³ The law had finally caught up to Himmler's social vision. Nevertheless, due to the radical transformation of German society that the Nazis intended to engineer, the laws had to be interpreted for jurists, their nuances parsed, to encourage the law's applicability in the broadest of contexts. Globke and Stuckart made the law's intent clear: National Socialism's 'sentiment' was the basis for the legal tradition. The law's 'sentiment' confirmed the legitimacy of a juridical scepticism regarding the equality of Jews and the other races.

National Socialism opposes the theories based on the equality of all men and on the fundamentally unlimited freedom of the individual vis à vis the State. [We support] the harsh but necessary recognition of the inequality of men and the differences between them based on the laws of nature.²⁴ Inevitably, differences in the rights and duties of the individual derive from the differences in character between the races, nations, peoples.²⁵

Globke's commentary repealed all rights that Jews gained with emancipation in 1871. In fact, the commentary was to provide context for the Nuremberg Laws so that every German jurist was able to understand the law's 'intent' without ambiguity. To put this in perspective, the commentary was designed to legitimate the 'sentiment' of National Socialism, the concern that Himmler had expressed to von Epp in 1934. Judges consulted the commentary in order to know what their 'Führer's intent' was for every legal question. This context mandated that judges apply a racial hierarchy in order to evaluate crime and requisite punishments. Since crimes against the Reich multiplied exponentially at this time, so, too, did these punishments.

Globke's commentary introduced a secondary element that aligned with the spirit of Himmler and Hitler's intent. Instead of legal precedent and tradition serving as the bedrock of jurisprudence, Nazi 'sentiment' legitimated legal ruling. Laws that guaranteed equality – Enlightenment's incremental enactments emancipating the Jews – had to be repealed. Prior legal decisions no longer held legislative authority; in their place, the Nazis substituted the imagined world of National Socialism. Although the Aryan world had yet to come into being, its predecessor, the Nazi world, created the conditions for it by cleansing German social institutions.

In 1937, Himmler continued to prepare the German public for their social adoption of the Nazis' worldview. In the 'National Political Course for the Armed Forces', conducted over a week in January, he declared the need for more concentration camps throughout the Reich. The camps that operated in Germany already, Dachau and Sachsenhausen, along with a handful of others, were necessary to contain the 'criminals and freaks', 'people with hydrocephalus, people who are cross-eyed, deformed, half-Jewish, and a number of racially inferior subjects' that had plagued the German people.²⁶ The concentration camps were for 'slave-like souls' who were incapable of 'any kind of instruction on an ideological basis'.²⁷ Himmler's perspective was clear: concentration camps controlled criminal elements through slavery.

In 1938–9, the philosopher Martin Heidegger wrote in his *Black Notebooks*, the coda to his *Collected Works*, that the Jews intermingled their essence with the German soul in order to destabilize the 'world of being'. Jews were 'historyless', 'bound to nothing', and made 'everything serviceable to itself (Jewry)'.²⁸ They were a force that ate away at the 'world' of humankind. However, Jews could not 'venture be-ing': they were incapable of constituting it. They, instead, were limited to 'calculate with beings', and to 'posit' their 'calculations as what is real'.²⁹

Heidegger reasoned, further, that Jews had developed their 'skilfulness' in the use of calculating from antiquity.

One of the most secret forms of the gigantic, and perhaps the oldest, is the tenacious skillfulness in calculating, hustling, and intermingling through which the worldlessness of Jewry is grounded.³⁰

Jewish 'worldlessness' was exemplified in Jews' abilities to 'intermingle', to 'calculate' and 'hustle'. Heidegger identified this 'worldlessness' with a very old, 'secret form' of skilfulness. Jews had honed their skills while occluding their 'worldlessness'. Peter Trawny characterized it as Heidegger's 'being-historical anti-semitism'.³¹ In another entry, Heidegger posed it even more acutely: 'world Jewry ... in an absolutely unlimited way', assumed 'as a world-historical "task" the deracination of all beings from being'.³² He reasoned that 'world Jewry ... in an absolutely unlimited way' had, from antiquity, undertaken a project of 'deracination' that was accomplished through Jews 'eating away' at the other races. Jewish 'worldlessness' was grounded in their lack of 'race'. They would destroy German being through miscegenation.

In 1939, Alfred Rosenberg, someone for whom Heidegger expressed great contempt, but who also used philosophy to legitimate National Socialism, published *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* in order to establish an intellectual justification for Jewish annihilation.³³ He quoted *Mein Kampf*, in which Hitler accused the Jews of being 'bearers of civilization', because they did not produce culture themselves. They did not 'ground' it as the Aryans had.³⁴ Since they did nothing original with culture, they 'stole it'. Their crimes did not end with cultural theft, but rather they invaded culture, made it 'degenerate'.³⁵

Like Heidegger, Rosenberg argued that the Jews were not a race at all. They were a virus that attached themselves to legitimate races; through their attachment, they weakened being within the races. In order to restore Aryan 'being', Germans would have to 'dream' their 'myth', a world cleansed of Jews.³⁶ Their 'myth' took place in their

'lived experience'; they would recover their 'race' only when experience and myth united in the world.³⁷

The year 1939 was also the one in which the Nazis' completely revised legal codes had finally removed Jews from Germany's streets, professional life and culture. The signifiers of Jewish existence in any form were prohibited. The German people stood ready to articulate the next step in the Führer's vision.

On 30 January 1939, Hitler spoke in the Reichstag about the Nazis' intended transformation of Germany.³⁸ Alon Confino observed that Hitler stated, explicitly, the necessity for the Jews' destruction.³⁹

I have often been a prophet in my life and I was mostly laughed at ... the Jewish people received with nothing but laughter my prophecy ... I want to be a prophet again today ... the result will be ... the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.⁴⁰

His prophecy reiterated the necessity of the 'annihilation' of the Jews. Hitler's 'vision' for Germany did not change from 1924 to 1939. His followers adhered, likewise, to the same ideological tenets, and, in the rare cases where their sympathies did not require them to join the party, as in the case of Globke, their lack of membership never stopped them from espousing support for a Nazi aesthetic and political ideology.⁴¹

In other words, German social institutions were revised to accommodate not only the groundswell of German identification with the Führer's ideology, but also the Nazis' anticipated and obligatory 'redemptive' mission, for a 'global' audience. Moreover, as social institutions conformed to the Nazis' social engineering, individuals escalated their adherence to an idealized *imago* of Aryan existence, what Ian Kershaw called 'working towards the Fuhrer'.⁴² In Kershaw's model, Germans exceeded the letter of Hitler's law, in favour of his 'sentiment'. Anti-Semitism became 'dynamic' and active.

Leading up to 1939, every year articulated some aspect of the Nazis' 'shared sense' across the spectrum of German social institutions. By the end of the 1930s, all German social institutions had conformed to the 'sentiment' of National Socialism and the 'intent' of the Fuhrer. They had coalesced around the idea of the removal of the Jews as a necessary means for the restoration of German race. The collective position enabled, furthermore, ordinary Germans to 'buy in' to the necessity of Jews' disappearance in varying degrees of intensity.

The Second World War began on 1 September 1939. Throughout 1939–40, Jews were systematically removed from their homes in the Reich's major cities, and crammed into 'ghettos'. The 'ghettos' were sealed off from the remainder of their cities, and Jews were not permitted to leave them. As the Reich's cities, towns and villages became empty of Jews, its ghetto populations swelled.

The 'exterminatory consciousness', 1940–5

In two inaugural speeches (26 and 28 March 1941) at the Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question in Frankfurt am Main, Alfred Rosenberg echoed Hitler's earlier claims of Jewish treachery. Jews' treachery had led to the founding of the institute.⁴³ In the second lecture, 'The Jewish Question as a Global Problem', Rosenberg declared

the Nuremberg Laws to be ‘revolutionary in nature for world history’ because they enabled the Nazis to break ‘the dominance of the Jews’.⁴⁴ The laws had disrupted a history promulgated for Jewish benefit and had destroyed Jewish occupation in the Germans’ land. In other words, the Nuremberg Laws had established the Nazi ‘world’, encasing it with ordinances that protected it from Jewish violation.

The war that is being waged today by the German Wehrmacht under the supreme command of Adolf Hitler is therefore a war of enormous transformation. It is not only overcoming the intellectual world of the French Revolution but also directly obliterating all the blood-polluting germs that the Jews and their bastards were able to develop unarrested from amid the European peoples for more than 100 years now. *The Jewish Question, a task that has been set forth for the peoples of Europe for 2000 years and not resolved, will henceforth find its solution, for Germany and for all of Europe, as a result of the National Socialist revolution!*⁴⁵

With this speech, Rosenberg set the terms for extermination of the Jews; their destruction was the only way for Germans to intervene in history, to correct the 2,000-year ‘problem’. Furthermore, he linked that ancient Jewish problem to the imposition of Enlightenment values, so that the Enlightenment values were ciphers for Jewish colonization. Thus, the Nazis had to overpower ‘the intellectual world of the French Revolution’. *Liberté, fraternité, égalité* were signifiers for Jewish conspiracy. Consequently, France’s defeat, occupation and eventual collaboration had finally positioned the Nazis to ‘resolve’ the ancient problem by ‘obliterating all the blood-polluting germs of the Jews’.

It was a new stage for ‘the exterminatory consciousness’, but it was not unanticipated. Nazi leadership recognized that the means for transforming the German collective subject had reached its necessary, biological expression. In the previous decade, the Nazis had concentrated on predictive and proscriptive actions that were meant to lead to this moment.

By late summer, a few months after Rosenberg’s speeches, Hitler gave the order to begin killing the Jews. Goebbels, the ‘voice of the Prophet’, as Confino christened him, proclaimed that the fulfilment of the Führer’s prophecy of Jewish annihilation in 1939 had been implemented by 1941.⁴⁶

He gave Germans a clear idea about the mass killings by informing them in an article published in *Das Reich* on November 16, 1941, that the prophecy was now in a stage of implementation. ‘We are seeing the fulfillment of the prophecy’. ... Some two years later, on May 8, 1943, he interpreted the prophecy further in his article, ‘The War and the Jews’: ‘none of the Fuhrer’s prophetic words has come so inevitably true as his prediction that if Jewry succeeded in provoking a second world war, the result would be. ... This process is of vast importance, and will have unforeseeable consequences that will take time. But it cannot be halted’.⁴⁷

Goebbels recognized that while some, if they knew, would object to the Jews’ destruction, ‘the process’ would eventually confirm the necessity of the Nazis’ actions, and it was not to ‘be halted’. Extermination had a momentum of its own, so that once the Nazis set it in motion, they were assured it would continue to its end: the

elimination of Jews in Europe. The justification for the ‘process’ had been a staple of Hitler’s and his inner circle’s rhetoric from the very beginning of National Socialism: Jews had caused Germany’s defeat in the First World War, and they had provoked the Second World War. They behaved so treacherously because they were motivated by an ‘inner drive’ to destroy German communities.

At the end of November 1941, Reinhard Heydrich ‘invited a number of state secretaries, senior officials and SS officers to a meeting’ in December, at which he intended to outline the methods already authorized by Hitler and undertaken for answering the ‘Jewish Question’.⁴⁸ Due to the entry of the United States into the war as well as the failure of the Barbarossa campaign, the Wannsee Conference had to be rescheduled to convene in Berlin in January 1942.⁴⁹

When Hans Frank, the governor general of the General Government, learnt of the Führer’s order in 1941 to begin a systematic extermination of the Jews, he lobbied before the meeting to have the exterminations start in Poland.⁵⁰ The Germans had determined that 2,284,000 Jews lived within his jurisdiction. To his subordinates, on 16 December 1941, he detailed the upcoming Wannsee Conference and declared that the plans for Jewish extermination would finally be articulated in his territory. It was not if Jews were to be exterminated, but *when* they were to be exterminated.

A major migration is about to start. But what is to happen to the Jews? Do you think they will actually be resettled in Ostland villages? We were told in Berlin. Why all this trouble? We can’t use them either. Liquidate them yourselves.⁵¹

It was a migration that did not actually go anywhere. Frank already knew that Jewish ‘migration’, their ‘resettlement’, was a code for their extermination. Jewish populations were to believe in a narrative of ‘resettlement’ – colonies in the East – but they were to be sent to death camps by the General Government. Eager to implement the extermination process, Frank sent his representatives to the Wannsee Conference when it finally convened in 1942, not only to obtain permission to build the death camps, but also to determine which of the T-4 staff would join each camp in order to accomplish it.⁵²

At the same time, Frank admitted the migration was only a ruse. The narrative of ‘going to the East to be resettled’ circulated throughout the Reich in order to create an excuse for Germans regarding Jews’ disappearance from cities and to reassure Jews that they were to be resettled away from Germans. For Jews, it exploited the familiarity of Jewish exile. However, as Frank’s comments clarified, the Nazis never ‘intended’ to ‘resettle’ Jews. This was not diaspora. ‘Resettlement’ was always a signifier for extermination.

The outcome of the Wannsee Conference was the decision to transport the Jews already collected in ghettos and ‘transit camps’ to a new creation, the death camp where Jews would be murdered without witnesses.⁵³ Three camps, Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka, later known as the Reinhard camps, were to perform the task of killing close to three million Jews living within the boundaries of the General Government.⁵⁴ In fact, these three camps exterminated Jews from the Netherlands, France, Central Europe and throughout Eastern Europe.

Belzec alone murdered 500,000–600,000 Jews in the time of its short operation.⁵⁵ The bodies were dumped in ditches around the camp. When Himmler determined that

Belzec had fulfilled its goal of purifying the areas around Lublin of Jews, he ordered its dismantlement. He also instructed his subordinates to burn the bodies crammed into ditches so as to leave no evidence for the future. This instruction aligned with Himmler's goal of secrecy around the real purpose of Jews' forced removal to 'the East'. Himmler issued similar orders for all three Reinhard camps and, eventually, for all the death camps. His instructions were disseminated through Globocznik, the 'SS and Police leader in Lublin' and Himmler's protege, since all three Reinhard camps were under Lublin's specific purview.

Globocznik opposed the burning of the bodies, as Arad noted, 'on ideological grounds'.⁵⁶ His reasons became known when a coterie of SS officers with the Hygiene Office were sent to Belzec to consult on ways 'to improve the service in our gas chambers'. Globocznik accompanied the officers on their mission to the camps, during which he stressed the 'need' for 'gas which is more toxic and works faster, such as prussic acid'.⁵⁷ To underscore the criticality of his demand, Globocznik demonstrated the use of the gas chambers by liquidating a special group of prisoners brought purposely to Belzec for the demonstration.

After the exhibition, Globocznik took Kurt Gerstein, one of the Hygiene department's SS consultants, to the pits outside the crematoria.⁵⁸ In his confession, known as the 'Gerstein Report', he recounted the conversation he had with Globocznik at Belzec about the delay in the cremation of the Jewish corpses.

Globocznik replied: 'The *Führer* ordered all action speeded up! Dr. Herbert Lindner, who was with us yesterday, asked me: "But wouldn't it be wiser to cremate the corpses instead of burying them? Another generation may perhaps judge these things differently!" I (Globocznik) replied: "Gentlemen, if there were ever, after us, a generation so cowardly and so soft that they could not understand our work which is so good, so necessary, then, gentlemen, all of National Socialism will have been in vain. We ought, on the contrary, to bury bronze tablets stating that it was we who had the courage to carry out this gigantic task!"'⁵⁹

Proud of his 'accomplishments', Globocznik considered any judgement against the extermination of the Jews as a sign of cowardice, effeminacy and weakness. He wanted 'bronze tablets' to be buried with his victims, commemorating the Germans' courage in building gas chambers and murdering Jews. Such tablets would ensure that the Nazis' efforts were to be remembered for the 'necessary' task they completed.

Franz Stangl, Treblinka's commandant from August 1942 to August 1943, called his camp's gas chambers the 'Jewish city'.⁶⁰ Eager for their completion, Stangl would oversee, initially, the deaths of 700,000 Jews 'in the East'.⁶¹ In this way, the Nazis' cynicism expressed itself through the signifiers of 'colonial forced migration' and 'population transfer'.

Still, Stangl 'wanted the camp that he commanded to look attractive', as Arad reported, 'so he ordered the paths paved and flowers planted along the sides of Seidel Street, near headquarters, and near the SS living quarters'.⁶² With Gitta Sereny, Stangl admitted that for Christmas 1942, he had a 'fake train station' erected to give Jews the illusion that they had arrived at a real transit station.⁶³ The illusion of a train station, a town with sidewalks and 'flowers', suggested a 'world', a colony that could be

inhabited, but not by the Jews. The Jews were ‘worldless’. The construction of the fake train station coincided with the exhumation of the Jewish corpses for burning.

Stangl justified his actions by likening the Jews to ‘garbage’, ‘a mass of rotting flesh’, of which he was required to dispose.⁶⁴ His obligation to his job was akin to ‘tidying up’ the camp of Jewish refuse. Thus, he acknowledged to Sereny that the bodies before him, living or dead, were never part of ‘humanity’: they were simply ‘cargo’.⁶⁵

After the gas chambers went into operation, the corpses were thrown into pits just outside the gas chambers. As he stood next to the pits of corpses with Christian Wirth, the commandant in charge of building all three Reinhard camps, Stangl saw only a ‘mass of rotting flesh’. His phrasing highlighted the conceptual turn of the Nazi aesthetic: Jews were never ‘individuals’ within the confines of the death camp. They were always part of a ‘mass’ of indistinguishable refuse. Units could be cut off from the group, on occasion, but they could never attain the status of human individuals because they were ‘raw material’.

Sereny questioned Stangl for over seventy hours in his prison cell, about the individuals he had murdered. She attempted to elicit, in Stangl, the subject position of his victims.

Sereny: ‘There were so many children, did they ever make you think of your own children, of how you would feel in the position of those parents?’

Stangl: ‘No’, he said slowly, ‘I can’t say I ever felt that way’.⁶⁶

In his first response, Stangl admitted that he never ‘felt that way’. The idea of an imagined identification with his victims, an *imago* that could trigger affect or sympathy, as well as anger or rage, was never a part of his subjective experience. He did not imagine himself in a similar situation or crisis. He was not threatened by the Jews.

The stakes of this awareness were significant: in addition to the horror of what he was doing, he had never imagined the Jews as possible subjects, akin to himself. They were phenomena converted into the objects of the death camp, already contained within the epistemology of extermination from the moment they arrived on the platform, and were coerced to run, ‘naked’, through ‘the tube’, also known as the ‘road to heaven’, to the gas chambers.⁶⁷

‘You see’, he then continued, still speaking with extreme seriousness and obviously intent on finding a new truth within himself, ‘I rarely saw them as individuals. It was always a huge mass. I sometimes stood on the wall and saw them in the tube. But – how can I explain it – they were naked, packed together, running, being driven with whips, like. . .’ The sentence trailed off.⁶⁸

As Stangl moved, consciously, to explain why he had not considered the Jews ‘human’ like himself, he relied on the epistemological terms he had constructed. The Jews were ‘always a huge mass’. They had lost the contours of individual human bodies. Even in their naked state, ‘packed together’, they warranted destruction. Stangl’s victims were reduced to the ellipsis of a simile.

Sereny continued to probe Stangl’s responses by asking him if he ‘Could . . . not have changed that? . . . In your position, could you have stopped the nakedness, the whips,

the horror of the cattle pens?’ Stangl held resolutely to the inevitability of what had happened, replying, ‘No, no, no. This was the system. Wirth had invented it. It worked. And because it worked, it was irreversible’.⁶⁹

The same *ethos* of irreversibility that marked Goebbels’ diary statements, and Rosenberg’s speeches, was embedded in Stangl’s response to Sereny’s questions. The Nazis had only started the system of extermination; its inner dynamism took over the entire process. They were never responsible for it per se, and in the odd moment when they looked directly at their victims, they did not see victims, but rather ‘refuse’, ‘cargo’, ‘Stücke’, ‘pieces’, ‘a mass of rotting flesh’, herds ‘packed together, running’.⁷⁰

This part of the interview concluded with Stangl’s justification for his lack of complicity, as overseer of Treblinka’s extermination of Jews.⁷¹

I had to … limit my own actions to what I – in my own conscience – could answer for. At police training school they taught us that the definition of a crime must meet four requirements: there has to be a subject, an object, an action, and intent. If any of these four elements is missing then we are not dealing with a punishable offense. … I could apply this to my own situation – if the subject was the government, the ‘object’ the Jews, and the action the gassing, I could tell myself that for me, the fourth element, ‘intent’, (I called it free will) was missing.⁷²

Here, Stangl relied on the Nazis’ collective subject position, in which he was absolved because of his training as a Nazi policeman.⁷³ It was, to quote Thomas Kühne, ‘the constitutive rather than the destructive side of mass murder’.⁷⁴

While Kühne focused on the subjective benefits that perpetrators imagined they gained from committing mass murder, the feeling of ‘belonging’, Stangl demonstrated another, unarticulated, effect. The Nazis had opened up a subject position for the individual in which he or she displaced responsibility for personal actions onto another agent, the collective body of Nazi leadership.⁷⁵ Stangl was not guilty, personally, for the murder of thousands of Jews: the real agent had been the unstoppable, collective dynamism of extermination. Since he shifted ‘intent’ to the collective position, he was absolved, as an individual, from guilt, and because his victims were no longer individuals to him, they could not, likewise, indict him.

However, this fallback position revealed several weaknesses. Stangl had, in fact, known several of his victims to be human. Arad reproduced two such examples, in which the Nazi commandant knew his victims and treated them as individuals. The first involved a married couple, the Blaus, whom he had known, previously, in Vienna. When they arrived on a transport, SS guard Franz Suchomel related that Blau recognized Stangl on the platform and ‘threw’ his arms around him.⁷⁶ According to Suchomel, Stangl made a deal with Blau: he and his wife would be saved in exchange for Blau’s collaboration.⁷⁷ Blau became a ‘kapo’ and his wife ‘a cook’ within the ‘extermination area’, until Blau’s health gained him a work exemption.⁷⁸

Later, Blau came to Stangl to beg for his father’s life. The elder Blau had just arrived on another transport, and Blau requested a reprieve because of his father’s age, ‘a man of eighty’.⁷⁹ For this very reason, Stangl refused to save the elder Blau. Blau then asked that he be allowed to give his father a last meal and that he be sent to the Lazarett to be killed rather than the gas chamber. Stangl agreed, unofficially. Stangl remembered that

Blau was grateful for such ‘mercy’. The commandant considered it an example of his moral sensitivity. When Sereny pressed Stangl about the eventual fates of the Blaus, he became evasive.⁸⁰ Arad observed that only two women survived Treblinka, neither of whom was Mrs Blau; that is, both Blaus were eventually killed.

Part of the T-4 staff that Himmler scattered over the death camp landscape, Heinrich Unverhau was assigned to be a guard at Belzec in 1942, and by 1943, he was assigned to Sobibor. In his deposition on his activities at Belzec, he wanted the prosecutor to know that he, as a member of ‘the guard staff had not the slightest to do with the actual killing measures’.⁸¹ Arad underscored the ‘mendacity’ of the Belzec guard’s testimony as he shifted responsibility for the mass killings of Jews from himself to his victims.

Unverhau blamed the hands-on killing at Belzec (and by extension, at Sobibor) ‘on the Jewish commandos working under Jewish overseers’ ... He concluded his ten-page statement with an alleged quotation from Wirth that ‘things functioned so smoothly in the camp, he didn’t need anyone [to administer it] – he could have sent everyone home and still been able to do the job alone with the *kapos* (the Jewish prisoners selected by the SS to supervise forced labor)’. This last point he drove home in his final utterance to the Munich prosecutor: ‘Strange as it may sound, the extermination program in its essence was carried out by Jews, who out of fear for their own lives demonstrated their absolute submissiveness and made themselves available for every task’.⁸²

Unverhau constructed his response, implicitly, around the excuse that extermination’s dynamism was fuelled by a Jewish ‘essence’. The *Sonderkommandos* were the real agents of murder. Quoting Wirth, Unverhau suggested that every Jew’s ontology articulated the destruction of the whole in order to promote individual self-interest. By this logic, each Jew preserved his own benefit and was, therefore, incapable of forming a real community, incapable of forming a ‘world’. To that end, Jewish ‘commandos’ carried out orders by their Jewish *kapos*; they organized themselves into units in order to accomplish their own community’s destruction.

The majority of the Reinhard camps’ staff used the argument that the Jews had exterminated themselves. They had gone willingly into the gas chambers, and had done all of the necessary work, ‘the cutting of the hair’, the sorting of the property, the cleaning out of the gas chambers, the burial of bodies in pits. If anyone was responsible for what happened to the Jews, it was the Jews themselves – not the Nazis.

Of the five people who survived Belzec, only two were known to the courts: Rudolf Reder and Chaim Hirszman.⁸³ Of those two, only Reder was alive when the Belzec guards were prosecuted in Munich.⁸⁴ Since Reder had escaped, he had not witnessed many of the crimes attributed to the defendants. The courts acquitted seven of the eight guards, because no one had survived who could indict them.

SS *Oberscharfuehrer* Karl Frenzel, the ‘subcommander of Camp 1 at Sobibor’, had always been a party member; he, too, belonged to the T-4 confederacy of technicians sent by Himmler to maximize the number of Jews killed in the gas chambers. At Sobibor between 1942 and 1943, he was notorious for his brutality.

In 1983, in Hagen, Germany, at his trial’s conclusion, Frenzel asked to meet one of the witnesses against him, Thomas ‘Toivi’ Blatt, a leader of the Sobibor uprising. Blatt

had testified at many of the trials brought against the former Nazi. As Frenzel sat at the table, ‘drinking a beer’ as if he ‘could be anybody’, Blatt questioned whether the former Nazi even remembered him from among his many victims. Frenzel replied that he ‘barely’ remembered him; ‘you were a small boy then’. In fact, Frenzel used to call him *Kleiner* after he beat him, sometimes with an iron rod, sometimes with a whip.⁸⁵ However, Blatt had recognized the former Nazi immediately.

Blatt filled in Frenzel’s vague and evasive reply, then, with his personal details: he was fifteen and he had been Frenzel’s ‘shoeshine boy’, but none of his family had survived the death camp.⁸⁶ Frenzel responded ‘that was terrible, terrible’⁸⁷ Blatt reminded Frenzel that he had killed thousands of Jews at Sobibor, and he demanded to know why Frenzel wanted to meet him.⁸⁸

The former SS officer wanted to demonstrate to his victim that he was ‘not angry’ with Blatt for testifying against him.

Nothing can be done about the victims. What happened, happened. We can’t change anything about that. But I would like to extend my personal apologies to you. I am not angry with you and the other witnesses, those who already testified and those who are still to come. ... Not only am I beside myself now, no, back then too. I was greatly bothered by it all.⁸⁹

Frenzel had adopted a new subject position: he was a victim of the Nazis, too. His sense of victimization was commensurable with his victims’ experiences. In crafting a narrative about commensurability, the ‘shared sense’ of victim and perpetrator ‘sufferings’, Frenzel repositioned himself as a subject who knew more about victimization than the victims themselves. Furthermore, he stressed he was ‘not angry’ at the victims who survived to testify against him.⁹⁰

Each time Frenzel referenced his actions, he was evasive. His time at Sobibor was characterized by the phrase, ‘that was terrible’; the demonstrative pronoun, *that*, a nameless signifier for the specific crimes Frenzel had committed at Sobibor. The numerous times he beat someone to death, shot a Jew point-blank in the back of the head or sent a transport immediately to the gas chamber were now ‘what happened, happened’. Every time he spoke about a specific act, it became, instead, an indefinite pronoun, consigned to history.

While Frenzel insisted that he had been ‘bothered by it all’, Blatt reminded him of his specific actions until, finally, Frenzel blurted out, ‘You don’t know what went on inside of us. You don’t understand the circumstances in which we found ourselves’.⁹¹ Not only had Jewish extermination been assigned to him, but he also wanted his former victim to know that he had suffered, too. He had been in prison for sixteen years. Furthermore, ‘we had to do our duty. This was a bad time for us’.⁹²

The formulas of extermination

The previous extracts of Nazis and Nazi sympathizers demonstrated that for the Jews’ persecutors, the collective subject position was a consensus position. Although the group offered a consensus, individuals chose the degree of their participation. They

could enthusiastically endorse, displace their responsibility in, or dispassionately execute persecution. What was clear, though, from all the excerpts was the ability of each individual to retreat into the position so that a simple dynamic, a calculus of killing, became imagined as a detachable, autonomous mechanism, whose innate force worked independently of human agents. Individuals were no longer culpable for their actions.

These elements were constitutive of the position, in the sense that each one demonstrated a sentiment that believed in Jewish extermination as a necessary, dynamic action that 'could not be stopped' and that each one held this perspective for quite some time. It was a fantasy, a 'dream', the commission of which each individual imagined. When the opportunity became available to fulfil the fantasy, each individual bought into the position and acted accordingly.

Holding the position in place was a sense of looking at something that was illegitimately present, an existence that harmed all others. All possessors of this existence were posited not only to be aware of their natural illegitimacy, but also to be in active conspiracy against the human organism. Thus, it behooved subjects to 'press out' or discharge the illegitimate substance. The subjects of Nazi persecution came closer to articulating their submerged Aryan identity through the extermination of Jews.

It set up then a very specific formula: illegitimate substance or being, refuse, ash. Another way to frame it would be, the being that is not-being (*ens nullius*) exists illegitimately in human form; thus, this illegitimate human form and all of its associated predicates must be destroyed. Each time Nazis contemplated Jews, they applied, then, one of these terms as their only recourse. Jews were designated beings who either should not be, were refuse or ended in ashes.

The formula's victims understood this particular trajectory quite clearly in the death camps. As the excerpts from victims in the next chapter illustrate, victims recognized that the historical narratives of persecution and oppression were meant to deceive them, most at the very moment when they were gassed. For others, forced to witness the destruction of their families, friends and communities, and with the knowledge that they were temporarily reprieved, it was the historical refrain of Nazi propaganda. Jews were promised 'resettlement in the East'. Jews from 'foreign countries' came to the death camps in 'passenger trains' with luggage, because the Nazis had assured them and their governments that they were just to be 'resettled'. They were to be sent to colonies for their 'moral rehabilitation'.⁹³

To that end, the Nazis constructed their 'fake Jewish "model camp"' to stage, for the world, that the absent Jews were sequestered safely in colonies.⁹⁴ Theresienstadt represented a 'resettlement' project designed to present Jews living there as 'a subaltern people'. When Ruth Klüger and her mother arrived at the camp, its inhabitants believed their survival was contingent on their ability to continue social institutions and cultural practices, and to be good workers in the new 'ghetto'.⁹⁵ However, the majority of Theresienstadt's 'colonists' ended in gas chambers.

The Nazis had led them to believe in colonialism, as if Jews provided some value to the Reich; through the construction of a narrative studded with colonial signifiers and exploiting a history of Jewish persecution, Jews presumed they had seen the attitude before. It included familiar components to their historical experience of

persecution: the redemptive practice of labour, subaltern service for an empire and the constant of Jewish exile; but the Nazis' narratives of 'population transfer', 'forced migration' and 'resettlement' were never about colonization, for the Jews.

Among themselves, the Nazis were bluntly sadistic about the death camps' real purposes. Chelmno was the Nazi fairy tale, Rosenberg's 'dream' for the German people. Stangl called Treblinka's gas chambers the 'Jewish city'. Belzec's administration designated the 'tube' to the gas chambers as the 'path to heaven'. Sobibor was a 'farm in the forest'. In fact, all three Reinhard camps were made to appear as 'farms' in the woods, that incredibly potent signifier of colonial presence.

The death camps were unlike the concentration camps, too, even if they 'shared' the same structures, the same outcomes.⁹⁶ This was the difference between Wannsee's 'natural wastage' due to labour and the veiled threat of having 'to be dealt with accordingly' to prevent their becoming 'the germ cell of a new Jewish regeneration.'⁹⁷ It was the basis behind Himmler's vision of a Konzentrationslager (KL) network traversing the Reich; criminals were to be rehabilitated through work; slaves were to be punished through it. Jews were to die because of it. It was an *ethos* that permeated Nazi actions.

‘Being’ Exterminated and the Formulas of Extermination

The ‘shared sense’ of persecution in the death camps

The Reinhard camps

The Reinhard camps had a much smaller percentage of survivors from the other death camps, because they were designed with one aim: the extermination of Jews, initially within the region of the General Government.¹ At these camps, small groups of Jews were separated from the transports for short-term labour. They knew that their labour only displaced their inevitable murder temporarily. Within these work details, an even smaller contingent were selected to serve as *Sonderkommandos*, special work details who were tasked with cleaning the gas chambers, removing and destroying the bodies; they lived with the realization that their reprieve from the gas chamber was counted in days and hours. Jews on this detail served only until a transport arrived with their replacements.

These camps came into being in 1942; they continued through 1944 or until they had reached their aim: the elimination of Jews from the adjacent areas.² As each Reinhard camp neared its goal, Himmler ordered camp personnel to begin its dismantlement. His order aimed for all Reinhard camps to finish operations by the end of 1943. However, the efficiency of the gas chambers overwhelmed the Nazis’ ability to dispose of the bodies. The glut of corpses dumped in pits around each camp derailed Himmler’s timeline. The land heaved and emitted gases and odours, and in the case of one camp, Belzec, the bodies’ decomposition, coupled with the presence of vermin, threatened to infect the camp’s water supply. Thus, the bodies had to be burnt immediately; when the Jewish prisoners failed to exhume the bodies fast enough, the Nazis brought in excavating machines. They pulled out the decomposed bodies, leaving large empty pits. On these pits, the Nazis built grates on which they burnt the bodies.

Belzec

Belzec, the first of the Reinhard camps, operated from 1942 to 1943. It began gassing Jews in March 1942. The Reinhard camps were virtually unknown outside Poland until

1959, when their guards, who were indicted in Germany for war crimes conducted in the euthanasia programme, referenced the death camp. Their inadvertent references were excluded from the legal record.³

It was an experimental camp, in that the Nazis had yet to perfect mass murder by gas, and so they tested various methods of extermination at this site. Some 500,000 to 600,000 Jews were killed during its operation.⁴ Of the handful of people who survived Belzec, only Rudolf Reder and Chaim Hirszman gave first-hand accounts of what happened there.⁵ Directly after his testimony, Hirszman was murdered by Polish nationalists in 1946. That same year, Reder testified before the Central Commission for Investigation of German Crimes.⁶ That testimony was, subsequently, published in Krakow; it provided the only complete account of any victim's experience of Belzec.

On 10 August 1942, the Nazis sealed the Lvov ghetto and 'evicted' the Jews from their homes and workshops, collecting them in a field where they were forced to sit on the wet ground until the next morning.⁷ Anyone who stood up during this time was shot immediately. At 6.00 am the next day, the Jews were marched to the Kalparov train station, where in groups of one hundred, they were loaded into fifty freight cars. These freight cars became a transport that Reder estimated contained 6,000 Jews, the majority of them women.⁸ During his time at the camp, women comprised most of the transports. In Reder's freight car, no one spoke, but everyone knew that they were to be killed.⁹

They were already within the space and time of extermination. From the moment the Jews were expelled from the ghetto in Lvov, they had moved into the public articulation of their absence. Reder suggested that the victims intuited not only their death, but also their absence within humankind. They realized that they existed as 'beings' that were not 'beings'.

After his arrival, Reder was removed from the transport with a small group of men, to dig graves for the corpses.¹⁰ He now belonged to the 'permanent death crew', of which he estimated was a workforce of 'five hundred' men. Within that group, two hundred and fifty were designated 'skilled laborers,' who had to sort the Jews' belongings, to cut and collect the women's hair before gassing, to drag corpses from the gas chambers to the burial pits, but four hundred and fifty 'were always occupied with the graves'.¹¹ Every day, 'thirty or forty' of these workers 'were set aside' from the details and shot.¹² It reinforced, for him, that his reprieve from his transport's gassing was temporary; the Nazis intended to kill him with all the other Jews. No one was to be saved; no one was to be spared.

Shortly after he began this task, another transport arrived, in which he recognized his family members among the victims, but his experience was not unique. 'In our working group were many men whose wives, children or parents had been murdered in Belzec'; consequently, the work details digging the burial pits became numb, rapidly, to seeing their families among the victims.¹³ Kinship was expressed in the recognition that they were to join their loved ones' corpses, if not in the gas chamber, then in the burial pit, within days. Families existed in death.

Reder remembered several discrete experiences, whose repetition 'every day, two to three times a day' imprinted them on his senses. The first occurred around the arrival of transports. There was one officer in particular, Irman, who waited at the platform for each transport. After the Jews were beaten and whipped out of the freight cars, he

told them that 'showers' awaited them, and then they would go to work.¹⁴ The second incident again included Irman. The Nazi officer enjoyed shooting disabled Jews from the transports at the edges of the burial pits and then kicking their corpses into the pits.¹⁵ Reder extended Irman's pleasure to all of the Nazis as they performed their duties; how happy they were when they saw naked, bayoneted people being chased into the chamber, indifferent to the cries of children.¹⁶

The third episode concerned the women. The transports coming from Poland were, according to Reder, dominated by women and children. The women were forced to run to the gas chambers, the path 'covered in blood', their 'cries in Polish and Yiddish'.¹⁷ The only variation on his memory was the realization that later, after 'the shutting of the doors' to the gas chambers, the cries in Yiddish became Czech, Greek, and French.¹⁸ His detail was assigned, then, to 'drag' bodies from the gas chambers to the burial pits that they had just dug and that were hidden in the forest.

Reder's detail dug pits every day in anticipation of the constant transports of victims.¹⁹ While his account described the killing process in detail, he noted that the members of his detail shared two experiences in common: they recognized their family members among the transports, and they did not discuss their lives prior to deportation.²⁰ They knew their histories prior to their extermination, but they also knew that their histories impeded their chances of survival. In order to survive, they had to sever themselves from history, because history belonged to that human world outside Belzec; its extension in time and space no longer had roots in the death camp. The epistemological grid governing their existence only concerned their present need of food, water, sleep and to perform labour.

On one occasion, Reder witnessed a visit by Himmler. Himmler and other SS watched his detail drag corpses from the gas chambers. He remembered the guards' exuberance and belief in great rewards for their fulfilment of their duties at the death camp. Shortly after this visit, in October 1942, Himmler ordered Belzec's bodies to be exhumed and burnt on outdoor grates. Reder escaped the death camp in November 1942.

Belzec's last victims were the *Sonderkommandos* who had been tasked with excavating and burning the corpses of its victims. When the Russians threatened to overtake the camp, the Nazis brought Belzec's last victims, the men attached to the *Sonderkommando*, to Sobibor. Arad recounted that the Nazis loaded Belzec's last Jews into the freight cars with the promise that they were to 'work in Germany', but when the train stopped at Sobibor, the members of the *Sonderkommando* knew they were to be gassed.²¹ Their identities became reducible to the notes they left in their clothes for the sorting detail at Sobibor.

Leon Feldhendler, a leader of the Sobibor uprising, copied one note into his diary.

We have worked one year at Belzec. We don't know where they are transporting us. They say to Germany. In the wagons are dining tables. We have received bread for three days, canned food and vodka. If this is a lie, you should know that death awaits you too. Don't trust the Germans. Take revenge for us.²²

They did not identify themselves as individuals; they were a collective 'we' who, in their last moments, realized an obligation to tell the inmates at Sobibor who sorted their clothes that they, too, were to be destroyed. In other words, they felt obligated to warn

Jews at Sobibor of the Nazis' intentions. Arad noted that at the discovery of their arrival there, the *Sonderkommando* 'resisted disembarking from the train and being taken to the gas chamber, but they were overcome and shot'.²³

After Belzec's dismantlement, the Nazis turned the camp into a 'peaceful looking farm'.²⁴ They ploughed the soil over the trenches filled with ashes. They planted trees and installed a Ukrainian guard in the role of farmer. The neighbouring Poles from the village of Belzec, outside the camp, descended on the 'farm' as soon as the Nazis had left for the remaining Reinhard camps; they dug among the ashes of the ploughed fields in search of the Jews' gold. One of these villagers, Edward Luczynski, testified that the Poles' digging in the camp 'fields' had left 'the whole surface of the camp covered with human bones, hair, ashes from cremated corpses, dentures, pots, and other objects'.²⁵ The Nazis returned in order to preserve the illusion of the site as a farm, so as to 'erase the traces of their crimes' at Belzec from the world.²⁶

Sobibor

While construction of the death camp began in February 1942, extermination only started two months after Belzec, in May 1942. The majority of Sobibor's victims were, like Belzec's, Jews deported from the General Government. It was the smallest of the Reinhard camps; hence, its number of victims was approximately 167,000.²⁷

Of the less than fifty survivors of Sobibor, Stanislaw Szmajzner, at age fifteen, was one of youngest inmates; he was also one of the few who had been at the camp within days of its opening and who escaped during the uprising of 14 October 1943.²⁸ Arriving with his family on a transport on 12 May 1942, Szmajzner had left the freight car together with his nephew, cousin and brother, but Szmajzner's father and mother had been separated from them.

In the chaos of the Nazis beating Jews as they left the freight cars, Szmajzner recognized 'an opportunity' and approached the camp's commandant, Stangl, with the information that he was a goldsmith, and the boys with him were also jewellers.²⁹ For Stangl, the boys' skill meant that the wedding rings and valuables of the Jews on the transports could be converted into personal items for the SS commandant.

Szmajzner became the leader of a detail of jewellers who worked, initially, for Stangl. His duties later expanded to include creating jewellery and ornaments for the other SS officers. As a special detail, Szmajzner was kept with the five other 'artisans' in a shack in Camp 1, the outer quadrant of the camp's three sections. From Camp 1, he observed transport arrivals and the silent marching of Jews to the gate leading to Camp 2.

Since he had no knowledge of what happened to these arrivals, and was part of a special detail, he received 'preferential' treatment from Stangl, so that he and the young men with him began to imagine that they were really at a labour camp. When he inquired, repeatedly, about arranging a visit with his parents, whom he presumed to be in Camp 2, Stangl assured him that Szmajzner would see them soon enough.

The Commander heard everything with his head bent, but with his whole attention.

Then turning to me with an air of generosity he assured me I had nothing to worry

about and that I would soon be able to see them. He assured me that all of them were well but their work was a little bit harder than ours. In spite of that, he added, there was no reason for me to be worried or afraid. Furthermore, he declared that all the Jews who had come in our transport had already had their baths, changed their clothes and were working on the farm, and that they were very happy and well taken care of.

Stangl paused for a minute and then went on, adding that nothing would be missing to our little group. We would always have enough material for us to work with, plenty of good food, not to mention beds to sleep in, comfortably. He finished by promising me, upon his word as a German officer, that my brothers and I would soon meet our parents who were in Camp 3.³⁰

Camp 3 became the fantasized location where he would find his parents. The Jewish boys would serve the commandant and, for their reward, they 'would soon meet' their parents, who waited for them in Camp 3. Using a narrative of colonization, Stangl reframed the disappearance of the thousands of Jews that had disappeared through Camp 2's gate as a consequence of their labours on Camp 3's 'farm'. The narrative of colonization was his personal promise to the young men so that they would hope to see their families again.

Stangl's sincerity so impressed this 'group of six young Jews, trusting and happy' that Szmajzner 'no longer worried' about his family, 'since they were working on the farm and were well taken care of'.³¹ Consequently, he imagined Stangl and the other Nazi officers to be 'good, understanding men' and the labour camp to which they had arrived significantly better than the ghetto at which they had been confined.³²

As the days passed, the guards became increasingly sarcastic and violent with him.³³ He began to intuit that they 'shared' a knowledge about his future from which he was excluded. He recognized the guards' pleasure in beating him and, then, their repeated promises that Szmajzner would join his father, and all the other Jews, in Camp 3 very soon.³⁴

The intuition of his exclusion from knowledge about the future translated into unarticulated doubt, confirmed by a friend on the *Sonderkommando* in Camp 3. Abraham had been on the same transport with him, but Abraham had been forced to march through the gate. Now he had sent a message to him, fifteen days later, cryptically telling him that 'nobody alive ... say kadish [sic]'.³⁵ In a second smuggled message, Szmajzner learnt that everyone who went through the gate ended in Camp 3's gas chambers; it was a knowledge the Nazis had forbidden him to know. The 'thousands of Jews' that 'pass through the gate' followed 'a long corridor' to Camp 2, where their belongings were taken from them, and they were required to stand naked, before they were herded into the gas chamber.³⁶ Jews were told that the next step to the process was a 'bath', and in that moment, the signs painted by the two painters in Szmajzner's detail made sense. The gas chamber resembled 'a large shack' with 'hundreds of people' crammed inside.³⁷ At this early stage, Sobibor killed by carbon monoxide asphyxiation. After the door was sealed behind them, a motor's exhaust pipe 'passed through a hole in the wall' and gassed the victims inside.

Abraham continued with an account of his duties on the *Sonderkommando*. Before the transport's Jews arrived at Camp 3, another work detail had dug 'giant ditches' so that afterwards, 'we the survivors of the same transport you came in, begin to pick up the bodies and throw them into the ditches'. Abraham ended his message with the warning that 'this place is the end for each and every Jew in the power of the Nazis' and that the Nazis watched 'the slaughter', 'delirious with happiness, as if they were at the opera. They seemed to take delight in looking at so many dead bodies naked and inert'.³⁸ Abraham had recognized that he was not to survive Camp 3, and he underscored for Szmajzner that the Jews' deaths elicited in their captors a pleasure akin to an operatic performance. The Nazis intuited their dissolution as an aesthetic experience.³⁹

Before Sobibor's 'renovation', when the Nazis increased the number of gas chambers from three to six, Szmajzner had to keep his knowledge a secret. After the 'renovation', the Jews of Camp 1 had more duties that required them to enter Camps 2 and 3. In these tasks, they recognized the inevitability of their own deaths at Camp 3. The renovation also changed the physical environment of the camp; the constant burning of bodies and identification papers produced an overwhelming smell throughout the camp. The fires were also seen at every location in the three areas of Sobibor. In other words, every subject position was oriented around the smell of burning flesh and the sight of the fires that produced it.

The SS no longer tried to hide the purpose of Camp 3 from the Jews inside Sobibor, but only from the transports that increased after the camp's enlargement. To that end, the Nazis exhibited him to new arrivals from these transports in order 'to persuade the unsuspecting newcomers' that they had arrived at 'a labor camp'. Forcing the Jews to 'lie to our own', the Nazi officers asked them 'questions' in front of the transports 'to which we would have to have highly convincing answers'.⁴⁰ The young men were to describe themselves as 'artisans' with 'workshops' and jobs; they were to emphasize that they always had enough food to eat.⁴¹ For Szmajzner, the lie meant that the Jews going to the gas chambers had the hope of resettlement, but he hated himself, because the lie of colonization assisted the Nazis' plans. As he put it, the Nazis not only 'enslaved and destroyed' their victims, but they also used them as 'spearheads in their most dreadful purposes', because they wanted to see 'their shameless propaganda to perfection'.⁴² His tormentors enjoyed eliciting 'hope' in their Jewish victims through the construction of a narrative of colonization.

In the autumn of 1943, Sobibor was close to its target: almost all of Poland's Jews, as well as the majority of Jews from the Sudetenland, Belorusse, the Balkans, Germany, Austria and France, had been eliminated at the Reinhard camps. Sobibor had been particularly effective in the destruction of Dutch, French and Polish Jews. At this time, a transport arrived from Lvov with only a handful of Jews still alive; Szmajzner described freight cars filled with 'corpses' already in extensive decomposition.⁴³ The smell of the bodies drove the Nazis out of Camp 1. The task of the bodies' removal fell to the Jews of the *Bahnhofskommando*, the work detail that led the transport victims from the freight cars to the Camp 2 gate, but when they reached into the cars to drag the bodies from them, 'their skin and even their limbs' came apart.⁴⁴ Both the victims

still alive and the corpses were loaded on to a special train and sent directly to Camp 3 for extermination. The job required them to handle their community in disintegration.

Szmajzner internalized the experience as an awareness that he had to resist being sent to Camp 3; he had to fight against being consigned to ashes. Szmajzner escaped in the October uprising, of which he was also an organizer. After the war, he emigrated to Brazil, where years later, he discovered Stangl, also an émigré. Szmajzner was instrumental both in bringing Stangl to trial and in the eyewitness testimony he provided the prosecution against the former commandant.

In 1941, Esther Raab remembered that her family was forced into a ghetto, and by 1942, their area of Poland was to be made *Judenrein*.⁴⁵ Her testimony represented one of the few women who survived the death camps. She arrived at Sobibor on 22 December 1942. It also looked like a 'farm', nestled in a pine forest.⁴⁶ Like Belzec, the camp appeared as though the Nazis had merely 'settled' the region by constructing a 'farm'.⁴⁷ The death camp looked, for all intents and purposes, like a 'colony' for the Jews.

Due to the intervention of a childhood friend, Raab was taken in a small detail of women who could 'knit'.⁴⁸ As the SS man Wagner led her away with the handful of women for the detail, she was overcome with 'the smell' of bodies and the sight of 'a fire' that appeared to cover the small camp.⁴⁹ Her arrival coincided with the excavation of the bodies and their burning over large open ditches.

In March 1943, 'Himmler came to visit the camp; and at that time they brought four hundred young girls from Majdanek, to show him how efficient and good they are at killing'.⁵⁰ During this visit, Sobibor's administration learnt that Belzec and Treblinka were to be dismantled. Raab related that, subsequently, 'one day they locked us in, and we knew if they lock us in something is going on out of the ordinary. ... And they brought the inmates from Belzec, and we knew the next day that those were the inmates, and they killed them off in Sobibór. And they closed up Belzec ... the next day when we sorted out their clothing, we found notes in their clothing'.⁵¹ The process of shutting in the inmates was repeated when the last members of the *Sonderkommando* from Treblinka arrived at Sobibor.⁵² However, due to the small cohort of Nazis and Ukrainians administrating Sobibor, the Nazis opted to shoot each of Treblinka's remaining victims rather than gas them. Raab heard their cries and the shots from the knitting barracks.⁵³ Later, when she sorted the clothing of this transport in her barracks, she found notes from these victims, too.

As her interviewer prodded her to continue with the events leading up to the Sobibor uprising, and her testimony against Karl Frenzel in court, she recalled, instead, an event that haunted her. Resistance in the camps and her legal depositions were linked, implicitly, for her, to the memory of watching a transport of women marched to the gas chambers.

The barracks where she 'worked' required the victims to walk down a middle aisle, leaving their belongings in a pile, in front of the women of the sorting detail. The sorting detail was not permitted to tell the victims anything about what was to happen. They stood mute, knowing that the women were walking into a gas chamber.⁵⁴

Raab interposed her inability to speak between the women marching into the gas chamber and her testimony about Frenzel's brutality. She stressed that the narrative

about Frenzel's brutality had to be joined to this underlying obligation to speak, finally, about the death camp's victims.

She proceeded, then, to relate how she witnessed Frenzel 'smash' an infant to death. Normally, the inmates from the sorting detail did not see the arrival of the train cars with new sets of victims. The Nazis kept the details separated from each other. The *Sonderkommando* did not, as a rule, interact with the other work details. Their barracks were segregated from the rest of the inmates and close to the gas chambers and burning areas. However, Raab and another woman were cleaning the commandant's house and had been forgotten when the detail was ordered back to their barracks. As a result, Raab occupied, illicitly, the novel subject position of the Nazis: she saw a transport arrive, in which a mother left her infant behind in the train car. Frenzel 'grabbed that little baby by the little feet and smashed his skull against the boxcar and ... and just threw it in like a dead rat. And I think this will be with me until my last day. I just can't get over it'.⁵⁵

When Raab testified against Frenzel about this case, years later, he accused her of lying, but he refused to deny that it happened. Raab noted that at every trial, the accused guards and officers admitted to so much death, but none of them ever testified under oath that their actions were wrong. No one 'said it was wrong'; only with the Hubert Gomerski trial, when the defence counsel essentially gave up attempts to prove the defendant's innocence, did she feel that someone felt 'what I felt'.⁵⁶ She concluded her interview with the observation that nearly fifty years later, she still did not sleep, 'it's not one night that I go to sleep and all of Sobibór doesn't march before me'.⁵⁷ The scene in her head repeated the imposition of silence.

The Sobibor uprising took place on 14 October 1943; Raab explained that the inmates of Sobibor were resolved that they would get revenge on their oppressors and that all inmates would have a chance at escape. They reasoned that even if they were shot in the back during that escape, they would deprive the Nazis of gassing them.⁵⁸ For each workshop, the Jewish labourers were to overpower and murder the SS officer and Ukrainian guards supervising them. The leaders of the uprising, Alexander (Sasha) Pechersky and Leon Feldhendler, identified Karl Frenzel as their primary target for assassination. He was the symbol of brute force and violence, the commandant of the *Bahnhofskommando*, gleefully beating Jews who exited the freight cars too slowly. However, when the rebellion started, Frenzel was nowhere to be found.⁵⁹

One survivor of the uprising, Thomas Toivi Blatt, recalled that he was among 'the last of the fugitives'.⁶⁰ As he scaled Sobibor's fence, behind the other Jews, it fell on him, the barbed wire burying itself in the leather jacket he had managed to take from the camp's workshops. Leaving the jacket behind in the fence, he ran through a minefield littered with the bodies of Sobibor inmates. Ukrainian and Nazi guards had shot the Jewish prisoners as they ran for the forest. They continued to shoot, and Blatt 'went down a few times, each time thinking I was hit. Each time I got up and ran farther ... one hundred yards ... fifty yards ... twenty more yards ... and at last the forest. Behind us blood and ashes'. Sobibor was filled with 'blood and ashes'. Of the 550 Jews at Sobibor at the time of the escape, just over three hundred attempted the escape. Of those escapees, less than fifty survived.⁶¹ While Blatt did survive, from 1943 to his liberation by the Soviets he was constantly hunted by his former Polish neighbours, Nazis and Ukrainians.

Treblinka

Treblinka was to be the ‘perfected’ death camp. It went into operation after Belzec and Sobibor, opening its gas chambers in late July 1942. By the time Treblinka, the last Reinhard camp, started its transports, several hundred thousand of the General Government’s Jewish population had been gassed already at Belzec and Sobibor. Treblinka remained in operation, and continued to receive deportations, until shortly after the August uprising in 1943. The last deportations ended in late August because of the uprising.

Jacob Wiernik’s *One Year at Treblinka* began with Wiernik’s account of the continued effects that the death camp had on him in the years that followed the war. He was a ‘homeless old man’, who continued to live in order to tell the story of Treblinka.⁶² He had no family, no community and no place, but he remained committed to tell his experiences, although he realized that no representation or image conveyed what was etched on his memory. He spoke and told, but always with the resignation that he was incapable of communicating the horror of his memory.

No imagination, no matter how daring, could possibly conceive of anything like that which I have seen and lived through. Nor could any pen, no matter how facile, describe it properly. I intend to present everything accurately so that the entire world may know what ‘western culture’ was like. I suffered while leading millions of human beings to their doom so that many millions of human beings might know all about it. That is what I am living for. That is my one aim in life. In peace and in solitude, I am constructing my story and am presenting it with faithful accuracy. ... Perhaps I will learn to laugh again ... once I have accomplished my work, and after the fetters now binding us have fallen away.⁶³

Wiernik was compelled to write and circulate his story even though his experiences were beyond the imagination’s limits. He, too, felt obligated to speak. The repetitions of his narrative underwrote his existence. The narrative, itself, indicted ‘western culture’ for the world; he emphasized that his freedom did not erase the need to present what he experienced. In fact, it only intensified his need to tell. It bound him to speak, even if he imagined at some future point that ‘the fetters’ would ‘fall away’.

On 23 August 1942, Wiernik was picked up with other Jews for ‘selection’ in Warsaw.⁶⁴ He was a carpenter with his own business, approximately fifty-three years old. His transport consisted of about five hundred men, women and children.

As the transport arrived in Treblinka, the Jewish deportees saw ‘the camp yard ... littered with corpses, some still in their clothes, and some naked. Their faces distorted with fright and awe, black and swollen, the eyes wide open, with protruding tongues, skulls crushed, bodies mangled. And blood everywhere, the blood of our children, of our brothers and sisters, our fathers and mothers’.⁶⁵ The newly arrived Jews recognized, immediately, the kinship between these corpses and themselves. They knew, at that moment, the Nazis’ intentions. While they had been told in Warsaw that Jews were under an ‘eviction’ order, to be deported to the East, at Treblinka they realized, barely two days later, that ‘eviction’ meant their death.

Intuitively, their lives had been redistributed under *ens nullius*: they were beings who had illegitimately occupied existence or 'beings' who were 'not beings'. Their occupation of space was not their only criminal offence; they illegitimately occupied time. They were excised both diachronically and synchronically. This sensibility ruptured any pre-held belief that their persecutors would allow them any small space 'to be'. For many of these victims, *sensus communis* was an illusion, a deception that was the intimate property of the persecutors now.⁶⁶

During its first five weeks of operation, Arad estimated that 250,000 Jews were killed at Treblinka, either by gunshot or by gas.⁶⁷ The commandant of the camp at the time, Eberl, hoped to exceed the other two Reinhard camps in the number of Jews killed. He imagined himself in a 'competition' with the other commandants, but the volume of victims overwhelmed Treblinka's three gas chambers.⁶⁸ Additionally, the quantity of bodies exceeded the pits for their disposal. An 'excavator' was brought in to dig more pits, but had been derailed by its own commandant. Eberl's desire to exceed his peers in murdering Jews forced the Nazis to dispense with the orderly murder of their victims, so that when Wiernik's transport rolled into Treblinka II, the killing centre, the Jews saw bodies, clothed and unclothed, and victims' belongings strewn before them. Under Eberl's mandate to divert as many transports as possible to Treblinka, the guards had dispensed with sorting and collecting Jews' clothing, leaving behind heaps of belongings. Corpses, as well, were left where they were killed. The illusion of 'the East' was revealed to Wiernik's transport on their arrival, when the freight cars' doors were unlocked and the Jews were herded on to the platform of Treblinka. The array of bodies and the Jews' belongings strewn throughout Treblinka forced the Nazis to close it to further transports until they could replace Eberl with Stangl and reconstruct Treblinka's image of the 'farm'.⁶⁹

Wiernik related that the men were ordered to the right and made to sit unmoving and isolated on the ground, to wait; the women and children were ordered to undress and then to the left for 'showers'. Wiernik saw other prisoners from the camp working, and he joined himself to a detail without anyone's observation. From these workers, he learnt that the entire transport was to be liquidated. Of the five hundred Jews in this work detail, the Nazis selected one hundred men to be marched into the distance and shot. The remaining men, the temporary workers, of which Wiernik was part, were to be spared until new transports came in with their replacements. All of the women and children who went to the left were murdered at that time. He 'never saw' any of them again.⁷⁰

The next transport had lost 80 per cent of its Jewish 'cargo'; they had died en route to the camp in the cattle cars.⁷¹ Wiernik's first detail was to 'drag each corpse' to a pit for burial.⁷² He served on this detail for four days. Eventually, his skills as a carpenter forestalled his inevitable execution, enabling him to witness several aspects of the extermination process, a subject position unlike that of the majority of the death camps' survivors and victims. His next 'job' on the new detail was to work on a 'secret building' behind a fence. Later, he discovered that the building was to contain ten new gas chambers, so that Treblinka could finally realize Himmler's goal of the complete liquidation of all Jews in the General Government.⁷³

The new gas chambers enabled Treblinka to kill 10,000–12,000 people a day. Each new gas chamber could hold 1,000–1,200 people at a time. Wiernik estimated that as

the transports increased, there were days when Treblinka reached 30,000 victims a day. From the outside, the building containing the gas chambers looked like an old-fashioned synagogue.⁷⁴ It had ‘bowls of flowers’ that lined the steps leading into the building.⁷⁵

When his construction detail finished for the day, Wiernik heard the new commandant, Eberl’s replacement, Stangl, describe the gas chambers as the ‘Jew-town’.⁷⁶ The German officer was happy that the work had finally been completed.⁷⁷ As Wiernik described the many kinds of victims he saw murdered at Treblinka, he noted that one transport of Roma saw the buildings of the death camp and believed they were entering an ‘enchanted palace’, only to die soon after their arrival.⁷⁸ Wiernik never stopped hearing the cries, screams and moans of all of these many victims. The sounds of their dying bore a cognitive imprint expressed in his senses. Subjectively, Wiernik described it as a physical burden he carried with him in his body. Their voices were trapped in him, his corporeality. He told his story in order to release them from the captivity of his being. In order for them to have their voices again, he had to represent ‘their cries and screams’. The narrative itself gave extension, a predicate, to these missing people. His narrative forced the text to repopulate the imagination with the lost.

For the remainder of Wiernik’s time at Treblinka, he was conscious of one particular memory, the pyres of burning bodies ordered by Himmler. These pyres required extensive amounts of labour. The Nazis determined to make roasting grates out of railroad tracks; the tracks stood on ‘concrete foundations’.⁷⁹ They made their prisoners excavate the buried bodies and then layer the corpses on these grates. In varying states of decomposition, the bodies sometimes came apart in pieces, and the pyres burnt night and day.

At the time the burning started, Treblinka was still in operation; transports still arrived with fifty cars of Jews for the gas chambers twice a day. The decomposed corpses were burnt in tandem with the gas chamber’s newest victims. Wiernik believed that the grates held 3,000 bodies, initially, but the Nazis’ aim was to increase the burning to parallel the number of Jews gassed in a day.⁸⁰ Thus, they forced more inmates to dig more ditches and to build more grates until, as Wiernik estimated, ‘10,000–12,000 bodies were cremated at one time’.⁸¹ There were so many bodies that needed to be burnt that Wiernik saw ‘no end was in sight’. Wiernik likened the experience to an infinite and boundless burning. It extended in space and time. These coordinates for the mind left Wiernik with the intuition of a phenomenology of dying that exceeded death itself.

The Nazis brought in a special officer, Herbert Floss, known to the inmates as ‘Tadellos’, to supervise the burning. Wiernik described the sublime affect that Floss exhibited during these cremations, ‘the sight of the flames licking at the bodies was precious to him, and he would literally caress the scene with his eyes’.⁸² Wiernik believed that Tadellos aestheticized extermination. His identity itself was contingent on the elimination of the Jews from the world. They were disallowed from existence, even in death. Wiernik observed Tadellos’ sublime experience of Jewish destruction and linked it, intimately, to his own sense of the endless burning of the bodies and the infinite pits of ashes. Space and time became conditions of existence that no longer applied to him. During this time, his subjectivity was contingent on the mental image of the implications of this horror.

Witnessing Tadellos and the other Nazi officers 'standing near the ashes, shaking with satanic laughter', Wiernik described the pleasures and benefit their persecutors derived from their destruction. While he saw infinite burning, they drew pleasure from the sight of their victims' final destruction.

They drank toasts with choice liquors, ate, caroused and enjoyed themselves near the warm fire. Thus even after death, the Jew was of some use. Though the weather was bitter cold, the pyres threw off heat like that from a stove. And the heat came from the burning bodies of Jews. The German fiends stood warming themselves, drinking, eating and singing. At last, the fires died down, leaving nothing but ashes which went to enrich the silent soil. Human blood and human ashes! What a fertilizer for the soil!⁸³

His persecutors 'toasted the scene' of Jews' bodies becoming ash. They were warmed from the fire that performed the transformation of bodies to ashes. The means of the destruction directly benefited them. In that destruction, Wiernik came to the startling 'revelation' of Nazi intent. After the 'fire began to die down', the ashes, freed of Jewish specificity, were 'food for the soil'. The world his persecutors imagined was one without Jewish particularity. This world was bounded by, fed on, the anonymous ashes of its victims. Jews would exist, finally, without particularity, returned to the earth as an amendment to the soil.

In 1943, Wiernik's detail was redeployed from dragging bodies to filling in 'the empty ditches with the ashes of the cremated victims, mixed with a little soil in order to obliterate all traces of the mass graves'. Treblinka's targeted cleansing of Jews was almost complete, and in the winding-down process, Wiernik concluded that Jewish 'blood and ashes' had enriched the new territory of the German Reich. As they prepared to leave, the Germans had the area graded 'for planting' because the soil proved to be extremely 'fertile'.

Wiernik characterized the Germans' response to the end of their tenure at Treblinka as 'full of pride in their accomplishments'.⁸⁴ They had a 'banquet' to reward themselves for the amount of work they had expended in the murder of their victims. The Jewish prisoners noted that only 75 per cent of the pits had been filled with ashes; they recognized in the remaining vacancy that they were soon to be the next victims.⁸⁵ Simultaneously, the Nazis transferred several of Treblinka's officers to Auschwitz and Madjanek, to assist in these camps' operation of gas chambers. This left a small cadre of SS and Ukrainian guards to manage the remaining Jews at the camp. The inmates had planned for this moment and recognized that the time for wholesale escape had finally arrived. Wiernik escaped in the August uprising. As he and the other Jews 'silently took our leave of the ashes of our fellow Jews', they vowed vengeance to the memories of these victims. Wiernik characterized his escape and Treblinka's destruction as a *mitzvah* he had to perform. His individual escape and his participation in the collective destruction of the death camp became twin obligations that structured the boundaries of his consciousness in the camp.⁸⁶

When Abraham Bomba arrived at Treblinka in 1942, he watched the majority of his transport led 'through the gate. Now we know what the gate was, it was the way to the gas chamber and we have never seen them again. That was the first hour we came in'.⁸⁷

Although Bomba spent only three months at Treblinka before he escaped, the imprint of the death camp was just as intense as Wiernik's. Bomba was assigned to a work detail of '18 or 16 people', some of whom 'worked already before in the gas chamber, we had a order to clean up the place'⁸⁸ Working under the strict rule of 'five, ten minutes' to clean the gas chambers and the undressing areas, Bomba described the Nazis' demand that everything look 'spotless ... like there was never nobody on the place, so the next transport when it comes in, they shouldn't see what's going on. We were cleaning up in the outside.'⁸⁹ Every survivor who was forced to work on the *Sonderkommando* at any of the death camps told a similar story. The Nazis insisted on a compressed period of time – usually ten minutes – to clean out the gas chambers, to dispose of the bodies, to collect and sort the clothing, property, foodstuffs left behind by the victims, so that the next set of victims, who waited in a 'reception area', would enter the 'shower rooms' without knowledge that gas awaited them.

Bomba believed that the Nazis wanted to erase any record of their actions, that without 'proof', their actions were unprovable. Some survivors added that the Nazis enjoyed exploiting the desperate hope of their victims; consequently, the buildings housing the gas chambers were made to look like the benign architecture of a nascent colony.

Since Bomba had been a barber, and the Nazis wanted their female victims' hair, he was next assigned to a platoon of barbers who cut the women's hair prior to the gassing. Known because of its centrality to Lanzmann's film, *Shoah*, this portion of Bomba's interview was reenacted for the camera. In a barbershop in Tel Aviv, Bomba cut a customer's hair as he recounted what he had done inside the gas chambers. Lanzmann had wanted to reproduce the actions of Bomba's daily life in Israel and suture them to the work details of Treblinka. The filmmaker reinforced the 'banality' of it all, and at the same time, he suggested that the survivor's everyday life after the war was marked by the unconscious presence of these nightmares.⁹⁰

However, Bomba's narrative continued beyond these frames. In a subsequent interview, he described in detail how his subjectivity coalesced around his recognition of the women in the gas chamber.⁹¹

We had scissors. From them we took bunches of hair. Cut off. Threw on the floor to the side, and about two minute has to be finished. Not even two minute be ... because there was a line waiting to come up the next to it. And that's how we worked. Inside it was very painful. Most painful was because some of the barbers, they recognized their dear ones, like wives, mothers, even grandmothers. Can you imagine that you have to cut their hair and not to tell them a word because you were not allowed? If you say a word that they going to ... uh ... be gassed in five or seven minutes later, there would be a panic over there and they would be killed too.⁹²

Bomba repeated the horror of the barbers when 'they recognized their dear ones' and knew that the Nazis had ordered them to keep their families' murder a 'secret', to accept, quietly, the inevitability of their murder. In a very nuanced way, Bomba associated the suppression of knowledge about the death camps with his survival; eventually, that association would be revalenced as a compulsion to tell, the fulfilment of an obligation to those to whom he could not speak.

In blunt details about the gas chamber, Bomba 'wanted' to tell his interviewer exactly 'how it looked'.⁹³ He described its 'simple ... all concrete', windowless construction; the way the Nazis had built the 'wires' overhead to look like they pumped water.⁹⁴ Each gas chamber had two doors, one through which the Jews entered, and the other through which their corpses were dragged out. To make sure that the interviewer understood what he described, he reiterated that he, Bomba, 'was in it, doing the job as a barber'.⁹⁵

And they pushed in as many as they could. It was not allowed to have the people standing up with their hands down because there is not enough room, but when people raised their hand like that there was more room to each other. And on top of that they throw in kids, 2, 3, 4 years old kids, on top of them. And we came out.⁹⁶

Although Bomba clarified that the Nazis were determined to gas as many people as the chamber could hold, his inability to intervene freighted 'and we came out' with an awareness that he had not run away, and he had not rescued.⁹⁷ He had simply exited with the other barbers. Mentally, his continued existence had been constitutively tied to their deaths and his failure, his survival, predicated on their loss. For a brief moment, he existed as *res nullius*, while they existed as *ens nullius*.

Arad estimated that each chamber held approximately '200–250 people', crammed together in a space of '16 square meters'.⁹⁸ Ukrainian guards sealed in the victims, and after a period of minutes, the corpses were removed, the chambers cleaned for the next waiting group.

Against this backdrop, Bomba finished with his description of his first hours in the camp.

The whole thing it took I would say between five and seven minute. The door opened up, not from the side they went in but the side from the other side and from the other side the ... the group ... people working in Treblinka number 2, which their job was only about dead people. They took out the corpses. Some of them dead and some of them still alive. They dragged them to the ditches, and over there they covered them. Big ditches, and they covered them. That was the beginning of Treblinka.⁹⁹

Bomba bracketed his memory with his recognition of the victims, and this last image, Jews forced to pull the bodies out of the gas chamber, then the bodies 'dragged to ditches ... big ditches' where they were 'covered' with dirt. The 'beginning of Treblinka' was the end of the Jews. Bomba relived this judgment repeatedly at the camp. He witnessed, literally, the Nazis' cathartic discharge of their victims from human existence. Bomba intuited the experience as a transformation of the self from a subject to the Nazis' object, their instrument. If he was to survive, he had to cling tenaciously to being their object.

As Bomba described in outtakes with Claude Lanzmann, the Lazarett was the other site of killing at Treblinka. The Lazarett was allegedly a 'hospital'. Its workers wore 'white dresses with a band around them, looking like doctors, but they were not doctors'.¹⁰⁰ To prove his point, he explained the 'hospital's' function for the transports. The Lazarett was situated in Treblinka 1, and at the platform, all 'the old, the sick and the children' were taken there and told to 'strip naked, supposedly for a medical examination'. The

building itself had a bench next to a fire pit in the middle of the room. The Jews were told to warm themselves on the bench. After they were settled, 'a group of men armed with machine-guns appears behind them. A short muffled burst of machine-gun fire is heard – and, shot through the head, they all fall into the burning fire.' Bomba described smelling 'the burning corpses from that place ... the burning flesh' permeated the 'nose', their 'hearts' and their 'bodies'.¹⁰¹

Exploiting the image of home and hearth, the cosy fire, the Nazis shot their victims in the back of the head and tossed them into the burning pit. Bomba registered this event physically – its smell – and he attributed this physical intuition to all of the inmates at Treblinka. They 'shared' the sense of these deaths.

In order to escape from Treblinka, Bomba buried himself beneath the victims' clothes in the sorting barracks near the Lazarett. He then crossed its burning ditch, 'a huge place for burning, burning clothes, paper, people'. He, his cousin and a friend covered their heads with clothes and 'went through that fire ... through that ditch'. They wore the remnants of the victims' belongings in order to escape the death camp. The sense of their survival in escape was the need to bear these anonymous belongings, the detritus of countless communities. It was the burden of these anonymous losses and the ashes clinging to them that enabled them to get out of Treblinka. In this respect, this action of escape and the burden of loss became a literal metaphor for the 'shared sense' of the death camp.

'Shared sense' of victimization in two non-Reinhard death camps

Auschwitz

Born in Salonika, Greece, in 1923, Shlomo Venezia had Italian citizenship and lived just outside Salonika's Baron Hirsch ghetto, where he witnessed the former Jewish neighbourhood transformed into a transit camp for deportations to death camps in 1943.¹⁰² He was sent to Auschwitz on 11 April 1944.¹⁰³

By that time, Auschwitz's functioning death camp had been in existence for two years, although the camp itself had been in operation since 1940. Wachsmann (2015) observed that while Auschwitz had been the site of 'mass death' as early as 1941, with the murder of Russian prisoners of war (POWs), it was still subsumed under the general Konzentrationslager (KL) or concentration camp network and designed primarily for labour to be performed by the asocials, criminals and political prisoners.¹⁰⁴ However, the success that the Nazis had both with the Tiergasse 4 (T-4) euthanasia programme and their experiments with Russian POWs led them to expand on Auschwitz's purpose. They began to siphon off percentages of able-bodied Jews from the transports headed to the Reinhard camps as well as the remaining ghettos for labour. As the Nazis began to imagine Auschwitz as a multipurpose camp, the transport of Jews unfit for work to dedicated death camps was a waste of resources. By 1942, the Nazis would begin killing Jews incapable of labour on site.

The camp Venezia entered in 1944 had grown from 12,000 in 1942 to approximately 500,000 Jews at any one time. The constancy of that number was eclipsed by the selections carried on throughout the camp and at the transport platform. Assigned to the *Sonderkommando*, Venezia cut the hair of the female corpses. Eventually, he became tasked with working in the crematoria and, on occasion, he cleaned the gas chambers after a transport's liquidation. Consequently, he had knowledge of the entire process of extermination. He bore this knowledge with the realization that it marked him for death. He had his place on the *Sonderkommando* because his predecessor had been recently exterminated. Thus, his 'contact with the dead was immediate'.¹⁰⁵

As Venezia continued to 'speak of those visions of the gas chamber', he described the complete violation of the victims' last moments.

You could find people whose eyes hung out of their sockets because of the struggles of the organism had undergone. Others were bleeding from everywhere, or were soiled by their own excrement, or that of other people. Because of the effect that their fear and the gas had on them, the victims often evacuated everything they had in their bodies. Some bodies were all red, others very pale, as everyone reacted differently. But they had all suffered in death. ... You found them gripping each other – everyone had desperately sought a little air. ... During the first days ... the stench stuck to my hands; I felt sullied by those deaths.¹⁰⁶

The bodies had already begun to break down; in death, they 'evacuated everything'. The *Sonderkommando* could not distinguish between the smell of excrement and the gas used to kill them, but Venezia did remember that each victim 'reacted differently'. The effect of being within this death was the sense of it, 'the stench stuck' to his hands and he felt 'sullied' by those deaths. He described this experience as one absorbed directly through his senses.

Later, when Venezia worked in the crematoria, he recalled it was a 'continuous, uninterrupted process'.¹⁰⁷ The crematoria *Sonderkommando* worked in two shifts, morning and night, because the crematoria had to keep up with the demand of the gas chambers. Venezia remembered that on one occasion, they stopped because the bricks in the crematoria had failed. The stoppage meant that the bodies remained in the 'atrium' adjacent to the crematoria for two days, where they had decomposed 'in the heat'. As they attempted to move the bodies to the crematoria, the 'gassed bodies disintegrated,' 'the skin came off in pieces,' 'sticking to his hands'.¹⁰⁸

For Venezia, his 'hands' evoked, metonymically, the way the ashes had imprinted his body, his senses and his mind. He stressed that the Jews in Birkenau believed they were 'outside the world', 'worldless', 'already in hell'.¹⁰⁹ The effects of this camp had turned them 'into robots', affectless, 'trying not to think' in order to live 'a few hours longer' under the special 'logic' of Auschwitz.¹¹⁰ They had to remain silent, obedient, and as Venezia turned to his interviewer, he declared, 'That's why I want to tell the story, tell it for as long as I live, but relying only on my memories, on what I am certain that I saw and nothing else'.¹¹¹ After burning the bodies in the crematoria, the *Sonderkommando* shovelled out the ashes, carried them to the river and dumped them there. There was to be no trace of the Nazis' victims. The 'shared sense' between these victims that Venezia intuited was organized around the handling and awareness of ashes.

Jean Améry called Auschwitz's 'logic' an aspect of its 'improvisations'; in comparison to other Nazi camps, Auschwitz was unique because the Nazis deployed dying as a 'constantly evolving aesthetic'.¹¹² Primo Levi remembered seeing train cars arriving to Auschwitz, 'filled with ashes'.¹¹³ Levi had characterized his experiences at the camp as designed to sever Jews from community, family, friends, by transforming them into monads. By the end of his time at the camp, his fellow Jews were no longer even monads, but just nameless, anonymous ashes. Ashes didn't testify to their existence; they were simply absorbed into the earth.

Chelmno

In 1941, Hitler had just ended the T-4 euthanasia programme in Germany, in which the 'staff' experimented with gassing the disabled and the mentally ill.¹¹⁴ The end to the euthanasia programme not only created a surplus of people with expertise in this process – skills for which no job existed – but also coincided with Hitler's oral communication to Himmler to begin the extermination of the Jews.¹¹⁵ With that purpose in mind, roving bands of German soldiers, known as *Einsatzgruppen*, worked towards Russia, collecting Jews in large groups and massacring them. The *Einsatzgruppen*'s mass shootings were eventually to be augmented, if not replaced, by the use and structure of the concentration camp, its enclosed 'world of terror', as the model for a new kind of camp, dedicated to killing Jews.

Chelmno operated from January 1941 to March 1942. It was originally a 'hamlet' in a forest, isolated and underpopulated, in the Kolo district.¹¹⁶ It had been chosen by one of the T-4 staff sent by Himmler to search for a site where the killing could take place without observation. That staff member, SS *Sturmbannführer* Herbert Lange, had pioneered the gas van in the T-4 programme.¹¹⁷ Lange identified the perfect site for the 'killing centre', an abandoned 'castle' with forests surrounding it.¹¹⁸ Chelmno's 145,000 victims were primarily Jews and Roma. The majority of the victims came from the Lodz ghetto.¹¹⁹

When the Jewish community of Kolo, Poland, was liquidated in late December 1941, Michal Podchlebnik described how the town's Jews were collected at the local synagogue.¹²⁰ They were allowed to bring a suitcase of 10 kilograms, and after their names were checked off against a census listing the town's Jewish inhabitants, they were herded in groups of forty to waiting trucks. Their luggage was taken separately, in trailers. They were told that they were going to work 'at a railroad ... in the East'.¹²¹ Believing that his 'father, mother, sister with her five children, brother with his wife and three children' were to be 'resettled', with jobs, Podchlebnik assured himself that they would be safe.

Kolo's transports were all directed to Chelmno. All Jews in the Wartheland region under the Nazis' General Government in Poland were to be gassed there.¹²² After their murder, Kolo was to be converted into a way station for Jews from the surrounding areas before they, too, were dispatched to Chelmno.¹²³

At this early stage in the death camps' development, Chelmno did not have gas chambers, but instead used gas vans. Lange, the former T-4 employee, pioneered

the method and drove a van himself. Arriving on a Saturday in January to Chelmno, Podchlebnik spent his first two nights confined to a basement in the manor house. On Monday morning, thirty of the men from the basement were taken for ‘work in the forest’; he and ten others remained behind. After the thud of the doors to the vans being locked, he listened to the cries of its victims as they were gassed. He was spared, temporarily, because he was young and strong, but he knew that, eventually, he was to die in the same manner. He lived with the sounds of the gas vans’ victims imprinted on his senses.

The Holocaust victims’ ‘shared sense’

The illusion that Jews had arrived at any of these death camps for colonization or enslavement ended, for the majority of the transports, within minutes of arrival at these camps. Whether forced to run naked through the ‘tubes’, crammed into the gas chambers or made to witness, in silence, the extermination of people whose only crime was their existence, Jews at death camps knew, usually, within moments that they were no longer within the world of human existence.¹²⁴ They had become beings that were not beings. For a small minority of Jews, who were conscripted into work details, the knowledge of their destruction came within days; it was usually expressed through their senses as physical and mental disintegration. Its signifier was ash.

As Hans Frank’s comments made clear, the Nazis used narratives of colonization for propaganda, hiding their purposes from populations throughout Europe so that the world accepted the necessity of the Jews’ disappearance. Jews were no longer allowed to live in Europe’s towns and cities. They had to be ‘resettled’ at the Aryan world’s margins. In this collapse of difference, between the colonial narrative and the implied necessity of Jewish exile, the Nazis hoped to elicit from world opinion the belief that they had always intended to resettle Jews, their extermination an afterthought when such resettlement proved unviable.

In a similar trajectory, the narrative of ‘*Arbeit macht frei*’ suggested, disingenuously, that the Jews were to be sent to labour camps outside the Reich’s proper territory, at its outermost margins, where through slave labour they would be redeemed from the evils of their existence. While individuals in concentration camps did, at times, imagine they were slaves, in death camps they knew this status to be temporary: it was a brief reprieve from the gas chamber.

A survivor of Treblinka, Richard Glazar, said ‘one could use the terms *masters* and *slaves* for every being who walks on two legs in Treblinka’; however, these ‘appellations’ were titles.¹²⁵ They did not express the full sense of how the victims of the death camps were enslaved. Alina G. confirmed this reality in her testimony, given at Noisy le Sec in 1999.¹²⁶ She had ‘passed’ as a Pole in Warsaw’s Aryan sector in 1944. She witnessed the Warsaw uprising from outside the ghetto. Since she was not identified as a Jew, she spent the war on a work detail in Berlin, her transport ‘taken off the train near Berlin and examined as beasts in an auction’.¹²⁷ The Nazis handled their captives, examining them as if they were ‘beasts of burden’, their value contingent on the Nazis’ use for them. In other words, part of the Nazi ‘dream’ was a slave force of commensurable units. Such details were replenished by new slaves when older units died off because of

labour, starvation and epidemic. In this respect, the Nazis employed a similar metric as the chattel slavery of the preceding centuries.

Alina G. also noted that her slave status, while humiliating, and violent, spared her from her family's fate. They were deported from the ghetto, arrived at Auschwitz, in a series of convoys, and were gassed immediately. She marked their experience in relation to her own as related, but radically different. She was enslaved, but allowed to survive because she was a 'beast'. Her family did not. The implications of Alina G.'s conclusions suggested that she would spend the rest of her life hanging on tightly to the dignity that had been withheld from her. She would fight for her freedom, and she would not be reducible to a 'beast'.

The only 'shared sense' among victims of the death camps, their *sensus communis*, was the intuition that they were consigned to gas chambers, their end in ashes. They were beings who were no longer entitled to existence. At the death camps, colonization was used not only to deceive the Nazis' Jewish victims arriving on the transports, to mask from the newest victims the reality of their dissolution, but also because the deception elicited in the perpetrators an aesthetic response, a pleasure. As Szmajzner illustrated, the Nazis' victims intuited their 'disintegration', their 'shared sense' of persecution, as their Nazi perpetrators' subjective and physiological liberation. They recognized the narrative as a cipher for the experience.

Survivors, those who through some means survived the death camps, as well as those who never went to the death camps – like Alina G. who 'passed'; like Semprun, who went to Buchenwald, a political prisoner – felt this intuition, too. It clung to them in their memories of family, friends, community, even the anonymous victims, that suddenly no longer existed. What was constitutive, for all of these survivors, was the need to tell what happened to them.

When H. G. Adler presented the fictional survivor of an unnamed death camp, Paul Lustig, climbing out of a sea of ashes, Adorno condemned him for taking aesthetic license with victim experiences in the death camps even though Adler was himself a survivor of a death camp.¹²⁸ In fact, survivors of the *Sonderkommando* units suggested a mimetic root in Adler's images that belated readers never considered; they never imagined it. Adler had Paul, like Bomba, climb through the ashes surrounding the death camp in order to escape it. It was Paul's only path to liberation, the ashes of his family clinging to him as he lifted himself out of the sea of ashes surrounding the death camp.

The Nazis' formula for extermination did not hope for a future with Jews but, rather, was intended to restore a missing Aryan past. For Hitler, Eden had been taken away from the Germans, stolen by the Jews. The evidence for his claim was in their Bible and their Talmud, the restorative power of life foreclosed to Germans by Jewish expropriation. It was the Nazis' obligation to restore the earth to an era prior to Jewish existence, to 'back-breed' human existence until the Aryan people re-emerged to live the 1,000-year Reich, when they would spread over a completely cleansed continent.

In collection, transport and extermination, Jews became part of a social engineering that LeComte de Nöuy stressed was the 'undoing of evolution'. Poles, Slavs, Russians, 'negros' existed as long as they did not impinge on the Aryan's quality of life. They were to enhance Aryan existence through slave labour, until that labour exhausted them 'naturally' and physically. Folded into their enslavement was the knowledge that

starvation, labour and epidemics would lead to these groups' 'extinction', but discrete individuals would survive, because they had been able in some way to prove the value of their labour. Their social extinction was a necessary evil, akin to colonial engineering, but some were permitted to survive, either as the Nazis' subalterns or as their slaves. However, the evil of the Jews was 'unprecedented'. Jews occupied history illegitimately; theirs was a 'worldlessness' that had to be eradicated.

Conclusion: Observations on the Future Store,¹ the Future Map and the Future

The formulas of persecution and victimization

As each section demonstrated, persecution relied on specific formulas that subjects used to construct knowledge about their objects.²

Res nullius+merchandise=chattel

Terra nullius+map=colony

Ens nullius+parasite/garbage=ash/extermination

These formulas were bound to constitutive experiences of the subject, so that the subject's intuition controlled the formula. Subjects felt entitled to enslave, colonize and exterminate. These entitlements produced interchangeable objects that went mutely to their assigned places. However, all three victim populations undermined that silence; they were in conscious negotiation of these formulas.

In slavery's '*res nullius* + merchandise = chattel', one of the key elements to slavery's 'continuity of principle' was the planters' ability to bury epistemically, within their social institutions, parts of the formula, so that subjects 'in the future store' could experience the subject position of the planters and reproduce slavery's coordinates, its expectations and its entitlements, without necessarily the reproduction of slavery itself.

In other words, the formula was designed to continue the animation of social institutions in the following way: *res nullius* + merchandise = chattel.³ Abolition prohibited chattel slavery, but it did not invalidate *res nullius*, the 'ownerless' being. Moreover, *res nullius* was structurally prohibited from attaining the status of the modern subject.

This reality forced former slaves to identify other modes of 'being' within communities and as individuals that did not revert to *res nullius* and that enabled them to negate its application for them altogether. Whether through religion, law, art, culture or education, slaves and their descendants identified new grounds for becoming subjects that did not require them to begin their existence as *res nullius*. These competing bases for the constitution of the subject still abut the constitutive experiences of subject formation that formerly enslaved them.

With colonialism, the formula was different, although still intimately related: *terra nullius* + map = colony. Since sovereign states that had, historically, practiced slavery were precluded from it during the Berlin Conference, *res nullius* beings were

subsumed under *terra nullius* as its ‘unknown’ resources. In the concept’s unarticulated ‘prehistory’, ‘happy natives’ danced at the margins of territory’s boundaries, waiting for their discovery and redemption. After a colonial designation of a *terra nullius*, and its representation on a map, modern subjects considered the discovery of any resources as part of the wealth of the colony, because these resources resided within the boundaries of the territory. Resources belonged to the settlers. Any move to disrupt that ownership required ‘legitimate’ military intervention.

Consequently, after the repeal of colonization in Africa, all of these boundaries were recognized as imbricated within Europeans’ persecution of Africans.⁴ They circumscribed African experience, following Europeans’ trade routes rather than actual migration and settlement patterns of traditional societies and indigenous polities, so that whole societies of postcolonial communities had grown up around them. African nations found themselves ‘stuck’ with the ruins of colonial cartography; it had been imposed on them without their knowledge for decades, but in their ‘liberated’ states, these boundaries, set in contract and treaty, had become ‘natural’ and familiar modes of negotiation.⁵

In the case of the Herero, a key aim of their initial reparations suit was the demand for a new map with the region’s waterholes re-marked. In this way, Brink’s map would have been displaced to the extent that the Herero could reattach their memories to a place on Namibia’s map.⁶ Their demand suggested that until the map illustrated these ‘waterholes’, the Herero would remain conscripted, anonymously, into the new Namibia. By demanding a revised map, the Herero had hoped to restake their claims, at least through memory, to a world that existed simultaneously with colonization.

In the case of the Nama, the group had a history of state-building that existed prior to and during German colonialism. Evidence of this civil structure led Simon Kooper to question how rulers ‘across the sea’ were able to draw imaginary boundaries on Namaland that revoked these pre-existing ‘states’ in their favour. It was the same complaint that Bismarck had ventured against the British at the Berlin Conference and that Britain had made against the Spanish and Portuguese at Tordesillas.

However, both groups appealed to a new representation on the map that shifted the argument to the idea of the community’s possession of *sensus communis*. In this respect, the epistemological formula was to be displaced by the imposition of subjects being constituted both as groups and individuals through alternative experiences. They were both ‘traditional’ and Namibian.

With the Holocaust, the Nazis foreclosed all human terms for Jews, so that the Holocaust’s formula began with a very different term, *ens nullius* or ‘being of no one’.⁷ A medieval term from the scholastics, I have modified its translation somewhat to reflect that the position assigned to Jews by the Nazis had no precedent within a racial hierarchy. They were beings without ‘being’, without any human legitimacy. Thus, the Nazis decreed Jews as beings whose existence damaged, endangered and impeded human development, freighted with an absolute lack of value.⁸ ‘Empty’ of ‘being’ inside, their bodies were useless containers, akin to refuse.⁹ They lacked the constitutive experience of racial subjectivity. For the Nazis, Jews were emblematically such entities. Their destruction equated to the removal of ‘refuse’.¹⁰ The formula in operation posited the following: *ens nullius* + refuse = ashes.

The Nazi subject who made these designations emerged out of a tradition cobbled together from myth, aesthetics and 'sentiment'. As Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy demonstrated, the aesthetic experience generating this subject was contingent on the catharsis of the death camps.¹¹ Himmler hinted at it himself in 1934, when von Epp protested the incarceration of individuals in concentration camps whose crimes had yet to exist in law. It was the 'duty' of the Nazi to 'discharge' the offending parasite in order to liberate the Aryan and usher in the Reich.

These three formulas suggested that individuals' memories had to revalence, belatedly, the events' significance for communities. They had to transform physical sites into places of memories, where persecution was mediated by subjects rather than objects of victimization.¹² The traces of this revalence are implied by the three images appearing in this chapter and at the beginning of each respective section.

The 'Future Store'¹³ the Future Map, the Future

Res nullius+merchandise=chattel

Unveiled in 1985, the nine-foot bronze statue portrayed in Figure 1 was commissioned by Tom Adams, Barbados's president, to commemorate liberation from slavery. It was known, originally, as the 'Emancipation Monument'; Karl Brodhagen, its sculptor, named it the 'Slave in Revolt', but it was so immediately recognizable to Barbadians as Bussa, the African leader of the failed 1816 rebellion, that the statue became popularly known as the 'Bussa Monument'.¹⁴ Its name was officially changed in 1988.¹⁵ Barbadians envisioned Bussa, poised to lead an enslaved people forward into freedom. The statue elicited explicit and immediate identification from generations 150 years removed from slavery, but not from their personal memories.

Brodhagen's 'Slave in Revolt' depicts the straining, muscular body of a male slave, breaking his chains and raising his arms upward to the sky. His head lifted up, he appears defiant, jubilant, as if he intended to pull the heavens down to earth, in order to be free of his shackles. His naked torso standing proud, the chains dangling from his wrists, he seems to lead his followers to freedom. In that moment, he invites emulation. Although scholars have argued over the legitimacy of Bussa's legacy, Barbadians still imagine Bussa's role as a leader who died in order to experience liberation, even if just for a moment.¹⁶

Catharine Reinhardt linked Barbadians' reactions to the 'Bussa Monument' as an effect of 'collective memory' in the context of Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora's work.¹⁷

French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs pioneered the concept of memory as a collective faculty. A group within a given society can reconstruct its past at any given moment by relying on the social memory of the group at large. Once people or historical facts have permeated the memory of the group, they gain meaning as a teaching, a notion, or a symbol and become part of society's system of ideas Nora calls such moments, places, people or objects that symbolize a community's



Figure 1 Monument of the Unknown Slave, also known as the 'Bussa Monument'. © Travel Ink. Source: Getty Images.

memorial heritage *lieux de mémoire* (realms of memory). These symbolic spaces become realms of memory when they are characterized by an overwhelming presence of the past.¹⁸

Halbwachs reasoned that minorities within a national body could 'reconstruct' their histories, because they had been absorbed into the national body's collective identity. In this way, memory was always available through 'traces' of its existence, not only in art, literature and culture, but also in the ruins, artefacts and people across the globe.

Halbwachs held these 'traces' to be suture points of forgotten experiences. Culture, as a whole, became a key repository for the identification of these sutures. Groups remembered who they were, and from where they had come, through tapping into this shared cultural repository. Cultural assimilation did not erase identity, but, in fact, it provided individuals with the means to own national culture and the public sphere. With Halbwachs' death at Buchenwald, his project receded in its popularity.

Pierre Nora's *lieux des mémoires* picked up Halbwachs' theory of collective memory and applied it to French culture to demonstrate that societies after traumatic events needed communities to reclaim spaces, to reterritorialize them, with memories. He related this model to many symbolic spaces, including those of persecution. As Reinhardt demonstrated with her work on the Bussa statue, and Eastern Caribbean monuments, the symbolic space of dignity had to be returned to peoples formerly categorized as *res nullius*. It was a reaffirmation of history, neither a reflex denial that it happened, nor an invalidation of its significance for present communities. Rather than removing the traces of slavery as if they had no bearing on the present, these traces articulated the identities of their victims, their continued presence and interaction with belated audiences.

Reinhardt used Eduard Glissant's theory of 'rhizome-memories' that he adapted from Gilles Deleuze to pose the question, 'How do these rhizome-memories, articulated across national boundaries, remap Caribbean "imagined communities?"'¹⁹ To put it another way, Reinhardt examined how the descendants of former slaves 'owned' these symbolic spaces. With Glissant's addition, Reinhardt identified how the status of *res nullius* became deterritorialized in Caribbean societies. What became critical for the Bussa statue was not, exclusively, the emphasis of gaining one's freedom, but, rather, it was the privileging of past memories of struggle that became immediately cathected to an imagined 'Bussa'.

The failed revolution was transformed into an integral part of the narrative of liberation. Rhizomatic memories reterritorialized space by producing a narrative about liberation, as well as the referential concept of the commemoration of freedom. Hillary Beckles saw this in his response to Jerome Handler: the statue was about a modern reception of the past that took into account personal memories of what had appeared to be unrelated and disparate pieces of the historical narrative. Memories made the narrative of freedom coherent for the slaves' descendants. Moreover, 'rhizome-memories' encouraged 'multiplicity', so that many subjective experiences, any and all that could be imagined, were authorized to come into being.²⁰

Terra nullius+map=colony

The second image, the 'Brink map of 1761' (Figure 2) marked not only the emptiness of colonial space, but also the propensity for the colonized to be moved to the margins of the frame of representation. In negation, the subaltern discovered a place in the world through the realization that she or he was marginal to colonial power. It dealt in absence, the necessary absence of pre-existing sovereign peoples.

As so many scholars have noted, colonialism worked from a template of absence, an imagined *tabula rasa*. If Europeans were not present there, as Heinrich Vedder declared, there 'was nothing of value', nothing of importance.²¹ Thus, the survivors of colonialism confronted a reclamation project in which they reclaimed not only land, but also traditions, culture and knowledge. The map became their highly charged representation; they needed to reclaim the places designated *nullius* from European cartography.

In other words, under colonialism, indigenous polities were self-consciously aware of what they had to be in order to circulate with a measure of autonomy. Autonomy was not reducible to freedom or liberation. Autonomy enabled the new being mobility, but there was no unbounded sense, primarily for two reasons. First, unboundedness had



Figure 2 Brink map of 1761. © Netherlands National Library.

been sutured to unbounded loss and absence. There was no way to recuperate this loss without reproducing it as a stable object whose discrete boundaries could be overcome with time. Time itself colluded with loss. Time was unbound, as was their absence.

Second, an individual transcendence, akin to Andersson's Lake Ngami experience and Vedder's 'Faustic' contract, was substituted for traditional unboundedness. To attempt this form of entitlement would require the indigenous to forfeit, apodeictically, their traditional sensibilities. In lieu of these traditional sensibilities, they would adopt hybridized sensibilities, something the Nama had incorporated, already, into their polities before colonization by the Germans, but that the remnant of the Herero did not experience until after the genocide, the concentration camps and their systematic indenture.

What this suggests is that the memory of the genocide remained intimately associated with their hybridized identities. To require them to make their memories conform to the objects of knowledge associated with the Germans' archive would doubly articulate their victimization, implying that even their capacities for memory had to be colonized by Western epistemology before they were permitted representation.

Ens nullius+parasite=ash/extermination

The third image (Figure 3) also expressed absence. Treblinka's ashes sat there, silent. Treblinka had been closed before the war's end by the Nazis, because it had accomplished its goal of eliminating all the Jews in the surrounding area of Lublin, as well as the surplus of Jews sent there from Western Europe. In Yad Vashem's collections, the picture was accompanied by a brief handwritten note on the back. It was 'dug out of mountains, heaps of things, near the crematoria'.²² The anonymous photographer saw 'heaps' of ashes, unmediated, unexplained and unknowable (Figure 4).

When H. G. Adler, in the novel *The Journey*, described his protagonist, Paul, climbing out of a sea of ashes surrounding an unnamed death camp, the ashes sticking to him, and his consciousness that his family and community comprised these ashes, most scholars, including myself, considered it a poetic trope.²³ When Primo Levi mentioned seeing 'train cars of ashes', scholars focused, instead, on the historical details



Figure 3 Ash pit at Treblinka. © Yad Vashem Photo Archives.

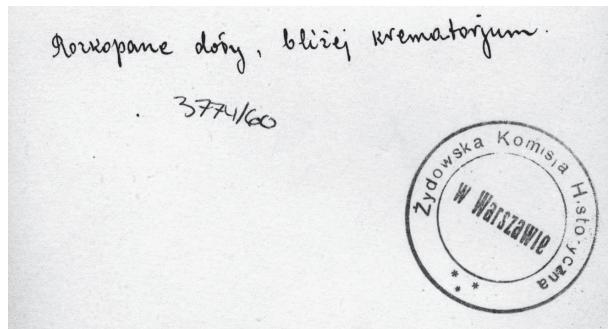


Figure 4 Reverse of 'Ash pit at Treblinka'. © Yad Vashem Photo Archives.

of Levi's narratives, not his so obviously subjective observation. In other words, most did not recognize the effects of ash on Holocaust survivors, although as Jorge Semprun wrote about his internment at Buchenwald, a concentration camp, whose crematoria disposed of bodies night and day, he could never 'get the smell of the crematoria out of his nose, the taste of ashes, out of his mouth'. There was no representation of the ash, simply because no one except for the Nazis' victims knew the sensual intimacy of these ashes. To some extent, this image was overlooked because it bore no resemblance to what it was: millions of Jews exterminated shortly after their arrival to the death camps.

From the picture, the pits appear unbounded, the ashes like sand dunes that extend across time and space. In fact, the ashes signify a kind of unboundedness that signified the absence of beings.²⁴ For the Nazis, Jews represented non-being in a very real sense. As Pierre de Nöuy le Compte wrote from his prisoner-of-war camp, the Nazis intended to undo evolution, because it had enabled Jews to exist at the expense of their mythical Aryan being. Through numerous social and biological engineering projects, the Nazis attempted not only to produce 'a world without Jews', but also to return the 'worldlessness of the Jews' back to its original elements.²⁵ Aryan ontology needed Jewish extermination. It was a subject position in which the Nazi subject who persecuted in the present believed that discharging Jews from the world, clearing away their 'worldlessness', would trigger the restoration of the mythical Aryan subject. The death camps were the constitutive mechanisms for this subjective experience.²⁶

All three of these images shared one common element – communities of victims during the events lacked representation – but this lack had very different valences. While the victims of slavery confronted social institutions whose foundations precluded them from entry, and whose descendants were, likewise, precluded from entry, theirs became a battle for representation and admission within those institutions for the future. Moreover, as countless scholars of slavery have established, those institutions continue, today, with these fundamental exclusions intact, designed to hold slavery's descendants, excluded, in their places. As Goveia put it, 'a continuity of principle' animated social institutions that developed from the legacy of slavery.²⁷ Johnson suggested that slavery's longevity counted on the idea of a 'future store'.²⁸

Postcolonial scholars have identified another set of problems for countries and empires that became colonial territories. These problems hinge on two elements: the

awareness that hybridity, as an effect of colonial experience, is now a given of postcolonial existence; and the understanding that the colonized's voice in colonial epistemologies had been muted and now must be heard. The two elements pose a tension for postcolonial and colonial studies because, on the one hand, colonialism left an indelible imprint on the colonized. The evidence of the colonizer's existence, colonial architecture, cartography, is always a part of the postcolonial landscape. Even the colonized's social institutions bear the colonizer's influences. Traditional societies, or even precolonial empires, will never return completely to precolonial modes of being, but hybridity is not necessarily the absence of tradition. Tradition may still be mediated by the terms of persecution; postcolonial scholars have demonstrated its persistence.

On the other hand, trying to gauge what was lost under colonialism requires an intervention into the epistemologies of the colonizer. The need to retrace the steps that colonialists took in order to take possession of territories means that the colonial project was also conceived in terms of its longevity. Reclamation projects of the entire past have become necessary strategies for going forwards. The crisis of Herero re-emergence in the recent decades had been that if they were to move forwards, they had to own the epistemological objects of their persecution, and this move is inimical to a traditional society.²⁹

Subalterns experienced colonialism as dispossession; structures, both cognitive and physical, were imposed, so that mental space became intuitable according to epistemological categories. The colonial mind imposed taxonomies of knowledge designed to legislate physical space in the same patterns of mental space.

For subaltern subjects, these hierarchies of imagined and perceived knowledge suggested that freedom from colonial space was a reclamation project of the mind and the land. If one regained property and knowledge, then, one was properly free. They had been persecuted under *terra nullius*; thus, they needed to revise the cartography of oppression under which they had been dispossessed to prove that they had 'effective occupation' long before Europeans invented the term.

This reality was the context for the Herero in their suit in 2001 against Deutsche Bank as the modern representative of the German settlers who colonized Namibia. In addition to the usual forms of reparation, the Herero demanded that another map of Namibia be produced, one that showed all the waterholes of the country. The waterholes had two primary resonances for the Herero: (1) the waterholes signified a world before they were subalterns and slaves to German settlers, a world of cattle, where time was measured from pasture to pasture, waterhole to waterhole; and (2) the waterholes of Namibia's deserts had also been sites of their massacre. As the Germans penetrated the Omaheke and the Kalahari deserts, von Trotha ordered the waterholes to be plugged up and poisoned. The German general intended that the Herero would die in the desert of a lack of water; they would become extinct in German territory, their only hope being to get to British territories.

The waterholes became, then, the last places for the weak and dying, primarily women, children and the aged. Their bodies were abandoned to these places, unburied and forgotten. The bones of their cattle, too, were found at these waterholes; they had also died of thirst within sight of the polluted wells. The Herero construed their prosperity and the possession of cattle as a sign of their ancestors' continued influence

in their lives. Thus, they were obligated to know where their ancestors were buried; they had to correct their lack of knowledge about these missing ancestors through the identification of the waterholes in contemporary Namibia. Their history was contingent on regaining possession of the map.

The victims, and even the survivors, of death camps had neither subject nor object position. Neither slave nor subaltern, their legitimate places were the ashes filling the pits of the Nazis' 'farms'. Jews in the death camps were faced, every minute of their existence, with their eventual dissolution. At Auschwitz, Shlomo Venezia was conscious of it as he stoked the flames of the crematoria with the bodies, after which he carried their ashes from the crematoria and dumped them into a river. The history of these Jews was washed away or left to mingle anonymously with the soil until, as Jacob Wiernik posited, they enriched it for the Nazi future.

Primo Levi said that eventually, the train cars that came to Auschwitz were filled, already, with ashes. At Sobibor, Thomas Blatt remembered wading into the gas chambers filled with excrement, blood and urine, unable to find purchase among the corpses that inhabited the Nazis' New World, victims' skin adhering to his hands as he struggled to pull bodies out of the chambers. Wiernik recalled that after several days at Treblinka, he assessed how heavy the new arrivals' corpses would be to drag from the gas chambers and to the crematoria.³⁰ Jewish lives were reducible to the detritus of the pit that appeared to be 'dug out of the mountains'. They no longer had definable spaces; their ashes made no physical imprint on the earth, the remnants of their being scattered in the wind.

I began this book's introduction with the recognition that recent trends in genocide studies had provided the trajectory of my argument. Zimmerer and Moses' thesis that the Holocaust was a 'subaltern war', a 'colonial war of annihilation', identified the specific areas and eras of my study. In this respect, their arguments have bracketed my own project, because of their appeal to displace the specificity of the victims in order to ground the causality of colonialism.

However, as the three images presented suggest, the traces of each community's attempt to resolve the past are embedded in their representations as well as their imagined modes of going forwards. Moreover, the terms of that resolution are imbricated, intimately, in the specific modes of their persecution. To displace the specificity of any one of these groups is to argue for an interchangeability on which their persecutors had relied. It was the calculus of the Middle Passage, the colonial massacre and the gas chamber.

Notes

Introduction

- 1 John Blassingame, *Critical Essay on Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 227.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Saul Friedländer, 'An Integrated History of the Holocaust: Possibilities and Challenges', in *Years of Persecution, Years of Extermination. Saul Friedländer and the Future of Holocaust Studies*, ed. Christian Wiese and Paul Betts (London: Continuum, 2010), 21–9; p. 23.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Thomas Kühne, *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918–1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 1.
- 9 See Donald Bloxham, *The Final Solution: A Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Carroll Kakel, *The Holocaust as Colonial Genocide: Hitler's 'Indian Wars' in the 'Wild East'* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire, German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 10 A. Dirk Moses, 'Chapter 4, Colonialism', in *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies*, ed. John Roth and Peter Hayes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 69; Jürgen Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust: Towards an Archeology of Genocide', in *Genocide and Settler Society*, ed. A. Dirk Moses, trans. Andrew Beattie (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004), 50.
- 11 Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust', 49.
- 12 Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004).
- 13 See Timothy Snyder, *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2015), 1. Snyder terms it a 'multifocal' project in which Nazis acted as colonizers, slaveholders and exterminators with different communities of victims. Hitler made the claim himself, cynically, when he stressed the inevitability of the Nazis' annihilation of their victims.
- 14 In fact, Hitler posited his policy towards the non-Jewish Poles as a response to the Thirty Years' War.
- 15 Many historians focus on *Lebensraum* or 'living space' in tandem with Nazi ideologies about 'blood' or *Blut und Bode*, as the critical elements that underpinned a 'race and space' ideology. For an overview of the terms, see Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), viii. Bergen uses the phrase throughout her book to pace the thesis; its first appearance occurs though in the preface.

- 16 Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust', 51. Zimmerer's claim alluded to an earlier dispute between Saul Friedländer and Martin Broszat. See Saul Friedländer, 'An Integrated History of the Holocaust: Possibilities and Challenges', in *Years of Persecution*, ed. Christian Wiese and Paul Betts (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 21–2. Friedländer outlined the dispute between himself and Martin Broszat, then director of the Institute of Contemporary History in Germany, over Broszat's statement that the 'traditional simplistic "black and white" representation of the Third Reich' espoused by 'the Jewish survivors and their descendants' posited 'a mythical memory' and a 'coarsening obstacle' to 'a rational German historiography'. Consequently, Friedländer wrote a history utilizing multiple historical perspectives to demonstrate the inaccuracies of Broszat's claim. In other words, the Jewishness of those who would dispute either of these perspectives is always referenced, sometimes in more explicit, but often enough in implicit, terms.
- 17 Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust', 51.
- 18 Zimmerer is too careful a scholar to have not realized that he repeated, essentially, the gesture to which Holocaust scholars have long objected: elimination of Jews from the discussion uncannily echoes the Nazis' project.
- 19 This claim has been made by Walter Benn Michaels in the case of African American experiences of persecution and slavery and by Ward Churchill in the case of indigenous persecution. In his work, *The Final Solution: A Genocide*, Donald Bloxham made it his organizing thesis. While the UN addressed slavery the same year in the Human Rights Convention, its omission from the Genocide Convention has had extensive implications.
- 20 I intentionally use the phrase 'general plan', with its immediate signification of Hitler's *Generalplan Ost*, the annexation of Polish territory and then extermination of Poland's Jews, because Zimmerer's intervention introduces a new intellectual footing for Hitler's actions. Zimmerer's argument hinges on a wider genocidal intent, and to that end, the specificity of Jewish victims is no longer a critical element of the Nazis' strategy, but subordinate to a historical narrative external to the Holocaust. The revision also delegitimized Friedländer's 'properly Jewish dimension of the events' by attributing that scholar's interest in the Jewish victims to 'identity politics'.
- 21 Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust', 53.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 This conclusion was reached by the death camps' victims and survivors, but with an incredibly different valence attributed to the meaning of their genocide. In their formulation, the Nazis were willing to risk it all, to undercut the effectiveness of their troops, in order to accomplish the extermination of the Jews. See Jean Améry, *At the Mind's Limits and Other Essays* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977).
- 24 Isabel V. Hull, 'Military Culture and the Production of "Final Solutions" in the Colonies: The Example of Wilhelminian Germany', in *Specter of Genocide. Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 147. I discuss Hull's argument more fully in the colonialism section and in relation to Lothar von Trotta's 'extermination order' against the Herero.
- 25 Moses, 'Chapter 4, Colonialism', 69.
- 26 Like Zimmerer, Hull applied the 'battle of annihilation' to the Herero insurgency in 1904–8.
- 27 Woodruff Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 134.

- 28 Hull, 'Military Culture'. The importance of Hull's thesis is its identification of the German military as a social institution that informed all aspects of civil life. Essentially, Hull, as well as other scholars of German military history and Jewish history, noted that a military ethos had penetrated German culture. The military acted as a constitutive organization in which Germans learnt how to be loyal citizens. See Thomas Hippler, *Citizens, Soldiers and National Armies, Military Service in France and Germany 1789–1830* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Ute Frewerth, *A Nation in Barracks: Modern Germany, Military Conscription and Civil Society*, trans. Andrew Boreham (New York: Berg, 2004). For a narrative account of how the military was intuited as an identity forming experience among Jews, see Menno Burg, *Geschichte meines Dienstlebens* (Berlin: MW Kaufman, 1916 [1848]); and Derek Penslar, *Jews and the Military. A History* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013). See Christian Davis, *Colonialism, Antisemitism, and Germans of Jewish Descent in Imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 2012) for an account of how colonialists interpreted the 'battle of annihilation' in Africa territories.
- 29 Marion Ross, 'Schroetter, Schön, and Society: Aristocratic Liberalism versus Middle-class Liberalism in Prussia, 1808'; *Central European History* 6, no. 1 (March 1973): 60–82; p. 60. Ross identified the Treaty of Tilsit (1807) and Germany's loss of half its territory to the French as one such foundational 'injustice'. See Hippler, *Citizens, Soldiers and National Armies* and Frewerth, *A Nation in Barracks*. Both authors linked Germany's defeat at Jena in 1806 to the emergence of a set of reforms, the Stein-Hardenberg reforms, that enabled Germany to posit the military as a social institution for fostering loyalty to the Reich by holding out social mobility as a reward for service.
- See also Götz Aly, *Why the Germans? Why the Jews?* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014), 13. Aly reintroduced the Stein-Hardenberg reforms in relation to Jewish emancipation. He agreed that in defeat, the kaiser realized he needed a standing army of soldiers loyal to the Reich in order to reestablish German power. Like Frewerth and Hippler, he observed that such an army had to be broadly based, and this conclusion prompted the kaiser to issue a series of acts, beginning with the 1808 Cities Ordinance Act, in which Jews were no longer restricted to certain trades, and the 1812 Concerning the Civic Relations of Jews Act, in which Jews were eligible for conscription. Aly also concurred that by giving Jews limited rights, a sense of being able to participate in German society as social actors, they would feel compelled to serve. Since the kaiser's greater aim was the production of an army that embodied German values, Jewish inclusion accelerated that process.
- Aly claimed that as Jews rushed to articulate these two acts, Germans 'felt like they had lost something' (13). Aly went on to develop how this tension fissured German culture by producing more incremental steps politically and socially for Jews' civic 'improvement' while increasing, simultaneously, a sense of Germans' social impoverishment because of it.
- 30 As both Davis, *Colonialism, Antisemitism, and Germans* and Aly, *Why the Germans?* demonstrated, German social 'reforms' in Africa were linked to what Germans felt they could not achieve in Germany.
- 31 See Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox and Suzanne Zantorp, *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).
- 32 See also Jonathan Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002). Hess pushed the origin of the military's new role for citizen formation back even earlier, to late eighteenth-century debates over Jews and 'the elevation of the race'. He staked its origin to Christian von Dohm's public appeal

for Jews' civil 'improvement', their betterment, through military conscription. In a debate with Johann Michaelis over Jews' capacity for 'uplift', von Dohm argued that Jewish conscripts could be 'settled' at Germany's borders in 'the East'. These recruits would have already articulated German values; they would learn these values through the hardening of their bodies and minds in military training. With their mental and physical transformations, they would serve as subalterns who would be useful in the dissemination of German values and identity formation among another 'uncivilized' population at a German border, the Poles. In this way, the Jews were to 'colonize' the Poles for the Germans. While this plan never materialized, Hess introduced the idea of German colonialism as a part of Germany's political aims and tied to the troubling presence of Jews in proximity to Germans in its metropoles.

If Moses' and Zimmerer's arguments are applied retroactively, and this is the suggestion of Christian Davis's *Colonialism, Antisemitism, and Germans* then, in some sectors of the German population, Germans imagined themselves colonized by Jewish existence as early as 1806. Davis extends this conclusion as a critical underpinning of the German colonialism in Africa in the late nineteenth century. Taken in conjunction with Hess's conclusions, as Jews gained in civil emancipation, they appeared to Germans as even more disentitled to such 'improvements' than before such emancipation. They were cognitively linked to identities that other European powers had definitively 'controlled', either by enslavement or by colonialism. Aly's text highlighted the sense not only of German distrust of their neighbours, but also of German anger at invasion of the metropole.

- 33 Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust', 55.
 - 34 Here, 'to clear out' is also *Vernichtung*.
 - 35 The *Lebensraum* concept.
 - 36 Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust'.
 - 37 Zimmerer was not alone in the assumption that the Nazis construed *Lebensraum* in strictly physical terms of settlements. Many Holocaust historians have discussed the 'living space' ideology as it was applied to Eastern Europe in similar ways, that is, a physical expansion of Germans occupying areas that the Nazis claimed were originally theirs.
 - 38 Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust', 60.
 - 39 Ibid.
 - 40 Zimmerer's thesis has influenced greatly Kristen Kopp's work. See Kristen Kopp, 'Gray Zones: On the Inclusion of "Poland" in the Study of German Colonialism', in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, ed. Jürgen Zimmerer and Michael Perraudin (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), 33–42. See Moses, 'Chapter 4, Colonialism', 70. Moses has also provided a concise elaboration of current scholarship's reassessment of Poland as colonial site. He cites R. Koehl, 'A Prelude to Hitler's Greater Germany', *The American Historical Review* 59, no. 1 (1953): 43–65.
- That region had long been regarded, in the words of General Erich Ludendorff (1865–1937), as 'primal German settlement territory', because German settlers had colonized it centuries earlier and in some places still constituted the leading social stratum.
- 41 Richard Gott, *Britain's Empire* (London: Verso Books, 2014), 691. However, the claim was also made about the necessity of enslaving Africans in order to bring them into modernity.
 - 42 This conclusion had several effects. While Horst Drechsler was the first German historian to declare that the Herero-Nama war constituted genocide, then followed by Geoff Eley, both had not made the leap to colonialism as the foundation for the Holocaust. The Holocaust's causality was still understood within an analysis of its uniqueness and focused entirely on Nazi ideology. Due to Zimmerer's intervention,

- scholars began to search for similar structures in a variety of historical precedents with a view to applying the genocide category broadly.
- 43 Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust', 50.
- 44 Quoted in Moses, 'Chapter 4, Colonialism', 69. There is, though, some inaccuracy with Zimmerer's characterization. Germans targeted Africans within their own colony; they did not invade Botswana, Angola or South Africa in order to pursue and kill the Herero. The inaccuracy does not invalidate the event as genocide but makes it more akin to genocides conducted within nations rather than one that extended to entire continents.
- 45 A. Dirk Moses, 'Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History', in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (Oxford: Bergahn, 2008), 3–54.
- 46 A. Dirk Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages', *Patterns of Prejudice* 36, no. 4 (2002), 38–9.
- 47 In fact, Moses implies that failure to see the Holocaust in the context of colonialism privileges Jewish suffering over the Nazis' other victims. Although this consequence was unintended, it is now the norm to suggest that the discussion of Jewish suffering during the Holocaust 'robs' or 'short-changes' other victims. Bloxham, *The Final Solution*.
- 48 Moses, 'Chapter 4, Colonialism', 69.
- 49 Ibid., 70.
- 50 Ibid. He also followed W. Smith's position in which Smith demonstrated an historical link in the public imagination between German colonies in Africa and potential German colonies in Eastern Europe.
- 51 Rafael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 1944).
- 52 Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 79.
- 53 Moses' addition significantly altered Lemkin's legal argument, an aspect that Moses did not take seriously in his otherwise very good analysis of Lemkin. As a jurist, Lemkin wanted *Axis* to establish a legal remedy for a new set of crimes he had witnessed. It had to address what was happening under the Nazis in his country of Poland as well as what it foreboded for the rest of Europe. Moses' Lemkin loses his specificity in order to join the ranks of an anti-colonial advocacy.
- 54 This identification of a pre-Holocaust consciousness operating in the preceding century was designated by Moses as the 'racialist century'.
- 55 Quoted in Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 51. Lemkin's statements appeared, initially, in 'The Importance of the Convention', *Papers*, Reel 2, NYPL.
- 56 Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages', 20.
- 57 Ibid., 20.
- 58 Ibid., 28–9. See also Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981). Moses' attention to the unintended genocide was critical for making the claim that colonialism had an affinity with the Holocaust. While these statements pertained to his critique of Leo Kuper's 'genocidal processes', Moses was still seeking a way to tie colonialism's abuses to actual agents in order to demonstrate a relationship between colonialism and the Holocaust through the concept of the 'exterminatory consciousness'. Kuper had identified genocide as a consequence of not only 'plural societies' but also the 'cleavages' that existed between the different groups constituting such societies. These 'cleavages' he designated as sites of production for 'genocidal processes' so that individuals could inhabit them without necessarily being committed to genocide. For Moses, this was an untenable conclusion, because it removed agency from 'non-deliberate' genocides. Kuper had wanted to accent the informal ways that individuals participated in genocide. For

- an overview of Kuper's theory within the recent context of genocide studies, see Deborah Mayersen, *On the Path to Genocide* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 5.
- 59 I am not belittling this approach in any way, because if it had been a staple of the legal code, every guard at Belzec, for example, would have been convicted of war crimes. The argument of a lack of intent was the prevalent strategy for lawyers after the war whose task it was to defend Nazis from the charge of war crimes.
- 60 This is also the underlying logic of 1948 UN Genocide Convention in which Article 2 stipulates that 'any one' of a list of actions is indicative of genocide.
- 61 In multiple essays, Moses has anchored his analysis of *Axis Rule* to other texts and manuscripts in the Lemkin archives. He demonstrates that Lemkin was committed to a politico-social project that either extended or exceeded the scope of *Axis Rule* considerably. If Lemkin intended to indict, a historical trajectory of imperialism was engaged in a historical project that extended and applied the concept of genocide diachronically and synchronically. The vision Lemkin had for *Axis Rule* was incremental. It was a first step of many steps down a path to outlaw and criminalize colonialism and imperialism. If he intended to construct a juridical concept foreclosing the Nazi project, he was engaged in a specific legal intervention. It would mean that Lemkin was, in fact, trying to establish the grounds for legal precedent in future cases. *Axis Rule* would then contribute to 'building' the law.
- 62 While they exceeded his purview, they remained important to him. In the case of 'cultural genocide', Lemkin believed that it was integral to the legal category. In the case of genocide's constituent parts, he believed that the state was also integral because it was the coordinating agent.
- 63 Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust', 4. In his reproduction of the convention, Zimmerer noted these shifts without comment.
- 64 Phillippe Sands, *East West Street: On the Origins of 'Genocide' and 'Crimes Against Humanity'* (New York: Knopf, 2016), 161–2. For an analysis of how the German legal code was revised by the Nazis, see also Claudia Koontz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 163–90.
- 65 Benjamin, 'Theses', XVII, trans. Harry Zohn.
- 66 Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages', 8. Moses infers this question from Benjamin's 'Theses on History': 'Every document of civilization is a document of barbarism', VII.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 See Moses' critique of Rothenberg.
- 69 Benjamin, 'Theses', XVII, trans. Harry Zohn.
- 70 Ibid. Benjamin's word choice is the critical element in the excerpt. Benjamin used *sprengen* to signify that the historian's task of excavating a life, a text and an era was to preserve a 'tasteless' but 'precious' object, an object without specificity. In the sequence of things the historian 'blasted out' of history, the three objects then became interchangeable. This interchangeability influenced the nuanced use of *aufgehoben* at the end of the passage in which the historian preserved a being only to 'cancel' that being. Zorn connected *aufgehoben* to Hegel's use of it in which the word meant 'to preserve, to elevate, and to cancel'. All three terms had been used to describe Jewish life in the Reich. Initially, Jewish history is the story of preserves in Europe. In both the Prussian and Austro-Hungarian empires, Jews were located in ghettos. By the late eighteenth century, Christian von Dohm lobbied to include Jews in the 'uplift' or 'elevation of the race' projects often associated with slaves and abolition in the Americas. With Hitler, Jews were to be 'canceled' out of existence.

See Gershom Scholem, 'Walter Benjamin and His Angel', in *On Walter Benjamin*, ed. Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 1991), 50–89;

- p. 53. In his analysis of the essay, Gershom Scholem, who had been Benjamin's interlocutor for years, criticized the inability of Marxist historians to grasp Benjamin's intent when his aphorisms were not linked explicitly to historical materialist aims, that is, when the Benjaminian text exceeded politicized or Marxist critique: they took 'no cognizance of it.'
- 71 Emphasis is mine.
- 72 Benjamin, 'Theses', XVII, trans. Harry Zohn. Emphasis in the quote is mine.
- 73 Benjamin's translator for the English edition, Walter Kaufman, chose 'oppressed' rather than 'repressed', a choice that as I show in the next note imposes two different epistemologies.
- 74 Benjamin's English translator had used 'oppressed' rather than 'repressed'. The ambiguity between 'repressed' and 'oppressed' is particularly chilling since it proposes two different senses of how something might return. If a past is repressed, it is denied the legitimacy of existence; if a past is oppressed, it is held in subjugation.
- 75 Benjamin, 'Theses', XVII, trans. Harry Zohn.
- 76 Bernd Witte, *Walter Benjamin: An Intellectual Biography*, trans. James Rolleston (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 206. While there are many controversial theories about Benjamin's death, he did carry with him morphine tablets specifically for suicide if he failed to leave Europe.
- 77 Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages', 8. See also Witte, for an account of Benjamin's reaction to the pact. Witte, *Walter Benjamin*, 198.
- 78 In fact, as he put it, quoting his own work on Kafka, 'There is hope, infinite hope, but not for us.'
- 79 Benjamin's essay on Kafka.
- 80 I do not argue that Jews, in general, were the 'insiders' to which Benjamin directed his 'being in text' but, rather, that Benjamin saw several individuals, linked to him through 'obligation', who would and could preserve his thought. Scholem was one such interlocutor. See Kitty Millet, 'Our Sabbatean Future', in *Scholar and Kabbalist: The Life and Work of Gershom Scholem/Institute of Judaic Studies Review*, ed. Miriam Zadoff and Noam Zadoff (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
- 81 Lemkin's remaining family was lost to death camps. Sergey Sayapin gives an anecdotal account of Lemkin after the passing of the Genocide Convention in 1948. Journalists went to find him to celebrate with him the UN resolution. When they found him, alone and removed from the auditorium, he was sobbing and did not speak. Sergey Sayapin, 'Raphael Lemkin, a tribute,' *The European Journal of International Law* 20, no. 4 (2010): 1157–62.
- 82 Sayapin, 'Raphael Lemkin, a tribute', 1159.
- 83 Ibid., 1158.
- 84 Power, *A Problem from Hell*, 51. The Turkish leader, Talaat, had massacred 1 million Armenians; this mass murder prompted a young Armenian, Tehlirian, to assassinate Talaat in revenge. See Rafael Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial: the Autobiography of Rafael Lemkin*, ed. Donna Lee Friese (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 19.
- 85 I use the term *massacre* rather than genocide, because Lemkin had yet to formulate the word and because *massacre* goes to the heart of Lemkin's initial assumption that mass murder should be prosecuted in the same way as individual murders. He followed precedent.
- 86 Power, *A Problem from Hell*, 17.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 3.

- 90 Power, *A Problem from Hell*, 19.
- 91 Lemkin attempted to get a law passed while Jews were already perishing in death camps, that is, he came belatedly to the scene. Although his law was not able to save the Holocaust's victims of the death camps, he was hoping to prevent more victims and to make the Nazi government guilty of an actual violation of law that could be applied retroactively.
- 92 Sayapin, 'Raphael Lemkin, a Tribute', 1159.
- 93 Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 3.
- 94 *Ibid.*, vii.
- 95 Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages'. Lemkin's alignment with colonialism for the legal purpose of outlawing genocide did not necessarily indicate his support for colonialism. He thought, legally, that colonial powers had only felt motivated to act when their own interests were at stake. If they perceived their collective loss, they might move to curb individual loss of life. Snyder also notes this in his *lebensraum* section. See Aime Cesaire, *Discours du Colonialisme*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1955). It also resonated with Cesaire's earlier critique that Europe had finally done to whites what it had done to blacks.
- 96 Hitler often referred to the European powers' attempt to 'colonize' Germany after the war, linking colonial abuse and humiliation to Germany's fiscal and social ills for the minds of his audiences. See Snyder, *Black Earth*, 27. Snyder gives an extended analysis of Hitler's statements in his memoirs and papers in which he characterizes Germany's victimization by the other European powers as an illegitimate colonial endeavour.
- 97 The question remains, though, of where Lemkin located Jews in the 'chicken analogy', if he did at all? In the application of the analogy's terms to the various groups victimized by the Nazis, Jews as social subordinates never factored in the Nazis' agenda. In the years of persecution leading up to extermination, German jurists, like Hans Globke, certainly drafted legal guidelines and commentary that explained for a legal community why Jews were not 'rights holders'. An adjunct to this question is the speculation as to whether or not Lemkin recognized the role of slavery within genocide.
- 98 Lemkin footnotes his comment with the following: 'Another term could be used for the same idea, namely *ethnocide*, consisting of the Greek word, *ethnos* – nation – and the Latin *cide*'.
- 99 Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 79.
- 100 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1941), 598. The war, from 1618 to 1648, was fought primarily on German soil but included almost all of Europe's monarchies, including Poland. Hitler alleged that German bloodlines became polluted from Poles at this time. In fact, Hans Globke, the architect of Nazi jurisprudence, made this claim, explicitly, in 1935 in his commentary on the Nuremberg Laws.
- 101 Thomas Kühne, *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918–1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 3.
- 102 Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 23.
- 103 For example, the Nazis routinely violated their military goals in order to pursue the extermination of the Jews; Göhring refused to torch Bialowicza during Barbarossa because of its association in the Nazi mind with Aryan existence and *Judenrein* space. See Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995).
- 104 Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, xi.
- 105 Ian Kershaw, "Working Towards the Führer": Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship, *Contemporary European History* 2, no. 2 (1993): 116.

- 106 John Docker, *The Origins of Violence: Religion, History, and Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 15; pp. 69–70. Docker's project foregrounded modern genocides as 'not so modern'. An early apologist for a 'continuity thesis', he argued that antiquity engaged in extermination and Greek tragedy was proof of a genocidal 'pre-history'. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Agamemnon was a 'genocidist' whose sexism and 'cold conversation' with Clytemnestra implied his ontological disposition towards mass murder and that the knowledge of genocide underpinned the concepts of *kleos* and *timé*.
- 107 A. Dirk Moses, 'Structure and Agency in the Holocaust', *History and Theory* 37, no. 2 (May 1998): 194–219; p. 201. Moses gives an extensive overview of how functionalism has proposed the Holocaust as 'accident'. This was also the position of Mommsen.
- 108 Jörg Fisch, 'Africa as *terra nullius*: The Berlin Conference and International Law', trans. Eamon Helly and J. P. Cowood, in *Bismarck, Europe and Africa, the Berlin Africa Conference 1884–1885 and the Onset of Partition*, ed. Stig Förster, Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Ronald Robinson (Oxford and London: The German Historical Institute London and Oxford University Press), 347–75.
- 109 Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages', 36.
- 110 Albert Memmi, *Colonizer and Colonized* (New York: Beacon, 1992). While he echoed Memmi, Moses added aspects outside of Memmi's purview.
- 111 Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages', 10. On the one hand, Moses traced a huge divide between survivors of the Holocaust and scholars of Holocaust studies in relation to scholars of other genocides, most notably, American 'indigenocide' and the legacy of slavery in the Americas. On the other hand, Holocaust studies scholars have argued that comparative analyses of Jewish victimization during the Holocaust with other victimizations make Jewish victims commensurable with populations who had a range of choices for circumventing the harshest aspects of their persecution.
- This debate was recently revisited when Donald Bloxham published *The Final Solution: A Genocide* in 2009 and omitted any references to Jews, consciously. As Omer Bartov described it, the omission was akin to erasing Jews from the event. He linked the omission to a 1998 debate in *Le Monde* over Stephane Courtois' *The Black Book of Communism* between Courtois, Henri Raczymow and Catharine Coquio, who asserted that Raczymow's insistence on an incommensurability between victims of imposed starvation and the Warsaw Ghetto was evidence that he privileged Jewish children's lives over those of their counterparts in the Ukraine. For the full discussion of the French debate, see Omer Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003). For Raczymow's original op-ed in *Le Monde*, see Henri Raczymow, 'D'un "detail" qui masque le tableau', *Le Monde* (21 January 1998).
- Other scholars have characterized the gesture to displace by inclusion as an act of anti-Semitism. It is meant to displace Jewish victims with other victim groups, thereby reproducing the coordinates of Jewish victimization institutionally as a practice for 'the greater good'.
- 112 Ibid. Perhaps this will be the future, when no one can remember specific persecutions and their victims, but I remain unconvinced that we have reached this point.
- 113 James Walvin, *Black Ivory: A History of British Slavery* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1994), ix. Seymour Drescher, 'The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Holocaust: A Comparative Analysis', in *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, ed. Alan Rosenbaum (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 127–48.
- 114 Drescher, 'The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Holocaust', 127–48.
- 115 Ibid.

- 116 American is broadly conceived, here, to include the Americas. Although my concern is primarily with Britain and the United States, I have, on occasion, gone beyond these boundaries.
- 117 In the truest Kantian use, ‘the *sensus communis*’ would not be consciously available, but intuitively apprehended. For how montage works, see Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 369, 440–65.
- 118 The range of philosophical approaches on *sensus communis* is extensive. David Sigler, ‘Shaftesbury takes an Ethiopian to the Carnival: Foreignness, Subjectivity, and Intersubjectivity in “sensus communis”’, *The Eighteenth Century* 53, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 23–40; pp. 24–5. Sigler discusses Shaftesbury in relation to an ‘imagined African’ trope that he used to posit the principle. Burke, *Philosophical Inquiry*, 21. Burke concluded that the *sensus communis* was a property of the imagination, whereas Kant posited it as an *a priori* of being that the imagination intuited as there (*Dasein*). See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, ed. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub, 1987), § 23.
- 119 Kant called this part of the experience ‘subjective universalism’ and stressed that the individual experience intuited belonging through this mechanism, one that would never be empirically verified, but would still be ‘communicable’.
- 120 Maurizio Passerin d’Entreves, ‘Hannah Arendt’, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter 2016 edn, ed. Edward N. Zalta. Available online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/arendt/>.
- 121 Jean-François Lyotard, ‘Sensus communis’, trans. Marian Hobson and Geoff Bennington, *Paragraph* 11, no. 1 (March 1988): 1–23.
- 122 Many colleagues on hearing of my project, for example, had just this kind of response. Why would a comparison be necessary?
- 123 Moses, ‘Conceptual Blockages’, 11.
- 124 See Catharine Reinhardt, ‘Remembering and Imagining Slavery’, in *Transatlantic Memories of Slavery: Remembering the Past, Changing the Future*, ed. Elisa Bordin and Anna Scacchi (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2015), 95–132. In fact, it was the exhibition of freedom as its performance that became central for slave communities. These performance spaces enabled the construction of a place both to enact denied experiences and to authorize a ‘black *sensus communis*’, two very important events. It was the intuition of a *communis* that persisted, even though individuals were shackled by slavery.
- 125 See James W. C. Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith Or, Events In The History Of James W. C. Pennington, Pastor Of A Presbyterian Church, New York, Formerly A Slave In The State Of Maryland, United States* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1849).
- 126 J. Fisch, ‘Africa as *terra nullius*’, 348–9. Slavery in the Caribbean had begun with Europeans’ imagined dominance over a world of unknown lands and oceans. In 1494, at the Conference of Tordesillas, and again in 1529, at the Conference of Saragossa, Spain and Portugal made a legal claim on their rights to the entire world. They divided it between them, into ‘two spheres’ in which each empire had ‘exclusive activity’. Their claims lacked ‘effective occupation’, since neither empire could occupy half of the world. However, these ‘imaginary ... borders’ gave shape to a subject position in which the Iberian sovereigns looked at the unmapped areas of the globe, its ‘empty spaces’, and represented the emptiness as ‘ownerless’ and available territory. This claim became the basis for a British challenge in which ‘effective occupation’ trumped ‘the mere claim to regions which had not yet been discovered’. Thomas Gage, *The English-American, His Travail by Sea and Land, or a New Survey of the West India's* (London: Cotes, 1648), xii. By the 1600s, the British bristled under Spain’s claim to

such possessions. Their complaint was echoed by politicians, travellers, migrants and exiles throughout the empire. Writing from the West Indies, Gage demanded that Britain had as much right to control the Caribbean as Spain, if not more, since Britain had the power to impose its will and had already established colonies in the islands, rather than the Spanish who patrolled the coastlines in ships, laying claim to everything they saw from their ships' decks. To his mind, Spain was an empire in decay. He believed that island Indians would support the British because they were benevolent colonizers, as opposed to the Spanish, who enslaved and abused them.

- 127 Since the Nazis identified Jews as not being able to constitute their own race or type because they illegitimately possessed being, they were illegitimately in existence. Any identity they possessed, they had come to possess by attaching themselves to a host race and parasitically drawing off that race's life force to come into existence. For a lengthier discussion of this attitude, see 'Caesura, Continuity and Myth: The Stakes of Tethering the Holocaust to German Colonial Theory', in *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Post-War Germany*, ed. Volker Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 93–119.
- 128 In other words, all three events utilized the *nullius* predicate to erase the primary relationship between their object and a primary characteristic. For slavery, it was the slave's possession of the body; for colonialism, it was the colonized's possession of a land; for the Holocaust, it was the Jews' possession of existence.
- 129 Nicole Aljoe, *Creole Testimonies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 21.
- 130 Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 73. Martin Gilbert identified five survivors, one of which was an infant. See Martin Gilbert, *Holocaust Journey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 215.
- 131 Primo Levi, *Collected Works* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), 1196–9.
- 132 Union of South Africa, Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa and Their Treatment by Germany' *Parliamentary Papers* (also known as the British Blue Book; Windhoek: South-West Africa, 1918), Chapter X, p. 47.

Part 1

- 1 For slavery's beginning in the Caribbean, see David Eltis and David Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 21. Slavery's end did not coincide with the end of the transatlantic slave trade. Cuba continued the practice to 1888, although the transatlantic trade stopped in 1867.
- 2 Seymour Drescher, 'The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Holocaust: A Comparative Analysis', in *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, ed. Alan Rosenbaum (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 131.
- 3 Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007), 5.
- 4 Eltis and Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*.
- 5 Sue Peabody, 'Slavery, Freedom, and the Law in the Atlantic World, 1420–1807', in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery. Vol. 3, AD 1420–AD 1804*, eds. David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 594–630; p. 594.
- 6 Betty Wood, 'The Origins of Slavery in the Americas, 1500–1700', in *The Routledge History of Slavery*, ed. Gad Heuman and Trevor Burnard (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 64.
- 7 For Barbados, see Matthew Parker, *Sugar Barons: Family, Corruption, Empire, and War in the West Indies* (New York: Walker Publishing, 2011), 14–32. and Karen Kupperman, 'Introduction' in Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island*

- of Barbados*, ed. Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2011), 14–15.
- 8 Kupperman, ‘Introduction’, 14.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830–1867* (London: Polity Press, 2002).
- 11 For the differences between the codes in terms of ‘personhood’, see Sally E. Hadden, ‘The Fragmented Laws of Slavery in the Colonial and Revolutionary Eras’, in *The Cambridge History of Law. Vol. 1*, ed. Michael Grossberg and Christopher Tomlins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Peabody, ‘Slavery, Freedom, and the Law in the Atlantic World’ and Elsa Goveia, *The West Indian Slave Laws of the Eighteenth Century* (London and Tonbridge: Whitefriars Press, 1970). Goveia lists the two main differences between Spanish and British slavery as whether or not the slave was chattel or possessed inferior ontology.
- 12 For a general overview of slave codes in the States, prior to abolition, see William Goodell, *The American Slave Code in Theory and Practice* (New York: American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1853); and George M. Stroud, *A Sketch of the Laws Relating to Slavery in Several States of the United States of America* (Philadelphia, PA: Henry Longstreth, 1856). Compiled as abolitionist texts, they synthesize state laws governing slaves. For a summary of West Indies legislation, see Goveia, *West Indies Slave Laws*. For French, Spanish, Spanish Caribbean and Portuguese codes, see *Code Noir* (1685); *Las Siete Partidas* (1265); *Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de las Indias* (1681); *Código Phillipino ou Ordenações E Leis do Reino do Portugal. Recopiladas por Mandado del Rey*. For excerpts of many different kinds of slave codes, see *Slavery*, ed. Stanley Engerman, Seymour Drescher and Robert Paquette (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 105–41.
- 13 See also, Hadden, ‘The Fragmented Laws of Slavery in the Colonial and Revolutionary Eras’, 253–87.
- 14 What I am getting at here is the inherent tension between the ‘shared’ object or a *sensus communis*.
- 15 Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Providence Island, 1630–1641: The Other Puritan Colony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), ix.
- 16 Hadden, ‘The Fragmented Laws of Slavery in the Colonial and Revolutionary Eras’, 263.
- 17 Peabody, ‘Slavery, Freedom, and the Law in the Atlantic World’, 604. Peabody observes that this adoption in South Carolina was an act of social control. The South Carolina emigrants wanted more control over the slaves, and the Barbadian slave code offered not only control, but ‘harsher’ punishments to maintain that control.
- 18 Michael Meranze, ‘Penality and the Colonial Project: Crime, Punishment, and the Regulation of Morals in Early America’, in *The Cambridge History of Law. Vol. 1*, ed. Michael Grossberg and Christopher Tomlins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 201.
- 19 Hadden, ‘The Fragmented Laws of Slavery in the Colonial and Revolutionary Eras’, 253.
- 20 Goveia, *West Indies Slave Laws*, 17.
- 21 Vernon Valentine Palmer, ‘The Origins and Authors of the *Code Noir*’, *Louisiana Law Review* 56, no. 2 (Winter 1996): 363–407. Palmer has taken the argument even further in his analysis of the *Code Noir*’s influence over Louisiana’s Slave Code.
- 22 Hadden, ‘The Fragmented Laws of Slavery in the Colonial and Revolutionary Eras’, 254.
- 23 Palmer, ‘The Origins and Authors of the *Code Noir*’, x.
- 24 Goveia, *West Indies Slave Laws*, 17, 37, 43. Goveia demonstrated that any time that slave codes offered protections to slaves, such protections were usually dispensed

with *in practice* because they conflicted with ‘local opinion’. In other words, the idea of ‘slave amelioration’ was often displaced by slaveholders in the islands until the law itself ‘had no teeth’. Planters made it ‘unenforceable’ in the colonies.

- 25 Wood, ‘The Origins of Slavery in the Americas, 1500–1700’, 64. Wood references Trevor Winthrop.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 There are many more worthy analyses of why than I am prepared to offer here.
- 28 Parker, *The Sugar Barons*, 58.
- 29 ‘Peculiar institution’ described slavery euphemistically in the American South.

Chapter 1

- 1 Trevor Burnard, ‘The Planter Class’, in *The Routledge History of Slavery*, ed. Gad Heuman and Trevor Burnard (New York: Routledge, 2011), 198.
- 2 Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 363.
- 3 For a discussion of slavery’s influence on the Hegelian dialectic, see Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999).
- 4 Kupperman, ‘Introduction’, 3. Ligon, on behalf of himself and other courtiers, received permission from the crown to drain the fens, public land that had previously been used by the locals for farming, fishing and hunting and that the courtiers intended to use for private profit. This project ended in the locals rioting and burning down the buildings associated with it.
- 5 Kupperman, ‘Introduction’, 1. Kupperman identified Ligon’s historical importance because he represented something ‘new in the period: an Atlantic life’.
- 6 Russell Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 4.
- 7 Kathleen Donegan, *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 155. On Ligon’s recipes, see Candace Goucher, *Congotay! Congotay! A Global History of Caribbean Food* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 114–24.
- 8 Keith Sandiford, *The Cultural Politics of Sugar* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 29.
- 9 Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (London: Printed for Humphrey Moseley at the Prince’s Armes, 1657), 6. Appears also in Kupperman, ‘Introduction’, 46–7. Susan Scott Parrish traced Ligon’s perception of himself as a marginal figure in England through the analogy he constructed of the carvil’s apparent insignificance in relation to his inner worth. See Susan Scott Parrish, ‘Richard Ligon and the Atlantic Science of Commonwealths’, *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (April 2010): 209–48; pp. 209–10.
- 10 Ligon, *A True and Exact History*, 54. See also Kupperman’s ‘Introduction’ for a precise description of the island, St. Jago, where the *Achilles* anchors. Kupperman, ‘Introduction’, 7–8.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 42.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 56.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 59.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 *Ibid.*, 60.
- 16 *Ibid.*

- 17 See Peter Erickson, 'Representations of Blacks and Blackness in the Renaissance', *Criticism* 35 (1993): 14–15. Erickson contended that African women were examples of 'disrupted harmony' during the Renaissance. His observation linked the African woman to a nature that demanded submission. British faculties were 'disrupted' by the African woman's body. See also Lynda Boose, "'The Getting of a Lawful Race": Racial Discourse in Early Modern England and the Unrepresentable Black Woman', in *Women, 'Race', and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London: Routledge, 1994), 49. Boose extended Erickson by linking implications of his argument to 'unrepresentability'. African women's corporeality existed as unknown phenomena that required the skillful intervention of Ligon's presentation. African women's bodies existed outside representation because they were outside his control. They had no epistemological place. They were lawless, and like the first Adam, Ligon had to name them. He was free to determine his own laws regarding their existence. The beautiful African women produced in him a new phenomenological existence. In this way, he used their existence to trigger his next experience of transcendence.
- 18 Ligon, *A True and Exact History*, 102.
- 19 Ibid., 97.
- 20 Ibid., 103. For an overview of feminist analyses of Ligon, see Jennifer L. Morgan, "Some Could Suckle Over Their Shoulder": Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500–1770, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 54, no. 1 (January 1997): 167–92. DOI: 10.2307/2953316
- 21 Ligon, *A True and Exact History*, 107.
- 22 Ibid. This epistemological project of matching races with specific kinds of labour continued, unabated, into the twentieth century. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 59–60. Schama demonstrated its use by Germans in Poland during the First World War when they assigned different groups living in Polish forests tasks according to their 'nature'.
- 23 Ligon, *A True and Exact History*, 111.
- 24 Ibid., 84. Walrond was a planter and royalist. He arrived in Barbados in 1646 with the hopes of reinventing his fortune in 'little England'. Like Ligon, he had been part of a scheme to drain 'fens in Lincolnshire'. After Ligon's departure, he became governor of Barbados. He was also fairly violent and, in subsequent years, would be banished from Barbados and the West Indies for a year and would be brought up on debt charges and imprisoned in England. At his death, he lived in the Spanish Caribbean. See Michael A. LaCombe, 'Walrond, Humphrey (b. 1602, d. in or after 1668)', in Michael A. LaCombe, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Available online: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28605> (accessed 10 February 2016).
- 25 Ligon, *A True and Exact History*, 168–80.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid., 102. The attitude was also prevalent in the American mainland. See Alan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772–1832* (New York: Norton, 2013), 324. Taylor demonstrated that masters lived with the apprehension of their slaves' revolt, while quieting their fears with narratives consciously advocating their superiority to their slaves.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Hans Sloane, *A Voyage To The Islands Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers And Jamaica With The Natural History Of The Herbs, And Trees, Four-Footed Beasts,*

- Fishes, Birds, Insects, Reptiles &c. Of The Last Of Those Islands: To Which Is Prefix'd An Introduction Wherein Is An Account Of The Inhabitants, Air, Waters ...: Illustrated With The Figures Of The Things Describ'd Which Have Not Been Heretofore Engraved In Two Volumes.* Vol. I. (London: B. M. printed for the author, 1707), xlviii.
- 30 Ligon, *A True and Exact History*.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid., 93.
- 34 Ibid., 99–100. Ligon related his discovery that one slave, Macaw, was ‘very apt’ to learn ‘the Science of Music’. He had encountered Ligon, in the house, ‘playing on a Theorbo, and singing to it’. Later, Ligon would find him in a grove, making a similar instrument and running through the scale of notes.
- 35 Ligon, *A True and Exact History*, 96.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Engerman, Drescher and Paquette, *Slavery*, 105–13. Out of seventeen clauses, fifteen concerned slave rebellion directly. The other two focused on slaves committing violence against their masters or their masters’ property, both effects associated with individual and collective rebellion.
- 38 Sloane, *A Voyage To The Islands*.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Goveia, *West Indies Slave Laws*, 82.
- 41 Gott, *Britain's Empire*, 90–7. Gott cited the use of gibbets and severed heads as lessons for their victims in South Africa (1808), 455–60; India (1806, 1857–8), 414–18 and 1140–61; Australia (1791), 236–7. Coromantee Slaves, also known as Fantee, came from ‘the more complex empires and slave-trading states – were usually the leaders of the slave revolts and the most militant fighters’. See Walter Rucker, ‘Coromantee’, in *Encyclopedia of African American History*, vol. 1, ed. Lesley Alexander (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 184.
- 42 Gott, *Britain's Empire*, 96–7.
- 43 Parker, *The Sugar Barons*, 146–60. Parker identified that simultaneously as slaves and Africans became ‘blacks’, masters encouraged poor migrants to identify as whites.
- 44 Sloane, *A Voyage To The Islands*, LVII. See Sidney Mintz, ed., *African American Voices: A Documentary Reader, 1619–1877* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 11. Sidney Mintz defined ‘seasoning’ as ‘a rigorous process ... during which Africans were forced to adapt to the harsh discipline of slavery’. Indeed, coercion by force was a key procedure in ‘seasoning’ slaves. Slave owners believed the initial period after a slave’s sale was crucial for the removal of any element of subjective resistance to enslavement. Therefore, they applied excessively ‘harsh’ and violent ‘discipline’ especially during this period. This is not to say that after ‘seasoning’, such forms of ‘discipline’ ceased; they did not, but slave owners wanted to instil in the slave’s mind an abiding fear that such treatment could emerge at any time for any offence. In the slave owners’ minds, a helot class had to have a sense of the self, against the backdrop of an intense fear of punishment.
- 45 Gott, *Britain's Empire*, 103.
- 46 Engerman, Drescher and Paquette, *Slavery*, 105–41. See the excerpted ‘Barbados Act of 1661’, also known as the ‘Better Ordering Act of Barbados’. For a more detailed legal analysis, see Christopher Tomlins, ‘Transplants and Timing: Passages in the Creation of an Anglo-American Law of Slavery Histories of Legal Transplantations’,

- 10 *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 389 (2009): 389–421; p. 401. Available online: <http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/facpubs/2311>.
- 47 The *London and Paris Observer* (1822), 33. Although Britain had abolished its own slave trade, Spanish ships still carried on the slave trade throughout the eighteenth century. The *Observer* reported that when the British captured these ships, they discovered slaves stowed ‘in sort of a hold’ but less than three feet in height. In 1833, after the capture of the *Desengaño*, ‘the height was only twenty-eight inches’. The slaves from these Spanish ships often jumped to their suicide even after their capture by the British. See Richard Follett, ‘The Demography of Slavery’, in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Slavery*, ed. Gad Heuman and Trevor Burnard (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 119–37; p. 133. Follett noted that in the case of Cuba, as late as the mid-nineteenth century, ‘87% of all reported suicides’ on that island were slaves.
- 48 William Butterworth, pseudo. [Henry Schroeder], *Three Years Adventures of a Minor in England, Africa, the West Indies, South Carolina, and Georgia* (Leeds: T. Inchbold, 1831), 107. Butterworth’s narrative reflected his experience as a ‘minor’. Since Schroeder did not intend to publish his experience while it was happening, he did not include dates for the events he related. Of all the narrative excerpts, the Butterworth text was designed to intervene against slavery as well as the treatment of crews on slave ships. Butterworth’s ‘memoir’ of his time under Captain Evans, aboard the *Hudibras*, argued that from his arrival on the ship, he became aware that he had been deceived about Captain Evans’ intentions. He internalized this as a moral compromise for which he was not responsible, but that enabled Evans to abuse him, and to keep him indentured for three years. To add to this crisis, conditions were so extreme for crews that Butterworth noted that he became lame aboard the ship, but was denied medical attention until three years later, when Evans abandoned his crew after selling his cargo of the remaining slaves in Grenada. At that time, another wronged officer of the *Hudibras* assisted Butterworth and used legal means in Grenada to compel Evans to pay for Butterworth’s treatment at a hospital.
- 49 Ibid., 107.
- 50 Ibid., 108.
- 51 Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 5.
- 52 Butterworth, *Three Years Adventures*, 109.
- 53 Ibid., 132. This practice reflected a more extensive investment from Hans Sloane’s earlier account (*A Voyage To The Islands*, 1707), in which he described how slaves were shaved, and rubbed with palm oil in order to make them beautiful.
- 54 Butterworth, *Three Years Adventures*, 133.
- 55 James Ramsay, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* (Dublin: Printed for T. Walker, C. Jenkin, R. Marchbank, L. White, R. Burton, P. Byrne, 1784), 54.
- 56 Ramsay, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves*, vii.
- 57 Ligon, *A True and Exact History*, 101.
- 58 See Douglas Hall, ‘Slaves and Slavery in the British West Indies’, *Social and Economic Studies* 11, no. 4 (1962): 305–18. For a modern example of this attitude, see Penny Lernoux, *Cry of the People* (New York: Penguin, 1980), 85. Ironically, as late as the twentieth century, in Nicaragua, Somoza, that country’s dictator, voiced exactly the same objection to *campesinos* on his coffee plantations, learning to read and write

- from Catholic priests' instruction. Lernoux cites Somoza's infamous sound bite, 'I don't want educated people, I want oxen'.
- 59 Ramsay, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves*, xvii.
- 60 Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death, a Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 19.
- 61 Christopher Tomlins, 'Transplants and Timing: Passages in the Creation of an Anglo-American Law of Slavery Histories of Legal Transplantations', 10 *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 389 (2009): 389–421; p. 401. Available online: <http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/facpubs/2311>. While Tomlins is preoccupied with slave laws in the United States, in this case, Virginia, the attitude was a component of Barbadian legislation as well, especially since the 1661 'Better Ordering Act' of Barbados was adopted virtually in its entirety throughout the eastern seaboard states.
- 62 His claim implied that slaves had a *sensus communis*; it constituted a shared state of being, 'a common sense' that Kant posited for European subjects. One became aware of this 'shared sense' through the experience of art; it was the touchstone for constituting Kant's subject. See Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, 'John Marrant Blows the French Horn: Print, Performance, and the Making of Publics in Early African American Literature', in *Early African American Print Culture*, ed. Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 330. In a North American context, Cohen and Stein demonstrate that slaveholders' fears were triggered by 'blacks "dancing, Singing and beating drums"' that is groups of slaves performing a black cultural *sensus communis* and thereby displaying and giving voice to a political power as a collectivity'. The idea that slaves participated in a *sensus communis* indicated that they were, by nature, not chattel. Drawing this conclusion in the form of a negative judgement required slave owners to admit at some level that they had, at best, miscategorized these beings or, at worst, that these beings threatened to undo fundamentally the epistemologies of power and profit held in place by their subjugation.
- 63 Ramsay, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves*, 234.
- 64 Thomas N. Tyson, David Oldroyd and Richard K. Fleischman, 'Accounting, Coercion and Social Control During Apprenticeship: Converting Slave Workers to Wage Workers in the British West Indies, c. 1834–1838', *The Accounting Historians Journal* 32, no. 2 (December 2005): 201–31.
- 65 David C. Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics, and Identity During the Age of Abolition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 44.
- 66 R. Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves: A Medical and Demographic History of Slavery in the British West Indies, 1680–1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 140.
- 67 Ramsay, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves*.
- 68 Ironically, one of the earliest advocates of the masters, Richard Ligon, likewise, had never owned slaves.
- 69 The Planters of St Christopher, *An Answer to the Reverend James Ramsay on the Treatment and Conversion of Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies: by some Gentlemen of St. Christopher* (St Christopher: 1789; Boston: Cengage/Gale Ecco Print Editions, 2010), 1.
- 70 Planters of St Christopher's, *An Answer to the Reverend James Ramsay*, 2.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Damian Alan Pargas, *Slavery and Forced Migration in the Antebellum South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 7–9; p. 8. Pargas positioned his analysis as a critique of the Genovese and the Fox-Genovese thesis regarding the

- 'paternalism' of the planter class. Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese argued that planters were 'sincere' in their ideological inclinations. See Eugene D. Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Fatal Self Deception: Slaveholding Paternalism in the Old South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- 73 Planters of St Christopher, *An Answer to the Reverend James Ramsay*.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Ibid., 3–4. In this respect, the planters' position resonated with the East Indies Company's position, even though the company did not intend to replicate West Indies slavery. See Andrea Major, *Slavery, Abolition, and Empire in India, 1772–1843* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 42–6.
- 76 Planters of St Christopher, *An Answer to the Reverend James Ramsay*, 4.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 Ibid., 6.
- 79 Ibid.
- 80 Steele's holdings included the plantation on which Ligon had worked in the preceding century. See William Dickson, *Mitigation of Slavery in Two Parts, Part 1 Letters and Papers of the Late Hon. Joshua Steele* (London: Printed by R. and A. Taylor, Shoe-Lane; Sold by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster Row, 1814), 143. He cites Ligon, *A True and Exact History*, 22.
- 81 Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics, and Identity*, 41.
- 82 Joshua Steele, 'No. XVIII. Queries from His Excellency Governor Parry. Answered by Joshua Steele, Esq., a Planter of 1068 Acres in the Parishes of St. John, St. Philip and St. George, in the Island of Barbadoes', reprinted in Dickson, *Mitigation of Slavery in Two Parts, Part 1 Letters and Papers of the Late Hon. Joshua Steele*, 146. Parry was Barbados' governor from 1784 to 1793. Ramsay died in 1789, just shy of the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and general emancipation in 1838.
- 83 Dickson, *Mitigation of Slavery in Two Parts, Part 1 Letters and Papers of the Late Hon. Joshua Steele*, 145.
- 84 Ibid., 145–6.
- 85 Steele also alluded to the controversy over the Sommersett Ruling of 1772. In that ruling, Chief Justice Mansfield found that there was no 'positive law' in England that supported slavery. Without such a legal precedent, the slave Sommersett who had accompanied his master from Virginia in 1769 was no longer legally bound to be a slave in England. He was freed in the absence of 'positive law'. In the West Indies, there was a slave code that constituted 'positive law'; however, Steele emphasized that since planters bought slaves as chattels, by 'implication,' they had more power than any 'positive law' could grant.
- 86 In fact, the irony of the Steele depositions in conjunction with the West Indian Slave Laws and various island-specific enactments is that Steele demonstrated how the law depicted better conditions than in fact existed for slaves in their experiences. See Douglas Hall, 'Slaves and Slavery in the British West Indies', *Social and Economic Studies* 11, no. 4 (1962): 305–18. Hall pointed out that at face value, West Indian laws appeared to sanction some form of amelioration as a logical consequence of the law. However, Steele's cryptic 'by implication' suggested, as Hall indicated, that slaves, as a form of 'multipurpose capital', existed essentially outside legislative purview. In other words, the law could stipulate, but the condition of slaves' existence resided well outside the realm of legislation because they were designated as capital rather than labor.
- 87 Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics, and Identity*.
- 88 Ibid., 43.

- 89 Olwyn M. Blouet, 'Bryan Edwards, Er.S., 1743–1800', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, 54, no. 2 (2000): 215–22.
- 90 Blouet, 'Bryan Edwards, Er.S., 1743–1800', 21. The irony of Edwards' reasoning is that slavery demanded exactly that kind of subjective transformation in its victims. The voyage across the Atlantic in the hold was meant to suppress the Africans' memories of being subjects in their own lands.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 John Poyer, *The History of Barbados from the First Discovery of the Island in the Year 1605 till the Accession of Lord Seaforth, 1801* (London: printed for J. Mawman, 1808), 143–4.
- 94 Quoted in Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 254; Poyer, *The History of Barbados*.
- 95 Matthew Lewis, *Journal of a Residence among the Negroes in the West Indies* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1845), 29.
- 96 Ibid., 28.
- 97 Ibid., 29.
- 98 Ibid., 30.
- 99 Ibid.
- 100 Ibid., 29.
- 101 Ibid., 34.
- 102 Gott, *Britain's Empire*, 264.
- 103 Standing Committee of West India Planters and Merchants, *An Abstract of the British West Indian Statutes for the Protection and Government of Slaves* (London: James Ridgeway, Piccadilly, 1830), iii.
- 104 Ibid.
- 105 Ligon, *A True and Exact History*; Sloane, *A Voyage to the Islands*.
- 106 Butterworth, *Three Years Adventure*.
- 107 This was the nickname the royalists gave to Barbados.
- 108 See Ligon, *A True and Exact History*.
- 109 See Standing Committee of West India Planters and Merchants, *An Abstract of the British West Indian Statutes*.
- 110 Goveia, *West Indies Slave Laws*, 75.
- 111 Burnard, 'The Planter Class.'
- 112 See Palmer, 'The Origins and Authors of the *Code Noir*'. Louisiana was one such case. Under French rule, its slaves fell under *Le Code Noir* (1685). However, as Palmer argues, the origins of the *Code Noir* were never exclusively derived from Roman case law. The 'law on the ground' was meant to reinforce an 'intent' of the law imagined for local contexts, to make explicit discursively a practice that was already considered acceptable.
- 113 Palmer, 'The Origins and Authors of the *Code Noir*'.
- 114 See Planters of St Christopher's, *An Answer to the Reverend James Ramsay*.
- 115 Ophelia Settle Egypt, *The Unwritten History of Slavery: Autobiographical Accounts of Negro Ex-Slaves*, ed. J. Masuoka and Charles S. Johnson, Social Science Document, no. 1 (Nashville, TN: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1945), v. Researchers at Fisk determined that the master-slave relationship was kept in place by the two superseding conditions of the master's authority being within 'custom and convention', and guaranteed by law so that the relationship at a collective level was impersonal even though, at times, individuals understood the terms quite personally.

Chapter 2

- 1 James W. C. Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith; or, Events in the History of James W. C. Pennington, Pastor of a Presbyterian Church, New York, Formerly a Slave in the State of Maryland, United States* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1849), v.
- 2 Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 5.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Jerome Handler, 'The Middle Passage and the Material Culture of Captive Africans', *Slavery and Abolition* 30, no. 1 (March 2009): 2.
- 5 Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself*, 2 vols (London and Chapel Hill, NC: UNC, 1789), vol. 1, p. 53.
- 6 Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 363.
- 7 Equaino, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life*, 70–88.
- 8 Ibid., 78.
- 9 Ibid., 79. 'Galling the chains' means that the chains around the neck – the manacles – rub against the neck.
- 10 An Eboe leader repeated the comment to Butterworth after the failed rebellion on the *Hudibras*.
- 11 Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life*, 80.
- 12 Even what slaves saw from the perspective of the ship's deck differed from the experiences described by Europeans.
- 13 Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life*, 80.
- 14 Ibid., 26.
- 15 Butterworth, *Three Years Aventure*, 107.
- 16 Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 5–7.
- 17 Quoted in Walter Johnson, 'Introduction: The Future Market', in Walter Johnson, *The Chattel Principle. Internal Slave Trades in the Americas* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 2. Johnson quoted Lewis Hayden, both a character in Harriet Beecher Stowe and a real slave informant.
- 18 Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1982). The concept 'social death' identified the slave's subject position, primarily, as one in which the faculties accepted the 'death' of their previous worlds. It implied, secondarily, that the slaveholders had designated the slaves as socially nonexistent in ways that the slaveholders were existent.

Through the removal of familiar objects of knowledge, the hold produced a phenomenal world of terror. The Africans were to learn to manage terror subjectively, in order to fit into the slave economy and survive. This experience was the linchpin to the creation of a helot work force of 'negroes' and 'blacks'. After such an experience, nondescript, interchangeable blacks existed in a preconscious state of fear; at least, this was the desired outcome from the perspective of the slaveholders.
- 19 Butterworth, *Three Years Adventures*.
- 20 Field hands were the least valuable on the scale of slaves in the islands; the death rate for this class was much higher than for slaves in the sugar ingenios, although bodily injury and maiming were often excessive in the ingenios. Field slaves, as a rule, were least skilled, and more prone to be beaten. B. W. Higman, 'Population and Labor in the British Caribbean in the Early Nineteenth Century', in *Long-Term Factors in American Economic Growth*, ed. Stanley L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 632.

- 21 Jerome Handler, 'Survivors of the Middle Passage: Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados', *Slavery and Abolition* 19, no. 1 (1998): 129–40. DOI: 10.1080/01440399808575231
- 22 Handler, 'Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados', 132.
- 23 Ibid., p. 132. Nicole Alljoe, 'Caribbean Slave Narratives', in *The Oxford Handbook of the African American Slave Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 367. Alljoe follows Handler, identifying both women as Fantee and John Ford as white.
- 24 Jerome Handler and Charlotte Frisbie, 'Aspects of Slave Life in Barbados: Music and its Cultural Context', *Caribbean Studies* 9 (1972): 5–46.
- 25 Handler, 'Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados', 132–3.
- 26 Ibid., 133.
- 27 Ibid. Slaves throughout the Americas were cognizant that their masters believed they were incapable of valuing families. Thus, Sibell references that her familial bonds were so strong that they made her a target for her unscrupulous brother-in-law.
- 28 Aljoe sees this break somewhat differently than I do. In her analysis, Sibell demonstrates to Ford that she is his equal, but I believe this conclusion ignores all of the syntactical and temporal markers she uses to highlight the differences between her enslaved position and her former identity. Nicole Aljoe, *Creole Testimonies. Slave Narratives from the British West Indies, 1709 to 1838* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 81–2.
- 29 Handler, 'Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados', 132. *Backerah* and *Buckra* are different spellings of the same term.
- 30 I mean 'split' in the full psychoanalytic sense of the word. Slavery produced a class of beings who lived in the tension between remembering and imagining freedom against the backdrop and manifold reality of being a slave, without any control or power in existence.
- 31 Handler, 'Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados', 135
- 32 Slavery was literally relying on terror as *Sinnlichkeit*.
- 33 Handler, 'Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados', 133; 139, n. 20. Handler also provides the transcriber's footnotes that define certain Creole terms: 'Back-e-rah people – white people; pick-a-nee-nee – little; messy-messy – eat eat; no fumfum – no whipping.'
- 34 Handler, 'Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados', 133.
- 35 Also known as Fantee, Coromantee. Slaves from Fantee came from 'the more complex empires and slave-trading states – were usually the leaders of the slave revolts and the most militant fighters'. See Walter Rucker, 'Coromantee', *Encyclopedia of African American History*, vol. 1, eds. Lesley Alexander and Walter Rucker (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 184. Rucker noted that the 'Fanti, as part of the Akan-speaking groups from the Coromantee region' were active 'as principles and leaders in more than 23 revolts and plots in locales ranging from Antigua to New York'. This is also confirmed in George Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography. Volume 1, From Sundown to Sunup, the Making of the Black Community* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1972), 27.
- 36 Handler, 'Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados', 134. Sloane, *A Voyage to the Islands*, xlvii. Sloane confirmed that the planters considered the Fantee the most violent of the African groups taken into captivity, and responsible for island rebellions.

- 37 Barbadian slave law had some of the most brutal and violent punishments for fugitive slaves. See excerpts of West Indies and Caribbean slave codes in Engerman, Drescher and Paquette, *Slavery*, 101–41.
- 38 Handler, ‘Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados’, 131. Handler identified the Ashy and Sibell narratives as the only autobiographical statements made by ‘two Africans who were actually sold on the island and who lived and, presumably, died there’.
- 39 Handler, ‘Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados’, 129–30.
- 40 The *London and Paris Observer* (1822), 33.
- 41 Mahommah G. Baquaqua, *The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua: His Passage from Slavery to Freedom in Africa and America*, ed. Robin Law and Paul Lovejoy (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Editions, 1854, 2001), 153–5 (pp. 43–4, original).
- 42 Baquaqua, *The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua*, 153.
- 43 Ibid., 157–9.
- 44 Ibid., 158.
- 45 Ibid., 156.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Ibid., 156–61.
- 48 Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 3.
- 49 Patterson’s conclusions underscore the importance of Te-Nehisi Coates’s recent *Between the World and Me* because, just as Patterson identified the slaveholders’ need to reproduce the ‘original, violent’ act of making a human a slave, in order to keep slavery going, so now must African Americans reproduce an ‘original’ act of making the slave a free person. In other words, systematic and epistemic changes are not enough to correct, or even address, this mental state.
- 50 Osnaburg was a type of rough fabric used for slave garments throughout the New World, as is evidenced in Prince’s reference to it, since Prince was in Bermuda. See Madelyn Shaw, ‘Slave Cloth and Clothing Slaves: Craftsmanship, Commerce, and Industry’, *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 35 (2014). Available online: <http://www.mesdajournal.org/2012/slave-cloth-clothing-slaves-craftsmanship-commerce-industry/#sthash.mjOfotjd.dpuf>. Shaw gives a basic description of osnaburg’s significance for textile production.
- 51 Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave*, ed. Sarah Salih (New York: Penguin, 1831, 2001), 234–5.
- 52 Miss Betsey inherited Mary as a slave close to her own age. Mary is approximately twelve and the oldest of the three girls sold at auction. As I noted in the introduction, the chilling resonance with this metaphor for colonialism and genocide implies an intimate link between slaves and domestic genocide.
- 53 Handler, ‘Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados’, 132. Scholars have noted that the strategy of authenticity was common in slave narratives, both formal literary texts and oral ethnographies. Sibell said as much, when she turned to her amanuensis and proclaimed, ‘you see me here now’.
- 54 Prince, *The History of Mary Prince*, 235.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Ibid., 235–6.
- 57 Baquaqua, *The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua*, 145. Slaves often noted the callousness of the market and the buyers’ ability to displace human suffering. Baquaqua, too, wondered that the buyers and sellers supposed that Africans had ‘none of the finest feelings of the human race’, and that their slaves were incapable of understanding the loss of family, home and community.

- 58 Baquaqua, *The Biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua*, 156. Baquaqua recalled the ‘handling’ of strangers as each gauged the slave’s worth as part of the humiliation of slavery, since it reduced slaves to body parts, quantifiable mass, girth, capacity for load.
- 59 Prince, *The History of Mary Prince*, 93–100.
- 60 John Thompson, *The Life of a Fugitive Slave* (Worcester, MA: J. Thompson; New York: Penguin, 1856, 2011), 19–20.
- 61 Thompson, *The Life of a Fugitive Slave*.
- 62 Ibid., 21.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Amelioration failed because, at its core, planters did not intend to prohibit slavery; that is, the system was understood not as a problem but, rather, as a necessary economic strategy. In fact, when the crown tried to introduce the abolition of slavery to Barbados initially, Barbadian planters argued that their sugar exports would never be able to compete with South Carolina’s – a state settled by a large Barbadian contingent in the 1670s – if they were forced to pay labourers for its production. This argument remained in force throughout the British West Indies.
- 65 Thompson, 34.
- 66 Ibid., 75.
- 67 Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 3.
- 68 Ashton Warner, *Being the Narrative of Ashton Warner, a Native of St. Vincent’s. With an Appendix Containing the Testimony of Four Christian Ministers, Recently Returned from the Colonies, on the System of Slavery as It Now Exists* (London: Samuel Maunder, 1831), 21.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 Edward Lycurgas, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936–1938. Florida Narratives*, vol. III (1936–8), 204–11.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Based on this characterization of one’s relationship to one’s ‘own body’, the slaves remain locked in an epistemology of slavery, even in their deepest dreams or fantasies of freedom. What we have to wonder is whether or not this fantasy is the experience of subsequent generations.
- 73 Ronald Judy, *Disforming The American Canon: African-Arabic Slave Narratives and the Vernacular* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 34.
- 74 Aljoe, *Creole Testimonies*, 81. Sibell and Ashy both juxtaposed their situations as slaves with their importance in Africa before slavery. Sibell was a ‘princess’ for whom a kingdom will fight. Ashy belonged to a people whose powerful black god controlled the weather.
- 75 Judy, *Disforming The American Canon*, 120.
- 76 See also Aljoe, *Creole Testimonies* for another analysis of Sibell and Ashy.
- 77 Te-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2015), 42. Recently, Coates described it as an African American’s constant struggle against a heritage still in firm control of all social institutions.
- 78 Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, iv–v.
- 79 Ibid., iv.
- 80 Ibid., v.
- 81 Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 31.
- 82 William Dickson, *Migration of Slavery in Two Parts. Part 1, Letters and Papers of the Late Honorable Joshua Steele* (Westport, CT: Negro Universities Press, 1814, 1970), 145–6.
- 83 Eltis and Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic of the Slave Trade*, 21.

- 84 Ligon, *A True and Exact History*.
- 85 See Parker, *The Sugar Barons*, 58.
- 86 Burnard, 'The Planter Class', 204.
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 Goveia, *West Indian Slave Laws*, 83.
- 89 This was the significance behind Lynda Boose's 1994 and Erickson's 1993 theses about Ligon and the general perception in the seventeenth century regarding the African woman's body. Each scholar identified critical components to the occluded intellectual bases for slavery.
- 90 Goveia, *West Indian Slave Laws*.
- 91 Johnson, 'Introduction: The Future Market', 2.
- 92 *Ibid.*
- 93 Drescher, 'The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Holocaust', 131.
- 94 Goveia, *West Indian Slave Laws*, 86.
- 95 In South Carolina, slave holders passed the 1739 Act, a prohibition on drum playing, because they, too, believed the slaves used it to communicate plans for rebellion.
- 96 John Luffman, *A Brief Account of the Island of Antigua* (London: printed for T. Cadell, 1789), 138–40.
- 97 'Bahamas, No. 1', *Colonial Acts Respecting Slavery* (London: House of Commons, 1821), 5. 'Whereas it is necessary, for the safety and tranquility of these Islands, that all communication between the slaves thereof, and certain slaves and people of color who have been lately, or may be hereafter brought to or shall arrive or be found in these Islands, should as much as possible be prevented.' See Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 49. The French, likewise, had a similar law prohibiting slaves from gathering together for conversation, although the markets remained open.
- 98 Goveia, *West Indian Slave Laws*, 80. Goveia cites the Spanish 'Code of 1680' to illustrate the Spanish colonies' concern with 'the problem of slavery' as, in reality, 'the problem of the public good'. The laws associated with the Code of 1680 multiplied exponentially the right to police the bodies of slaves. See Waldemar Westergaard, *The Danish West Indies under Company Rule (1671–1754)* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), 158. Westergaard noted that the British example mirrored a similar reflex in Danish colonies in the Caribbean in which punishments and laws 'became more severe as the ratio of negro to white population increased'. It was the prevalent perspective before 1700. Ligon certainly confirmed this attitude in Barbados.

Chapter 3

- 1 George Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 8, 135. Woodruff Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 4. Smith expands the timeline for German colonialism through the inclusion of colonies begun by private individuals during the Hanseatic League, as well. For a complete overview, albeit dated, see W. O. Henderson, *Studies in German Colonial History* (New York: Routledge, 1962, 2012), 48. Scholars discounted Germany as a colonial power because it was not a maritime power, and colonialism, historically, had been driven by empires with powerful navies: originally Spain, Portugal, Britain, the Netherlands and France. In fact,

- when the Germans initially made overtures about the Lüderitz settlement in Angra Pequeña, the British did not take them seriously because of it.
- 2 Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting*, 4.
 - 3 However, that enterprise was not as 'dead' as it would seem, since under the Union of South Africa, the first governor appointed to supervise SWA was a German.
 - 4 Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America. Vol 1, 1441–1700* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution, 1930), 1–5.
 - 5 Leonard Thompson, *The History of South Africa* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001, 2014), 32. Batavia is now Java.
 - 6 Thompson, *The History of South Africa*, 33.
 - 7 Ibid.
 - 8 Ibid.
 - 9 Ibid., 34.
 - 10 Ibid.
 - 11 Ibid., 35.
 - 12 Winifred Hoernlé, *Social Organization of the Nama, and Other Essays*, ed. Peter Carstens (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1985), 21.
 - 13 Ibid. Van der Stel's comments reinforce the idea of a colonial *sensus communis*, a 'shared sense' between colonial agents, regardless of the flag under which they sailed. In positing the Nama as 'friendly' and 'happy' to assist the Dutch, van der Stel suggested that the 'natives' appreciated colonial occupation. Richard Gott gave the example of the British military's arrival in New South Wales, with the intent of staking a prison there. They expected the 'aboriginals' to welcome them as 'friends'. The British commanding officer expressed his 'hurt' at the realization that the aborigines rejected them. See Gott, *Britain's Empire*, 232.
 - 14 Thompson, *The History of South Africa*, 37.
 - 15 Ibid., 38.
 - 16 Jon M. Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), xx.
 - 17 Carle Frederik Brink, 'The Journal of Carle Frederik Brink of the Journey into Greate Namaqualand (1761–2)', in *The Journals of Brink and Rhenius*, ed. E. E. Mossop (Cape Town: The Van Riebeck Society, 1947), 5.
 - 18 Brink, 'The Journal of Carle Frederik Brink of the Journey into Greate Namaqualand (1761–2)', 7.
 - 19 Heinrich Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, trans. and ed. C. G. Hall (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1938), 21.
 - 20 Ibid.
 - 21 Brink, 'The Journal of Carle Frederik Brink of the Journey into Greate Namaqualand (1761–2)', 81. In the 'Council of Minutes', the Cape government authorized the expedition because of Coetse's inadvertent penetration into Namaland while hunting elephants (2–3).
 - 22 Elri Liebenberg, 'Unveiling the Geography of the Cape of Good Hope: Selected VOC Maps of the Interior of South Africa', in *History of Cartography. The International Symposium of the ICA Commission, 2010*, ed. Elri Liebenberg and Imre Josef Demhardt (Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer Verlag, 2012), 209–32; p. 220. Liebenberg referenced the actual orders given to Brink and concluded that the Dutch wanted 'a beast of burden'. The focus was already on the idea of Africa's untapped resources waiting for opportunistic Europeans. See the extended discussion in Brink, 'The Journal of Carle Frederik Brink of the Journey into Greate Namaqualand (1761–2)', 80–1.

- 23 Jana Moser, 'Die frühesten Karten Südwestafrikas zwischen 1761 und 1879', *Cartographica Helvetica: Fachzeitschrift für Kartengeschichte* (2004), Band 29–30, Heft 30. Brink, 'The Journal of Carle Frederik Brink of the Journey into Greate Namaqualand (17612)'.
- 24 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*.
- 25 Brink, 'The Journal of Carle Frederik Brink of the Journey into Greate Namaqualand (1761–2)'. Vedder's identification of the stated mission would resonate with the German missionaries' attempts to designate different indigenous groups as 'Hamitic'. The designator would make them legitimate heirs to the Christian mission.
- 26 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 21.
- 27 'Known empty space' represented the region as *known* to be empty. An agent verified that the region did not belong to anyone; it was not *unknown*.
- 28 The motif of indigenous peoples located in preserves was not unique to the Dutch. The British, likewise, used it as a planning strategy when they received the island of Dominica from the French in the Caribbean. They hoped to commandeer the better plots of land occupied by indigenous Caribs and redistribute it to the French plantation owners already on the island and to an anticipated influx of British settlers. See Gott, *Britain's Empire*, 102.
- 29 Liebenberg, 'Unveiling the Geography of the Cape of Good Hope', 220, 228. Cape Colony governor Willem Jacob van de Graaff 'corrected' Brink's map in 1785.
- 30 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 21. The map was actually printed and published in Patterson's botany text in 1779. However, Liebenberg maintained the map did not circulate because the mission was a secret, designed only for VOC's further colonial development; Liebenberg, 'Unveiling the Geography of the Cape of Good Hope'.
- 31 Dane Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces: Exploring Africa and Australia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
- 32 This attitude would be manifested repeatedly by the Europeans in SWA. For example, Vedder relates that the Germans' expectation that they would find copper in SWA caused them to ignore the actual diamonds strewn all over the area; the area became worthless because they were searching for copper and did not find much of a vein.
- 33 The British took control of the Cape Colony from the Dutch in 1795. The Batavian government would regain control in 1803. The British would then regain control in 1806. See John Barrow, *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa in which are Described the Character and Condition of the Dutch Colonists of the Cape of Good Hope, and the Several Tribes of Natives beyond its Limits: The Natural History of Such Subjects as Occurred in the Animal, Mineral, and Vegetable Kingdoms; and the Geography of the Southern Extremity of Africa, in Two Volumes*, vol. I (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies in the Strand, 1806), 1.
- 34 Thompson, *The History of South Africa*, 44.
- 35 Technically, the Nama or Khoikhoi were not slaves, but they were treated as such.
- 36 Barrow, *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa*, 340–1.
- 37 Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, 24.
- 38 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 303.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Israel Goldblatt, *History of South West Africa from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century* (Cape Town, Wynberg, Johannesburg: Juta & Company Limited, 1971), 1–3. Jonker Afrikaner was the main leader of the Nama in Namaland for most of the nineteenth century. Reinhart Kössler, 'Rebuilding Societies from Below: Reflections

- on Heroes Day, Gibeon, Namibia', in *Development from Below: A Namibian Case Study*, ed. Reinhart Kössler, Henning Melber and Per Strand (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2003), 6–23; p. 10. Kössler demonstrated that Afrikaner introduced the first 'state' into SWA, and that the Witboois followed suit in 1863.
- 42 Goldblatt, *History of South West Africa from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, 23. Quoted in the VRS, vol. 40, p. 99.
- 43 Goldblatt, *History of South West Africa from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, 13.
- 44 Hahn, *Quellen*, vol. 25, p. 104, Hahn's Diary – 26 March 1851–14 September 1851. Quoted in Goldblatt, *History of South West Africa from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, 21.
- 45 Ibid., p. 28.
- 46 Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, 34–5.
- 47 Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces*, 80. Referring to Andersson's first trek to find Lake Ngami with Galton, Kennedy noted that Vedder's characterization of Andersson as 'explorer' reflected a bias in which white Europeans were always described in such terms, but that in Andersson's case, he was simply a 'middle-class participant'. Kennedy pointed out that the burghers of the Cape Colony presented themselves as 'explorers'.
- 48 Ovamboland was, and is, the region of the Bantu-derived tribes, the Ovambo, in the northernmost corner of SWA.
- 49 C. J. Andersson, *Lake Ngami or Explorations and Discoveries during Four Years Wanderings in the Wilds of Southwestern Africa (1850–1854)* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1861), 416. Quoted in Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 302–3. Vedder's text incorrectly identified the expedition as occurring in 1867 (301), the year of Andersson's death. According to Andersson's own text, he was in Namaqualand between 1852 and 1853. Vedder used the correct chronology later, when he discussed *Lake Ngami*'s publication.
- 50 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 304. Vedder claimed that Andersson was successful in proving a route through SWA to Lake Ngami, in enlarging 'knowledge of Africa's flora and fauna', and 'his description of the Natives ... enabled a glimpse to be obtained of the manner of life amongst these peoples in the interior of Africa'.
- 51 Jan-Bart Gewald, *Herero Heroes, a Socio-Political History of the Herero of Namibia 1890–1923* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999) (reprint of *Towards Redemption*), 111. Although Gewald's account concerned the path that rinderpest took to get to Hereroland, in 1896, he noted that the disease afflicting Herero cattle and, eventually, all cattle in GSWA travelled the very routes established by Andersson and other traders.
- 52 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 293.
- 53 Andersson was an extremely divisive figure in SWA. He eventually armed the Herero in their war with the Afrikaners and made the trading post akin to a weapons depot. The idea that 'natives' repelled European settlers from colonizing their territories was not unique, here. See Richard Gott on British settlers to New South Wales and Tasmania. Gott, *Britain's Empire*, 427–8.
- 54 Quoted in Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 145. Vedder did not analyse the statement, opting instead to emphasize that the Herero were nomads, preoccupied with their cattle. As Lau pointed out conclusively, Vedder was an unreliable reporter and often applied a skewed perspective about Africans. For example, he contended that Berg Damaras were genetically predisposed and historically oriented to being 'slaves'. See Brigitte Lau, 'Thank God the Germans came: Vedder and Namibian

- historiography', in *Africa Seminar, Collected Papers, Vol 2*, ed. Keith Gottschalk and Christopher Saunders (Cape Town: Centre of African, 1981), 29.
- 55 Vedder took the account after the genocide and when the system of indigenous preserves was in operation.
- 56 Lau, 'Thank God the Germans Came'. Lau was one of the earliest scholars to identify the unarticulated biases motivating Vedder's accounts of African indigenous life prior to 1890.
- 57 John Kinahan, 'From the Beginning: The Archaeological Evidence', in *The History of Namibia*, ed. Marion Wallace with John Kinahan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 32. Kinahan described this application of 'static' as 'part of the hegemony' of the 'historical ethnography of the Western Cape'. By imposing 'static being' on the indigenous tribes of the Cape and SWA, ethnographers and anthropologists implied that until Europe entered Africa, the 'natives' were trapped in pre-evolutionary existence. Therefore, even the 'catastrophic encounter with Europe' could be recuperated as necessary in order to move the tribes' into a narrative of 'progress'. See also John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress* (Lanham: Rowman Littlefield, 2014), 14–17; Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 29. Jan-Bart Gewald summed up the use of 'static' and its relationship to European models of evolution.
- 58 Dag Henrichsen, 'Pastoral Modernity, Territoriality, and Colonial Transformations in Central Namibia, 1860s-1904', in *Grappling with the Beast: Indigenous Southern African Responses to Colonialism, 1840-1930*, ed. Peter Limb, Norman A. Etherington and Peter Midgley (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 201–2. Henrichsen argued that 'such a view has to be regarded as an elitist's view of history – belonging that is to successful cattle pastoralists'. Henrichsen objected to the speaker's belief that the Herero constituted 'a socio-cultural "hegemony" and "homogeneity" among cattle owners, irrespective of space and time'. He faulted the perspective and its subsequent use by scholars as 'taking the notion of the Herero being people "with cattle" for granted' in order to emphasize 'the primordial existence of a Herero cattle-based society'. The problems with this approach were that (1) it did not account for impoverished members of the 'Otjihero-speaking' world; and (2) it did not explain the historical development of the Herero as a people with specific practices and to give, presumably, the socio-economic reasons for their migration to specific places. In other words, the aforementioned Herero speaker gave a myth in place of history.
- 59 See Thompson, *The History of South Africa*, Chapter 1. The problem with the model is that while it works for Nama and Orlam groups coming out of the Cape, it did not reflect the extensive religious significance of the Herero as a group. This lack of applicability became extremely important for understanding the psychological crisis and cultural disjunction of Samuel Maharero under German occupation.
- 60 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 141–2. In his subsequent descriptions of Herero incursions into the central and southern parts of Namibia, for example, he used this phrase repeatedly to prove that the Herero did not recognize the boundaries of territories belonging to other groups. The claim went to the heart of his assertion that Herero ontology was both 'higher' than the other indigenous groups in the region and, as a consequence of their rejection of Christianity, as well as the civilizing mission, 'lower', reflecting incomparable depravity. The territory became infertile and barren because of their 'sin'.
- 61 Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, 14. Scholars have not settled on the dates for their migration. Bridgman claims it to be from 1600 CE; Jan-Bart Gewald argues that the group, or at least its predecessor, was in the region as early as 1100 CE. What can be agreed on is the presence of traditional groups of Herero living scattered across the

- Kaokoveld to central Namibia before the nineteenth century. The groups that were in central Namibia were not large, though, and the bands of Herero who migrated out of the Kaokoveld often did not have large herds of cattle, that is, they were not the wealthiest Herero or *ovahona*.
- 62 Lau, 'Thank God the Germans Came', 37. Vedder wanted to establish the legitimacy of missionary attempts to move the Herero on to stable preserves, designated 'tribal areas'. Commenting on Vedder's revisionism, Lau noted that 'there existed no "tribal areas" as these came into existence only during the colonial period'. In other words, Vedder imposed, retroactively, a narrative about why the Herero were at Otjimbingwe, and this narrative insinuated that the missionaries' efforts had been redemptive for and 'protective' of the Herero.
- 63 Alan Barnard, *Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa: A Comparative Ethnography of the Khoisan Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 176–99. Barnard states that the only difference among the Khoisan groups, in the plotting of their *werfts*, was the orientation. While his project concerned indigenous Khoekhoe/Khoisan groups of southern Africa, his survey of ethnographic studies of the thirties illustrates that much of the knowledge about indigenous groups in the region was mediated by colonial antecedents.
- 64 This image of the African nomad continued to punctuate the colony's history, even after Herero and Nama had established permanent settlements. Von Trotha alluded to it as the Herero's 'aimless wandering around Okanhandja'. See Gerhard Pool, *Samuel Maharero* (Gamsberg: Macmillan, 1991), 245.
- 65 Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, 172–3. Bridgman identified the Herero as having nine tribes, historically, but he cites data from 1904, a relatively late census.
- 66 Ibid., 19.
- 67 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 77.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Ibid., 317.
- 70 Their failure to understand the *ethos* in play because of the *oruzo* and *eanda* concepts made them 'blind' to Herero history. Even in Bridgman's account of the *oruzo* and *eanda* cattle, Bridgman thought only in terms of their use value to pay debt, that is, he looked at the cattle and their role in the Herero's eventual dispossession.
- 71 Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, 18.
- 72 Ibid., 14. See also Kalle Gustafsson, 'The Trade in Slaves in Ovamboland, ca.1850–1910', *African Economic History*, no. 33 (2005): 31–68. Although the article concerned the existence of slavery among the Ovambo, Gustafsson mapped German missionaries' incursion into and eventual ceding of Ovamboland's 'heathens' to the Finnish Missionary Society.
- 73 Allan D. Cooper, 'Reparations for the Herero Genocide: Defining the Limits of International Litigation', *African Affairs* 106, no. 422 (2006): 113–26, 118. Cooper referenced Ovambo participation briefly in the rebellion. Gustafsson, 'The Trade in Slaves in Ovamboland, ca.1850–1910', 31. Gustafson asserted that the Ovambo entered Herero territory routinely in order to raid cattle and were never prosecuted for these incursions by the Germans.
- 74 Jeremy Sarkin, *Colonial Genocide and Reparations Claims in the 21st Century. The Socio-Legal Context of Claims under International Law by the Herero against Germany for Genocide in Namibia, 1904–1908* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger Security International, 2009), 18. Sarkin cited T. E. Sole, 'The Südwestafrika Denkmunze and the South West African Campaigns of 1903–1908', *Military History Journal* 1 (1968): 19–23.

- 75 Sarkin, *Colonial Genocide and Reparations Claims in the 21st Century*, 202.
- 76 Ibid., 28. Sarkin quoted the census data for contemporary Namibian populations. The Ovambo (Owambo) today comprise 50 per cent of Namibia's population.
- 77 Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, 22. Bridgman described them as 'hunters and gatherers ... [who] lived peacefully together'. He accounted for their peaceful coexistence because both groups did not have to compete with each other for resources. Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 138. Vedder contended that the Saan did not live peacefully with any other tribes. He also noted that they enslaved the Berg Damara so that both groups appeared to be 'like wild animals' to their Herero counterparts.
- 78 Vedder *South West Africa in Early Times* claimed they were often enslaved to the Herero as well as the Saan. Almost every German account from the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century stressed that the Berg Damara were slaves to the Herero and that they eventually served in the German *Schutztruppe*. For a counterperspective, see Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 93. Gewald disputed the claim of 'enslavement', insisting that German narrators used it in order to justify the group's absorption into the German *Schutztruppe*.
- He argued that the Herero did not enslave the Berg Damara, but that the group lived 'as subjects of rich Herero pastoralists'. He claimed that the 'German thinking at this time' believed that the 'Berg Damara were a subjected and enslaved people. A people who needed to be freed from their enslavement so that they could develop a counter – naturally allied to the Germans – to Herero and Nama power'. He noted, further, that the Germans intended to press this 'freed' group into 'labour' for the nascent colony.
- A provocative element in Gewald's analysis remained though his account of the Germans' detachment of the Berg Damara from the Herero chief, Daniel Kariko, at Okombahe. Since Kariko gave significant testimony to the British in 1918 about German abuses towards the Herero during the rising, Gewald's excerpt demonstrated Kariko's previous experiences.
- 79 Thompson, *The History of South Africa*, 10. Thompson identified how the Dutch settlers gave derogatory names for each of the three indigenous groups they identified in the Cape. The importance of this is twofold: (1) the names were meant both to designate and to demean; and (2) the terms mischaracterized the indigenous groups, presuming them to be 'pure, racial types', a thesis Thompson corrected. For the Europeans, the mischaracterization enabled them to specify racial differences among the indigenous in order to categorize them hierarchically.
- 80 Winifred Hoernlé, *The Social Organization of the Nama and Other Essays* (Johannesburg: Witswatersrand University Press, 1985), 32.
- 81 Barnard, *Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa*.
- 82 To get a better sense of the Little Nama territory, it extended through the Richterveld, the site of Hoernlé's initial fieldwork with the Nama and comprised not only the Northern Cape territory of South Africa, but also a portion of the area within Namibia. For European purposes, though, the Orange River was the boundary between British and German territories.
- 83 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter XVI, p. 68. By 1918, the British recognized 'Hottentot' as an offensive term that 'the more educated and intelligent Hottentots secretly resent'. They cite Chief Christian Goliath of Berseba, who described it as a 'spot en veracht naam' (i.e. a name of

derision and contempt). Likewise, Barnard referenced the term as pejorative and inaccurate; *Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa*, 9.

- 84 Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, 23. The Red Nation signified the Great Nama or ‘the loose confederation of six Nama tribes’ that crossed the Orange River to settle in SWA.
- 85 Ibid. See also Administrator’s Office, ‘Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa’, Chapter XVI, 71. The Berseba group and the Topnaars were the only Nama tribes to still exist after the insurrection. Berseba did not participate in the 1903 Bondelzwarts rebellion; the Topnaars were both too remote for the Germans to reach and too poor to justify the expense of subjugation. Bondelzwarts was the home of the rebellion, and it had been the site of the settlers’ imposed ‘demands’ in which ‘every coloured person must regard a white man as a superior being’ and ‘the evidence of one white man can only be outweighed by the statements of seven coloured persons’ (33). The Bondelzwarts, as a tribe, ceased to exist after the rebellion, in that it no longer had a *kaptein*. For the Germans, the Topnaars’ poverty indicated that the group was without natural resources to sustain life, that is, it would be forced into natural extinction.
- 86 They are sometimes referred to as ‘Afrikaners’; for consistency, I use the Afrikaner term.
- 87 Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, 24. Bridgman’s use of ‘detribalized’ needs to be understood in context of their experiences prior to the formation of Orlam groups and their adoption of the commando structure that would characterize the groups in SWA. See Thompson, *The History of South Africa*, 38. Thompson described it as a result of the Khoikhoi’s ‘disintegrating’ identity as a group under the pressure of Dutch colonization.

The Khoikhoi had been unable to withstand the invasion of the Dutch East India Company and its settlers. They had lost most of their livestock – their most valued possessions: the records of the company show that between 1662 and 1713 it received 14,363 cattle and 32,808 sheep from the Khoikhoi. Their fragile political system had collapsed, and the chiefs had become pathetic clients of the company. In the 1680s, individuals and families had begun to detach themselves from their society and serve burghers as shepherds and cattleherds. The southwestern Khoikhoi were a subordinate caste in the colonial society, set apart in appearance and culture from both the Whites and the slaves; technically free, but treated no better than slaves.

- 88 See also Hoernlé, *The Social Organization of the Nama and Other Essays*, 32–3. In her fieldwork, conducted in the early twentieth century, in the Richterveld of South Africa, Hoernlé asserted that the Nama had lost all memory of their precolonial existence and practices. Her conclusions were repeated by Vedder to prove that the Orlams’ attempt to rejoin the Nama tribes in Namibia reflected their inferiority vis-à-vis the Europeans, since the Orlams resisted evolutionary progress by attempting to regain a traditional indigenous identity.
- 89 In the early stages, missionary efforts failed, so that their constant lament was the absence of ‘natives’ at regular services and major Christian holidays.
- 90 Lau, ‘Thank God the Nazis Came’, 35.
- 91 Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, 44. He cites and follows Robert Shell’s (1994) work.
- 92 Ibid. John Edwin Mason, ‘Paternalism under Siege: Slavery in Theory and Practice during the Era of Reform’, in *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and Its Legacy in Nineteenth Century South Africa*, ed. Nigel Worden and Clifton Crais (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995). Thompson followed Mason.

- 93 Goldblatt, *History of South West Africa from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*.
- 94 Lau, 'Thank God the Germans Came', 28. Vedder leapt to this conclusion repeatedly in his writing. Lau was particularly acute in her demonstration of how Vedder constructed his history of SWA's indigenous groups 'in order to explain and justify the settlers' cause' so that colonization became an 'idealized' and 'Faustian' necessity.
- 95 Brigitte Lau, 'The Emergence of Kommando Politics in Namaland, Southern Namibia, 1800–1870' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1982), 50–1. Lau described the 'kommando-like band' differences from traditional Khoi groups at the Cape and, by extension, the Nama tribes in SWA. While many scholars focused on the critical elements of Orlam differences derived from their 'hybridity', what remained undervalued was how intensely Orlam tribes revalenced traditional Nama structures. For example, by the time the Afrikaner tribe was completely reintegrated into the Nama confederacy of tribes, these 'differences' emblematically signified Nama authenticity. In other words, they no longer signified the characteristics and practices of newcomers. By the late nineteenth century, Witbooi's emergence as the overall Nama *kaptein* connoted Nama values exclusively.
- Lau cited Martin Legassick's 'The Northern Frontier to 1820: The Emergence of the Griqua People', in *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1820*, ed. R. Elphick and H. Giliomee (London: Longman, 1979). Although some scholars might question the use of Lau's MA thesis as a secondary source, Lau remains one of the most important and authoritative commentators on the groups and personalities of GSWA. In this context, her early work continues to have relevance.
- 96 Henning Melber, 'Economic and Social Transformation in the Process of Colonisation: Society and State Before and During German Rule', in *State, Society and Democracy. A Reader in Namibian Politics*, ed. Christiaan Keulder (Windhoek: Macmillan Education Namibia, 2010), 16–48, 21. See also Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 14. In Gewald's discussion of borrowed Nama terms present in the Herero language, he cited 'the Nama word/*honkhoeb*, meaning master'. The term united several divergent histories, the Afrikaners' Boer 'master' at the Cape, the traditional Nama *kaptein* and the Orlams' powerful Jonker Afrikaner. Provocatively, Gewald suggested that the Orlams derived their sense of a powerful *kaptein* from the Boer 'master' on the farms at which they laboured.
- 97 Melber, 'Economic and Social Transformation', *ibid.*
- 98 This is certainly behind the transformation of the Red Nation under a female chief and the overwhelming influence of the Afrikaners on that group.
- 99 Melber, 'Economic and Social Transformation', *ibid.*
- 100 Lau, 'Thank God the Germans Came'.
- 101 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 119. Games assumed the *kapteinship* due to her son being too young to lead the tribes. See Bridgeman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, 21.
- 102 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 250–1. Hoernlé discusses the details of Orlam migration in relation to pre-existing Nama tribes. Hoernlé, *The Social Organization of the Nama and Other Essays*, 42–3.
- 103 Bridgeman, *The Revolt of the Hereros*, 24. See also Brigitte Lau, ed., *Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, trans. Annemarie Heywood and Eben Maasdorf (Windhoek: National Archives of Namibia, 1990), vii.
- 104 A. Heywood and E. Maaskorp, trans., 'Letter from Witbooi to Missionary Olpp, 03 January, 1890', no. 23 (1990): 31–6.
- 105 See Tilman Dedering, 'The prophet', 'Hendrik Witbooi, the prophet', *Kleio* 25, no. 1 (2007), 54–78; p. 58. DOI: 10.1080/17532539308537845

Chapter 4

- 1 A. J. P. Taylor, *Germany's First Bid for Colonies. 1884-1885. A Move in Bismarck's European Policy* (New York: Norton, 1938), 10; A. J. P. Taylor, *Bismarck, The Man and the Statesman* (New York: Random House, 1967), 215; H. A. Turner, 'Bismarck's Imperialist Venture: Anti-British in Origin?', in *Britain and Germany in Africa*, ed. P. Gifford and W. R. Louis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 47–83; Jakob Zollmann, 'Communicating Colonial Order: The Police of German South-West-Africa (c. 1894–1915)', *Crime, History & Societies* 15, no. 1 (2011): 33–57; p. 34. *Stenographische Berichte*, 6. Legislaturperiode, 2. Session, Bd. 1, S. 117. Germany's archival records also point to this conclusion.
- 2 J. Fisch, 'Africa as *terra nullius*: The Berlin Conference and International Law', trans. Eamon Helly and J. P. Cowood, in *Bismarck, Europe and Africa, the Berlin Africa Conference 1884–1885 and the Onset of Partition*, ed. Stig Förster, Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Ronald Robinson (Oxford and London: the German Historical Institute London and Oxford University Press, 1988), 350. See also Taylor, *Germany's First Bid for Colonies*, 10; and Taylor, *Bismarck, The Man and the Statesman*, 221.
- 3 Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity*, 25–6. In his discussion of Christian von Dohm's colonial fantasies, Hess exposed the tension that ran through German culture between the demand for colonial products and the effect that such demand had on a country without colonies. His example was coffee and the sudden emergence of the coffeehouse in Berlin, London and other capitals in Europe. A signifier for Europe's transformation from pre-modern medievalism to Enlightenment modernity, Hess summed up coffee's impact on the 'colony-less' Germany:

For Germans, who had no colonies and had to purchase such goods through middlemen, the consumption of coffee was a double-edged affair. Coffee's appeal lay not merely in its flavor, its value as a stimulant or even its widely hailed medicinal properties. It also represented, on a symbolic level, the power and urbanity Germans typically associated with international players such as England, France, and Holland. As Wolfgang Schivelbusch has argued, drinking coffee gave Germans a chance to partake 'in a level of Western urbanity' they had not yet achieved for themselves, and in practice, this symbolic boost to Germans' self-image had the effect of undermining rather than bolstering the international stature of the German lands.

As the realization grew over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that Germany was disadvantaged because it lacked colonies, more and more sectors of its population demanded them.

- 4 Eric A. Walker, *Cambridge History of the British Empire. Vol. 8* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 526. The Second Reich began in 1871, with Prussia's successful defeat of France. This defeat enabled Germany to lay claim to being a great empire, if not the greatest empire, in Europe.
- 5 W. F. Reddaway, 'Great Britain and France, 1848–70', in *Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol 2*, ed. J. Holland Rose, A. P. Newton and E. A. Benians (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 547–64; p. 562. Exacerbated by the Napoleonic Wars, Bismarck saw France and, to some extent, Britain as unwilling to concede to the fledgling Prussia 'a sphere of influence'. Hull, 'Military Culture and the Production of "Final Solutions" in the Colonies', 147–8. Hull argued that 'encirclement' was a military 'dogma' that developed in response to 'perceived German weakness'.

- 6 Taylor, *Bismarck, The Man and the Statesman*, 220–8.
- 7 Ibid., 215.
- 8 Zollmann, ‘Communicating Colonial Order’, 34. Although Bismarck did not enthusiastically endorse a colonial project in distant places, he authorized one along the Polish border. For a discussion of that project, begun in 1886, see Moses, ‘Chapter 4, Colonialism’, 70.
- 9 Woodruff Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 33.
- 10 For a discussion of Germany’s colonial development, colony by colony, see Steinmetz, *The Devils’ Handwriting*, 13.
- 11 Zollmann, ‘Communicating Colonial Order’; Marion Wallace, *The History of Namibia, from the Beginning to 1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 125–6. See Davis, *Colonialism, Antisemitism, and Germans*, p. 1. Davis theorizes that Carl Peters’ colonial occupation of East Africa stemmed from these tensions in German society.
- 12 John H. Wellington, *South West Africa and its Human Issues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 167.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Walker, *Cambridge History of the British Empire*, 526–7.
- 16 Fisch, ‘Africa as *terra nullius*’, 347–75. For an overview of the British failure to recognize the implications of Bismarck’s inquiries, see Fisch’s discussion of Bismarck’s motivation for convening the conference (349).
- 17 Walker, *Cambridge History of the British Empire*. Vol. 2, 695.
- 18 Wellington, *South West Africa and its Human Issues*, 168.
- 19 Fisch, ‘Africa as *terra nullius*’, 352. See also David Van Reybrouck, *Congo, the Epic History of a People* (New York: Ecco Press, 2014), 53.
- 20 Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, 35. Smith gave a fuller account of the Berlin Conference’s significance for Europeans in note 42, pp. 238–9. This perspective reflects the dominant opinion. For a revision of that thesis, see Michael Craven, ‘Between Law and History: The Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 and the Logic of Free Trade’, *London Review of International Law* 3, no. 1 (2015): 31–59. doi:10.1093/lrl/lrv002. Craven focused on ‘the terms of a possible Franco-German entente the object of which would be to undermine the expansion of British informal empire’ (36). For a discussion of the conference’s concepts, and informal agreements, see Ronald Robinson, ‘The Conference in Berlin and the Future of Africa, 1884–1885’, in *Bismarck, Europe and Africa, the Berlin Africa Conference 1884–1885 and the Onset of Partition*, ed. Stig Förster, Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Ronald Robinson (Oxford and London: The German Historical Institute London and Oxford University Press, 1988), 1–35.
- 21 Bismarck had acted in this capacity before by hosting several summit-like conferences since 1871.
- 22 Robinson, ‘The Conference in Berlin and the Future of Africa, 1884–1885’, 1. Hereafter referred to as the Berlin Conference.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 ‘General Act of the Conference of Berlin Concerning the Congo’, *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Supplement: Official Documents (January 1909), 7–25.
- 25 Robinson, ‘The Conference in Berlin and the Future of Africa, 1884–1885’. Robinson referred to this as the conference’s ‘Open Door’ policy.

- 26 David Olusoga and Casper Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 394.
- 27 Craven, 'Between Law and History', 35.
- 28 Robinson, 'The Conference in Berlin and the Future of Africa, 1884–1885'.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Fisch, 'Africa as *terra nullius*', 349.
- 31 Ibid., 349–50. Fisch explained Bismarck's perspective in relation to the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, when Spain and Portugal divided the world between them by cartographic boundary. The next century, Britain accused Spain of claiming the West Indies and the Caribbean simply because the islands were in proximity to its settlements. Bismarck used a similar argument in 1884.
- 32 Fisch, 'Africa as *terra nullius*', 357.
- 33 A. Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 91.
- 34 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*, 288–9. Postal service preoccupied missionaries in the Cape Colony and SWA.
- 35 Henderson, *Studies in German Colonial History*.
- 36 Andrew Fitzmaurice, *Sovereignty, Property and Empire, 1500–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 6–7.
- 37 It also reinforced the notion that Africans were part of an exploitable natural resource.
- 38 Here, the parallels to slavery are remarkably close, except that the primary focus was land rather than people. However, this focus did not preclude a change in Africans' status vis-à-vis the law: Africans remained property of the territory; they were part of the environment. Under slavery, they had been transportable as chattel; now they were fixed as static and organic entities, although Europeans still believed they could be exported domestically within Africa.
- 39 Dag Henrichsen, 'Pastoral Modernity, Territoriality, and Colonial Transformations in Central Namibia, 1860s–1904', in *Grappling with the Beast: Indigenous Southern African Responses to Colonialism, 1840–1930*, ed. Peter Limb, Norman A. Etherington and Peter Midgley (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 94. Henrichsen referred to the Herero as a 'modern pastoral society' to counter the claim that the indigenous Africans lacked farms. Africans had extensive skills with agriculture and its related activities. For an examination of Nama agricultural practices, see Alan Barnard, *Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa: A Comparative Ethnography of the Khoisan Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 179.
- 40 'General Act of the Conference of Berlin Concerning the Congo', 7–25.
- 41 Quoted in Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 59.
- 42 Adekunle Ajala, 'The Nature of African Boundaries', *Africa Spectrum* 18, no. 2 (1983): 177–89. Available online: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40174114>. The significance of these boundaries was not lost on Africans, then or in the decades after African independence. Ajala summarizes how the arbitrary boundaries of colonialism affected postcolonial political entities.
- 43 Friedrich Handtke, *General Karte von Afrika* (Glogau: Carl Fleming, 1889); Moser, 'Die frühesten Karten Südwesafrikas zwischen 1761 und 1879'. Moser demonstrated that, by 1871, the German map represented the entire area as empty.
- 44 Birthe Kundrus, ed., *Phantasiereiche: zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2003), 7–18.

- 45 Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz and Wildenthal Lora, *Germany's Colonial Pasts* (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).
- 46 Zimmerer considered this application of 'inferiority', then, a constitutive 'shared structure' inherent in colonization.
- 47 Dominik Schaller, 'From Conquest to Genocide, Colonial Rule in German Southwest Africa', in *Empire, Colony, Genocide. Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), 296–324; p. 299. See also Karl Dove, *Deutsch-Südwestafrika Band 5* (Berlin: Wilhelm Süsserott Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1903). Dove made this claim the justification for general and complete dispossession of the African polities that had lived contiguously to the German settlements for two decades.
- 48 Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting*, 37.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*.
- 51 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter IX, p. 43. The reprints comments made by Paul Rohrbach, the director of the Colonial Office in Berlin. As the director of the Colonial Office in Berlin, Rohrbach's conclusion was damning.
- 52 Israel Goldblatt, *History of South West Africa from the Beginning of the Nineteenth-century* (Cape Town, Wynberg, Johannesburg: Juta & Company Limited, 1971), 28. The biblical allusion is key to the motivation behind the Germans' presence in SWA prior to the conference and immediately afterward. They thought they were redeeming Africa from its 'uncivilized' abandonment. Goldblatt cites no less than three missionaries' use of the phrase to explain the significance of the tribes' 'primitiveness'.
- 53 This was the premise of Vedder's two ethnographies (1928, 1938) about indigenous occupation in SWA: to show that precolonial history was violent and self-destructive and needed European intervention.
- 54 Brigitte Lau, ed., 'Introduction', in *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, trans. A. Heywood and E. Maaskorp (Windhoek: National Archives of Namibia, 1989), x. The uncolonized 'north' is Ovamboland. The group was never colonized, and the chief of the Ovambos refused to meet with German agents. Allan D. Cooper, 'Reparations for the Herero Genocide: Defining the Limits of International Litigation', *African Affairs* 106, no. 422 (2006): 113–26; p. 119. Cooper's account of Ovambo participation in the uprising of 1904 summarized an Ovambo experience of German persecution.
- 55 Lau, 'Introduction'.
- 56 Lau, 'Introduction', x–xv. Lau posited three phases of colonialism: 1884–9; 1890–3; 1894. In this regard, she differed from Horst Drechsler's more familiar model of 1884–92; 1893–1903; 1904–7; 1907–15. Horst Drechsler, *Let Us Die Fighting* (New York: Lawrence Hill, 1981), 6–7. Drechsler linked his periodization to the 'transitional period between free market capitalism and imperialism' (6). In other words, German colonialism was driven by capitalism, so that imperialism acted as a powerful lever for economic oppression. Lau derived her model from specific indigenous experiences, exemplified through the lives of their leaders – on this occasion, Hendrik Witbooi.
- 57 Lau, *Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, ibid.
- 58 Wellington, *South West Africa and its Human Issues*, 168. Wellington identified the contracts as actually being issued in 1884 with the Bethanie chief, Josef Frederiks, discussed earlier. Drechsler, *Let Us Die Fighting*, 23. Drechsler's fuller account identified 1883 as the correct date for the second treaty. Importantly, though, in the

first phase, the contracts issued prior to the colonial era gave shape to a necessary discursive infrastructure that had to be circulated symbolically in GSWA before the contracts were implemented physically.

- 59 Lau, 'Introduction'. The primary agent issuing contracts at this time was Ernst Göring, the father of the Nazi officer and member of Hitler's inner circle, Herman Göring.
- 60 Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*. Smith used the term 'Hottentot' to designate an indigenous chief. The term emerged in the seventeenth century among the Boers and referred to the Khoikhoi or Khoisan group in South Africa. In GSWA, Germans applied the term to the Nama. Considered an offensive reference, it is only used in quotation.
- 61 Wellington, *South West Africa and its Human Issues*. See also Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting*, 133, n. 255. The upshot of these agreements was a complete loss of indigenous property to private German commercial interests.
- 62 Fisch, 'Africa as *terra nullius*', 357. As Fisch pointed out, the introduction of *terra nullius* for international law legitimated the 'theory of occupation', effectively reducing 'the inhabitants of ostensibly ownerless territories to things, thus treating them as slaves'.
- 63 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter IX, p. 42. According to the British, the earliest contracts were designed to indenture the indigenous. Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting*, 127. Steinmetz demonstrated that this aim not only remained the Germans' primary goal even after the genocides of 1904–8, but it also factored significantly in the earliest interactions between German missionaries and Africans in the 1860s. Steinmetz's contention of the longevity of this aim is important to establishing German intent early on for Africans. They represented a distinct racial category.
- 64 The Germans behaved just as every other colonial power from the Portuguese to Britain had acted in the history of colonialism.
- 65 Lau, 'Introduction', x–xi; Hermann Hesse, 'Die Schutzverträge in Südwestafrika', *Zeitschrift für Kolonialpolitik, Kolonialrecht, und Kolonialwirtschaft. Herausgegeben von der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft*. Jahrg 7. Issue 1 (January 1905): 1–48.
- 66 Lau, 'Introduction', xi. See also, Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter VI, p. 32. The British not only made this claim, but they also underscored the cynicism with which Germans manipulated indigenous groups.
- 67 Lau, 'Introduction'. Lau identifies three phases of German colonialism in Namibia – 1884–9; 1890–3; 1894 – and I will use these designators from time to time.
- 68 Heinrich Vedder, 'The Herero', in *The Native Tribes of South West Africa*, ed. C. H. L. Hahn, H. Vedder and L. Fourie (London: Frank Cass & Co, 1928), 206. In fact, after the 1904–8 uprisings, the contracts would return as the legal basis for German settlers' claims to all of GSWA, including the preserves they had designated for the indigenous signatories. In Vedder's cited statements, the Herero never owned any 'tribal territory. The reserves were free assignments on the part of the German and Mandate governments'. In fact, the contracts became the scaffolding on which the Germans built their colony, and staked their claims to SWA, even when they knew these contracts to be fraudulent.
- 69 Again, this fantasy of the imagined 'willingness' of Africans to become Europeans' servants was an implication of the General Act. Through service, Africans were to learn European civilization's superiority, and, because of that knowledge, they would throw off their unevolved lives. They would embrace a subaltern existence because it was better than their 'natural state'.

- 70 The implications of how the Germans understood this obligation will become clear in my discussion of Africans physically under colonial rule. Initially, it merely presumed that the German army was entitled to prevent its property from damage or theft; if said property showed, furthermore, an inclination to injure itself or the colony, then the German army was free to act punitively in all forms.
- 71 *Schutztruppe*. See Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting*, 149, n. 39. The initial police force under the auspices of the Colonial Company amounted to 'a desultory police force of six German and twenty African soldiers in May 1888'. It proved insufficient and largely representational, in the sense that it was there to prove to Europeans that Germany had 'effective occupation'. To establish the colony, the Germans would need to send in troops and, through violence, take control.
- 72 For a discussion of the Police Zone and its relevance to colonialism, see Christiaan Keulder, 'Traditional Leaders', in *State, Society and Democracy: A Reader in Namibian Politics*, ed. Christiaan Keulder (Windhoek: Macmillan Education Namibia, 2010), 157, n. 3. With a police zone, the indirect rule of the trading company became direct rule by German troops, a *Schutzgebiet*.
- 73 Fisch, 'Africa as *terra nullius*', 356–7. Fisch underscored that the shift gave the Germans a wholly different condition on the ground. It moved them from 'paper sovereignty' to an 'occupation' that privileged German 'rights', even to the extent of violent suppression of indigenous peoples.
- 74 Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 34.
- 75 Theodor Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch – Südwestafrika* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn Königliche Hofbuchhandlung, 1906), 378.
- 76 Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 33.
- 77 Ibid., 31–2, n. 9. Gewald cited an important detail about the treaty's signing in which the RMS missionaries had been key mediators between the Colonial Company and the Herero, encouraging Maharero to sign as Paramount Chief, although the majority of the chiefs had left the conference. In other words, the Germans pushed for a centralized leadership in which a chief acted unilaterally for all of the other groups, that is, even at this early stage, there was an attempt to identify one figure as the only individual with whom the Germans would negotiate, thereby reducing the diversity of the tribes to interchangeable units.
- 78 Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 31, n. 9. See also Lau, 'Introduction', xi. These three individuals, as Lau demonstrated, were unprepared and unequipped to implement the contracts: they were only there to set up the discursive coordinates for the German territory. Furthermore, as a consequence of their failure to provide Maharero with any kind of protection, he summoned them to Okahandja and dismissed them, expelling them from the territory.
- 79 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter IV, p. 19.
- 80 Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 34.
- 81 N. O. Oermann, *Mission, Church and State Relations in South West Africa Under German Rule (1884–1915)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999), 57. RMS missionaries were encouraged to this decision because of the German government's lack of commitment to a larger presence and direct rule.
- 82 Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 39. Gewald argued that the first phase of German colonialism was so unsuccessful that it ended with Lüderitz's agents being expelled from the territory by the Herero. Gewald's text implied, though, another element about which he does not comment. The Germans were focused almost exclusively on the Herero from their arrival in SWA. According to Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting*, Germans identified the Herero as their preferred labour force.

- 83 Tilman Dederling, 'Hendrik Witbooi, the Prophet', *Kleio* 25, no. 1 (2007): 54–78. DOI: 10.1080/17532539308537845.
- 84 For example, in the Frederiks treaty of 1884, Josef Frederiks signed as the *kaptein* of Bethanie, and he certified his control over huge swaths of land. He then ceded those swaths, the majority of his polity's territory, to Lüderitz's agents for their use. In this way, his territory became limited to Bethanie, the settlement, rather than including its environs, since those environs now were under German control.
- When the Germans imagined their colony, they saw these different spaces as a cartographical grid punctuated by roads, railroad tracks, telegraph lines – the signs of European investment and settlement. These lines of communication circumscribed space, reshaping again what was visible.
- 85 The transfers were important not only because the Germans intended to lay claim to best land in the territory, currently occupied by indigenous settlements, but also because their future aims included preserves from which they could draw an indigenous workforce for their farms and ranches, and separation of the tribes prevented them from rising up against the Germans as a unified front.
- 86 Lau, 'Introduction'.
- 87 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter V, p. 24. 'Letter from Witbooi to Herman, 20 May, 1892, No. 63', 74; 'Letter to Witbooi from Herman, 12 June, 1892, No. 65', 79, both in *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, trans. A. Heywood and E. Maaskorp.
- 88 Lau, 'Register' in *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, trans. A. Heywood and E. Maaskorp, 180.
- 89 'Letter from Witbooi to Herman, 20 May, 1892', No. 63, in *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, trans. A. Heywood and E. Maaskorp, p. 74.
- 90 Curt von François, *Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika. Geschichte der Kolonisation bis zum Ausbruch des Krieges mit Witbooi. April 1894* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1893), 153. In his memoir, von François stated that the meeting was conducted over two days, 8–9 June.
- 91 Apparently, the captain did not think that Witbooi was capable of discerning the implications behind how a German 'friend' of the Herero could characterize them as 'inferior' to Witbooi, who was not the Germans' 'friend'.
- 92 Willem Christian was the chief of the Bondelswarts Nama.
- 93 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter IV, p. 22. See also *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, trans. A. Heywood and E. Maaskorp.
- 94 Brigitte Lau, 'Thank God the Germans Came: Vedder and Namibian Historiography', *Africa Seminar, Collected Papers, Vol 2*, ed. Keith Gottschalk and Christopher Saunders (Cape Town: Centre of African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1981), 24–53. Lau sketched how Vedder and German historians constructed an indigenous 'need' for German intervention.
- 95 Goldblatt, *History of South West Africa*, 28. Goldblatt argued that the Orlams were never enslaved; however, they did live in proximity to slavery on Boer farms, did absorb runaway slaves into their *kommandos* and did observe slavery at the Cape Colony. Thus, von François' allusion to the Nama's tenuous hold on freedom implied that the Nama would be enslaved if they did not surrender themselves to Germany. At the very least, his threat suggested that 'personal sovereignty' would be lost if Witbooi did not willingly forfeit the sovereignty held by the *kaptein*.
- 96 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter IV, p. 22. The British reported the Germans used this strategy repeatedly throughout the region. Many chiefs had previously signed because of the fear of a Boer attack and subjugation. See also Curt von François, *Deutsch Südwest-Afrika. Geschichte der Kolonisation bis zum Ausbruch des Krieges mit Witbooi. April 1894*

- (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1899), 153. Von François stated that bonuses were offered to Witbooi exclusively: an annual income of 5,000 marks to sign the treaty, stipends both to the older and the younger members of the tribe and 'free food'. Whether he ever made the offer is questionable, since Witbooi did not reference the offer in his *Tagboek*. In the negotiated treaty with Leutwein, Witbooi received a stipend.
- 97 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', *ibid*.
- 98 As the British observed, the meeting established that SWA no longer existed; it had been 'annexed' already by the Prussian Empire, at the 1884–5 Conference in Berlin. Furthermore, von François wanted Witbooi to know that Britain, the other European power in the region, agreed to the Germans' plans. They were unprotected by competing European powers.
- 99 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter IV, p. 23.
- 100 In this respect, his actions mirrored those taken by a myriad of colonial agents globally.
- 101 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 83. Pool contended that the demand for Witbooi to return to Gibeon actually originated with Samuel Maharero. Von François extended the demand because he supported Samuel's claim to be his father's successor. Samuel wanted Witbooi safely tucked behind the Nauklaft Mountains, prevented by nature from attacking Herero *werfts*.
- 102 Brigitte Lau, ed., '4 August, 1882, Hendrik Witbooi to the Magistrate of Walvis Bay', in *Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, trans. Annemarie Heywood and Eben Maasdorf (Windhoek: National Archives of Namibia, 1989), 90. Although Witbooi did not know of the *uti possedit* doctrine, Witbooi's argument articulated exactly that principle.
- 103 Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, xx.
- 104 To better gauge the extent of Witbooi's power as leader of the Nama, one must look at the earliest census records kept by missionaries in 1863. The Witbooi Nama at that time were approximately 3,000 people, based loosely around Gibeon. Since that census, families, other Orlam groups and other Nama continued to join themselves to Hendrik Witbooi. In 1820, when Witbooi's Orlam forbears left the Cape Colony, they were a small band, but by the time Germany tried to subdue Witbooi, he had become a formidable enemy who appeared to be growing in stature with every German defeat. When Witbooi left his position with the *Schutztruppe* in 1904, the Nama were estimated to be about 20,000. Alan Barnard, *Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa: A Comparative Ethnography of the Khoisan Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 184. Barnard related that the Nama chief's authority 'depended on maintaining links' with distant Nama groups, that is, Witbooi's ability to keep such connections made him particularly powerful – a fact that the Germans tried to undermine in the !Nomtsas episode with Herman.
- 105 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter V, p. 33. Leutwein (1906), 242, *unterworfen Völkerschaften*. The British quote Leutwein's text. Ironically, the Germans' fears produced this outcome in 1903 and 1904; however, at this early point, the idea that the Herero were inspired by Witbooi's actions seems misplaced. See also Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting*, 151.
- 106 Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, Chapter XV.
- 107 This appeared in Heywood and Maasdorf, *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, 117. Hendrik Witbooi, 'Letter, #105; #217 in original; dated 20 April 1893. Directed to the British Magistrate at Walvis Bay'. In Witbooi's account, he and his people were 'peacefully sleeping'. Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa'. The Report quotes Leutwein's account from *Elf Jahre*. It's unclear whether Leutwein

- imagined that Witbooi was having ‘his morning coffee’ when the massacre began (26), a symptom of his identification with the Nama leader or whether Witbooi had communicated this event to him and he was merely reproducing the narrative. Hoornkrans was the permanent settlement of the Witbooi Nama.
- 108 Steinmetz, *The Devils’ Handwriting*, 151.
- 109 Administrator’s Office, ‘Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa’.
- 110 Von François, *Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika*, xi. ‘Erst der Krieg gegen Witbooi 1893/94 hat endgültig entschieden, dass das südwestafrikanische Schutzgebiet vom deutschen Reiche behalten werden wird’. Von François implied that SWA would not have been ‘retained’ as a German colony if it hadn’t been for the successful defeat of Witbooi. The Hoornkrans massacre became a stunning victory that von François had won.
- 111 John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 58.
- 112 Cooper, ‘Reparations for the Herero Genocide’, 118, 122. Cooper summarizes Herero legal claims in relation to the codes the Germans determined were no longer binding in their treatment of ‘the natives’. Cooper reprises Shelton’s argument. See Dinah Shelton, ‘The World of Atonement Reparations for Historical Injustices’, *Miskolc Journal of International Law* 1, no. 2 (2004): 259–89; p. 263.
- 113 Administrator’s Office, ‘Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa’, Chapter X, p. 49; the British translate comments made by Karl Dove, and reproduced in Paul Rohrbach, *Deutsche Kolonialwirtschaft, kulturpolitische Grundsätze für die Rassen- und Missionsfragen* (Berlin-Schöneberg: Buchverlag der “Hilfe”, 1907), 286.
- 114 Hugo Von François, *Nama und Damara* (Magdeburg: G. Baensch, 1895), 77; 159. In this case, Witbooi was characterized as having no sense or capacity for understanding how to read a map in order to know his rightful place.
- 115 Fisch, ‘Africa as *terra nullius*’, 349.
- 116 Ibid., 357.
- 117 Heywood and Maasdorf, *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, 115–16. Hendrik Witbooi, ‘Witbooi to Hermanus van Wyk, Letter #103; #213 in original’; dated 18 April 1893.
- 118 Witbooi, ‘Witbooi to Hermanus van Wyk’.
- 119 Ibid.
- 120 Heywood and Maasdorf, ‘4 August, 1882, Hendrik Witbooi to the Magistrate of Walvis Bay’, 116–17. Hendrik Witbooi, ‘Witbooi to Pastor Heidmann, Letter # 104’.
- 121 Witbooi, ‘Witbooi to Pastor Heidmann, Letter # 104’.
- 122 Ibid.
- 123 Lau, ‘Introduction’, xiii.
- 124 Administrator’s Office, ‘Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa’, Chapter VI, p. 28. The *Blue Book* stated that the promotion occurred because of von François’ service in the colony and demonstrated a principle that Woodruff Smith identified as a key factor in German colonialism, the ability to demonstrate skills in contexts from which one was barred in Prussia so that upon returning to Germany, one was promoted to a higher rank. Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, 134.
- 125 Wallace, *The History of Namibia*, 129.
- 126 Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 16.
- 127 Ibid., 16–17.
- 128 Administrator’s Office, ‘Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa’.
- 129 Ibid.
- 130 Wallace, *The History of Namibia*.
- 131 Paul G. Pierpaoli, ‘Theodor Leutwein’, in *Modern Genocide: The Definitive Resource and Document Collection*, ed. Paul R. Bartrop, and Steven Leonard Jacobs (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood/ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2014), 1051.

- 132 Theodor Leutwein, *Die Kämpfe mit Hendrik Witbooi 1894 und Witbois Ende* (Leipzig: R. Doitländer Verlag, 2012). An excerpt from Leutwein's earlier memoir of his governorship in GSWA, the text reprints Leutwein's perspective on the war with Witbooi.
- 133 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter V, p. 26.
- 134 Karl A. Yambert, 'Hoornkrans Massacre', *Modern Genocide: The Definitive Resource and Document Collection*, 1047.
- 135 Theodor Leutwein, 'Letter #110, Leutwein to Witbooi, Keetmanshoop, 9 March 1894'. Reprinted in A. Heywood and E. Maaskorp, trans., *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers* (Windhoek: National Archives of Namibia, 1990), 122.
- 136 Hull, 'Military Culture and the Production of "Final Solutions" in the Colonies', only contextualized the term in relation to von Trotha's *Vernichtungsbefehl*.
- 137 Hull, 'Military Culture and the Production of "Final Solutions" in the Colonies', 147.
- 138 Ibid., 147–8.
- 139 Like Thomas Mann's hero, Hans Castorp, each one ran to his death to achieve the destruction of the enemy and the elevation of the empire's honour.
- 140 Hendrik Witbooi, 'Leutwein to Witbooi, #96b' (1894) in Georg Gugelberger, ed., *Nama Namibia: Diary and Letters of Nama Chief Hendrik Witbooi, 1884–1894* (Boston, MA: Africa Studies Center/Boston University, 1984), 106.
- 141 Gugelberger, ed., *Nama Namibia*.
- 142 Theodor Leutwein, 'Letter #112, Leutwein to Witbooi, Camp before Naukluft Mountains, 5 May 1894', reprinted in Heywood and E. Maaskorp, trans., *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, 124–5.
- 143 Schaller, 'From Conquest to Genocide, Colonial Rule in German Southwest Africa', 299. Schaller's use of 'culturelessness' should be understood as the *kulturlos* referenced by Dove.
- 144 Ibid.
- 145 The claim reduced European value systems to shared possessions. In this way, it reflected a modernist sensibility since culture became tangible through ownership, possession and objects. However, as far as Europeans were concerned, both prior to and after the Berlin Conference, culture was reducible in large part to such objects. Conference participants made specific claims that civilization was achieved through the imposition of farms, gardens and settlements. They were proof of shared European values.
- 146 For an overview of Herero legal standing in the courts, see Jeremy Sarkin, *Colonial Genocide and Reparations Claims in the 21st Century. The Socio-Legal Context of Claims under International Law by the Herero against Germany for Genocide in Namibia, 1904–1908* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger Security International, 2009).
- 147 Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting*, 67.
- 148 Memory Biwa, "'TOA TAMA !KHAMS GE' Remembering the War in Namakhoeland, 1903–1908' (Diss., University of Western Cape, 2010). Biwa's unpublished dissertation remains one of the few scholarly texts analysing Nama participation and loss during the war. Its importance to the field is immeasurable because of the extensive data mining and ethnographies that Biwa has collected and analysed.
- 149 Heinrich Vedder, 'The Herero', in *The Native Tribes of South West Africa*, ed. C. H. L. Hahn, H. Vedder and L. Fourie (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. 1928), 153–208; Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*.
- 150 While other colonial powers also engaged in colonialism, even when it was more profitable to pull up stakes and go home, the purpose for German 'continuity' remained tied to the subject's need to constitute himself through territorial *catharsis*.
- 151 Fisch, 'Africa as *terra nullius*', 374.

- 152 Timothy Snyder, *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2015). Snyder recently linked this ideology to the Nazis, and it is relevant here. Although several scholars in German and genocide studies have wanted to peg German colonialism and, by extension, all colonialisms to Nazism, their arguments have remained unconvincing to specialists in Holocaust studies and other variants of colonialism, usually because scholars have wanted to make the concentration camps of GSWA akin to, or the precursors of, the Nazis' concentration camps, and because they have claimed that the Nazis did nothing that Britain had not done before in South Africa, or that other colonial powers, including the Americans, had not done in their colonial pursuits. Of course, Hitler made just this argument as a rhetorical dodge during the Second World War, but this precedent of quoting Hitler for justification does not appear to be problematic to contemporary scholarship.

However, what should 'disturb the waters' is, I believe, a key component to Snyder's scholarship and yet to be taken seriously by historians. Snyder locates an ecological ideology that underpins much of Nazi policy on *Lebensraum* or 'living space' during the Holocaust. Historians usually discuss the policy as a physical expression that the Nazis used to annex physical spaces in other countries, notably Poland and Ukraine. Germans needed more physical space; it was a political aim because they wanted a buffer zone between the Reich and the Soviet Union. Therefore, they had to spread out from the Reich's borders and take back land they believed was, liminally, part of the *Alte Reich*. Modern scholars have construed the annexation of Poland to be a colonial movement and then have gone on to pinpoint nodes of connection between Poland and other colonized countries, so that Polish experiences of Nazi occupation are purported to be a continuous line from Nazism to European colonialism, the 'continuity thesis'. Snyder brought the discussion back to its metaphysical foundations and demonstrated that as a policy, *Lebensraum* had much more to do with the supposed conditions necessary for the constitution of the German subject. I have discussed this thesis in an earlier publication. See Kitty Millet, 'Caesura, Continuity and Myth: The Stakes of Tethering the Holocaust to German Colonial Theory', in *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Post-War Germany*, edited by Volker Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 93–119.

- 153 Isabel V. Hull, 'The Measure of Atrocity: The German War against the Hereros: The Military Campaign in German Southwest Africa, 1904–1907', *GHI Bulletin*, no. 37 (Fall 2005): 39.

Chapter 5

- 1 Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of the Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 2–3.
- 2 Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, 3. While Nandy's context was British India, he outlined steps that were relevant to the GSWA conditions.
- 3 Ibid. See also, Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages', 11. Moses introduced this aspect of the colonized's adoption of a shared code as a step in the conversion of the colonized into colonizer. Although he analysed Durkheim's theory of the sacred in this essay, he has also linked this idea back to Albert Memmi's thesis articulated in *Colonizer and Colonized*. See Albert Memmi, *Colonizer and Colonized* (New York: Beacon, 1992). Both scholars adapted Memmi's thesis articulated in *Colonizer and Colonized*.

- 4 Robinson, 'The Conference in Berlin and the Future of Africa, 1884–1885.'
- 5 Fitzmaurice, *Sovereignty, Property and Empire*, 6.
- 6 Karl Dove, *Deutsch-Südwestafrika Band 5*, reiterated this claim years later.
- 7 Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting*, 225. In 1904, this epistemological construct was applied to all space outside the 'preserve' or category to which a group belonged, so that the indigenous had to wear identity tags that specified where they belonged if they were outside their preserve. While Steinmetz's comments dealt with the reasons the Basters were exempted from wearing these tags, he still gave proof of an unbroken line of thought about the need to fetter indigenous groups to specific categories and areas.
- 8 Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 541–2. Leutwein made the point even more clearly.

For a deployment of several thousand German soldiers and several hundred million marks, we have completely destroyed the three economic values of the colony, mining, livestock and two-thirds of the native labor. ... After all, if we want a farm, we get an operation permit, we add to each farmer a protective guard 6 to 8 riders: so we have certainly made a bad deal. The farm may bring 6,000 marks a year, 6 to 8 riders costs annually 18,000 to 24,000 marks. Even the greatest optimist therefore cannot say that our policy of violence in South Africa has been rewarding. Our justification for them is therefore only that we have been forced to it. [My translation].

- More inclined to see their colony as an expression of their entitlements, German settlers forfeited profit for brutality. Leutwein legitimated their response with 'we have been forced to it'. Germans elected to be 'landlords' of a people and space that required them to leverage people, money and the future of the colony. Leutwein's perspective implied that had the Germans removed the explicit ideological components from their colonial policy, the Africans would have accepted, implicitly, their transformation into a helot labour force. They would have articulated German goals automatically, since these goals reflected 'evolution' and not 'personal bias'.
- 9 Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting*, 160. Steinmetz cited Leutwein's execution of Andries Lambert, the *kaptein* of the Khaus Nama, for a murder he 'neither committed, nor even ordered' in 1894. A German trader had been found murdered in Lambert's territory. When von François demanded that Lambert give him 'the murderer', Lambert had refused. Although von François had no evidence on which to base his demands, he suspected Lambert protected the killer. Since Lambert continued to ignore German authority, Leutwein decided he warranted the 'lesson' of his execution. In 1896, at the end of the Khaus-Ovambanderu campaign, he sent all of the Khaus Nama and Ovambanderu Herero to a prison camp after he defeated them. They served as 'exploited labor'.
- 10 Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 541.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Fitzmaurice, *Sovereignty, Property and Empire*, 275. Fitzmaurice calls it 'national Darwinism'.
- 13 With the exception of the von Trotha era from 1904 to 1905, this perspective did not change; it was not even modified. Karl Dove repeated it, and Heinrich Vedder incorporated it into his ethnography of Germany's necessary intervention into Africa.
- 14 Steinmetz, *The Devils' Handwriting*, 188. Although Steinmetz applied the term to the Herero, exclusively, Leutwein used *Vernichtung* with Witbooi. Leutwein, like his German peers, contended that all indigenous groups had to be transformed, not just the Herero. All the indigenous groups within GSWA were to 'completely change

- their habits and customs', and this transformation entailed becoming 'wage-earning people', 'coming closer to our own notions'. If any of these groups rejected 'this more rational way of life', there would be a "war of annihilation" (*Vernichtungskampf*). While the Germans did not see the Nama as agricultural labourers, they were imagined as integral to the *Schutztruppe*. Their skills were military and, as such, they were to be absorbed into army for the suppression of the other indigenous groups.
- 15 Zollmann, 'Communicating Colonial Order', 34–5. See also Ludwig Helbig and Werner Hillebrecht, *Growing to Nationhood: The Witbooi* (Windhoek: Cass Longman Namibia, 1992), 45. Helbig and Hillebrecht argued that 'National consciousness – the feeling of belonging to one nation – only grew from the common experience of colonialism'. In this respect, German intentions to alter GSWA so that it resembled 'a state' became the awareness that modern Namibia grew from the eradication of traditional polities in favour of citizenship in 'one nation'.
- 16 Leutwein admired Witbooi at different times in his tenure in GSWA because he believed the leader had 'adopted his values', that is, because Witbooi had fulfilled the very condition he applied to the Herero in 1895.
- 17 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter V, p. 33. Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 242. Leutwein's German text reveals the extent of this social transformation: '*Von der alten Selbständigkeit mußte ihnen schließlich nichts mehr bleiben als die Erinnerung. Hand in Hand mit einer solchen Friedens politik konnte in Fällen von Unbotmäßigkeit eine allmähliche Entwaffnung der Eingeborenen, verbunden mit Auflösung der Stammesverbände, gehen, wie das auch tatsächlich schon teilweise geschehen war*'. The new African identity derived from colonial transformation would no longer remember a previous existence; the 'independence' of that existence would recede into an unconscious realm. Africans would enter history with only the immediate sense of their service. Its memory would eventually inform their notion of history. They would go back to the founding of their new existence as an evolutionary necessity.
- 18 *Selbstständigkeit*.
- 19 Leutwein's perspective echoed the conclusions of the Berlin Conference. See Fisch, 'Africa as *terra nullius*', 368. 'If the protege is willing to lose his autonomy then he will reap the benefits of civilization'. My translation.
- 20 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 230. See also Tilman Dederling, "A Certain Rigorous Treatment of All Parts of the Nation." The Annihilation of the Herero in German South West Africa, 1904', in *Massacre in History*, ed. Mark Levene (London: Berghahn Books, 1999), 206. Dederling noted that increased Herero vulnerability to the colonialists' desire for more 'land and livestock resources' translated into a general sense of disempowerment, exemplified by the colonialists' constant meddling with the chiefs' authority, the European traders' encouragement to subsist on credit until the Herero 'found themselves at their mercy'. Finally, with the Herero unable to repay the credit, their herds never fully recovered from *rinderpest* and the country plunged into a massive drought, the traders took possession of the remaining Herero cattle, leaving them without resources and indigent, that is, they were left without any means of regaining fiscal autonomy.
- 21 Hull implied that Herero colonial resistance triggered German military thinking to imagine an even more awe-inducing punishment, an apodeictic *Vernichtung*. Unlike the colonial massacre, with its exhibition to demonstrate superiority to a necessary remnant of witnesses, the apodeictic *Vernichtung* suggested a liberation of the German colonial subject from the restraints of law and human morality. It was a breach of human sensibility, tacking transcendence to the necessary decimation of the enemy.

- 22 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 243.
- 23 Dederling, “A Certain Rigorous Treatment of All Parts of the Nation”, 207.
- 24 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 244 and Dederling, “A Certain Rigorous Treatment of All Parts of the Nation”, 208.
- 25 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 244.
- 26 Jeremy Sarkin-Hughes, *Germany’s Genocide of the Herero: Kaiser Wilhelm II, His General, His Settlers, His Soldiers* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer Ltd, 2011), 160.
- 27 Steinmetz, *The Devils’ Handwriting*, 13. Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 150.
- 28 This created, at least in von Trotha’s mind, the idea that the previous colonial empires, the British and the French, whose empires were built on slavery, had become weak and vulnerable to their own need for helot labour. The Germans needed land, but not African labourers to work it.
- 29 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 244.
- 30 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 238. As von Trotha prepared for his tenure in Southwest Africa, he studied the military reports filed by Leutwein’s predecessor, Curt von François, Leutwein and other officers leading up to the most recent events of May 1904, the outbreak of military skirmishes coinciding with the initial announcement of von Trotha’s appointment. Leutwein had been engaged in discrete battles against the Herero, battles punctuated by breaks in which Leutwein attempted to bring Maharero under German protection treaties once more. Unsuccessful in these attempts, the military governor had run out of ammunition, men and supplies as Leutwein engaged in a protracted war over unfamiliar terrain. The German soldiers were unprepared for the African warriors’ guerrilla warfare, in which Herero snipers lodged in trees prevented the Germans from using the sightlines necessary for their vastly superior weapons.
- 31 With the government’s absolution of obligations to its African inhabitants, its collective subject position, individuals were free to express their biases without fear of punishment. This licence of persecution established the state as the agent of ‘a coordinated plan of actions’. In other words, with von Trotha’s arrival, the German empire had moved discretely into genocide.
- 32 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 245. In the quote’s entirety, von Trotha described all indigenous groups in terms of ‘the aimless running around of a lot of rats’. He implied that the Herero had no aim in their warfare, no goals for their existence. They were outside of a narrative of progress, ‘aimlessly’ polluting the territory. Pool used the Von Trotha Archives, 315, *Abschrift der Tagebücher mit Anlagen u. Materielsammlung*, 10.
- 33 Hull, ‘The Measure of Atrocity’, 39–44; p. 41. Hull argued that each time von Trotha attacked, he attempted to reproduce the conditions for a singular, decisive defeat of the Herero.
- 34 Steinmetz, *The Devils’ Handwriting*, 13. While this is distinctly different from the ‘salvage colonialism’ the Germans practised in Samoa, Leutwein postulated that the transformation of the Herero, as well as all of the indigenous polities, into a subaltern class led, ultimately, to their ‘improvement’. Presumably, over decades, the process of Herero ‘uplift’ was to be played out against the backdrop of increased German wealth. In this respect, Leutwein’s theorization aligned with a previous generation’s idea of German colonialism in which the brutality of von François could coexist with German ideologies of ‘salvage colonialism’.
- 35 Vedder shared his perspective.
- 36 Helmut Bley, *Namibia under German Rule* (Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 1996), 39. Bley reproduced the obituary that Leutwein published after Witbooi’s death in which Leutwein expressed his admiration for ‘the little captain’. Although the indigenous,

overall, represented a socially inferior group, Leutwein imagined discrete individuals as potentially rising to the status of 'great men'. The ideology of the favoured subaltern espoused by the RMS missionaries, likewise, appealed to this sentiment throughout their tenure in GSWA and then Namibia. Moreover, these early missionaries considered it part of civilization's progress.

- 37 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 274. Von Trotha Archives, 315, *Abschrift der Tagebücher mit Anlagen u. Materielsammlung*, 73.

Now I have to ask myself how to end the war with the Hereros. The views of the governor and a few of the old Afrikaners on the one hand and my views on the other differ completely. The first wanted to negotiate for some time already and regard the Herero nation as necessary labour material for the future development of the country.

- 38 One cannot help but note the parallel here between the eighteenth-century Prussian designation of Jews in Germany as *natio*, a nation living among the Germans. Amos Elon identified that Germans were compelled to tolerate Jews legally in this suborned status because the term itself had 'no political connotation', 'there was no unified state' and German Jews still existed as a very small minority within the empire. See Amos Elon, *The Pity of It All, a Portrait of the German Jewish Epoch, 1743–1933* (New York: Macmillan, 2003), 23. In other words, at the time of German colonialism, Germany had central authority, 'nation' was a politicized term and their 'enemies' outnumbered them.
- 39 Dederling, "A Certain Rigorous Treatment of All Parts of the Nation", 208. See also Walter Nöhn, *Sturm über Siidwest: Der Hereroaufstand von 1904 – Ein düsteres Kapitel der deutschen kolonialen Vergangenheit Namibias* (Koblenz: Bernard u. Graefe, 1989), 205. Dederling quoted Nöhn.
- 40 While the von François and the Leutwein systems had practised massacre as a discrete instrument that would teach the remaining 'natives' to serve the Germans, von Trotha advocated an entirely different concept of the colony. Von Trotha's settlement was grounded in segregation. Africans were not to live in proximity to or come into contact with the Germans.
- 41 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 248. Von Trotha Archives, 315, *Abschrift der Tagebücher mit Anlagen u. Materielsammlung*, 54.
- 42 Pool appended one such story that had been shown on Namibian television. X, a member of South West Africa People's Organization, a Namibian political party, reproduced his grandmother's story of her flight through the Omaheke with Herero warriors. See Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 312.
- 43 Specifically, the soldiers became vulnerable because of the military stratagem that von Trotha had deployed: he had ordered them to plug the wells, to destroy any oases the fleeing Herero might use to return to the territory. These actions forced German troops deeper and deeper into the deserts in pursuit of their victims. It also left them without water and provisions, in excessive heat and dragging weaponry.
- 44 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 272. There are several debates about how the proclamation, the *Vernichtungsbefehl*, was issued. Citing an original copy from the National Archives in Botswana, Gewald (*Herero Heroes*) contended that the proclamation was first presented at the public hanging of thirty Herero warriors, and witnessed by thirty more Herero prisoners, who on receiving the proclamation were then driven into the Omaheke desert by gunfire. They had to clutch the proclamation (173). Lau ('Uncertain Certainties') disputed the hanging (4–5; 8). Dederling ("A Certain Rigorous Treatment of All Parts of the Nation") stated that it was read, initially, from a pulpit in a missionary church (211).

- 45 Dedering, "A Certain Rigorous Treatment of All Parts of the Nation", *ibid*.
- 46 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 226. According to Pool, von Trotha referred to the Herero practice of disfiguring corpses.
- 47 See Bley, *Namibia under German Rule*, 163–4. Bley quoted Rust, *Krieg u. Frieden im Hereroland* (1905), 385.
- 48 Von Trotha repeated the proclamation, with minor amendments, over and over again to his soldiers in subsequent days. The soldiers internalized their real mission: the destruction of the Herero people both as a group and as individuals.
- 49 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 273–4.
- 50 Von Trotha still acted within the tradition of colonialism, in the sense that he did not specify any other indigenous groups to be considered under the order.
- 51 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 281, Von Trotha Archives, 315, *Abschrift der Tagebücher mit Anlagen u. Materielsammlung*, 294: 'which I have already predicted in 1897 for East Africa in my reports. ... It is and remains a racial conflict, which all nations of this earth who wish to take up the economic black legacy are interested in. To apply the ploughshare before the end of the war is futile.' A striking element of von Trotha's remarks is his oblique reference to those who would convert Africans into a helot class of labour for the purpose of accruing wealth to the empire. By offering the 'ploughshare' to the Herero before 'the end of the war,' the 'alte Afrikaner' have imposed an untenable situation. They have created the conditions for the inferior to work alongside the German providing an opportunity to undermine German productivity, safety, and prosperity.
- 52 Jacques Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, trans. Cynthia Schoch (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 36. In this respect, Semelin's argument regarding the collapse of distinction between *ethnos* and *demos* is relevant.
- 53 Von Trotha's perspective was not uniformly accepted within Germany. While Berlin had authorized von Trotha to use his own methods to accomplish their aim, the German public grew disgusted with the images and stories of German atrocities.
- 54 Dove, *Deutsch-Südwestafrika Band 5*, 206. Dove argued that the predominantly male German population would 'fall' to vice through alcohol and the absence of women and children. They would become 'true Afrikaners' opting to live without the 'culture' (*Kultur*) and 'thinking' (*Denkweiss*) of the Europeans. Consequently, Dove envisioned the Africans' removal so that women could live in the colony, eventually bearing children and satisfying their husbands' sexual needs. Pureblooded families would follow and the colony serve its purpose.
- 55 Even Gewald and Silvester's *Words Cannot Describe* is an annotated version of the British document. Recently, narrative fragments of the experiences have been presented in interviews, and collected ethnographies from the children, now adults, whose parents and grandparents lived through Omaheke and Waterberg. See Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, xx.
- 56 George Steinmetz, 'The First Genocide of the 20th Century and Its Postcolonial Afterlives: Germany and the Namibian Ovaherero', *The Journal of the International Institute* 12, no. 2 (Winter 2005). Available online: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.4750978.0012.201>. Quoted in Steinmetz, the excerpt confirmed the Herero accounts with a record from the German military archives.
- When the rainy season started in March, First Lieutenant Schweinitz followed a broad trail through the Omaheke 'that could only have originated from the ... fleeing Hereros' finding there 'ever more numerous and larger collections of remnants of corpses, hundreds of men, women, and children lying together.' The path, he wrote, was lined with 'human skulls and skeletons.'

Anon., 'Der Verbleib der Herero seit dem Gefecht von Waterberg', *Militärwochenblatt*, no. 96 (1905): 2215. Of particular importance is the identification of the source as the 'Military Weekly' published in 1905.

- 57 These were the three main camps, but they were not the only camps constructed by the Germans in Namibia.
- 58 The British intended to prove that Germany had exceeded its reach by engaging in colonial abuses that even appalled the British, with their tolerance for such acts. Thus, the British started with a specific point, the Battle of Waterberg, deciding that this event was the emblematic moment when Germany moved beyond the pale of regular colonial abuse. They subsumed all indigenous insurrections under Waterberg.

Brigitte Lau, 'Uncertain Certainties: The Herero-German War of 1904', in *History and Historiography – Four Essays in Reprint*, ed. Brigitte Lau and Annemarie Heywood (Windhoek: Michael Scott Oral Records Project, 1995); Eckl Andreas, 'The Herero Genocide of 1904: Source-critical and Methodological Considerations', *Journal of Namibian Studies* 3 (2008): 31–61. Some scholars sidelined the narratives as 'compromised by their role in British propaganda' almost exclusively, because of their belated collection and their use as evidence against the Germans' retention of colonies after the First World War. To that end, the Germans published their own 'White Book' demonstrating that their actions were in the same vein as the British in their colonies in previous and current times. They did not dispute the accounts, only that they should be condemned for them since they acted as other colonial powers had done previously.

The problem with both objections is fairly obvious. On the one hand, the Herero who survived the Omahke as a dispossessed remnant were without real support in Botswana. The British had just concluded the Boer War in 1902 and were unwilling to do much more than allow the Herero to work in mines, as ranch hands, wherever they could get employment. Those in the camps were being worked and starved to death. No one was there to listen to their testimonies of abuse. In other words, the first opportunity to tell their narratives would have been after Germany's defeat in the First World War. On the other hand, the complaint that 'victor's justice' promoted these narratives did little to address their content. The sentiment that the world powers were all complicit in oppression did not make the Germans less culpable for their actions.

- 59 Herero accounts of this period are difficult to find and verify. Admittedly, many of the testimonies from Herero speakers appear either in the British *Blue Book*, compiled in 1918, in the court case the Herero brought against Deutsche Bank in 2001 in Delaware, and ethnographies passed on from family members many generations later. Much of the material is difficult to evaluate against the normal standards used to verify historical narrative, but such incapacity does not invalidate the testimonies. In fact, the narratives themselves repeat details and effects that also appear in German military accounts, like the aforementioned incident cited by Steinmetz (2005). These repeated details give us a sense of how a community perceiving itself under siege, at risk, reconstituted itself around certain images.
- 60 The importance of Kariko's experience is often lost in discussions of Kariko's testimony, because it happened so much earlier than the genocide.
- 61 Jeremy Silvester and Jan-Bart Gewald, *Words Cannot Be Found. German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 113–14.
- 62 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*.
- 63 Kariko lives with this realization: it inscribes a permanence of fear.
- 64 With this moniker, *alte Afrikaner officers*, von Trotha signified officers who not only preceded him in GSWA, but whose perspective mirrored the 'Leutwein system'. Thus,

- he discounted the officers' willingness to negotiate a surrender as part of Leutwein's obsolete programme and its failure in GSWA.
- 65 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 248. Von Trotha Archives, 315, *Abschrift der Tagebücher mit Anlagen u. Materielsammlung*, 137.
- 66 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 249. Von Trotha Archives, 315, *Abschrift der Tagebücher mit Anlagen u. Materielsammlung*, 137.
- 67 Silvester and Gewald, *Words Cannot Be Found*, 114.
- 68 Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*. This experience is very much akin to the 'social death' concept that Patterson identified in relation to slavery. As the British noted, the Germans were intent on seeing their colonies through the lens of slavery. See also G. W. Prothero, ed., Administrator's Office, *Treatment of Natives in the German Colonies* (London: HM Stationery Office, 1920), Chapter IV, p. 20. See also Biwa's discussion of Simon Kooper, a Nama *kaptein* under Witbooi, who repeated Witbooi's request for British control of the territory.
- 69 Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, 205. Maharero sent his sons, Wilhelm and Samuel, to Berlin to assure Germans of the Herero's loyalty.
- 70 Oermann, *Mission, Church and State Relations*, 105.
- 71 George Steinmetz, 'From "Native Policy" to Exterminationism: German Southwest Africa, 1904, in Comparative Perspective', *Theory and Research in Comparative Social Analysis*, Paper 30 (Westwood, CA: UCLA, 2005), 4.
- 72 Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung 1 des Grossen Generalstabs, *Die Kämpfe der deutschen Truppen in Südwestafrika*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn), 214.
- 73 Hendrik Witbooi, 'Letter #147, Witbooi to Hermanus van Wyk, Rietmond, 1 October 1904', reprinted in Heywood and Maaskorp, trans., *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, 155–6.
- 74 Hendrik Witbooi, 'Letter #148, Christian Goliath to Witbooi, Berseba, 2 October 1904', reprinted in Heywood and Maaskorp, trans., *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, 156.
- 75 Biwa, "TOA TAMA !KHAMS GE", 134. Biwa uses the current transliteration of Nama language for Khoikhoi, Khoisan in Namibia today.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Ibid., 143.
- 78 Ibid., 134.
- 79 Biwa, 'TOA TAMA !KHAMS GE', 90.
- 80 Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 186.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid., p. 185.
- 83 Ibid.
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives of German South-West Africa', Chapter XX, p. 101.
- 86 Typographical error in translation, 1904.
- 87 Vedder, 'The Herero', 161–2.
- 88 Ibid., 205. While Vedder's phrase referred to the period after 1915, he made similar statements regarding the outcome of the Herero war, specifically. Vedder's comments resonated with Nandy's *The Intimate Enemy* depiction of colonialism's longevity. Colonialism was used literally by Vedder to paper over genocide.
- 89 Vedder, 'The Herero', 200.
- 90 Ibid., 164.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 While there were traditional polities on reserves, they never reached the numbers or the influence they had prior to the insurrections. This realization was the basis

- for their subsequent legal suits for reparations. See Sarkin, *Colonial Genocide and Reparations Claims in the 21st Century*.
- 93 Sarkin, *Colonial Genocide and Reparations Claims in the 21st Century*, 28. Sarkin cited the 1989 census prior to Namibian independence.
- 94 By 2011, Namibian censuses refocused their attention on Namibians as a collective body; tribal differences were important for cultural reasons, but not for assessing Namibia's articulation of a standard of living. The new categories proposed assessments pertinent to other African countries: income, residence, birth rates and death rates.

Part 3

- 1 For an overview of the Holocaust, see Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination, Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006). For a treatment of Iceland's actions during the Holocaust, see Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson, 'Iceland, the Jews, and Anti-Semitism, 1625–2004', *Jewish Political Studies Review* 16 (Fall 2004): 3–4.
- 2 Alan E. Steinweis, 'Hans Hinkel and German Jewry, 1933–1941', in *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 38, ed. John Grenville and Julius Carlebach (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3.
- 3 Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 12. Friedländer identified the elimination of 'Jewish spirit' in all cultural venues as the Nazis' first priority after Hitler's election.
- 4 Jakob Wasserman, *My Life as a German and a Jew* (New York: Allen and Unwin, 1934), 6.
- 5 Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), 12.
- 6 Aly, *Why the Germans? Why the Jews?*, 13.
- 7 Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, 271–3.
- 8 Ibid., 295.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Steinweis, 'Hans Hinkel and German Jewry, 1933–1941', 3.
- 11 Koontz, *The Nazi Conscience*, 8.
- 12 Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews. 1933–1939*, 3, 73–112.
- 13 Victoria Khiterer, 'Introduction', in *The Holocaust: Memories and History*, ed. Victoria Khiterer and Ryan Barack (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2014), 9.
- 14 Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, 27, 154. Friedländer provided several instances of such murders. For the preconditions for burning Jews within their synagogues, see Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews. 1933–1939*, 295. In that account, German women, watching the burning of one synagogue, were disappointed that there were no longer Jews inside it.
- 15 Although camps pre-existed this period, they had, as Wachsmann recently demonstrated, multiple uses, that is, they were not exclusively designed to murder. See Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Concentration Camps* (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 2015), 1–6.
- 16 For the number of camps in the KL universe, see Geoffrey P. Megargee, ed., *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2009), 1666.

- 17 Peter Longerich, *The Holocaust, the Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 305–10.
- 18 Longerich, *The Holocaust*, 307.
- 19 Several scholars have read Wannsee as the moment when Jewish extermination crystallized around the idea of the death camp and have taken this ‘crystallization process’ as evidence that the Nazis did not intend to exterminate the Jews prior to that meeting. The premise suggests that extermination either was ‘accidental’ or, at least, ‘unintentional’, because Nazi leadership had not previously identified the death camp specifically as the means by which they would exterminate Jews. However, to justify this assertion, they had to recast Nazi rhetoric as essentially without intent. The Nazis had announced their intention to murder Jews as a rhetorical gambit without meaning.
- 20 Longerich, *The Holocaust*, 307.
- 21 See Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 74–5 for an overview of the T-4 programme. The T-4 referred to Hitler’s euthanasia programme, located on Tiergasse 4, in Berlin.
- 22 For an overview of the T4 program and its temporal link to the death camps, see Longerich, *The Holocaust*, 278–81.
- 23 Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987). Arad reached this conclusion based on vom dem Bach’s testimony, suggesting that the decision to gas Jews only began to circulate as a thesis in 1941. However, recently Khiterer challenged that perspective in light of the T-4 programme. She argued that the idea of extermination of the Jews by gas was likely imagined in early 1939. See Khiterer, ‘Introduction’, 9.
- 24 Wachsmann, *KL*, 293. Chelmno went into operation on 8 December 1941.
- 25 Although, as Wachsmann noted, the programme ‘Operation Reinhard’ encompassed, eventually, several other camps, in its initial conception it was restricted to Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka.
- 26 Tomas Vojta, ‘Rethinking the Elimination of Traces of Mass Murder at the Treblinka Extermination Camp’, in Khiterer et al., *The Holocaust*, 41–63. Vojta argued that the cremation of the bodies began in early 1942 as an experimental project at Treblinka.
- 27 Vojta, ‘Rethinking the Elimination of Traces of Mass Murder’, 62–3. Vojta noted that the region’s residents continued this practice for several years until they had ‘obliterated’ all sense of the dimensions of the original pits of ashes. Observers of this practice remarked that bone fragments, belongings and bricks from the original buildings of the camp were strewn everywhere.
- 28 This conclusion was written in Polish on the back of the picture of this particular pit of ashes. Special thanks to Magdalena Zolkos for her assistance on this translation.
- 29 Wachsmann, *KL*, p. 258.

Chapter 6

- 1 Martin Heidegger, *Martin Heidegger: Überlegungen VII-XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938/39) Gesamtausgabe v. 95* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014), 97. Unpublished translation into English by Richard Polt.
- 2 Moses, ‘Conceptual Blockages’, 26.
- 3 Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1889–1936: Hubris* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 221–42.
- 4 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston, MA: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1941; published by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin), 6 May 1921, p. 531.

- 5 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 532.
- 6 Rahel Levin used a similar construction to describe how she emerged as a German subject in the world. See Lilliane Weissberg, 'Writing on the Wall: Letters of Rahel Varnhagen', *New German Critique*, no. 36 (Autumn 1985): 157–73; p. 172.
- 7 Davis, *Germans of Jewish Descent*, 1. As Davis noted, Germans were aware that the abuses done to Africans were a displacement of what they wanted to do to Jews. Davis reprinted the debate in the Reichstag between Auguste Bebel and Carl Peters over Peters' murder of his black mistress and her lover.
- 8 'Entente' refers to the 'Entente Cordiale'. England, France and Russia formed an alliance to oppose Germany, Austria and Italy. See Bernadotte Schmitt, *Triple Alliance and Triple Entente* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1971).
- 9 His reference reminded Germans of their forfeiture of colonies after the First World War. German soldiers returned from German Southwest Africa (GSWA) with African wives and children. These families, too, were referred to as the 'Rhineland Bastards'; the 'Bastards' moniker itself was a term for a mixed indigenous group in GSWA. The term alluded to the Baster population coming from the Cape Colony, in which Khoikhoi and Boer marriages produced a mixed-race group that had migrated to Southwest Africa prior to German colonization. The Baster group had no purchase within Boer society, but within the German colony, they had a 'subaltern' existence with some degree of autonomy.
- 10 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 598.
- 11 This war, dating from the Middle Ages, saw Poles, in addition to almost all of Europe's nations, fighting a religious war across Germany. See Elon, *The Pity of It All*, 1743–1933, 14–15. Elon noted that Prussia 'lay in ruins' because of the Thirty Years' War, and Frederick I was eager to rebuild by exploiting the Jews fleeing their expulsion from Austria in 1669. Frederick offered Jews his 'mercy' by permitting each refugee 'to pay him two thousand thaler (roughly equivalent to ninety thousand dollars today)' in order to become '*Schutzjuden* (protected Jews)'. The status enabled them to live, but without visible signifiers of Judaic social institutions, like synagogues, and without the civil protections of citizenship. They were tolerated in German cities, because they paid an inflated tax on their existence. They were prohibited from exhibiting the signs of settlement. Even though reforms occurred in 1808, 1812 and 1848, and full emancipation in 1871, the residual strategy of paying for tolerance punctuated German Jewish experience.
- 12 Georg Schott, *Das Volkbuch vom Hitler* (München: H. A. Wiesmann, 1924), 18.
- 13 Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2008), 10.
- 14 Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, 3–4.
- 15 Several scholars concluded that Hitler felt the German people to be 'colonized' by Jews through these reforms; Heidegger's *Black Notebooks* confirmed the attitude, as well. However, this is only half of the equation. Hitler looked at these reforms as an imposition of modernity and enlightenment that had occluded a Jewish conspiracy to push Germans ever further away from their pure, Teutonic, Aryan being.
- 16 Wachsmann, *KL*, 141.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid., 140.
- 19 Ibid., p. 141.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid., 142.
- 22 Millet, 'Caesura, Continuity and Myth', 104.

- 23 Daniel E. Rogers, 'Restoring a German Career, 1945–1950: The Ambiguity of Being Hans Globke', *German Studies Review* 31, no. 2 (May 2008): 303–24; p. 303.
- 24 Hans Globke, *Commentary on the Nuremberg Race Laws* (1935). Quoted in Koontz, *Nazi Conscience*, 163.
- 25 Koonz omitted the last line of the commentary excerpt, but the line demonstrated how the Nazis constructed a racial hierarchy on which the Jews did not appear. The Nazis adumbrated races in terms of their inferiority to the Aryan master race. Within that hierarchy, any number of inferiors could exist with roles of service to their superiors, the Germans. However, Jews were never part of that racial hierarchy. They were prohibited from existence.
- 26 Robert Stackelberg and Nancy Winkle, eds, 'National Political Course for the Armed Forces, January 15–23, 1937', in *Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Texts* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 206.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Heidegger, GA 95: 96–97 (*Überlegungen VIII*, 4) (all GA 95 entries date from 1938 to 1939), unpublished trans. Richard Polt. Heidegger was appointed by the Nazis to be rector of the University of Freiberg in 1933, a handful of months after Hitler came to power, but as his biographer, Rüdiger Safranski, declared, Heidegger was not an 'anti-Semite'. In his analysis of Safranski's remarks and Heidegger's sympathies with the Nazis, Peter Trawny critiqued this logic by pointing out that even though Heidegger had had at least one Jewish lover" and had attracted many Jewish students to his lectures in the 1920s, even though the Nazis considered him their 'philosopher'. See Peter Trawny, *Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 2.
- 29 Heidegger, GA, ibid.
- 30 GA 95: 97 (*Überlegungen VIII*, 5). Heidegger, trans. Richard Polt.
- 31 Trawny, *Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy*, 94.
- 32 Quoted in Peter Trawny, *Freedom to Fail: Heidegger's Anarchy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 13.
- 33 Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts: eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit* (München: Hoheneichen-verlag, 1939).
- 34 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 400. Quoted in Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, 'The Nazi Myth', trans. Brian Holmes, *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1990): 291–312; p. 309. It was the difference for Hitler between *Kulturträger*, 'the bringer of civilization', and *Kulturbegründer*, *Kulturbeschöfer*, 'the founder of civilization'. For a further analysis of the Nazis' belief that Jews did not constitute a race, see Millet, 'Caesura, Continuity and Myth'.
- 35 Through the Degenerate Art exhibits of the 1930s, Hitler intended that Germans would learn of the cultural inferiority of modern aesthetics influenced by Jewish taint.
- 36 Rosenberg, *Mythus*, 81; Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, 'The Nazi Myth', 308.
- 37 Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, 'The Nazi Myth', 308.
- 38 The war began in September 1939.
- 39 Alon Confino, *A World without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 225.
- 40 Quoted in Confino, *A World without Jews*.
- 41 See Raul Teitelbaum and Yvette Shumacher, 'Hans Globke and the Eichmann Trial: A Memoir', *Israel: Journal of Foreign Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2011): 79–86, doi 10.1080/23739770.2011.11446462. After the war, Globke rehabilitated his career by pointing out that he had never been a party member, and he served in Adenauer's administration directly after the war. His position was later challenged at the

Eichmann trial when Servatius, Eichmann's attorney, filed an appeal of his client's conviction. Although Eichmann's refrain that 'he was just following orders' has become a popular cliché, at the trial, Servatius identified Globke as one of 'Those engaged in legislation' that had 'not been required to answer for it'. Teitelbaum quoted Haim Gouri's written assessment on 23 March 1962, of Servatius's demand in *Facing the Glass Booth* that 'Auschwitz began at Nuremberg'. Gouri's text was a 'real-time' account of events during the trial.

- 42 Kershaw, "Working Towards the Führer".
- 43 Jürgen Matthäus and Frank Bajohr, *The Political Diary of Alfred Rosenberg and the Onset of the Holocaust* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 371.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Scholars were never able to pinpoint the exact date that Hitler gave the extermination order, only that it occurred sometime in early 1941.
- 47 Confino, *A World without Jews*, 226.
- 48 Longerich, 'Wannsee Conference', 305. See Wachsmann, *KL*, 295. Wachsmann describes the outline of Jewish extermination as taking place over lunch. This reference should not be overlooked; it goes to the heart of the idea of Jewish extermination as a central concept organizing the Nazi ethos. The Nazis regarded the elimination of the Jews as a *fait accompli*.

There has been speculation as to why Heydrich convened the conference. Arad argued that Himmler had been disturbed by an event late in 1941. Himmler had accompanied the *Einsatzkommando* in their disposal of 100 Jews in Minsk. The officer in charge, vom dem Bach, related that the SS commandant 'looked down on the ground' while the unit shot the Jews at close range. Vom dem Bach complained that the 'men in this commando' were damaged, not only for the rest of war effort, but for 'the rest of their lives'. Arad posited that Himmler had demanded the conference to determine a more holistic way to murder Jews, so that the sensibilities of the Reich's soldiers were spared. Quoted in Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 8. Arad quotes Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 218–19, 646. Christian Gerlach disputed the relevance and the accuracy of this episode. See Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrussland 1941 bis 1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1999), 52.

- 49 Longerich, 'Wannsee Conference', 306.
- 50 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 70.
- 51 Ibid., 12.
- 52 The T-4 referred to Hitler's euthanasia programme located on Tiergasse 4, in Berlin.
- 53 At Wannsee, the death camps were referred to as transit camps in the Minutes under Heydrich's orders to Eichmann. The idea was to communicate on paper through euphemism while at the meeting itself; the principals were explicit about their intentions. See Longerich, 'Wannsee Conference', 305–10.
- 54 By July 1942, Himmler issued the order to Frank for the 'resettlement of the entire Jewish population in the General Government'. See Wachsmann, *KL*, 291. Wachsmann preferred to call the Reinhard camps 'Globocnik camps', since the Nazis also referred, on occasion, to Auschwitz and Majdanek as part of Operation Reinhard. However, the convention is still to refer to the three main camps as 'Reinhard camps'.
- 55 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 177. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) revised the number to 434,508.
- 56 Ibid., 171.

- 57 Ibid., 101.
- 58 Kurt Gerstein delivered 'The Gerstein Report' after his arrest and imprisonment at Cherche-Midi in Paris. It was his confession, and while some scholars argued, there were many 'ambiguities' that indicated how Gerstein absolved himself as he indicted his fellow Nazis, his report remains one of the few eyewitness accounts by a Nazi officer to the murders committed at the Reinhard camps. See Rothfels, Hans, 'Augenzeugenbericht zu den Massenvergasungen', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1. Jahrg., 2. H. (April, 1953), 177–94, 188–9. Rothfels' version is incomplete. See also Saul Friedländer, *Kurt Gerstein: The Ambiguity of Good* (New York, 1969), 128–9.
- 59 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 101.
- 60 Ibid., 184. The term was *Der Judenstadt*. See Wachsmann, *KL*, 99. Wachsmann's analysis suggested that Nazi leadership envisioned the KL system in its earliest iterations as 'small cities of terror'. Stangl's 'Jewish city' of the gas chamber, connected to this antecedent, suggests the differences among the 'worlds' the Nazis wanted to create for their victims. Stangl was also commandant of Sobibor from April 1942 until August, when he was ordered to take over Treblinka from its first commandant, Eberl.
- 61 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 177; USHMM estimated that close to one million people died in Treblinka's gas chambers.
- 62 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 185.
- 63 Gitta Sereny, *Into that Darkness: An Examination of Conscience* (New York: Random House, 1974), 200.
- 64 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*. Christian Wirth actually posed the question of how to get rid of 'this garbage' to Stangl as they looked at 'pits full of blue-black corpses'.
- 65 Quoted in Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*. The full transcript of this interview was the basis of Sereny, *Into that Darkness*, 200–1.
- 66 Sereny, *Into that Darkness*, 200.
- 67 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 42. The 'tube' was a tunnel erected purposely to shunt Jews from camps' 'reception areas' to the extermination zone, the gas chambers. All three camps had 'tubes'. It was Stangl's practice to watch the Jews run through 'the tube' to their extermination. He did this at both Sobibor and Treblinka.
- 68 Sereny, *Into that Darkness*. Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 84–6. Arad identified Treblinka's 'tube' as a 'fenced path' that led directly to the gas chambers. It was designed primarily for the female prisoners, who had to run naked through it to the promised 'showers'. Abraham Goldfarb, one of Treblinka's few survivors, remembered that he could 'hear the women's screams' throughout the camp. Arad also noted that guards would beat the women with an iron bat, whip them and stab at them with a sword to get them to run faster to the gas chambers.
- 69 Sereny, *Into that Darkness*.
- 70 Blatt and Wiernik referenced 'cargo' as a word repeatedly used for Jews.
- 71 Stangl also served at Sobibor, and one of its few survivors was responsible for his arrest after the war. Stangl had been smuggled out of Germany, and lived with his family in Brazil, when he was discovered by Stanislaw Szmajzner on the street. See Jules Schelvis, *Sobibor: A History of a Nazi Death Camp* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 262. For the evidence he provided authorities, see Szmajzner's unpublished narrative, 'Hell in Sobibor, A Tragedy of a Teenage Jew', Holocaust Center, SF archive. Unfortunately, I received the full manuscript too late to include it here.
- 72 Quoted in Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 186. Arad reproduced Sereny, *Into that Darkness*, 201.

- 73 Stangl had been a part of the T-4 staff prior to his appointments to Sobibor and Treblinka and, presumably, prior to his police training, if that training occurred at Trawniki, the training centre used for the Reinhard camps.
- 74 Kühne, *Belonging and Genocide*, 3.
- 75 See Michael Bryant, *Eyewitness to Genocide: The Operation Reinhard death camp trials, 1955–1966* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 71. Bryant demonstrated in the example of Belzec, that ‘seven of eight Belzec guards indicted by the Munich prosecutor’ successfully convinced the courts that they had harboured no personal bias against the Jews, ‘that they had acted under duress’, ‘that their activities within the camp did not involve murdering the Jews’, that ‘they had exploited every available option to secure reassignments’ and ‘that they had performed their tasks in a spirit of refractory opposition’.
- 76 Sereny, *Into that Darkness*, 208–9. Quoted in Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 116. Arad abbreviated the recognition scene between the two men, but Suchomel gave a detailed account. Suchomel became well known as the Nazi guard in Lanzmann’s film, *Shoah*, who was secretly recorded discussing details of Jewish extermination.
- 77 Sereny, *Into that Darkness*, 208.
- 78 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*.
- 79 Sereny, *Into that Darkness*, 208.
- 80 Ibid., 209.
- 81 Quoted in Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 133.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 Martin Gilbert, *Holocaust Journey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 215. Gilbert’s list does not specify who the other three survivors were. Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination* and Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka* identify only two survivors of Belzec. These two, Reder and Hirszman, were the only individuals who were able to give actual testimony about the death camp. See also Chris Webb, *The Belzec Death Camp* (Stuttgart: Ibidem Verlag, 2016), 93–6. Webb identified eight survivors, but several of these either did not survive the war, or their whereabouts after the war were unknown. Thus their testimonies about escapes from Belzec could not be substantiated unless they were mentioned by others, as in the case of Mina Astman, who Rudolf Reder referenced.
- 84 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 264–5. Hirszman was killed in 1946, and his death left only Reder to testify at the Reinhard trials. Reder was unable to identify the one Belzec guard, Josef Oberhauser, ever convicted of any crime.
- 85 Thomas Toivi Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 111.
- 86 Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor*, 235.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Ibid., 236.
- 90 In her testimony against Frenzel, Esther Raab noted that he accused her of lying about him in court and was extremely angry that she remembered him killing an infant. See Chapter 8 of this text, the ‘Esther Raab’ testimony.
- 91 Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor*.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 H. G. Adler, ‘Ideas Toward a Sociology of the Concentration Camp’, *American Journal of Sociology* 63, no. 5 (March 1958): 513–22. Both in fiction and scholarly essay, Adler

repeated how the ruse of ‘moral rehabilitation’ circulated among the Nazis’ victims. His novel, *The Journey*, was particularly acute on this point. The Lustig family relied on the fiction of colonialism, because its alternative, immediate death, was too much to imagine.

- 94 Longerich, ‘Wannsee Conference’, 151–9.
- 95 Ruth Klüger, *Weiter Leben* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1992), 71–88.
- 96 Jorge Semprun, *Semprun, Wiesel: Se taire est impossible* (Madrid: Editions Mille et une nuits, 1995), 17. It was a statement repeatedly made by both men, the survivor of Auschwitz and the survivor of Buchenwald.
- 97 Longerich, ‘Wannsee Conference’, 307.

Chapter 7

- 1 Nicholas Wachsmann designated these camps ‘Globocnik camps’, because Odilo Globocnik was the police chief of the Lublin district in the General Government where the camps were located. He had formal jurisdiction over them, and he had agitated Berlin for them to be built. Wachsmann also used the term to distinguish, in Nazi documents, these three camps from Auschwitz and Majdanek, at times also incorporated in Operation Reinhard. Since most scholarship prior to 2015 used ‘Reinhard’ as the designator for these camps, and since I examined each camp specifically, I decided to use the scholarly accepted designator of ‘Reinhard’ rather than Wachsmann’s more precise ‘Globocnik’. See Wachsmann, *KL*, 293.
- 2 Although the ostensible aim of the Reinhard camps was the elimination of Jews from all sectors of the General Government, the Nazis were not averse to killing Jews from Central and Western Europe at them. Survivors from Sobibor and Treblinka reference, often enough, the arrival on passenger trains of French and Dutch Jews, who believed they were to be resettled on the Reich’s eastern borders.
- 3 Robin O’Neill, *Belzec, the Forgotten Camp*, 2007. Unpublished account by a British historian, archived through the Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team (HEART). Available online: <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/trials/belzectrials.html>.
- 4 The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) revised it at just under 500,000.
- 5 Martin Gilbert, *Holocaust Journey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 215. Wachsmann cited three survivors to give testimony about Belzec, but did not identify who the third narrator was. See Wachsmann, *KL*, 293, n. 12.
- 6 Rudolf Reder, *Bełżec* (Kraków: Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, 1946 and 1999). Page numbers from 43–68 refer to the Polish edition of 1946; page numbers from 116–143 refer to the English translation, bound with that edition in 1999.
- 7 Reder, *Bełżec*, 43, 116.
- 8 Ibid., 44
- 9 Ibid., 45, 118–120.
- 10 Ibid., 46, 121.
- 11 Ibid., 46–7, 130. Reder explained the process more fully.

We dug the pits, the enormous mass graves, and dragged the bodies. . . . We dug with shovels and there was also a machine that loaded sand and lifted it above ground level. This machine threw the sand out at the side of the grave. A sandpile formed which was used to cover the graves when they were filled with corpses. About 450 people were always occupied with the graves. It took a week to dig one grave. The most horrible thing for me was that they ordered us to put

corpses a meter above a grave that was already full and dump more sand – then thick black blood seeped out of the graves and flooded the whole surface like the sea. We had to walk across from one edge of a grave to the other, to get to another grave. Our legs sank in the blood of our brothers, we were treading on mounds of corpses.

- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid., 49, 121.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid., 119–20.
- 16 Ibid., 53, 136. Survivors from all three Reinhard camps related similar experiences. Arad cited Abraham Goldfarb's account, in which women were forced to run naked through the 'tube' to the gas chambers. The guards beat them, urging them to run 'faster' because 'others have to use the showers too', 'their screams ... heard far off in other sections of the camp'. See Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 84–6.
- 17 Reder, *Belzec*, 49, 122.
- 18 Ibid., 54, 126–7.
- 19 Ibid., 49–50, 123.
- 20 Ibid., 59, 132–3.
- 21 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 371.
- 22 Quoted in Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor*, 113.
- 23 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid. See also Christian Webb, *The Belzec Death Camp: History, Biographies, Remembrance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 89. Webb quotes Arad and dates this testimony to 1945. Webb stated that it was given to the Allies. Arad left it undated.
- 26 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*.
- 27 Ibid., xxx. Arad's reference is the standard estimate, although the Polish Central Commission of War Crimes calculated 250,000. See Richard Rashke, *Escape from Sobibor* (New York: Delphinium Books, 2012), xx.
- 28 Stanislaw Szmajzner, *Inferno em Sobibor: a tragédia de um adolescente judeu* (Rio de Janeiro: Edicoes Bloch, 1968). Unpublished English translation by Lucy de Lima (Coimbra Brasilia, Brazil, 1979). Courtesy of the Archives at the Holocaust Center of San Francisco.
- 29 Szmajzner, *Inferno em Sobibor*, 112.
- 30 Ibid., 123.
- 31 Ibid., 125.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid., 148.
- 34 Ibid., 149.
- 35 Ibid., 144.
- 36 Ibid., 150.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 While many scholars have discussed the sadistic pleasure the Nazis exhibited whenever they tortured, killed and humiliated Jews, only Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe linked this display back to the German *darstellen* in Kant. Lacoue-Labarthe demonstrated that the Kantian project of subject constitution had been commandeered by the Nazis and pressed into service as a justification for genocide.
- 40 Szmajzner, *Inferno em Sobibor*, 240.

- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid., 250.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 USHMM Holocaust Archives, RG-50.030.0184.trs.en, pp. 5–6, unpublished.
- 46 Quoted in Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 36. Arad cites Yad Vashem Archive A-361, p. 4, ‘testimony of Dov Freiberg’.
- 47 In this respect, the Nazis were careful to construct the sites to appear as colonial settlements, both to deceive their victims and to enable a narrative of colonization to circulate about their intentions. For an analysis of colonization as a ‘farming’ project, see the historical overview of the concept in Margaret Kohn’s entry for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Available online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/colonialism/>.
- 48 RG-50.030.0184.trs.en, 9.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Ibid., 12.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ibid., p. 13.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid., 14.
- 55 Ibid., 15.
- 56 Ibid., 16.
- 57 Ibid., 20.
- 58 Ibid., 24.
- 59 Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor*, 150.
- 60 Ibid., 153.
- 61 Ibid., 232–3. Blatt stated that there were fifty-eight survivors from Sobibor, overall.
- 62 Jakob Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka: An Inmate Who Escaped Tells the Torturous Facts* (New York: American Representation of the General Jewish Workers’ Union of Poland, 1944), 5.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, 6. Selections collected Jews from neighbourhoods, and cities, for deportation.
- 65 Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, 8.
- 66 Charlotte Delbo and Jean Améry commented extensively on the realization of the morally compromised *sensus communis*. For Delbo, she had to reject at Auschwitz the unarticulated givenness of the *sensus communis*. All humans did not ‘share’ a sense of the human. The ‘shared sense’ was the destruction of the inmate at the death camp who hoped to survive. Améry came to a similar conclusion, also at Auschwitz. He posited a different ‘shared sense’ at the death camp, in which its victims were forced to confront the ‘manifold of death’ rather than the ‘manifold of life’. See Charlotte Delbo, *None of Us Will Return* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 60–1. Jean Améry, *At the Mind’s Limits: Contemplations of a Survivor of Auschwitz and its Realities*, trans. Sydney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 1–20. For an in-depth analysis of Améry and the ‘shared sense’, see Kitty Millet, ‘Contemplating Jean Améry’s Loss of Transcendence’, in *On Jean Améry: Philosophy of Catastrophe*, ed. Magdalena Zolkos (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 21–38.
- 67 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 87.

- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Ibid., 88. Due to the camp not being able to receive the transports, Jewish victims in cattle cars were held at way stations, without fresh air, water or food. The freight cars began to heat up, and the people within them died in numbers. These deaths compromised the secrecy of the camp, since more Jews died in the freight cars, stranded at way stations, than the Nazis intended.
- 70 Wiernik, *A Year in Treblinka*, 8–9.
- 71 Ibid., 9.
- 72 Ibid., 10.
- 73 Ibid., 10–11.
- 74 Ibid., 18.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 Ibid., 26.
- 79 Ibid., 29.
- 80 Ibid. Whether or not Wiernik's calculations were correct, the important element here was what he imagined as the Nazis' goal.
- 81 Ibid., 30.
- 82 Ibid., 29–30.
- 83 Ibid., 29.
- 84 Ibid., 39.
- 85 Ibid., 39.
- 86 Ibid., 44–5.
- 87 Avraham Bomba, RG-50.030.0033, 'Interview with Avraham Bomba' (Washington, DC: US Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1990), 7.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 The only way out of this traumatic repetition had been the displacement of memory, but Lanzmann's film, *Shoah*, implied that the investment in memory's displacement continued to inflict damage on the victims. In this respect, 'forgetting the past' advanced several social and political agendas, none of which addressed the world left behind by the Nazis. By the time his film ended, viewers were left with the central question of how to remember what had happened to the Jews, and by extension, the Poles, the Nazis, Europe, when there was nothing left, physically, but the semblance of a world untouched by the Holocaust.
- 91 RG-50.030.0033, 'Interview with Avraham Bomba', 9.
- 92 Bomba, n. 89: 9.
- 93 Ibid., 11.
- 94 Ibid.
- 95 Ibid.
- 96 Ibid.
- 97 Initially, there were only three gas chambers at Treblinka; later they added ten more to increase 'the absorption', a demand that Hans Frank had put to Kurt Gerstein. It was these ten that Stangl declared the 'Jewish city'. See Saul Friedländer, *Kurt Gerstein: The Ambiguity of Good* (New York, 1969), 128–9.
- 98 Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 86.
- 99 Bomba, 'Interview with Avraham Bomba', 11.

- 100 Claude Lanzmann, 'Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, Interview with Abraham Bomba' (Washington, DC & Jerusalem: US Holocaust Memorial Museum & Yad Vashem & State of Israel, 1979), 29.
- 101 Ibid. See also RG-50.030.0033, 'Interview with Avraham Bomba', 13.
- 102 Shlomo Venezia, *Inside the Gas Chambers: Eight Months in the Sonderkommando of Auschwitz* (London and Washington, DC: Polity Books in association with the USHMM, 2009), 1–16.
- 103 Venezia, *Inside the Gas Chambers*, 60.
- 104 Wachsmann, *KL*, 299.
- 105 Venezia, *Inside the Gas Chambers*, 62.
- 106 Ibid., 62–9.
- 107 Ibid., 73.
- 108 Ibid.
- 109 Ibid., 61.
- 110 Ibid., 59.
- 111 Ibid.
- 112 Quoted in Millet, 'Contemplating Jean Améry's Loss of Transcendence' (1980: 6; 1997 [1977]: 25).
- 113 Primo Levi, *Volume II*, ed. Ann Goldstein (New York: Tom Duggan Books, 2015), 1196–9.
- 114 Michael Bryant, *Eyewitness to Genocide* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 1.
- 115 Ibid.
- 116 Ibid., 2.
- 117 Ibid.
- 118 Ibid.
- 119 Doris Bergen, *The Holocaust: A Concise History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 185.
- 120 He was also known as Mordechai. See Bergen, *The Holocaust*, 184.
- 121 For a complete version of Podchlebnik's testimony, see <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/survivor/podchlebnik.html>.
- 122 Death camps were, initially, associated with the liquidation of specific areas of the General Government's purview. Chelmno was assigned the Wartheland; likewise, the Reinhard camps had their specific sections to cleanse.
- 123 Peter Longerich, *The Holocaust, the Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 343. Longerich pointed out that the Nazis invested heavily in the promotion of rumours about the missing Jews being 'resettled' in a 'large camp in Kolo' when in fact, Kolo was the staging ground for preparing Jews for Chelmo.
- 124 Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 24.
- 125 Richard Glazar, *Trap with a Green Fence* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 45.
- 126 Alina G., 'cnlxvii[1]-1' (Paris: Centre Juive, 1999), unpublished.
- 127 Ibid., my translation.
- 128 Jeremy Adler, 'Good against Evil?', in *Social Theory after the Holocaust*, ed. Robert Fine and Charles Turner (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000).

Conclusion

- 1 Johnson, 'Introduction: The Future Market', 1.
- 2 The question of intent on the part of the subjects who persecuted, although important, is not the aim of this text. Rather, as I demonstrated, subjects went about their persecution with a myriad of excuses, but did not see their victims outside of their epistemologies. The objects of victimization were always self-consciously aware of their circumstances, especially when they had the means to free themselves of their statuses.
- 3 W. E. B du Bois drew this conclusion as well, in his analysis of Reconstruction. See W. E. B. du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America; An Essay Toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York: Athenaeum, 1969).
- 4 Ajala, 'The Nature of African Boundaries'.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 I use the Brink map as a signifier for the subsequent German and European maps in which the Herero did not appear at all.
- 7 There are several translations: 'beings of not being'; 'beings without being'. The element, though, to understand is that the being, *ens*, is precluded from possessing being in the human sense. The scholastic use posited a divine being whose ontology was without human predicates. In my adaptation, the emphasis is on a being who is denied human predicates.
- 8 The hierarchy 'worked' as long as racial difference was segregated by the visible boundaries of colour. Since Jews defied race, they were not included within the racial hierarchy; their inclusion would have invalidated hierarchical boundaries.
- 9 In the case of the Nazis' philosophers, Jews were incapable of 'being' and 'race', that is, a constitutive subjective experience.
- 10 Emblematically is not to be confused with comprehensively. The Nazis had many victims, and their plan, once established, was to remove all of these problem populations; but, in its earliest iterations, the Nazis' 'multifocal' plan required different strategies and methods. See Snyder, *Black Earth*.
- 11 Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, 'The Nazi Myth', trans. Brian Holmes, *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1990): 291–312.
- 12 Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire, Volume 1: The State*, trans. Mary Trouille (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), xxxl.
- 13 Johnson, 'Introduction: The Future Market'.
- 14 Even among Barbadians living off the island, this statue is designated 'the Bussa Monument'. For Barbadian diasporic communities, 'Bussa' remains a potent signifier of their imagined freedom. Many thanks to DC Anthony Leacock, his family and his friends for this insight.
- 15 Catharine Reinhardt, 'Remembering and Imagining Slavery', in *Transatlantic Memories of Slavery: Remembering the Past, Changing the Future*, ed. Elisa Bordin and Anna Scacchi (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2015), 100.
- 16 See Jerome Handler, 'The Barbados Slave Insurrection of 1816: Can it be properly called "Bussa's Rebellion"?' *The Sunday Advocate* (St. Michael, Barbados), 26 March 2000, <http://jeromehandler.org/2000/03/the-1816-slave-revolt-in-barbados-an-exchange-in-barbados-newspapers/>
- 17 Halbwachs' theory of memory as a collective faculty introduced an important corrective to the Kantian hegemony of faculties, in which memory did not appear.

Halbwachs died at Buchenwald of dysentery, as a political combatant of the Nazis. A devout Catholic, he had written letters and publicly condemned the Nazis' removal of Jews from France. He spent part of this campaign on behalf of his wife, who was Jewish. Jorge Semprun, his former student, was with him at Buchenwald just before his death and recounts his professor's last moments in *Literature or Life*. Semprun used Halbwachs' theory of memory to bring his professor back to memory through the recitation of Baudelaire's poetry just before his death. Semprun wrote that it restored dignity to his former professor.

- 18 Reinhardt, 'Remembering and Imagining Slavery', 98. She cites Nora.
- 19 Ibid., 97. Here, Glissant also consciously adapted Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 199–201.
- 20 This was Deleuze's major point about the rhizome: it worked to produce new connections, or couplings, into infinity.
- 21 Vedder, *South West Africa in Early Times*.
- 22 Special thanks to Magdalena Zolkos for assistance with the translation. The Polish is provided in Figure 4.
- 23 Adorno thought that the novel, *Eine Reise*, should not be published, and that it was inappropriate to use aesthetic language to represent what must not be represented. For Adorno, Adler's betrayal of that principle caused him to revise his familiar dictum of 'no lyric poetry after Auschwitz', to encompass literature also as a precluded aesthetic expression. For a discussion of Adler's novel, see Kitty Millet, 'Can the Holocaust Novel be a Magical Realist Text? H. G. Adler's The Journey "After Auschwitz"', *Symbolism: An International Annual of Critical Aesthetics* 12, no. 13 (2013): 192–209. For more information about Adorno's rejection of the novel, see Adler, 'Good against Evil?', 71–100.
- 24 Améry understood this absence in the death camp as the denial of human predicates to Nazism's victims.
- 25 'A World without Jews' by Alon Confino; 'worldlessness of Jews' is quoted from Heidegger's *Black Notebooks*.
- 26 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, trans. Chris Turner (Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990). Lacoue-Labarthe made exactly this argument in relation to Heidegger's thesis about spirit.
- 27 This has recently changed for both the Herero and the Nama. See *Nambian Sun*, 'About Us, Without Us?' 10 September 2015.
- 28 Walter Johnson, ed., *The Chattel Principle. Internal Slave Trades in the Americas* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).
- 29 Goveia, *West Indies Slave Laws*.
- 30 Johnson, 'Introduction: The Future Market', 2.

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