HOLOCAUST TOPOLOGIES
SINGULARITY, POLITICS, SPACE

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ABSTRACT. This paper explores the Holocaust through three figures of singularity: *exception* (the Holocaust as a unique event in world history); *extremity* (the Holocaust as a limit case which discloses what only remains latent in other instances); and *serial erasure* (the Holocaust as a transpearing trace of the attempt to terminate the interminable). Whilst these figures have been respectively associated with debates in history, sociology, and Continental philosophy, they have almost invariably been divorced from considerations of physical and social *space*. This lacuna is particularly disappointing, however, insofar as our understanding of the Holocaust is seriously impoverished by such a failure to map the geopolitics, geohistories, and geophilosophies which were its conditions of possibility. Specifically, the paper situates the Holocaust in relation to the Nazis' attempt to produce *Lebensraum* (living-space for the Ayran Race) through *Entfernung* (removal of the Jews from the German lifeworld). This not only clarifies many of the difficulties encountered in the existing Holocaust literature, but also specifies the extent to which the Auschwitz universe of gas chambers and crematoria, in which millions of human beings were systematically murdered, was employed by the Nazis to produce the *space* of the Third Reich. The paper concludes by briefly reflecting on the Holocaust and our (post)modernity.

> The death camps are a reality which, by their very nature, obliterate thought and the humane programme of thinking.... The death camps are unthinkable, but not unfelt. They constitute a traumatic event and, like all decisive trauma, they are suppressed but omnipresent, unrecognized but tyrannic, silted over by forgetfulness but never obliterated (Cohen, 1981: 1-2).

Holocaust degree-zero

> we say that the war will not end as the Jews imagine it will, namely with the uprooting of the Ayrans, but the result of this war will be the complete annihilation of the Jews. (Adolf Hitler, Berlin address, January 30, 1942).

Death, silence and disappearance saturate the event that has become known as the Holocaust, Churban or Shoah. First and foremost, this event entailed the systematic and methodical killing of millions of human beings by the Nazis on the continent of Europe—millions of whom were transported to purpose built 'extermination centres', where they were gassed to death, and then burnt in adjacent crematoria. From 1939 until 1945, one of the most 'advanced,' 'modern,' 'enlightened,' and 'forward-looking' nations on earth adopted genocide as an all encompassing state policy. In the words of Hilberg (1985, volume 3: 1044): "The German annihilation of the European Jews was the world's most complete destructive process." Little wonder, then, that Steiner (1987: 55) should

refer to this process as "the abyss of 1939-1945." By the close of the Second World War, this 'genocidal universe' had been responsible for the murder of between 12 and 13 million people. And for what? Hitler's words: an "urge towards racial purity" through a "maintenance of the purity of the blood." The name for this racial impurity was: 'the Jews'—those without a *right* to exist, who *ought* not to exist, and who were therefore *obligated* not to exist.

Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazis 'helped' millions of errant bodies *fulfill their obligations*—through emigration, deportation, ghettoization, Ayranization, enforced euthanasia, genocidal sterilization, calculated starvation, socially engineered disease, excessive labour, mass shooting, mobile gassing, mass gassing, mass burning, and death marches. In the event, the Nazis eventually operationalized mass gassing in the six purpose-built death camps of Auschwitz/Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibór, and Treblinka as the definitive realization of their attempt to 'terminate the interminable.' The Nazis referred to these camps as 'The Final Solution to the Jewish Problem;' a solution pursued through the *rational calculations* of instrumental reason and propelled by a resolute adherence to a *moral code* in which only "Death is sufficient, since it proves that what ought not to live cannot live" (Lyotard, 1990: 104). To that extent, the Nazis did not consider themselves to be murdering 'the Jews,' even though their genocidal universe included over nine thousand camps, hundreds of mobile killing units (*Einsatzgruppen*), and dedicated extermination centres. To the contrary, the Nazis offered their Final Solution to the 'problem' of the purity of the 'Ayran' blood by helping 'the Jews' vanish from the physical, social, moral, and aesthetic spaces of the Greater German Reich.

The insanity of the Holocaust resides in the fact that millions of heterogeneous human bodies came to be categorized as one of 'the Jews.' The abhorrence of the Holocaust lies in the fact that to be classified as one of 'the Jews' was to be judged as a body without a right to exist, and as a life that was obligated to cease to exist. The horror of the Holocaust lies in the fact that the Nazis set about systematically exterminating 'the Jews' from the face of the earth. However, it is worth emphasizing from the outset that the 'twisted road to Auschwitz' (Schleunes, 1965) was neither necessary, nor inevitable, nor destinal; it was not a terrifying possibility awaiting its barbaric realization, but an instrumental peregrination *towards* a Final Solution—so-many contingent responses to the futility of trying to terminate the interminable. To that extent, it could always have been otherwise. For example, Hitler initially suggested not only that there were "considerable remnants of unmixed Nordic-Germanic people" in the "body of the German people," but also that one should "not only gather together and maintain the most

valuable remnants of primeval racial elements, but slowly and surely lead them to a commanding position." To that end he promoted the acquisition of "outlying colonies," not in order to expel the impure, but rather as places to be colonized by the "bearers of the highest racial purity," where the latter were to be chosen by "commissions of racial experts" (quoted in Burleigh and Wippermann, 1991: 38-39). What is interesting to note here is not so much that Hitler presents the German people as impure, nor even that the pure are in the minority, but rather that it is the pure who should be removed. Nevertheless, it should be clear why such a binarization of the *socius* is open to reversal, reinscription, and labyrinthine complication (Peukart, 1973; Schleunes, 1965). Moreover, given the assumption of a majoritarian fact of impurity and debasement, it should be clear why there was always an inclination for Nazism to *internalize* the terror: "If there is terror in Nazism," writes Lyotard (1988: 103), "it is exerted internally among the 'pure,' who are always suspected of not being pure enough." Hence the fact that Nazi anti-Semitism was expressed through a eugenic and hygienic hatred of difference, alterity, and Otherness *as such* (Levinas, 1981).

When the Holocaust is grasped as an attempt to exterminate the Other *as such*, it should be readily understandable why it has sparked an enormous, interdisciplinary literature (Lang, 1989; Rosenberg and Myers, 1988; Shermin and Ament, 1979; Szonyi, 1985; Young, 1988). However, many appear only to be able to approach the Holocaust through tired clichés, devalued homilies, and protective phraseologies. Similarly, and whilst absolutely vital as a point of departure, narrative-empiricism is used by many to ward-off the difficult task of actually *engaging* with the "Auschwitz universe" (Steiner, 1987: 55).

In addition to the comfort granted by a quarantined phraseology and a narrative-empiricism, many others remain largely unaffected by the Holocaust through various forms of inoculation. Two forms stand out. First, those for whom it was essentially *banal*, an extreme and hyperreal example of something else: the criminality of the State; the commodification of death; the vampiric form of capital; the colonization of the lifeworld by instrumental reason; the amorality of bureaucracy; the irrationality of events; the barbarism beneath the veneer of civilization; etc. Second, those for whom the Holocaust was *meaningless*, insofar as it was death pure and simple, with nothing for 'us' to carry away from the event, save the 'statistic' and the 'fact' that 'it' happened (Critchley, 1992; Dawidowicz, 1981). If anything remains of the Holocaust 'after' Auschwitz, then it is the ambient fear and dim foreboding that 'it' could happen again: without reason, warning, sense, or gain.

For many, then, the Holocaust *itself* fails to register, even when one strains to hear, to see, to feel, to touch, and to comprehend: one *hears* only silence, screams, or din; or one *sees* only a factory, a bureaucracy, or criminal barbarity; or one *feels* nothing, *touches* nothing, or *comprehends* nothing. Hence the fact that many are themselves reduced to silence (Carroll, 1990; Freeman, 1991; Wollaston, 1992).

In order to avoid becoming inoculated against the effects of the Holocaust, and to keep those effects current, much of the Holocaust literature has adopted the concept of *singularity* when speaking of the Nazis' genocidal universe. However, singularity is a highly contested concept, consisting of at least three heterotopic figures: *exception*, *extremity*, and *seriasure*; a unique event, a boundary case, and a serial erasure; point, limit, and trace. Unfolding the structuration and spatialization of these figures forms the substance of the present paper.

The understanding of singularity in terms of **exception** is exemplified in debates over the supposed uniqueness of Nazism and the Holocaust, the extent to which it can be explained, understood, or even situated within a properly *historical* movement and *human(e)* language. Specifically, the question of uniqueness is exemplified in the so-called 'Historians' Debate' between those who wish to affirm the absolute singularity of Nazism and the Holocaust, and those who wish to relativize and normalize them. Nevertheless, in spite of the subtlety and complexity of these debates, the question of singularity always appears as a modality of exception—and to that extent, the bifurcation of the debate between those who wish to 'separate,' 'isolate' and 'contain' the Holocaust as an event which interrupts, eternally, the flow of so-called 'normal' history on the one hand, and those who wish to 'integrate,' 'accommodate' and 'assimilate' the era of National Socialism within such a flow on the other, risk repeating in thought the gestures of Nazi anti-Semitism *par excellence*: expulsion and extermination. If unique, then erased *from* History (it no longer 'belongs' to the historical); if not-unique, then erased *in* History ('it' disseminates into the labyrinthine minutiae of history's everyday life). Such is the geophilosophy of exception which leaves no place for, and no trace of, either the Holocaust or 'the Jews' in our (post)modernity: they are "Expelled, doomed to exodus. Thus their hatred of geophilosophy" (Lyotard, 1990: 93).

In contrast to the framing of singularity in terms of exception, the figure of **extremity** is particularly associated with the sociological literature on the Holocaust. Extreme events disclose what remains only latent or possible in other instances. For whilst the discourses of exception have sought to *distance* the Holocaust from the structuration and flow of so-called 'normal' events, the discourses of extremity have sought to emphasize their

(almost) absolute *proximity*—the extremity 'belongs' to normality. Indeed, it is precisely in this sense that the historical and sociological discourses on the Holocaust most often bifurcate: an 'extreme' event is not necessarily an 'exception.' For whilst the discourses and counter-discourses of exception consider the Holocaust to be a punctiform interruption of an otherwise linear succession (hence the obsession for tracing genealogical roots and networks of causation and responsibility), the discourses and counter-discourses of extremity frame the Holocaust as a distribution of potentialities and actual occurrences (hence the obsession for discerning which elements of modernity were actualized in the Auschwitz universe).

Finally, the articulation of singularity in terms of ***seriasure*** has been particularly associated with the advent of poststructuralism and postmodernism in Continental philosophy and social theory. In contradistinction both to those discourses which hurl the singular *outside of* the normal, and those which disperse it *within* the normal, the framing of the singular through the figure of ***seriasure*** serves to bear witness to the disappearance of events into perspectival vanishing points and 'superficial abysses' (Baudrillard, 1990a). Accordingly, the Holocaust is not presented as something which falls outside of the ebb and flow of so-called 'normal' events, but neither is it presented as the disclosure of the extremity of the norm or that the extremity belongs to the norm. To the contrary, ***seriasure*** diagrams the modalities of death, silence, and disappearance through which events come to pass whilst nevertheless leaving their trace. In short, the distantiated discourses of the 'It happened' (It *was* an exception; it *was* extreme) slide into the proximal discourses of the 'Is it (but what?) happening?'

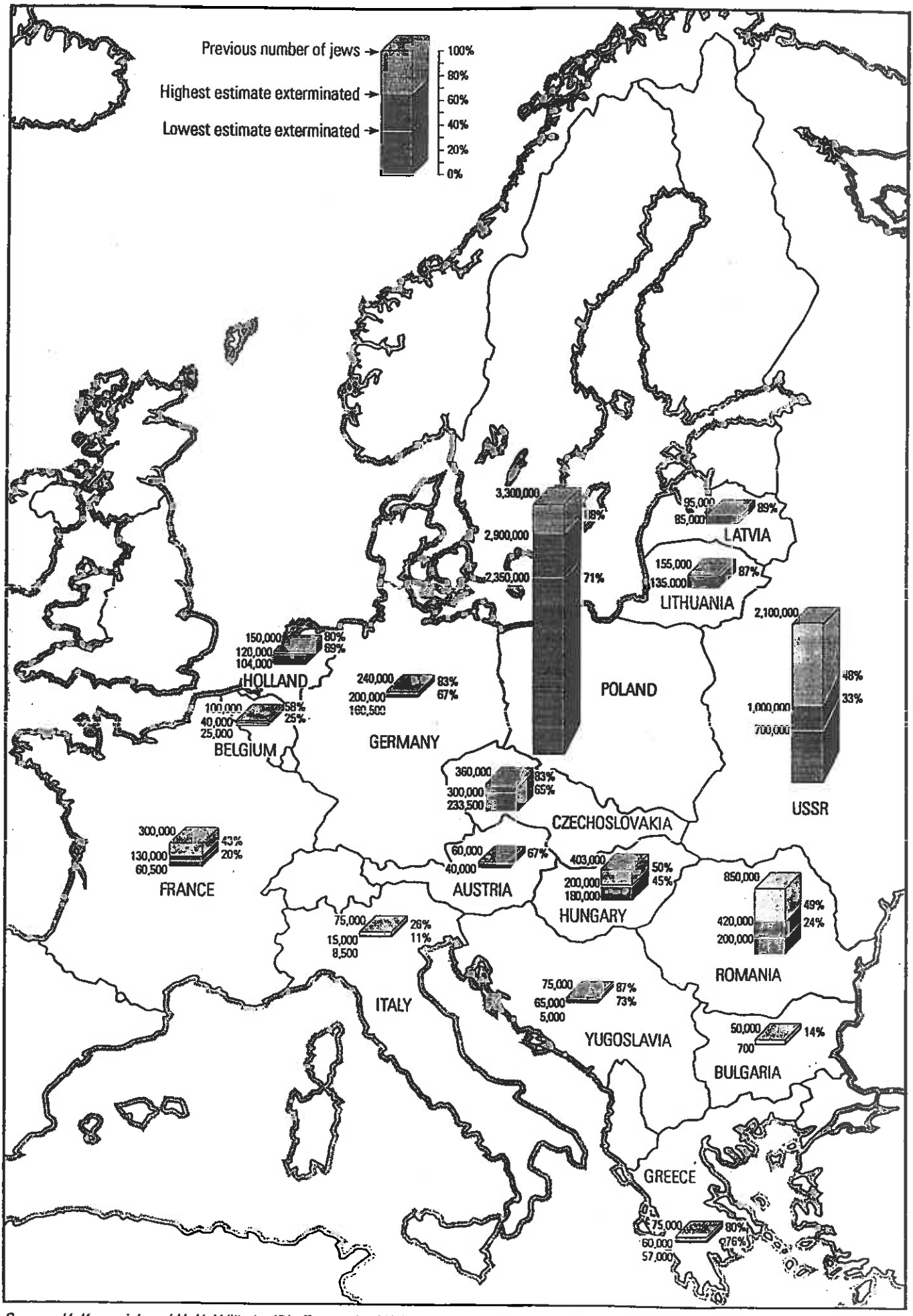
Thus, we feel that the Holocaust is a particularly vivid context for exploring both the three-fold figure of singularity and the virulent hatred of the Other, a loathing which was so intense that the Nazis set about exterminating *without trace* the Other *as such*, in a futile attempt to terminate the interminable, and to thereby fashion a collective 'we' which would be able to carry both the blood and the name of the 'Ayran' Same (Theweleit, 1987; 1989). To that extent, the Holocaust is an exemplary context for unfolding some of the more interesting, remarkable, and important relationships between singularity, politics, and space, and between geopolitics, geohistory, and geophilosophy. And it is to this task that the remainder of the paper is devoted. However, before unfolding the concept of singularity through the figures of exception (point), extremity (limit), and *seriasure* (trace), it is first necessary to consider briefly the Nazis' peregrinations towards the genocidal universe of the Final Solution.

Holocaust I: an accident of geography[1]

> If the Nazi regime had suddenly ceased to exist in the first half of 1941, its most notorious achievements in human destruction would have been the so-called euthanasia killings ... and the systematic murder of the Polish intelligentsia. If the regime had disappeared in the spring of 1942, its historical infamy would have rested on the 'war of destruction' against the Soviet Union .... In the next eleven months, however, from mid-March 1942 to mid-February 1943, over one-half the victims of the Jewish Holocaust, or *Shoah*, lost their lives at the hands of Nazi killers. The Nazi regime called this attempt to murder every Jew in Europe the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question.' (Browning, 1992: ix).

Weinberg and Sherwin (1979: 22) close their historical overview of the Holocaust with the words: "THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DEAD FROM MAJOR GENOCIDAL OPERATIONS BY THE NAZIS IS ESTIMATED AS BEING BETWEEN TWELVE AND THIRTEEN MILLION." This figure includes: six million European Jews; four million Soviet POWs; 2.2 million non-Jewish Poles; 100,000-400,000 Gypsies; 2,000 Jehovah Witnesses; an unknown number of homosexuals and Freemasons; and 50,000-250,000 of Germany's "insane, mongoloids and retarded children.... political dissidents and random victims" (Burleigh, 1991). In addition, there were 200,000-350,000 forced sterilizations ordered by Germany's Hereditary Health Courts between 1934 and 1939, for the maintenance of so-called 'racial hygiene' (Gellately, 1990; Mason, 1993). And yet, of all the Nazis' victims, the Holocaust is associated almost exclusively with the Jews. In 1939, there were nine million Jews living in Europe. By 1945, there were only three million. Of the two-thirds of the European Jewry who disappeared from the continent in the intervening six years, the vast majority were systematically killed by the Nazi regime—through starvation, disease, shooting, gassing, and death marches (Figure 1). In many respects, the six death camps at Auschwitz/Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibór, and Treblinka were *dedicated* to the total annihilation of the 'the Jews:' "More than three million people—mostly Jews—were murdered in these camps, some by starvation and exhaustion, disease, shootings, and beatings. But many more were killed by gassing" (Berenbaum, 1993: 122). In excess of 1,100,000 Jews were killed in the gas chambers at Auschwitz/Birkenau, whilst 550,000-600,000 were gassed to death at Belzec. Similarly, 150,000 were killed at Chelmno, 500,000 at Majdanek, 200,000-250,000 at Sobibór, and 750,000-870,000 at Treblinka. In recognition of these unprecedented events in world history, the dominant historical, philosophical, political, sociological, and theological discourses have invariably presented both the Nazis and the Holocaust as truly *singular* phenomena.

Figure 1: Estimates of the numbers of Jews who died in the Holocaust



Source: H. Krausnick and H. H. Wilhelm 'Die Trappe des Weltanschauungskrieges. Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des 1938 – 1942' (Stuttgart 1981) pp 618ff

However, the extent to which the Jewish experience of the Holocaust should be singled out from all of the other experiences, actions, and atrocities of the Nazi regime is highly contentious (Kulka, 1990). Nowhere is this contention higher than in the quantitative analysis of death in the Second World War. Of the 45 million who died, by far the largest *national* group were the Russians, with almost 20 million dead. Similarly, Poland lost approximately six million (3.3 million of whom were Jews). Germany itself lost just over five million, Japan four, and China eleven. France lost 600,000, Great Britain 360,000, and the USA, 350,000. Similarly, from a qualitative perspective, it is also a matter of dispute as to whether anti-Semitism was the *raison d'être* of Nazi ideology. Many have argued that the dominant theme of Nazism was anti-Marxism and anti-Bolshevism (considered by the Nazis to be 'sociological crimes'), demonized through the conceptual personae of 'the Jew' and 'the Slav' (Arendt, 1951; Beetham, 1983; McDonough, 1992). For example, consider the words of Himmler, leader of the SS:

> Here in this struggle stands National Socialism: an ideology based on the value of our Germanic, Nordic blood .... On the other side stands a population of 180 million, a mixture of races whose very names are unpronounceable .... These people have been welded by the Jews into one religion, one ideology that is called Bolshevism. When you, my men, fight over there in the East, you are carrying on the same struggle against the same subhumanity, the same inferior races that at one time appeared under the name Huns, another time ... under the name Magyars, another time under the name Tartars, and still another time under the name Genghis Khan and the Mongols. (quoted in Berenbaum, 1993: 95).

These 'Slavic' peoples were loosely defined by the Nazis to include Russians, Poles, Yugoslavs and various Balkan and Eastern European peoples. Himmler suggested that at least 30 million of them would need to be killed, with many millions more displaced further East and forced into slave labour.

Now, even within the broader framework of Nazi racial policy, 'the Jews' and 'Slavs' were not the only groups singled out for systematic killing (Burleigh and Wippermann, 1991; Gellately, 1990; Hirschfield, 1986). Nazism categorized large and heterogeneous groups of people as 'racially inferior,' 'racially subnormal,' 'enemies of the State,' and 'unproductive.' For example, the so-called 'Euthanasia Program,' established by Hitler in 1939 under the code name T-4, was carried out in secrecy under the guise of a health care program for the mentally and physically disabled. In practice, the T-4 program was one of extermination, and encompassed nearly all of Germany's psychiatric community. In addition to tens of thousands of Germany's mentally ill, physically disabled, and emotionally disturbed, the program also killed Gypsies, homosexuals, wounded soldiers,

prostitutes, vagrants, the long term unemployed, and criminals. Moreover, the Euthanasia Program provided the logistical building blocks for much of the Final Solution. Six German asylums (at Bernburg, Brandenburg, Grafeneck, Hadamar, Hartheim, and Sonnenstein) were turned into killing centres. After dabbling with starvation and lethal injections, these centres soon adopted gassing as their favoured method of killing. Shower rooms were transformed into gas chambers, whilst converted postal vans were used for mobile gassings in the countryside. Visits were prohibited, fake death certificates were issued, inquests and cremations were timed in order to prevent relatives from attending, and the ashes were made available for a small administrative charge. Under the T-4 program, tens, and perhaps even hundreds of thousands of people were exterminated. And although the killing appeared to end in the Autumn of 1941, after the real purpose of the T-4 program had been disclosed to the German people, it had actually moved East, to the death camps in Poland.

In 1933, there were only 600,000 Jews in Germany. This was also the year in which the first racial law enacted by the Nazi regime categorized Jews as 'non-Ayrans,' stripping them of their citizenship, and excluding them from posts in the government, civil service, army, media and professions. A general economic boycott was encouraged from 1933 onwards, whilst Jewish books were burned and newspapers banned. Large numbers of Jews emigrated from Germany between 1933 and 1939, and although they were encouraged to do so by the regime, their plight was not treated sympathetically by the international community (Barta, 1985; Kushner, 1991).

Given the relatively small number of Jews in the 'body of the German people,' it was only after the invasion of Poland and the beginning of the Second World War in September 1939, that the so-called 'Jewish Question' gathered pace. Whilst the annexation of Austria in 1938 had brought 185,000 Jews into the physical and social space of the Reich (three quarters of whom left before the outbreak of war), the invasion and subsequent division of Poland brought with it two million more, in addition to millions of 'inferior (Slavic) races.' Furthermore, as the Nazi occupation extended across Europe in May 1940, the invasions of France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Norway brought with them: 350,000; 140,000; 66,000; 4,500; and 1,900 Jews respectively. In each of these countries, the treatment of the Jews was modelled on the Nazis' earlier treatment of the German and Austrian 'Jews:'

> First, Jews were categorized; then civil liberties were restricted and property confiscated. Next, Jews were dismissed from universities and civil service jobs, which often included school teaching, and were barred from the professions. Jewish businesses were taken over and Ayranized. Jews were

> then isolated, forced to wear the Jewish star and forbidden to use public facilities. Finally, Jews were assembled, first in large cities and then in transit camps. From 1942 on, they were deported from these transit camps to the death camps in the east. (Berenbaum, 1993: 68).

Accordingly, one of the first moves towards a Final Solution was the establishment of Jewish ghettos, which were effectively quarantined city-states, governed by Jewish Councils (*Judenräte*) consisting of Nazi-appointed officials. By 1942, almost all Polish and Soviet Jews were ghettoized. By the summer of 1942, the Nazis began liquidating the ghettos. And by the summer of 1944, virtually all of the East European ghettos had been emptied, their internees transported to the Auschwitz universe, and the death camps of Belzec, Sobibór, and Treblinka had been closed. Needless to say, conditions in the ghettos in the intervening months were appalling, with 400,000 people crammed into the Warsaw ghetto alone. At least 500,000 Jews died in the ghettos from what the Nazis euphemistically termed 'natural causes'—calculated starvation and socially engineered disease (Hilberg, 1985, Volume 3: 480-485).

Meanwhile, with the invasion of the Soviet Union in the Summer of 1941, millions more Jews and 'Slavs' were brought under the influence of the Nazi State apparatus. It was an invasion that inaugurated routinized, mass killing on a truly huge scale. Alongside the invasion forces, the SS established mobile killing units (*Einsatzgruppen*: Special Action Squads). These had previously operated in Poland to round up Jews for ghettoization, but were deployed with much greater effect in the wake of the military advance into the Soviet Union, murdering well in excess of 1.2 million Jews. However, mass, mobile shooting on this scale was both extremely inefficient and psychologically devastating for many of the 3,000 *Einsatzgruppen* personnel. Thus, killing centres were established at major road and railway intersections. However, as we have already noted above, the main extermination centres were not located in the Soviet Union, but in proximity to the Jewish population centres of Poland. On the 8th of December 1941, the day after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour, the experimental gassing of Jews in specially converted vans began at Chelmno. Meanwhile, Zyklon B and carbon monoxide gas chambers were already under construction at Auschwitz/Birkenau and Belzec respectively.

One month latter, in January 1942, the state secretaries of all the major government ministries met at Wansee, a suburb of Berlin, to prepare and co-ordinate a more coherent and efficient program for exterminating 'the Jews.' Adolf Eichmann was responsible for the logistical calculations. Within months of that conference, stationary gas chambers were operational at all of the death camps apart from Chelmno, which continued to rely on 'obsolete technology.' The four gas chambers and two crematoria at

Auschwitz/Birkenau alone had a capacity to kill and dispose of 24,000 people a day. Indeed, the scale of the killing operation at Auschwitz/Birkenau can be gleaned from the fact that Auschwitz was served by forty-four parallel tracks (double that of New York's Pennsylvania Station). Incredibly, neither Auschwitz/Birkenau, nor the railway lines which served it, were ever bombed by the Allies (Gilbert, 1981). However, even though the death camps were 'free' to function more or less at capacity until they were either closed down or liberated by Allied troops during the course of 1945, the successful co-operation of a host of agencies was absolutely crucial for the successful implementation of mass killing on the scale envisaged, not least of which was the co-operation of the 1.4 million workers on the German railroad (*Reichsbahn*), 500,000 of whom were the civil servants who kept the system going. Moreover, the Nazis tried to keep the entire killing operation a secret, using many of the techniques developed during the Euthanasia Program—particularly the dissimulation of the entire operation behind a Welfare-State veneer of 'Health Care' and 'Workfare.' The whole operation was organized in order to maximize the compliance of the victims and thereby ensure the smooth and efficient running of the camps. Industrial companies tendered to build and maintain them, competing on price, efficiency, and turnover time in order to ensure that, incredibly, the Final Solution was actually run at a profit. Health officials worked out exactly how much gas to administer to each category of inmate. Trains were allocated, charged at the rate of four *Pfenning* per passenger kilometre (with reductions for children and large groups), and booked by the SS through travel agents. Camps were built and staffed, gas was supplied, and refuse was collected. In short, tens of thousands of workers, administrators, managers, and civil servants were required in order to keep the Holocaust in motion. Most appeared to carry out their 'tasks' with a bewildering level of detachment and devotion to duty; very few resigned. The routinized and alienated compilation of charts, statistics, timetables, supplies, specifications, costings, maps, itineraries, and so on provides a chilling illustration of what has become known as the 'desk killer' (Milchman and Rosenberg, 1992). And it is perhaps this *banality* and *coldness* of evil, rather than the sheer *quantity* and simple *facticity* of death, which renders the Holocaust so difficult to comprehend as an event (Arendt, 1977).

For many writers, then, the systematic and largely incomprehensible killing of two-thirds of the European Jewry symbolises the *uniqueness* of Nazism and the essence of socio-political insanity, brutality, and terror. Accordingly, the majority of German historians have been content for Nazism to be presented as an 'aberration,' and content for Holocaust studies to be dominated by narrative-empirical explorations of the mechanisms and experiences of the extermination processes themselves, particularly from the perspectives of the victims, survivors, bystanders, and perpetrators. In contrast, most

European and American historians have concentrated on the processes giving rise to and sustaining the Final Solution, particularly in terms of genealogy and responsibility. Meanwhile, most Soviet and East European historians have emphasized the anti-Marxist nature of Nazism, whilst the majority of Israeli historians have emphasized the uniqueness of its anti-Semitism.

However, one consequence of emphasizing the uniqueness of Nazism and the Holocaust is that it tends to lend credence to the isolation of both from their embededness within wider social, cultural, political, and economic movements, and their relationship to the continuity of fascistic desires and practices *per se*: "the singularity of the Hitler period, if framed too consequentially, may lead to a denial both that Nazism was fascism, and therefore part of a broader movement characteristic of many nations, and also that it was a product of German historical development, except in a one-time, irreproducible and therefore safely quarantined sense" (Baldwin, 1990: 18). In short, singularity in this sense is inclined towards a de-Nazification of fascism.

In the 1970s, some German historians began to examine Nazism outside the framework of the Nazi elite and the uniqueness of the Jewish experience, calling instead for the 'historicization' of the Third Reich (Friedländer, 1987, 1990; Kershaw, 1992); a few even called for its 'normalization,' thereby reducing Nazism and the Holocaust to mere *examples* of totalitarianism and genocide (compare Carlton, 1990; Evans, 1987a; 1987b; Fein, 1990; Rich, 1987). For example, Nolte (1987) claimed that since the Holocaust was perpetrated largely in secret, it was therefore beyond the scope of a collective and specifically *German* responsibility. Similarly, Hillgruber (1986) has argued that the fate of the German army on the Eastern Front was no less traumatic and tragic than the fate of 'the Jews' caught up in the Final Solution, and that the bombing of German civilians in Dresden by the Allies was commensurate with the killing of 'the Jews' in the Auschwitz universe by the Nazis. Taken together, however, the uncoupling of responsibility, and the levelling of the difference in kind between war and extermination, risks revalorizing Nazism. Hence the appellation 'revisionist' or 'apologist' (Eley, 1988; Habermas, 1989).

Even more controversy has surrounded Nolte's (1987, 1988) claim that the idea for a Final Solution originated not with the Nazi policy for the complete annihilation of the Jewish '*Race*,' but rather with the Marxist yearning for the total eradication of the bourgeois *class*. Such a claim clearly fails to recognize the fundamental difference in kind between Nazi *annihilation* and Marxist *sublation*. Nevertheless, it is on the basis of such a conflation that Nolte went on to claim not only that the Gulag Archipelago was more of an 'origin' for the Holocaust than Auschwitz but also that the Nazis may have

carried "out an 'Asiatic' deed perhaps only because they regarded themselves and their ilk as potential or real victims of an 'Asiatic' deed" (quoted in Joffee, 1987: 72). In other words, Nolte claimed that the Holocaust was a *defensive reaction*—or a *pre-emptive strike*—against the amassing forces and agents of 'Judeo-Bolshevism.' Moreover, by calling the Holocaust an Asiatic deed, he was making what he perceived to be its origin, proprietorship, and responsibility absolutely explicit: the Holocaust *belongs* in the East; it *belongs* to 'the Jews' as victim-perpetrators. It should come as no surprise, then, to discover that such a perversion of the concept of singularity has outraged many Holocaust scholars (see for example, Habermas, 1989).

The attempt to normalize the Nazi era has progressed through four main tactical maneuvers: comparison, continuity, immoral equivalence, and rhetoric. Attempts by revisionist authors such as Nolte and Hillgruber to reinscribe the Nazi era within a *comparative* framework have been in order to situate it within so-called 'normal' history. However, this has not been in order to nudge the so-called 'normality' of 'normal' history into the asymptotic curvature of labyrinthine deviation (Baudrillard, 1990b; Doel, 1994; Doel and Clarke, forthcoming). To the contrary, it has been utilized as an expedient means for asserting that the 'war against the Jews' was commensurate with other wars and genocides, especially the war on the Eastern Front, the bombing of Dresden, and the genocides perpetrated against the Armenians and Kulaks by the forces of 'Judeo-Bolshevism.' Moreover, the placing of Nazism within a comparative framework clearly opens up the possibility of establishing a *continuity* between the actions of the Nazi regime and the actions of other, 'normal' states. In short, Nazism is in a sense re-legitimated, particularly through the ruse of attempting to present the Auschwitz universe as a reactive, defensive, and rational response to the threat of 'Judeo-Bolshevism,' and the establishment of *immoral equivalencies* between heterogeneous events, to the point where the significance of the Holocaust is effectively normalized out of existence (Baldwin, 1990; Joffee, 1987; Maier, 1986).

Finally, it should come as no surprise to learn that *rhetoric* played a crucial role in the revisionist endeavour. On the one hand, the presentation of the 'heroic struggle' of the Germany Army on the Eastern Front invariably proceeded through the "rhetoric of cheap war paperbacks," as Habermas (1989: 218) puts it, whilst on the other, the Holocaust is routinely presented through "unrevised clichés" and "the frozen language of the bureaucrat" (*ibid.*: 219). Habermas is particularly scathing about Hillgruber's (1986) *Two Kinds of Doom: The Smashing of the German Reich and the End of European Jewry*: "'Smashing' requires an aggressive opponent; an 'end' takes place on its own" (Habermas, 1989: 219). For Habermas, what is at stake in the Holocaust is not so much

who did what to whom, but what it discloses for the 'unfinished project of modernity'—specifically the colonization of the intersubjective (subject-subject) lifeworld by the criteria, principles, and practices of instrumental (subject-object) reason (Habermas, 1987). Imperceptibly, we have already reached the limits of conceiving of the Holocaust as a unique event, and it is this relation, between the Holocaust and modernity, to which we now turn.

Holocaust II: the geopolitics of extremity—*Lebensraum* through *Entfernung*

> bureaucracy made the Holocaust. And it made it in its own image. (Bauman, 1989: 105).
>
> the exterminatory version of anti-Semitism ought to be seen as a thoroughly modern phenomenon. (Bauman, 1989: 73).

The relation between the Holocaust and modernity engenders a concern to cast its singularity in terms of extremity, rather than exception. Extremity is precisely the condition which can justify genocide and at the same time inculcate the importance of those decidedly *quotidian* morals apparently incommensurate with, yet vital for, the efficient execution of such a task. The Holocaust is an *extreme event* which discloses the capacity that remains only latent in other states of affairs. This framing is radical in that it refuses to separate the Holocaust off into a supposedly unique and quarantined event. But as we shall see below, this framing also carries with it certain dangers, especially the (mis)conception that a repetition of the Holocaust lies within the realm of the *possible*, rather than within the realm of the *virtual* (Deleuze 1991: 17-21).

The most effective recent statement on the configuration of the Holocaust as an extreme event is to be found in the work of Zygmunt Bauman (1989). Bauman is concerned to place the Holocaust within the context of a *modernity* which would disavow it. At the very least, then, the Holocaust is an *aberration* of the modern system, rather than something lying outside of it. Even in 1941, the Holocaust was not an expectable event, and to that extent, Bauman (1989: 85) insists that "*the unimaginable ought to be imagined*" (Bauman, 1989: 85). Furthermore, Bauman, like Arendt (1951), insists that the 'banality of evil' is *internally* related to modernity, and that the refusal to believe that horror, evil, and crazed power bear absolutely *no* relation to the normal, rational, and progressive nature of modernity is an in-built feature of modernity itself.

In the context of the Holocaust and modernity, Arendt has suggested that there were three significant developments in nineteenth-century Europe which "undermined and

eventually dismantled the structure and self-understanding of nation states. These were racism, imperialism and, as an obverse side to imperialism, movements such as the Pan-Slavism and Pan-Germanism, which provided the raw material for totalitarianism in the twentieth century" (Kaplan, 1991: 32). These processes, whilst not determining—teleologically—the events of the Holocaust, laid many of its conditions of possibility. Both Arendt (1951, 1977) and Bauman (1989), then, have sought to establish the thoroughly *modern* character of the Holocaust. However, their idea that Nazism was based on 'reactionary modernism' (Herf, 1984)—an unstable mix of traditional 'folk' values on the one hand, and modern technology and attitudes on the other—is, in some ways, not stated strongly enough. To that extent, it risks belying the fundamental *contradiction* between the decidedly anti-Modern position of this strain of *volkisch* nationalism and the modern state powers employed during the Holocaust.

Whilst popular racism may be sustained for a time on the basis of a few violent individuals, the Holocaust required modern methods of planning and a bureaucratic system capable of processing death in a manner where individual concerns for the ethics of the situation were almost entirely repressed. Thus, the 'Night of Broken Glass' (*Kristallnacht*), which took place on 9th November 1938, was a pogrom not altogether different in kind from the pogroms which scatter the diasporic history of the Jews. In terms of Hitler's desire to exterminate 'the Jews,' however, such mob violence was clearly ineffective. Moreover, it tended to reinforce popular opinion *against* the anti-Semitism espoused by the Nazis (Sabini and Silver, 1980). The implementation of the Final Solution thus required an altogether different, bureaucratic strategy, employing "a typically modern ambition of social design and engineering, mixed with the typically modern concentration of power, resources and managerial skills" (Bauman, 1989: 77). Perhaps more importantly, the hierarchical and functional divisions of labour that modern bureaucracies necessarily entail allowed for a substitution of 'technical' for 'moral' responsibility. In this way, moral and ethical concerns about killing were invariably displaced up the chain of command—at the pinnacle of which, Hitler himself was, and will probably remain, "cocooned in the silence of the sources" (Kershaw, 1992: 4)—and overcoded by considerations of duty and performance.

Accordingly, Halberstam (1988: 41-42) launches his trajectory *From Kant to Auschwitz* by noting how "Every encounter with the Holocaust ends with the same exasperated cry: how could they? How could people throw terrified babies into the flames of burning pits?" However, what is "Even more startling, more frightening," he continues, "is that these Nazis did not see themselves as amoral barbarians but as moral agents acting within the moral code ... What is so disturbing is not their misperception of their legitimate

obligations, but their commitment to the notion that the performance of duty is the supreme moral imperative." For example, and notwithstanding the psychological devastation of many in the *Einsatzgruppen* and death camps, consider Himmler's comments to his *Gruppenführer*: "We had the moral right *vis-á-vis* 'our' people to annihilate (*umzubringen*) 'this' people which had wanted to annihilate us ... But on the whole we can say that we have fulfilled this heavy task with love for our people, and we have not been damaged in the innermost of our being, our soul, our character" (quoted in Halberstam, 1988: 43). Such was the cognitive, moral and aesthetic codification of Nazism in terms of a thoroughly rationalized racial hygenism, linked to a desire for a New (moral and aesthetic) Order. But this explicitly modern codification cannot be considered in isolation from the equally modern economic rationality which underlay the Holocaust.

Whilst by no means reducible to a simple economic logic, the death camps were run on the basis of an explicitly economic calculus. The Holocaust was managed by the Economic Administration Section of the *Reichsicherheithauptamt*. "It went about it the way all bureaucracies do: counting costs and measuring them against available resources, and then trying to determine the optimal combination" (Bauman, 1989: 77). However, the bureaucratic and economic aspects of the Final Solution can only ever provide for a partial understanding of the Holocaust. We also need to grasp the sense in which Nazi anti-Semitism was in and of itself a truly *modern* phenomena (and to that extent we would dissent from the widely held view that the Holocaust was the result of applying *modern* solutions to *pre-modern* problems: for example, advanced capitalism plus virulent heterophobia). Specifically, Bauman (1989) posits a clear distinction between *heterophobia* and *racism*, arguing that the latter is a thoroughly modern form of the former, articulated through a very particular reconfiguration of social, moral, and aesthetic space.

To that extent it is paradoxical that the spaces of the Holocaust have received little explicit attention in the existing literature (Charlesworth, 1992). This is unfortunate since two fundamentally *spatial* concerns underpinned the Nazis' desire for the production of a New (socio-spatial) Order: *Lebensraum*—the so-called 'living-space' required by the German Reich and the 'Ayran Race' (Dickinson, 1943)—and *Entfernung*—"an effective removal of the Jews from the lifeworld of the German race" (Bauman, 1989: 120). Whilst the idea of *Lebensraum* is intimately connected to geopolitical concerns for the mastery of concrete, de-populated, physical space, the problem with previous readings lies in their unwitting desire to detach such a physical-social concern from the management of *social* space itself, especially through *Entfernung*. It is proposed here, therefore, that a theorization attentive to the impossibility of separating social and physical space is the

most effective way to proceed in examining the geopolitical, geohistorical, and geophilosophical contours of the Holocaust.

To this end, Bauman's (1993) philosophically inclined account of 'Social spaces: cognitive, aesthetic, moral' may usefully be used to reflect further on his *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989). However, it is important to clarify that it is not the case that Bauman's (1993) tripartite division of social space into 'cognitive,' 'moral,' and 'aesthetic' spaces neglects *physical* space. Bauman (following Schütz and Luckmann, 1974) insists that physical-spatial conceptions of distance arise from a phenomenological reduction of social concepts of space—for example, the qualities of socially proximate or distal groups—into abstract categories of a 'physical space' that is always already beyond experiential categories: "we grasp physical space intellectually with the help of notions which have been coined originally to 'map' the qualitatively diversified relations with other humans." This is important because such spatial practices and representations frequently take themselves as referring to a purely *physical* space. Such is the space of *Lebensraum*—conventionally (mis)understood—which only readmits the social at a stage once removed from the original disassociation, rendering it the avatar of a wholly modern representation of space: abstract, homogeneous, and empty (Lefebvre, 1991; Relph, 1976). The way in which such an abstract space then maps onto other social spaces thus demands explicit attention in any sustained account of the Final Solution. For it is in the interaction of these different spaces that the Nazi desire for the 'purification of space' (Sibley, 1988) finds its apogée, in the Holocaust of 'the Jews.'

"The system of spatial arrangements," write Schütz and Luckmann (1974: 40-41) "enters into the differentiation of intimacy and anonymity, of strangeness and familiarity, of *social* proximity and distance." If cognitive space—the space we know about—is conceived of in these terms, we may think of those with whom we share space as being "stratified according to levels of anonymity" (Schütz and Luckmann, 1974: 80) and degrees of strangeness. But more importantly, the increase of social distance which serves to define 'the stranger' breeds such unfamiliarity that it often generates an anxiety relating precisely to the absence of any possibility of categorizing (or in Schütz's terms, *typifying*) the Other. In this way, the imperceptible stranger increasingly blurs "the boundaries which ought to be kept watertight" (Bauman, 1993: 150) and is thus often perceived as a growing threat to the socio-spatial order. From the perspective of the molar order, then, the conceptual persona of the stranger embodies a host of "multiform, allotropic phenomena which stubbornly defy clarity-addicted knowledge, elide assignment and sap the familiar classificatory grids" (Bauman, 1993: 164). Bauman names such a threat: *proteophobia*—fear of the stranger.

The significance that proteophobia takes on with the dawning of modernity relates to the fact that people can no longer be coherently categorized according to binary oppositions such as neighbour/alien. But also, and more crucially, it relates to the growing *necessity* of 'relations of strangeness,' brought on by new forms of increasingly distantiated social processes and interactions that modernity ushered in. In Simmel's (1978) view, for instance, the adoption of a modern money system required and sustained exactly this kind of relationship: "The desirable party for financial transactions—in which, as it has been said quite correctly, business is business—is the person completely indifferent to us, engaged neither for nor against us" (Simmel, 1978: 227). Thus the wholly modern space of the stranger is characterized by encounters which are "socially distant yet physically close" (Bauman, 1993: 153), typically within an urban space characterized by 'mismeetings'—by fleeting, episodic encounters which are necessary but detached from the intimacy of traditional social spaces. The entry of the stranger into the spaces of modernity is, therefore, necessary but fraught with anxiety. For those concerned to maintain their power of defining the social spaces of the molar order, there are, according to Levi-Strauss (1955), two available strategies: assimilation (an *anthropophagic* strategy of consuming or digesting the stranger); and exile (an *anthropoemic* strategy of expulsion or vomiting, of merging the category of the stranger with that of the alien). However, whilst Levi-Strauss suggests that these strategies are *historically successive* (moving from a primitive anthropophagy to a modern anthropoemy), Bauman insists that they are actually *parallel* and *reversible* within any given society. In the context of the Holocaust, Bauman's position is clearly preferable insofar as pre-war Germany was considered to be one of the *least* anti-Semitic nations in Europe. Indeed, the emphasis he places on the simultaneity of these strategies clarifies why the Nazis were able to *reverse* the long-standing assimilation of the Jews into German society through their anthropoemic projection of cognitive, moral, aesthetic, and physical spaces proper to the German Reich.

But having said this, it is important to note that the social spaces of modernity are founded upon a decidedly cognitive and rational process. In a markedly difficult and complex relation to this cognitive social space sit moral geographies, geographies that are more often than not negligent of—and even pitted against—the very reasonableness of a cognitive space: "The two spaces are guided by different, and mutually autonomous factors, and the spectre of clash and mutual destruction hovers continuously over their uneasy co-existence" (Bauman, 1993: 166). The important power-knowledge asymmetry between cognitive and moral spaces, though, is that the former proceeds as if to overrule and annihilate the latter, "which cannot but appear un-reasonable, wayward and erratic," whilst the latter "cannot be 'wary' of anything: it just ignores the precepts of cognitive

space (or, rather, proceeds as if it has ignored them)" (Bauman, 1993, 166). However, it is primarily in the realm of cognitive spacing that the space of the Third Reich was conceived, in a manner capable of culminating in the Holocaust.

Perhaps the greatest contribution Bauman (1989) makes, however, lies not in his nuanced reassessment of the bureaucratization of death and of the banality of evil, but in his recognition of the ways in which the social space upon which this process rests is ruptured by the diasporic space of 'the Jews'. His careful construction of the thesis that the Holocaust represents a singular event in terms of its extreme form and spatialization of modern State racism accomplishes a vision of how the swathing geopolitical ambition of the Nazis was fundamentally at odds with the world of the stranger, who straddles the clean-cut boundaries which produce such a conceptual persona in the first place. The fact that "Strangers are the products of the same social spacing which aims at assimilating and domesticating the life-world" (Bauman, 1993: 160) generates a situation whereby strangers are "simultaneously, the anchor and bane of existence." (Hence the futility of attempting to terminate the interminable.) This uncomfortably ambivalent feature lead those in the position of defining the Nazis' social space to adopt a mechanism "projecting its inner incongruity upon a selected social target (that is, focusing the ambivalence which saturates the whole of social space on a selected sector of that space)" (Bauman, 1993: 106)—'the Jews'.

In such a context, Bauman (1989) and Lyotard (1990) write of real Jews in contradistinction to the boundary-straddling, 'slimy,' conceptual 'Jew' which formed such a proteophobic projection for the Nazis: 'the Jews' as a de-humanized, de-personalized, and demonized category through which the Nazis rationalized their desire to exterminate the heterogeneity of real Jews. Bauman suggests that the 'conceptual Jew' initially takes on the role it does in relation to Christianity. "The self-identity of Christianity was, in fact, estrangement of the Jews. It was born of rejection *by the Jews*" (Bauman, 1989: 38). The later secularization and modernization of society then inherited this proteophobic projection of an ambivalent and 'slimy' role onto conceptual 'Jews.' But, as Simmel noted, modernity itself needed and produced such ambivalent, boundary-straddling strangers, and it is precisely the contradiction between modernism and anti-modernism within the Third Reich that engendered such a vehement strain of anti-Semitism. In particular, and when contrasted with the geopolitical, geohistorical, and geophilosophical aims of the Nazi state, the diasporic character of the Jewish people presented itself as a wholly Other conception of social space, one fundamentally at odds with the pan-Germanism of the Third Reich (Barnavi and Eliav-Feldon, 1992: vi-ix). Thus: *"The conceptual Jew carried a message; alternative to this order here and now is*

not another order, but chaos and devastation" (Bauman, 1989: 39; see also Deleuze, 1991). The threat of the Jewish 'Race' was "rooted precisely in its unique universality, ex-temporality and ex-territoriality" (Bauman, 1989: 41). Or again: "*The World tightly packed with nations and nation-states abhorred the non-national* [sic.] *void. Jews were in such a void: they were such a void*" (Bauman, 1989: 53).

That 'the Jews' were, conceptually, a *void* provides one of the most persuasive explanations for the conditions of possibility of the Holocaust. In the eyes of Nazism, 'the Jews' were not criminals, but something far worse: void, vice, virus, vermin. Quite simply, 'the Jews' *ought* not to exist, and to that extent real Jews were to be returned from whence they came—the void. Likewise, "A crime is met with punishment; a vice can only be exterminated" (Arendt, 1951: 87). Again: "Cancer, vermin or weed cannot repent. They have not sinned, they just lived according to their nature" (Bauman, 1989: 72). The conceptual 'Jew' thus provided the focus for the ambivalence that saturated the social space of modernity. It is this fact, coupled with the bureaucratic management of the Holocaust, which allows it to be categorized as singular in the *extreme*. In such circumstances, it should be clear why so many moral geographies were faced with a smooth cognitive space with little place for resistance or hiding.

Specifically, then, it was the Nazis' desire to extend and develop their *Lebensraum* through *Entfernung* which marks the singularity of the place of 'the Jews' in Nazi ideology and practice. Specifically, the Nazis believed that the latter (*Entfernung*) was the condition of possibility for the maintenance and development of the former (*Lebensraum*). This is why Berenbaum (1993: 105) is so wrong to insist that "The Holocaust served no political or territorial purpose" since "the Jews posed no territorial threat to the Nazis. Their murder led to no geopolitical benefit, yielded no territorial gain." And whilst Berenbaum (1993: 108) notes that "The Final Solution was a managerial triumph," since although "There was no budget for the program .... the entire killing operation was run in the black," he repeatedly emphasizes the enormity of the opportunity costs involved: "For twelve years, the persecution and then the destruction of the Jewish people was a national priority, even at the cost of rational policy. Jewish workers were killed in spite of an acute labor shortage, and railway trains were made available to carry Jews to death camps even when every piece of rolling stock was needed to supply German troops on the eastern front" (Berenbaum, 1993: 106). By dwelling on the themes of eugenic anti-Semitism and military-economic opportunity costs, Berenbaum entirely misses the *spatial* underpinnings of the Final Solution. Moreover, such a misunderstanding rests precisely on the conflation of physical and social space, reducing their heterotopic articulation to the flatscape of the earth. For the Nazis, by

contrast, physical space literally *amounted to nothing*, unless it conformed to a very particular configuration of cognitive, moral, and aesthetic codes. Only on this basis is it possible to grasp both the instrumental logic and the moral imperative through which the Nazis were prepared to risk conquered territory (physical space) for the production of *Lebensraum* through *Entfernung* (social space).

In the expansive phase of the war, the Nazis managed to accumulate both physical and social space, producing the latter by deterritorializing the former. However, when the occupied territories available to the Nazis began to contract, owing to the Allied advance, the asymmetry of physical and social space became most clearly visible insofar as the Nazis were prepared to relinquish physical space in order to maintain the production of a social space free of 'the Jews.' It is in this sense that *Lebensraum* was produced through a deterritorialization of physical space coupled to its reterritorialization onto a two-fold, political space of *seriasure*. First, physical space was turned into a blank page, ready for an inaugural inscription by the 'Ayran' Same; and second, 'the Jews' were not only expelled from the face of the earth, they were also forced into a social space of silence (Carroll, 1990; Lyotard, 1988, 1990). In short, it was precisely the disappearance of 'the Jews' *without trace* that made *Raum* formation for the Nazis possible. In this way, the despotic deterritorialization and two-fold reterritorialization of the earth (its 'Germanification') came to be seen as a primordial inscription upon the blank page of a more or less isotropic plane: *Deterritorialization*—"In regions of total planning freedom *Plannungsfreheit* 4.5 million of a total population of 10.2 million were to be removed and the rest resettled within the imposed territorial order" (Cosgrove, 1994: 19); *Rural reterritorialization*—"a key feature of the new order imposed across former Poland was the imposition of a planted landscape of fields, farms and hedges, reflecting national Socialist belief in *Blud und Boden*, that the nation is born out of the soil" (*ibid.*: 18); *Urban reterritorialization*—"plans were made to build completely new German cities in the East, with approximately 15,000-20,000 population, at important railway and highway junctions. Such cities were to be surrounded by a 5-10 mile broad belt of German villages" (Kamenetsky, quoted in Rössler, 1989: 422).

For the Nazis, then, the Auschwitz universe was a system of production—although the principal product it manufactured was neither death, nor silence, nor materials, but cognitive, moral, and aesthetic *space*. This is why Himmler insisted that "The hard decision had to be taken to make this people ['the Jews'] vanish from the earth" (quoted in Joffe, 1987: 75). But as we noted above, the two-fold production of *Lebensraum* opened a rift in both physical and social space, which could neither be entirely erased, nor effectively dissimulated, insofar as it always entailed a transpearing of the Same and

its Others in an interminable *seriasure*. To that extent, the Final Solution embodied not only a *banality*, but also a *transparition*, of evil (Baudrillard, 1993).

In summary, a geopolitical concern to segregate the social spaces which permitted the Holocaust from the territorial ambition of the *Lebensraum* policy entirely misses their internal relation. However, the recognition of this relation between *Lebensraum* and *Enfernung*, whilst vital, is itself in immanent danger of an ontological ordering characterized by the systematic expulsion of its own internally engendered waste: "Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter ... the reaction which condemns any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classifications" (Douglas, 1970: 48). Thus, the discourses of singularity as extremity are haunted by conceiving of a state of affairs as a selection from an array of *pre-existing* possibilities (Deleuze, 1991). Such a conception haunts the presentation of the Holocaust by Arendt and Bauman, a haunting which risks dissipating the significance of the Holocaust into the incorporeal and ethereal realms of the *always already*. But other moments in their work certainly testify to the fact that the real is more, not less, than the possible; it is the *virtual*. The singularity of the Holocaust finally insists, therefore, in its third figuration, as *seriasure*.

Holocaust III: the geophilosophies of *seriasure*—untimely traces

> -.... *fear... yes, fear, that only boundless thought can reach...* fear, yes, but what *of*...?
> The answer fills the universe and the universe in me:
> -... very clearly, of NOTHING.... (Bataille, 1988: 6)

As a transpearing, transparition, and *seriasure* of evil, the Nazis operated two regimes of death: deaths which arose as an (un)intended consequence of the war for territory (physical space) and deaths which arose from the war against 'the Jews' (social space). And it was through the attempt to produce the Third Reich's *Lebensraum* through *Entfernung* that these two regimes came together as a very particular geopolitics, geohistory, and geophilosophy of death. Moreover, the unraveling of these regimes came to be exemplified in the hypertelic death marches: whilst the war for territory risked and exchanged life for *Lebensraum*, and the war against 'the Jews' sought to purify this social space, the death marches quite literally abandoned the earth in order to produce the death, silence and disappearance of 'the Jews.' Accordingly, there is an aparallel evolution of two regimes of death: 'beautiful death' and 'sufficient death.' In the first regime, deaths that arose through armed conflict could always be sublated as beautiful deaths insofar as

they could be rationalized within cognitive, moral, and aesthetic space: *To die for...* (for example, values, family, community, class, state, nation, the 'Ayran Race,' etc.). To that extent, "The 'reason to die' always forms the bond of a we.... One escapes death by the only means known—the perpetuation of the proper name.... Such is the Athenian 'beautiful death,' the exchange of the finite for the infinite, of the *eschaton* for the *télos*: the *Die in order not to die*" (Lyotard, 1988: 100). But

> The authority of the SS comes out of a we from which the deportee is excepted once and for all: the race, which grants not only the right to command, but also the right to live.... One's death is legitimate because one's life is illegitimate. The individual name must be killed (whence the use of serial numbers), and the collective name (Jew) must also be killed in such a way that no we bearing this name might remain which could take the deportee's death into itself and eternalize it. (*ibid.*: 101).

Hence the fact that Bataille (1988: 89) suggested that "What makes death not yet the worst is its being not *the* end but only the end of the finite and the revelation of the infinite. Worse than this magical death would be a death without reversal, an end which is simply the end, including the end of the infinite." Hence also the fact that Adorno (1966: 371) insisted that "In the camps death has a novel horror; since Auschwitz, fearing death means fearing worse than death."

For Nazism, 'the Jews,' 'Slavs,' Gypsies, Jehovah Witnesses, homosexuals, Freemasons, Bolsheviks, the physically and mentally ill, the long term unemployed, misfits, drifters, outcasts, dissidents, and criminals, are all people without a right to exist: 'internal enemies,' 'asocial elements,' 'subhumans,' 'vermin,' 'unproductive parasites,' 'useless mouths to feed,' 'lives unworthy of being lived.' And whilst it is undoubtedly the case that the Nazis perceived the principle threat to Race and Reich as coming from 'the Jews,' it should be clear why Levinas (1981) insists that National Socialist anti-Semitism is not confined to real Jews, but is expanded to entail the proteophobic hatred of the Other person *as such*. In short, the 'Ayran' Same sought to find a Final Solution to *its* Others, *its* 'Jews' (either through an 'incremental innovation' as posited by the broadly postmodern sociologists and functionalist historians, or else through a 'teleological metanarrative' as presented by the broadly modern sociologists and intentionalist historians). Accordingly, "Nazism requires nothing from what is not 'Aryan,' except for the cessation of its appearing to exist" (Lyotard, 1988: 103). And in this mismeeting, "Dispersion is at its height. My law kills them who have no relevance to it. My death is due to their law, to which I owe nothing. We think of terror" (*ibid.*: 101). Meanwhile, twelve to thirteen million men, women, and children were exterminated in order to render the Race and Reich pure. And yet, what could be more paranoid and absurd than an

attempt to fashion the 'Ayran' Same by exterminating and annihilating *its* Others? Hence the tendency for the terror to be internalized as an interminable *seriasure* of the entire social space of Nazism (Clarke and Doel, forthcoming; Deleuze and Guattari, 1984; Perez, 1990).

> If there is terror in Nazism, it is exerted internally among the 'pure,' who are always suspected of not being pure enough. They cleanse themselves of suspicion by excepting themselves from all impurity through oaths, denunciations, pogroms, or final solutions.... Jews (and others) are not suspect, they are already judged. Rational terror is inclusive and 'progressive' in the sense that it is faced with an infinite amount of suspicion to be cast upon anything that can be presented: the tribunal will be permanent, goodwill will is never good enough. Racist or exceptive 'terror' is exclusive and regressive, suspicion is limited to the 'good' race.... It is a 'terror' without a tribunal, and without a pronounced punishment.... The solution is final.... It does not even kill the others, it offers its final solution ... by helping them vanish. (Lyotard, 1988: 103-104).

In an attempt to disrupt the discourses which present the Holocaust as simply past, absent, and no longer present, Barham (1992) has attempted to reconfigure the Auschwitz universe in terms of a 'counter-time'—or *seriasure*—which interminably interrupts what is taken to be present. For Barham (1992) and Levi (1963), this proximity is exemplified in the everyday life of the survivors for whom the "recapture of forgotten habits—how to use a toothbrush, toilet paper, a knife and fork—and forgotten tastes and smells—blossom, the sweet scent of rain in spring—finds itself vulnerable to the 'counter-time' of Auschwitz, where the rain stinks of diarrhea and the winds carry the odour of burning flesh" (Barham, 1992: 40). This is what Barham calls a 'temporal dislocation' insofar as the survivor who experiences such an intrusion of counter-time is no longer (simply) living in the present. Accordingly, and in contrast to the commonsense view that 'we' are distant from the Auschwitz universe in cognitive, moral, and aesthetic space, Barham wants to emphasize the survivors' (almost) absolute proximity to Auschwitz. And this heterotopic co-presence, or *seriasure*, is eternal. Indeed, it is precisely in this context that Barham, following Blanchot, speaks of the 'died event' and 'humiliated memory' in contradistinction to the sublating movement of the 'lived event' and 'anguished memory:' "The person may indeed survive but the terms of existence available to her are those of living under threat of a death or dying which has already taken place" (Barham, 1992: 41). Consequently, it is important "to understand the *finality* of the 'died event' and to recognize it as a determinate ending, no matter how many new beginnings may come after it.... The Holocaust experience 'murdered part of the future even for those who survived it'" (*ibid.*: 41-42). Hence Steiner's (1987: 55-6) insistence that "Eloquence after Auschwitz would be a kind of obscenity."

This distinction between a diachronic temporality of 'normal' everyday life on the one hand, and a dislocating, synchronic counter-time on the other, is underscored by Barham's reliance upon Langer's (1991: 175) distinction between Auschwitz as a 'story' and Auschwitz as a 'plot:' "Auschwitz as story enables us to pass through and beyond the place, horrible as it may be, while Auschwitz as plot stops the chronological clock and fixes the moment permanently in memory and imagination, immune to the vicissitudes of time." Hence Langer's suggestion that her everyday life as a survivor is less a living-on 'after' Auschwitz, than a living 'beside' Auschwitz. It is in this sense that Barham claims that whilst Auschwitz represents a rupture, transpearing, transparition, and *seriasure* in the progressive (meta)narrative of (post)modernity—to the extent "that the actuality of what took place there cannot be transfigured or absorbed, become 'history or past time'" (Barham, 1992: 52)—we must nevertheless "respect the longings of narrative to commence the story anew."

However, this presentation is troubling for several reasons. First, who 'we?' Second, the binarization of the explanatory framework ensures that the terms for comprehending the Holocaust are never put into question: 'we' can still distinguish between the story and the plot, between our time and counter-time, between diachrony and synchrony, between the died event and the lived event, between humiliated memory and anguished memory, between Auschwitz and (post)modernity, and between the survivors and the collectivity. Third, insofar as it is the intrusion of the plot into the story which dislocates temporality, opening a *seriasure* in the socio-spatial order of things, this dis-location can only be attributed to, and experience by, the survivors of the Holocaust: it is not 'our' counter-time; it is not part of 'our' (post)modernity. Fourth, Barham's and Langer's accounts suggest that in spite of this rupture, produced through the *seriasure* of countertime, the progressive narrative of (post)modernity continues unabated on its diachronic path. After Auschwitz, and beside Auschwitz, the story moves on; 'we' "pass through and beyond" into Other cognitive, moral, and aesthetic spaces: "We shall never know whether Nazism, the concentration camps or Hiroshima were intelligible or not: we are no longer part of the same mental universe" (Baudrillard, 1993: 91). Finally, and perhaps most worringly, Barham's theorization implies that our obligation to the fact of the other's counter-time only extends to a passive memorialization: "we cannot put Auschwitz behind us, but must live 'beside' it" suggests Barham (1992: 52). "Auschwitz just is that place," he continues, noting that "For Freud, a memorial once established was 'just there' and to be taken for granted." But are 'we' really obligated to simply 'let Auschwitz be' whilst 'our' (post)modernity—without ever forgetting or sublating the Holocaust—simply passes by and moves on? Such is the impoverished sense of responsibility which emerges from

Barham's theorization: one abandons the (died) event and (humiliated) memory to an inert facticity: *It happened.* And yet, what if it is precisely *our* (post)modernity, (lived) events, and (anguished) memories that are untimely? What if *we* are all survivors? (Baudrillard, 1990b; Doel and Clarke, forthcoming; Massumi, 1993).

In Lyotard's (1988, 1990) view, reducing the Holocaust to an inert facticity—It happened—is clearly not enough insofar as it unwittingly aligns itself with the 'savage narrative tradition' of Nazism, a tradition which also worked through the 'already there.' By contrast, Lyotard notes how the Jewish (Cabbala) tradition is "placed under the *Is it happening?* Nazism assails the occurrence, the *Ereignis*. It thereby attacks the time of all modernity.... The Jewish phrase has not taken place. There is no *Is it happening?* It happened" (Lyotard, 1988: 106). Paradoxically, then, the establishment of a memorial which is 'just there' conforms to the savage narrative tradition of Nazism, just as a narrative-empiricism enables the Holocaust to be erased in History, and erased from History. Indeed, one should recall that the Nazis themselves actually set about establishing an "'Exotic Museum of an Extinct Race,'" and had amassed hundreds of thousands of exhibits (Sayer, 1991: 8). Such is the contradiction of striving to terminate the interminable, to finalize the Final Solution.

The discourses of the 'already there' are not, however, confined to a memorialization and a narrative-empiricism, insofar as for Lyotard—as for Theweleit (1987; 1989)—*war* is the savage narrative tradition of fascism and Nazism *par excellence*, insofar as it provides the framework through which a collective 'we' can be formed in opposition to all of the forces of destabilization, dissemination, and *seriasure*. "That is why savages make war," suggests Lyotard (1988: 106). "They endlessly carry out, and thus endlessly hear and tell, the narrative of their we. They merit their name. Who the adversaries are is of no importance. They are not adversaries. Nothing will happen through them that has not already happened. Nazism restores this genre of discourse, which modernity has brought to ruin."

Perhaps 'we' hear only silence now—the silence of *exceptive terror*, which categorized millions of human beings as not having a right to exist, and the silence of *seriasure*, which interleaves the transparition of the Other in cognitive, moral, and aesthetic spaces. Such is the two-fold geopolitics, geohistory, and geophilosophy of Nazism as it reconfigured space, ethics, and politics around the gas chambers and crematoria of the Auschwitz universe—*Lebensraum* through *Entfernung*. Sadly, it also appears to be a two-fold spatial practice that continues to articulate the unfolding and *seriasure* of 'our' (post)modernity.

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Notes

1. This phrase is taken from Charlesworth (1992: 468).

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