

lying human discourse that we understand one another through speech. By forcing the analyst to mind his speech, to eat his words, this analysis unconsciously seeks to represent either his or his parents' failure to play with misrecognition.

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## 9

### *The Fascist State of Mind*

"Our program is simple," wrote Benito Mussolini in 1932. "They ask us for programs, but there are already too many. It is not programs that are wanting for the salvation of Italy but men and willpower" (185). "What is Fascism?" asked Gramsci some ten years before Mussolini's spartan statement. "It is the attempt to resolve the problems of production and exchange with machine-gun fire and pistol shots" (82).

Fascism seemed to simplify the ideological, theological, and cultural confusions that emerged from the failure of the Enlightenment view of man to comprehend human existence. It was, argues Fritz Stern, a "conservative revolution" constituting "the ideological attack on modernity, on the complex of ideas and institutions that characterize our liberal, secular, and industrial civilization" (xvi). Where the Enlightenment had partly emphasized the integrity of individual man, twentieth-century Fascism extolled the virtue of the state, an organic creation driven by the militant will of the masses, a sharp contrast indeed to the federal republic encumbered by checks and balances dividing power so that the people remained individually free to speak their minds in a pluralistic society.

While Freud reconsidered the dark side of man's self, this id never was free as a virtuous agent of the innate will of man. It became part of an internal federation of complex checks and balances, of ego working with superego against id, or id with superego in compromise negotiations with the ego. Freud rethought man and maintained some considerable belief in the power of reason to influence the id, and even if his theory of the death instinct accounts for the possibility of a mass negation of life, he remained a Bismarckian with a sense of real politics: life was to be an endless series of compromise solutions between the parts of the self. At the end of a Freudian life it is possible to be a Montaigne, rendered far too wise by the mayorial negotiations of existence to characterize ontology as a "pursuit of happiness," but nonetheless continuously respectful of the individual skills of man to negotiate a good enough life.

Like many Europeans of his time, Freud deferred recognition of a deeply troubling factor in human culture, an element which preoccupies us now with its haunting relevance: the related issues of terror and genocide. In February 1915 the Ottoman government decreed that its Armenian population would lose the privileges of the ordinary civilian, and immediately the slaughter began. In that year 800,000 Armenians were massacred, and although the *entente* nations (Britain, France, Russia) protested to the Ottoman government and Arnold Toynbee collected a volume of essays testifying to the atrocities against the Armenians, this was to be a massacre that could not be inscribed in the symbolic orders of Western thought; references to it were scarce indeed. There is no mention in Freud's work of the elimination of 75 percent of the Armenian population. Nor indeed does he make more than a single reference to the pogroms that preceded it in European history.

Although the genocide against the Jewish population in Nazi Germany—the Holocaust—seems an irreplaceable icon to evil in the twentieth-century mind, we may wonder if its

ironic function (the Jew now used once again to serve as a point of projection) is to serve as a continued mental negation of the continuation of genocide. We seem to know this, as citizens of the Western world do try not to eliminate from their thoughts the re-emergence in Cambodia of the Khmer Rouge which put to death millions of people. "Never forget," the cry of the Holocaust victim, seems a tellingly apt injunction: we seem all too able to forget.

"Terror is the realization of the law of movement: its chief aim is to make it possible," writes Hannah Arendt, "for the force of nature or of history to race freely through mankind unhindered by any spontaneous human actions." Is genocide, the mass implementation of terror, social license to remake the world according to one's vision? "Those who are not of my species are not my fellow men . . . a noble is not one of my species: he is a wolf and I shoo" (O'Sullivan, 49). So spoke a French revolutionary. And from 3 executions a week in 1793 to 32 a week in early 1794, the revolutionaries executed, on average, 196 people a week in the summer of 1794.

But a noble is not man but wolf, so is this the destruction of a lowly creature? In genocide a person is killed for who he is, not for what he does, which prompts Kuper to pose an uncomfortable question: as there is a "thoroughgoing dehumanization of the bourgeoisie" in the Communist manifesto, is it possible to see this intellectual act as a precondition for Stalin's elimination of such bourgeois elements in his death camps (95)? In other words, is this famous act of Marxist objectification, the vilification of the bourgeoisie to which thousands of intellects since that time have paid lip service, the "warrant" for killing some 20 million human beings in the years between 1919 and 1939 (59)?

In the *perestroika* world created by Mikhail Gorbachev it now seems not only possible but equally essential to think not only about what we have done but about who we are, or what we are, when we license genocide. As a psychoanalyst

I turn my attention to that frame of mind which is the warrant for the extermination of human beings. I term it the Fascist state of mind, knowing that in some respects this is historiographically incorrect, as Fascism was a particular movement in world history with highly unique features to it, but I justify this license by playing on the double meaning of the word "state." There was a Fascist state. The coming into being of that state and its political theory can tell us quite a lot about another state: the state of mind that authorized a Fascist theory. Furthermore, like it or not, "Fascist" is now a metaphor in our world for a particular kind of person, and I wish to reserve this ironic scapegoating of the Fascist from the convenient movement of its personification of evil, as, like Wilhelm Reich and Hannah Arendt, I shall argue that there is a Fascist in each of us and that there is indeed a highly identifiable psychic profile for this personal state.

Noel O'Sullivan, a political theorist and author of a fine study of Fascism, dismisses the psychoanalytical literature on Fascism as "dangerously complacent . . . since it merely explains Fascism away by pushing it out of sight into a psychiatric ward." He disagrees with Martin Wagh's view (247) that the idealization of Hitler relieved homosexual tensions through submission to the leader, and objects to this and other analytical studies of Nazi pathology as failing to "explain why other nations whose children were left fatherless in the First World War did not produce successful Führers and Nazi-type mass movements." Psychoanalytic studies, he continues, "explain everything, and therefore tell us nothing"; they assume that any sane person would be a liberal, and "once this hidden postulate is granted, it naturally follows that those who dislike parliamentary institutions, respond to nationalistic appeals, and show a taste for heroism and self-sacrifice, are the victims of some psychological disorder." The psychoanalytic argument, O'Sullivan con-

cludes, ultimately claims that Fascists are the insane, and liberals and psychoanalysts are the sane (27).

Some analytic studies of the Nazi movement may have suggested that there was an illness peculiar to the Germans, and if such a disorder is regarded as an idiosyncronome of culture and history, then I would join O'Sullivan in regarding such psychoanalytical positions as worryingly simplistic. It is my understanding of a prominent feature of psychoanalysis that the pathology found in the Fascist movement is inside each of us, and that one aim of a training analysis is to provide the analyst-to-be with the evidence of neurotic and psychotic processes within the ordinary self. Indeed I shall argue that it is possible to be both a liberal believing in a parliamentary world and yet capable of developing a Fascist frame of mind. I thus find no contradiction between a belief that a world of checks and balances mitigates genocide and the view that as the Fascist state of mind is ordinary, it can indeed subvert the democratic mind.

There is a view now fairly common in psychoanalysis that the subject is composed of varied parts of the self. These parts are the ordinary functioning parts of the mind (i.e., the workings of the mind according to Freud, Klein, Fairbairn, and Winnicott) and the differing selves and objects represented in this internal world. It is rather like a parliamentary order with instincts, memories, needs, anxieties, and object responses finding representatives in the psyche for mental processing. When under the pressure of some particularly intense drive (such as greed), or force (such as envy), or anxiety (such as the fear of mutilation) this internal world can indeed lose its parliamentary function and evolve into a less representative internal order, particularly as differing parts of the self are projected out into other objects, leaving the mind denuded of its representative constituents.

To see the mind's move to Fascism, we need to consider just how this democratic order is changed. How does one

become Fascist? Eric Brenman suggests that "the practice of cruelty" is a "singular narrow-mindedness of purpose" that when "put into operation . . . has the function of squeezing out humanity and preventing human understanding from modifying the cruelty" (256). In object relations terms, humanity is presumably represented or representable by the presence of different capacities of the self (such as empathy, forgiveness, and reparation) which had been squeezed out of the self.

Kleinian psychoanalysts frequently refer in their literature to the "killing off" of those parts of the self, thereby emphasizing the factor of murder as an ordinary feature of intrapsychic life. Rosenfeld, for example, describes an aggressive aspect of the narcissistic self state achieved by "killing their loving dependent self and identifying themselves almost entirely with the destructive narcissistic parts of the self which provides them with a sense of superiority and self admiration" (248). Compare this psychoanalytic observation to the terrorist credo of Mikhail Bakunin's *Revolutionary Catechism* written in 1869.

All the tender feelings of family life, of friendship, love, gratitude, and even honor must be stifled in the revolutionary by a single cold passion for the revolutionary cause. (67)

Bakunin's statement is a conscious articulation of what the revolutionary must do to achieve his cold passion, and perhaps because he knows (has made conscious) what must be squeezed out, we can feel the horror and sadness of this psychic movement. Rosenfeld, however, addresses the unconscious equivalent of this process, and in a passage strikingly relevant to our subsequent considerations of political genocide, he likens destructive narcissism to the work of a gang:

The destructive narcissism of these patients appears often highly organized, as if one were dealing with a powerful gang dominated by a leader, who controls all the members of the gang to see that they support one another in making the criminal destructive work more effective and powerful. (249)

The death camps of Buchenwald and Dachau come to mind, the training ground for the SS, a gang dominated by a hierarchy of Hitler clones who watched each other commit atrocities in order to ensure that no one in the gang stepped outside the ethos of terror. There could be no internal opposition to the gang's operation of the death camps, organized by their "death work" (Pontalis, 184). "Terror becomes total when it becomes independent of all opposition," says Arendt. "It rules supreme when nobody any longer stands in its way" (464). Other psychoanalysts (e.g., Kovel and Federn) have addressed certain mental mechanisms that are useful to an understanding of the Fascist state of mind.

It is incumbent to very briefly outline the extraordinary study by Robert J. Lifton, who believes the key to understanding how Nazi doctors committed acts of genocide yet remained ordinary family men lies in the psychology of doubling: "the division of the self into two functioning wholes, so that a part self acts as an entire self" (418). Such doubling may be ordinary—for example, when a surgeon needs to be his ordinary doctor self in order to perform operations. Nazi doctors escaped the sense of guilt arising from their evil actions by transferring the guilt from the ordinary to the "Auschwitz self." Nonetheless, argues Lifton, the Auschwitz self must become psychically numb to commit atrocities, something partly achieved by refusing to name the act of killing, finding instead many alternative words.

Lifton brilliantly illustrates the link between these Nazi doctors' sense of being inside the atmosphere of death and

their increased omnipotence and mechanization of self as they transcended the death feeling. German genocide, argues Lifton, emerged from the sense of death that followed on from the First World War, a war that left Germans with a "profound experience of *failed regeneration*" (468). A sense of collective illness pervaded the country, leading to a "vision of total cure" (470) which the charismatic Hitler provided. The cure that becomes genocide, according to Lifton, must be total, invincible, transcendental. The victim of genocide is designated a disease that could contaminate the self and must therefore be eliminated, sponsoring a "genocidal necessity" that is a "ferce purification procedure" (482).

### *The Fascist State of Mind*

Whatever the factors that sponsor any specific social act of genocide, the core element in the Fascist state of mind (in the individual or the group) is the presence of an ideology that maintains its certainty through the operation of specific mental mechanisms aimed at eliminating all opposition. But the presence of ideology (either political, theological, or psychological) is hardly unusual; indeed it is quite ordinary. The core of the Fascist state of mind—its substructure, let us say—is the ordinary presence of ideology, or what we might call belief or conviction. Arendt finds the seeds of totalitarianism in ideology because ideologies "claim . . . total explanation," divorce themselves from all experience "from which they cannot learn anything new," insisting therefore on the powerful possession of a secret truth that explains all phenomena, and operates from a logic which orders facts to support the ideological axiom (470-71).

Thus something almost banal in its ordinariness—namely, our cohering of life into ideologies or theories—is the seed of the Fascist state of mind when such ideology must (for whatever reason) become total.

To achieve such totality, the mind (or group) can entertain no doubt. Doubt, uncertainty, self-interrogation, are equivalent to weakness and must be expelled from the mind to maintain ideological certainty.

This is accompanied, in my view, by a special act of *binding* as doubts and counter-views are expelled, and the mind ceases to be complex, achieving a simplicity held together initially by bindings around the signs of the ideology. Political slogans, ideological maxims, oaths, material icons (such as the flag), fill the gap previously occupied by the polymousness of the symbolic order. When the mind had previously entertained in its democratic order the parts of the self and the representatives of the outside world, it was participant in a multifaceted movement of many ideas linked to the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real—Lacan's terms. Specifically, words, as signifiers, were always free in the democratic order to link to any other words, in that famous Lacanian slide of the signifiers which expressed the true freedom of the unconscious (this Other) to represent itself. But when representational freedom is foreclosed, signifiers lack this freedom, as ideology freezes up the symbolic order, words becoming signs of positions in the ideological structure. When Michael Dukakis tried to introduce complex issues in the American presidential campaign of 1988, George Bush made the word "liberal" a sign of weakness visited upon the certain mind by doubt and complexity. To supplement his destruction of the symbolic order Bush made the American flag the sign of the difference between Dukakis and himself; sadly, it signified the end of discourse and the presence of an emergent Fascist frame of mind.

As the empty binding of the order of signs constitutes an act of de-semiosis, it enables the mind to function in a highly simplified way, cushioned initially by the success of such binding.

O'Sullivan believes there is a "marshall sense" to Fascism, which I shall define here as a binding of mental forces to

create a sense capable of murder. In a way the elimination of the symbolic, of polysemousness, is the first murder committed by this order, as the symbolic is the true subversion of ideology. The slide of signifiers will always dissipate a bound meaning and subvert any act of solidarity, a fact which Freud showed so very simply in his numerous demonstrations of how the parapraxis subverts the position of the conscious subject.

Aware of the pathological functions of certainty, Freud wrote in *The Future of an Illusion*:

An enquiry which proceeds like a monologue, without interruption, is not altogether free from danger. One is too easily tempted into pushing aside thoughts which threaten to break into it, and in exchange, one is left with a feeling of uncertainty which in the end one tries to keep down by over-decisiveness. (21)

Ideological certainty, then, in spite of its binding of the self through simplification and the exile of other views, is threatened by the sudden breakthrough of the pushed-aside thoughts, which now must be dynamically ordered by an overdecisiveness.

This will work for some time, perhaps for a long time. Stuart Hampshire claims that the Nazi movement created "a dizzying sense in German minds that all things are possible and that nothing is forbidden . . . and that there is an infinite moral space now open for natural violence and domination" (69). The psychoanalyst Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel sees this infinite moral space as the pervert's accomplishment eliminating (at first Oedipal) opposition to desire and gaining objects without opposition. Hampshire argues that the violence inherent in the Nazi moral space has left "a great vacancy . . . a moral void" (69), which psychoanalysis such as Chasseguet-Smirgel, Khan, and Stoller, who study the

perversions, would agree lies at the now empty heart of the pervert.

The moral void created by the simplifying violence of an ideology that brooks no true opposition is also an essential consequence of this stage in the evolution of the Fascist state of mind. For although the binding of signs and the power of certainty dull the subject into complacency, the moral void created by the destruction of opposition begins to make its presence felt. At this point the subject must find a victim to contain that void, and now a state of mind becomes an act of violence. On the verge of its own moral vacuum, the mind splits off this dead core self and projects it into a victim henceforth identified with the moral void. To accomplish this transfer, the Fascist mind transforms a human other into a disposable nonentity, a bizarre mirror transference of what has already occurred in the Fascist's self experience.

As contact with the moral void is lost through projective identification into a victim, and the victim now exterminated, the profoundly destructive processes involved are further denied by a form of delusional narcissism which is constructed out of the annihilation of negative hallucination, an idealization of self accomplished by the negation of any alternative (and thus enviable or persecutory) self or environment. As the negation of the qualities of the other are destroyed via the annihilation of the other, a delusional grandiosity forms in the Fascistically stated mind.

It is at this point that the process of annihilation is idealized in order to supply the Fascist mind with the qualities-essential to delusional narcissism. Mental contents are now regarded as contaminants, and the Fascist mind idealizes the process of purging itself of what it has contained. The cleansing of the self suggests the possible birth of a new, forever empty self to be born with no contact with others, with no past (which is severed), and with a future entirely of its own creation.

The foregoing mental processes can be seen, in some



respects, in Nietzsche's semi-autobiographical *Ecce Homo*. At a time when he suffered from continuous episodes of vomiting, traveling about Europe he became preoccupied with "the question of nutriment," by which he meant not only literally what one ate but also what sort of national culture one took into oneself. He proclaimed, for example, that "the German spirit is an indigestion" while extolling the virtues of Italian culture and life (52).

*Ecce Homo* is, by any account, a deeply anguished text, full of contradictions, which, if they evoke our interest and compassion, are nonetheless remarkable actions of split consciousness. "I am by nature warlike," he proclaims (47); yet elsewhere he claims: "no trace of struggle can be discovered in my life . . . I look out upon my future as upon a smooth sea . . . Tuffed by no desire" (65). Perhaps this is a sea of vomit, accomplished through a continuous warlike spirit that leaves him feeling serene.

I refer to Nietzsche because at times he defines quite precisely the unconscious idealization of the self as an empty, and therefore pure, container. "I possess a perfectly uncanny sensitivity of the instinct for cleanliness," he writes, adding that this instinct has given him a sense of smell for the unclean "innermost parts, the 'entrails,' of every soul" which are the cause of his "disgust." No doubt in such moments he would have to vomit up these noxious internal objects in order to maintain his sense of inner purity: "As has always been customary with me an extreme cleanliness in relation to me is a presupposition of my existence, I perish under unclean conditions" (48).

Such a state of mind extols the virtue of being pure, uncontaminated because nothing is taken into the self, the psyche living from its sense of antiseptic accomplishment by maintaining purity in its own right, achieved by the continuous oral evacuation of the noxious. We can find this phenomenon, however, in ordinary life, whether it be spoken by those who attempt to claim the position of pure Christi-

anity, pure objectivity, pure science, or, dare I say, pure analysis!

The greater the annihilation of the opposition, the more delusionally narcissistic the Fascist mind must become, a psyche now empty of ideas other than those performing a pure sign function—to bind the state of mind—a mind that idealizes itself as a cleaning process. It is not difficult to see, then, why the Fascist did not share the Marxist's belief in a logical history, but supported a movement that idealized struggle (or riddance) in its own right. As Mussolini wrote:

War alone brings up to their highest tension all human energies and puts the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have the courage to meet it. Fascism carries this anti-pacifist struggle into the lives of individuals. It is education for combat . . . war is to man what maternity is to the woman. I do not believe in perpetual peace; not only do I not believe in it but I find it depressing and a negation of all the fundamental virtues of man. (185)

But this so-called struggle is, in fact, no combat at all. How far we are indeed from that "noble" warfare found in the chivalric code of the *Song of Roland* when the virtue of one's opponents ennobled the act of physical battle. What is this male maternity to which Mussolini refers? Is it not the death camps, where the living are brought to a container, stripped of their culture, their loved ones, their adult characters, and turned into bizarre fetuses eventually to be killed in this deadly womb?

Some who opposed Fascism, such as Giovanni Zibordi, were able to diagnose the Fascist need to be at war. In 1922, in "Towards a Definition of Fascism," he wrote that after the First World War "the officers sympathize with Fascism because it represents a prolongation of the state of war internally, and of a possibility of war externally" (89). Psychoanalytically considered, this permanent war is actually

against struggle, against the conflicts brought on by continued engagement with opposition views. The idealization of war and of the warrior is a call to a state of mind that rids itself of opposition by permanent violence.

Cotta suggests that there is a "circuit of de-personalization" conducted by the person who submits to domination by passing on to another victim his own circumstance. "Violence has its origins and triumphs within the circuit of de-personalization thus actuated, which ultimately leads to a dispossession of oneself" (63).

This loss of self seems to me to be that loss of humanity to which Brennan referred, and which leaves in its place an idolized skeleton, a figure (leader, ideology, or state) revered for its militant capacity, in the end an idealization of the capacity to murder the self.

Thus the concentration camp, a metaphor of the psychic process of Fascism, is the place where, as the humane parts of the self are dehumanized and then exterminated, the death work is idealized in the death workers who cleanse the body politic of the undesirables. As Susan Sontag argues, when illness is used as a metaphor for the opposition, then the act of elimination is viewed only as a necessary surgical intervention. Reference to the opposition as a disease or cancer that must be removed from society (and mind) is a frequent feature of the Fascist mental state, leading eventually to an idealization of the anti-human. Writing of the mobile killing units of the SS, Leo Kuper muses that "the ideal" seems to have been that of the dispassionate, efficient killer, engaged in systematic slaughter, in the service of a higher cause" (122). "Higher" here is a metaphor of that grandiosity that achieves nobility by rising above the human: Kuper quotes from an address by the chief of the SS to his top commanders in October 1943:

Most of you know what it means when 100 corpses lie there, or when 500 corpses lie there, or when 1,000 corpses lie there.

To have gone through this and—apart from a few exceptions caused by human weakness—to have remained decent, that has made us great. (122)

### *Intellectual Genocide*

"Genocide" is a word coined by the jurist Raphael Lemkin in 1944, from the Greek *genos* (tribal race) and the Latin *cide* (killing). Lemkin found a word that linked up with "tyrannicide" and "homicide" and thus inscribed itself in the symbolic order, enabling us finally to think about this crime.

The process that leads to a Fascist state (of mind, group, or nation) is unremarkable, and evidence of its emergence is easy to detect. I intend to list the features of what I shall term *intellectual genocide*, to name the mental processes precursor to, and eventually part of, the genocidal act. I do so, as will be clear toward the end of the chapter, not only out of interest in this problem but because I think identification of ordinary genocide (the genocide of everyday life) may lead us toward self scrutiny and confrontation of others when we see that an individual or a group has taken on this form of representation of the other. Because it is so ordinary, it is easily identifiable but, equally, because of its unremarkable status, it is also capable of emergence into mass murder.

I start by differentiating between *communitive genocide*, identifying its visible traits, and *omnitive genocide*, which is an act of omission.

### *Communitive Genocide*

*Distortion.* In the early stages of a possible move to a Fascist state of mind, the subject subtly distorts the view of the opponent, rendering it less intelligent or credible than



hitherto. This is an ordinary part of debate, but in the extreme manifests itself as slander.

*Decontextualization.* A point of view held by the opposition is taken out of its proper context, which recontextualized would make the content more credible. This is an ordinary part of debate and the victim of decontextualization will naturally struggle to fill the gaps created by this rhetorical violence. The extreme of this act is the removal of a victim from his tribe, home (i.e., context), isolated for purposes of persecution.

*Denigration.* The belittling of an opponent's view combines distortion and decontextualization, rendering the opponent's views ridiculous. This is a door through which affects (of scorn and belittlement) move and displace ideation as the machinery of conflict with the opposition.

*Caricature.* This is the move from the denigration of the opponent's views to cartooning of the individual who presumably holds the views. Again, it is part of ordinary rhetoric to caricature the opposition's view and yet it is a transfer from the view held to the holder of the view. It therefore represents a significant step in the identification of a person or group with ascribed undesirable qualities.

*Character assassination.* This refers to the attempt to eliminate the opposition by discrediting the personal character of the holder of a view. An unacceptable form of debate, it is an ordinary part of discourse, usually referred to as "gossip." This perfectly harmless act of character assassination ("Oh, I do love gossip! Tell me all about it!") which discredits an opponent by conveying fictions or facts in a nonjudicial place—notably where the victim cannot speak for himself—can eliminate a person from the scene of consideration.

*Change of name.* Again, this is sometimes an acceptable part of debate but with obviously more disturbing manifestations ("kikes" for Jews, "gooks" for Vietnamese) that form part of the act of elimination of the proper name, precursor

to the elimination of the person himself (from the scene of consideration or from life itself). It is ordinary ("You know, what's his name. Thingy"), sometimes acceptable, if tiresome (when a person's name is consciously distorted for humorous purposes), and may be an unconscious parapraxis when the name is unknowingly altered.

*Categorization as aggregation.* These terms, used by Kuper, are useful to define the moment when the individual is transferred to a mass in which he loses his identity. It may be ordinary: "Oh, but of course she is Freudian." It may be permissible, if dicey: "Well, of course she is ill" or "Well, he is a psychopath." Or it may be an extreme act of lumping together: "He's a Jew."

#### *Omnibus Genocide*

*Absence of reference.* This is an act of omission, when the life, work, or culture of an individual or group is intentionally not referred to. Again, this is an ordinary feature of life: one group may get rid of the contributions of another group by never referring to them, or a writer such as Solzhenitsyn may be removed from bookshelves, or in the extreme there are no references to crimes against humanity.

When a person or a group addresses the opposition in the terms outlined above, alarms should ring in the witnesses to such action, who may respond by not engaging in vicious gossip or by directly confronting an individual who distorts, decontextualizes, denigrates, or caricatures the holder of different views. Such confrontation aims to arrest, at the very least, intellectual genocide. It is ordinary. Yet even in its purely rhetorical expression it can be extremely destructive. If an individual or group, previously participant in discourse, is a ceaseless object of intellectual genocide, then the recipients will show the effects. Some will simply leave the scene, no longer partaking in the group—a kind of

voluntary exile in the face of persecution. Some may be pushed to express extreme views, victims of a violent innocence (discussed in Chapter 8) who appear to have gone over the edge. Others may somatize the conflict: a heart attack, we know, is often the outcome of extreme duress in one's place of work. Others may attempt to form alliances with the persecutor in an effort to gain some form of protection against their own potential destruction.

My point here is to raise intellectual genocide within our consciousness as a crime against humanity. Since it is ordinary, we can do something about it in the simple Freudian way of talking about it in the here and now and therefore partly divesting the act of its potential by addressing it.

### *The Vicious Circle*

We could say that until Lemkin created a word for mass murder, "genocide" managed to elude the signifier and thus escaped its representation in a symbolic order. To this list of obstacles I wish to add a few more.

One of the most perplexing features of the success of intellectual genocide is that its most gifted practitioners not only seem to achieve places of prominence by viciously attacking others; indeed they also seem to become objects of endearment to those who otherwise—one would have thought—would be horrified by such behavior. I recall a right-wing political figure in my hometown in Southern California, a person who vilified the opposition, spread vicious gossip, and damaged many, many people. Yet he was almost loved as a kind of cute monster. I also recall, only a few miles down the road, another person known for his viciousness who was finding himself the object of endearment: Richard Nixon. And though we knew of Stalin's monstrosity we still turned him into good old Uncle Joe.

The puzzle is why we "love" these monstrous monsters

rather than oppose them. Why are they allowed to climb so far up the ladder of success, sometimes to a place of leadership where they continue to eliminate the opposition in vicious ways? Perhaps they represent us. Perhaps we fear to challenge such an individual. There must be some truth to that, but I also think we observe an interpersonal sleight of hand in which the monster person is "the impossible loved object" because love here exonerates the subject from responsible opposition: "I wish I could stand up to Mary, but you know she's just impossible and I'm afraid I love the old monster." Presumably confrontation of the monster must be reserved for those who don't love the monster, and yet almost everyone gives the same shrug of the shoulder: "How can Mary be challenged? She is Mary and her very monstrous qualities, darn it, are what we kind of love about her." In some ways this seems to me to be the interpersonal equivalent of creating a type of joke. Aggression—the anger or outrage evoked by such a person's behavior—is turned into humor: Mary becomes the basis of our laughter about the atrocious. But such an obstacle to confronting viciousness in a person, and in some cases the practice of intellectual genocide, is no laughing matter and deserves our continuing study. I consider this further through a personal vignette.

I attended high school in Orange County, California, during the 1950s, and for a limited period of time it became compulsory for the students to attend Christian anti-Communist crusades in—of all appropriate places—Disneyland, and usually with a visiting speaker, who showed them was Ronald Reagan. I particularly admired one of my history teachers, who struck me as an intelligent and very decent man. Yet in the weeks approaching such events and most intensively at the crusade itself, he became rabid in his hate of the liberal conspiracy that was plotting to overthrow the U.S. government.

I had not known his politics until then and I recall being shocked at the utter transformation in his character whenever

contemporary politics entered his mind. I think most of us were bewildered by him and by what I would now term a local psychotic state. But what we did is of interest: we turned this aspect of his behavior into a joke. He became our loved madman, and occasionally one or another of the group would "push his button" and send him across the boundary from the sane to the insane part of his personality.

Discussing the vicious behavior of a person, people will often say, "But you know, she really is quite a lovely and kind person" or "Well, you know, removed from her pulpit she is really quite a different person." And this is true. But it is not the point. In fact, this opposes the point: humanity (the good parts of the self) is now used to excuse the destructive side of the self. The joke, as always, now borders on the perverse. The humane now authorizes the inhumane as Mary's viciousness is loved, in the economical exchange between the Fascistic and the non-Fascistic parts of her personality.

Even if we accept that compliance with a Mary is in the interests of vicarious support of one's own viciousness, which will always be partly true, the act of dissociative acceptance (the "how Mary is really privately a nice person" story) colludes with the function of genocide. In this case, however, it is the witness who, by tacitly accepting Mary's viciousness, accepts the eradication of the humane as a joke: the world will then be full of monstrous Mary stories, tales of her beastliness.

When we excuse the destructive behavior of anyone by citing their humanity, we commit a crime against the function of humanity. When we distance ourselves from collusive responsibility for the destructive effects of the vicious person by turning them into a joke of sorts, we pervert the truth. It is this corruption in the citing of humanity that perverts truth and that constitutes essential contextual support for any vicious person's successful establishment of the Fascistic

parts of themselves in the successful movement of the social group to its own Fascism.

The noncollusive witness to that personality change that occurs when the person crosses over from the sane to the insane parts of the self, is initially shocked by this transference. We all know how stunning it is, when discussing an issue with someone, to witness the person's vicious espousal of a doctrine that derives part of its energy from the intellectual annihilation of the other. We may be speechless. Such a rupture also occasions a sense of dissociation: we feel immediately separated out from the conversant's insanity. And following this dissociation, part of us will feel deadened by the eruption, as how it is clear to us that the other is subject to an internal Fascistic process. In a way our response is our victimage. It is in feeling shocked, dissociated, and deadened that we share elements in common with those who are more severely traumatized by socially operant Fascism.

We may also share responsive qualities in common with a collusive witness, whereby we may try to recover from this trauma by reminding ourselves how, in so many other ways, this person is not only sane but likable. In this respect we use our humanity and its link to the humane parts of the other to recuperate from the trauma, but, as suggested, the irony of this is that it ultimately excuses, and finally supports, the destruction of humanity. Often we feel a certain dread as we sense our responsibility to those who are the objects of this person's intellectual genocide. We must say something that at the very least marks our opposition to the Fascistic state of mind.

When we exonerate a vicious person's actions by citing elements of their humanity, I think we create a perversion in logic itself—in thinking—that is part of what we may consider the vicious circle. It is of interest that from the seventeenth century the word "vicious" was used to describe a fault in logic, when a conclusion was realized by false

means of reasoning. Webster's third definition of the vicious circle cites this fault in logic: "an argument which is invalid because its conclusion rests upon a premise which itself depends on the conclusion." The argument that Mary is really a good human being, in spite of her nefarious actions, because she is at the same time a human being, is a circular argument, a flawed logic that perverts the truth because it comes round full circle. Indeed, I use the word "vicious" to describe the person in a Fascist state of mind not only because this word signifies one who is "full of faults," which seems an apt description of one carrying moral voids determined by massive evacuations, but because we may also speak of a particular process—the vicious circle—which is definitionally affiliated with the vicious person, that suits my analysis of such a person as involved in a particular mental process.

A vicious circle is also defined as "a situation in which the solution of one problem gives rise to another, but the solution of this, or of other problems rising out of it, brings back the first, often with greater involvement." Another definition states: "a situation in which one disease or disorder results in another which in turn aggravates the first." It is exactly this type of process which, in my view, takes place in the Fascist state of mind: whatever the anxiety or need that sponsors the drive to certainty, which becomes the dynamic in the Fascist construction, the outcome is to empty the mind of all opposition (on the actual stage of world politics, to kill the opposition), a process that ironically undermines the vicious person. It does this by creating a moral void which further increases the underlying uncertainty which set the mind on its pathological track to certainty in the first place. It is a procedure which Nietzsche regards as a virtue: "the doctrine of 'eternal recurrence,' that is to say of the unconditional and endlessly repeated *circular course* [italics mine] of all things" (81). The cycle of purification through violent expulsion leaves a void which Nietzsche tries to fill with a

notion of tranquility derived from the liquefaction of opposition: "I swim and bathe and splash continually as it were in water, in any kind of perfectly transparent and glittering element" (48), which is possible until he meets up with any human element which fills him with a sense of disgust (48). To the extent to which Nietzsche portrays early on the process of thought subsequently peculiar to the Nazi movement, we can see how the Fascist sea of inner tranquility is mirrored by those horrid seas of internment camps that contain the Fascist's vomit: the place that purifies them because it contains the indigestible opposition.

For a person incarcerated in the concentration camp, it is hard to find any vestige of the humane that could possibly offer resistance to the Fascist state. In *The Informed Heart*, Bruno Bettelheim tells us that humane gestures expressed by one detainee to another were punished by death. One eventually could not help the other. Nor indeed could the subject express any of his feelings about the treatment meted out to the other and to oneself. Expression of feeling led to further torture and sometimes to extinction. Thus those qualities we value so highly as expressions of humanity—helping others in need and expressing our feelings and views—were eliminated. In that situation, incarcerated in Buchenwald, Bettelheim knew that to lose one's humanity was to risk personal madness. How could he remain sane? He discovered that it was through an ironic act sponsored by his extreme state: he would observe the SS guard when he consider at an intellectual remove what was taking place. "If I should try to sum up in one sentence what any main problem was during the whole time I spent in the camps," he writes, "it would be: to protect my inner self in such a way that if, by any good fortune, I should regain liberty, I would be approximately the same person I was when deprived of liberty" (126). He had to accept, therefore, a split in his personality between the private world of his own thoughts—which ultimately were unreachable by the SS—

and "the rest of the personality that would have to submit and adjust for survival" (127). This is an extreme state of victimage in which the subject can only retain his humanity by preserving his sanity, which he accomplishes by accepting a split of sorts in his personality. It is interesting that thought and memory, the capacity to perceive reality, to think it, and remember it, become the core of potential recovery to a humane future.

We can see, then, why any person or group which has suffered a genocide must reach a point in the process of recuperation when remembering what actually happened is crucial. It is not only an action aimed at objectifying the crimes committed against the self, but, as Bettelheim hints, to recuperate from one's own destruction of the humane parts of the self in the interests of survival. As the victim seeks his own safety and deserts his fellow man, there will be an enormous loss of self respect. Only through further self analysis and self expression can the victim recuperate that love of himself that is an ordinary part of the generative narcissistic structure of human relations. I suggest, therefore, that the ultimate human response to genocide is self preservation: following physical liberation from the terms of aggression, this curiously inhuman side of the preservation of one's humanity (the will to survive) will move toward its abandoned humanities first by memory, then by speech, and finally by true grief. There is a triumph, here, of the seemingly inhuman (our Darwinian move) that is curiously more humane than the collusive acts of humanizing the monstrous parts of the self.

If a person, group, institution, or country truly wishes to recover from the traumas of intellectual or physical genocide, then it will have to remember the crimes it has committed. The act of remembering is the antecedent to forgiveness (of self and others) and instrumental to the reparative rehumanization of the group. This painful process is often bypassed by denials ("it is water under the bridge") aimed

to thwart recollection, and by transfers to the next generation, which is somehow meant to naturalistically displace the crimes of the older generation and absolve that generation from its collective responsibility. And as we know, a new generation, though seemingly possessed of its own displacing vision of the future, is highly liable to inherit the sins of the fathers.