

Dare to Compare

Americanizing the Holocaust

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For several centuries now, men of the white race have everywhere destroyed the past, stupidly, blindly, both at home and abroad. . . . The past once destroyed never returns. The destruction of the past is perhaps the greatest of all crimes. Today the preservation of what little of it remains ought to become almost an obsession. We must put an end to the terrible uprootedness which European colonial methods always produce, even under their least cruel aspects. We must abstain, once victory is ours, from punishing the conquered enemy by uprooting him still further; seeing that it is neither possible nor desirable to exterminate him.

Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind*

THE DYNAMICS OF DENIAL: UNCLE SAM'S WILLING EXECUTIONERS

German-speaking Jewish writers have long felt comfortable expropriating images and analogies from the site of Native American identity in their literary imagination.¹ Today, a growing sentiment of sympathy for the “vanishing American” in Germany has upped the ante in the identity-appropriations game, and German-speaking Jewish writers now appropriate Native American identity in the attempt to inflect their own historiography with an added degree of moral currency on the landscape of a contemporary Germany still caught in the throes of denial concerning its own genocidal past.

In German-speaking literary circles, the examples of Else Lasker-Schüler, who stylized herself as an American Indian, and Franz Kafka's wish to be a “Red Indian” are well known. George Tabori's 1990 stage production of the Jewish Western *Weisman und Rotgesicht* wittily pitted [Jewish] white man against [partly Jewish] red man in a verbal duel in which the protagonists exchange a hilarious blow-for-blow account of injuries and insults suffered by the victim-

ized populations they represent. But the phenomenon of conflating Jewish and “Indian” identity is not unique to foreign-language publications. As Seth Wollitz points out, in his discussion of *Weisman und Rotgesicht*, this “tradition of spoofing Jewish-Indian interrelations . . . reaches back to a Yiddish playlet, *Tsvishn Indianer*.”² This 1895 play, “Among the Indians, or The Country Peddler,” as its translator states, “is not an anomaly, but rather a pathbreaker in a well-defined line of Jewish-American entertainment that leads to the films of Mel Brooks and others.”³ The American leg of this lineage includes Eddie Cantor’s redface minstrelsy in *Whoopie!* (1930) and Woody Allen’s *Zelig* (1983). Fanny Brice sang herself to stardom with “I’m an Indian,” and Bernard Malamud’s *The People* provides a classic example of the phenomenon.

Most recently perhaps, Raphael Seligmann has gone on record stating that the Jews are “the Indians of Germany.”⁴ That this statement begs the question of identifying “Uncle Sam’s willing executioners” seems, however, of minimal concern to the Jewish community in America and abroad. In fact, when the time comes to put the Shoah on the other foot and parallels are drawn between atrocities experienced by the American Indian population over a five-hundred-year period and those experienced by the Jewish population of Europe in the twelve-year reign of Nazi terror, the knowledge of self-described “Jewish Indians” recedes into the recesses of repressed memory. In a seditious reversal of national identity politics, Lucy Dawidowicz charges those who would dare to compare with “a vicious anti-Americanism.”⁵ Rabbi Irving Greenberg, founder of the Holocaust Resource Center and first director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Commission, has described the comparison of the Nazi Holocaust with other acts of genocide as “blasphemous.”⁶ In *The Holocaust in American Life*, Jewish historian Peter Novik describes the way in which any attempt to compare is dismissed as a “felonious assault” on truth and memory.⁷

In the pathological dynamic of genocidal histories, the perpetrator culture invariably turns its gaze to the horrors registered in the archives and accounts of the “other guys.”⁸ This is why Holocaust studies in the United States focus almost exclusively on the atrocity of Auschwitz, not of Wounded Knee or Sand Creek. Norman Finkelstein, in his discussion of the way images of the Holocaust have been manufactured to reap moral and economic benefits for members of the Jewish elite, states that the presence of the Holocaust Museum in Washington is “particularly incongruous in the absence of a museum commemorating crimes in the course of American history” and makes specific reference to the slave trade and genocide against the American Indians.⁹ Peter Novik suggests that the Holocaust has become a sort of “civil religion” for American Jews who have lost touch with their own ethnic and religious identity, and asserts that “in the United States the Holocaust is explicitly used for the purpose of national self-congratulation: the Americanization of the Holocaust

has involved using it to demonstrate the difference between the Old World and the New, and to celebrate, by showing its negation, the American way of life.”¹⁰

The *Historikerstreit* or “Historians’ Debate” in Germany during the mid-1980s disrupted the traditional historiographical narrative, which placed three groups of actors at the scene of the Nazi crime—perpetrators, bystanders, and victims. Saul Friedländer summarizes the controversy as “a debate about the shape of the past in terms of public memory and national identity.”¹¹ Conservative historians, in their efforts to “historicize” the Nazi period and thus suture the wound of discontinuity presented by a “past that refused to go away,” attempted to relativize the crimes of the Nazi period by situating them in the context of a narrative that included an amalgamated fourth character in the plot: the Soviet and American forces who forced Germans into a victim position from which only further victimization could ensue. These abnegationist attempts at historical revision were staunchly contested by left-wing social philosopher Jürgen Habermas in a series of essays that have since been collected and published in German and in English.¹²

The Historians’ Debate directed international attention to the issue of historical liability as it relates to public memory and national identity in territories known to have been host to genocidal campaigns. However, what got lost in translation when the debate migrated to America was the very real opportunity this controversy might have presented for an authentic “working through” or “mastery” of *this* country’s traumatic genocidal past. Instead, the dispute conveniently constructed a site of transference upon which the melancholic drama of “manifest manners” could be acted out.¹³ American intellectuals, confronted with the quandary of whether to see or not to see, chose to look the other way. George Tabori, in “Hamlet in Blue,” provides an apt metaphor for this dynamic of denial: “the old Hamletian ploy of dodging action by mind-fucking.”¹⁴ As Henryk Broder points out in “Die Germanisierung des Holocaust,” today one speaks of the “Americanization of the Holocaust” as though the Jews were slaughtered on American soil.¹⁵ This, in turn, cultivates fertile breeding ground for absolutionist scholarship and public discourse on both sides of the Atlantic. In the end, only the interests of the respective aggressor cultures are served.

The same kinds of arguments attempting to “historicize” America’s past in the interest of “normalizing” its present from the perspective of the perpetrator population do not unleash the same scandalous international controversy as do similar efforts on the part of historians negotiating a revision of German history. The genocide against the Jews is considered an ugly chapter in Germany’s past and acknowledged internationally as one of the gravest crimes against humanity in the twentieth century. But while the whole fabric of German culture remains “under the shadow of Hitler,” the genocide against in-

digenous populations in North America is still today denied or dismissed as the inevitable prelude to the rise of the greatest nation on Earth.

Reactionary historian James Axtell, in his 1992 study, *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America*, writes:

We make a hash of our historical judgments because we continue to feel guilty about the real or imagined sins of our fathers and forefathers . . . [We] can stop flogging ourselves with our “imperialistic” origins and tarring ourselves with the broad brush of “genocide.” As a huge nation of law and order and increasingly refined sensibility, we are not guilty of murdering Indian women and babies, of branding slaves on the forehead, or of claiming any real estate in the world we happen to fancy.¹⁶

Statements like this, when proffered in defense of Germany’s genocidal history, elicit vehement opposition from the academic and intellectual community, yet, with regard to America’s tragic past, go virtually unchallenged and are integrated into the canon of acceptable discourse.

As the success of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen’s indictment of the German people in *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* illustrates, public flogging of the German people for their willing participation in the melee represents an acceptable and indeed lucrative form of public and academic discourse. The 1996 publication of Goldhagen’s Ph.D. dissertation thrust the previously little-known Harvard professor into the international limelight. His thesis, that widespread “eliminationist anti-Semitism” among the ordinary men and women of Germany, not the ruthless racial policies of the Nazi regime, was the sole cause of the extermination of the Jews, has been contested by Holocaust scholars and historians the world over. But the book, translated into thirteen languages, became an international bestseller and secured for Goldhagen the prestigious German Democracy Prize in 1997. It also unleashed an international debate that has been dubbed “The Goldhagen Wars,” not to mention a series of highly paid speaking engagements for its author throughout the world. Goldhagen’s staunchest opponent has been Norman Finkelstein, the Jewish scholar whose rebuttal of “the Goldhagen thesis” first appeared in *The New Left Review* (July/August 1997) under the title “Daniel Goldhagen’s ‘Crazy’ Thesis.”¹⁷ In a statement printed by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* on 21 April 1998, Goldhagen proudly asserts: “My book has sold more copies in Germany than anywhere else. It’s been embraced by the German people.” It is interesting to note, in this context, that Native American scholar Ward Churchill’s stellar and seminal piece of scholarship on Holocaust and denial in the Americas, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, did not meet with the same degree of public success.

Taking the American people to task in the little matter of genocide against indigenous populations of North America remains a terrible taboo registered in the “Don’t you Dare” category of “Academic Do’s and Don’ts.” Like any taboo, this act of transgression does not derive from a vacuum but rather emanates from a specific social consciousness—or lack thereof. As journalist William Greider notes in *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism*:

German social consciousness was anchored in the country’s tragic knowledge of guilt and defeat, a humbling encounter with self-doubt that Americans have so far evaded in their national history. . . . American history did provide ample basis for humility and social introspection: slavery and the enduring wounds of race, “winning” the West by armed conquest, Hiroshima and the nuclear potential for mass destruction, the bloody failure of the neocolonialist war in Vietnam. . . . The social meaning of these experiences was usually deflected, however, and repackaged by the optimistic American culture as stories of triumph. . . . Thus, Americans generally managed to evade any national sense of guilt or defeat. Critical reflection on the national character was discouraged, ridiculed as “un-American.”¹⁸

Dominick LaCapra has established a clear relationship between the implications of the Historians’ Debate for American scholars and objections raised by German scholars on the left-wing side of the skirmish. He states that liberal historians may have had

strategic as well as more deep-seated philosophical reasons for not placing too much emphasis on the ambivalence of Western traditions and the possibly dubious role of a critique of revisionism in lessening awareness of the implication of other Western countries in massively destructive or even genocidal processes. Given the history of the United States, this danger is clear and present for an American, and identification with Habermas’s position may be facilitated by the narcissistic and self-justificatory gains it brings.¹⁹

But even before the Historians’ Debate, the relative singularity of the Nazi Holocaust had long been the center of international debate. Uniqueness proponents such as Deborah Lipstadt, Steven Katz, Saul Friedländer, Michael Marrus, Yehuda Bauer, Lucy Dawidowicz, and others share an insistence on the exclusivity of the Nazi Holocaust as an unparalleled event in the history of the twentieth century. This view has been challenged by survivors and scholars, among them a number of Jewish intellectuals such as Hannah Arendt, Irving Louis Horowitz, Israel Charny, Helen Fein, Simon Wiesenthal, Norman Finkelstein, Peter Novik, and others. Increasingly, Native American scholars and their allies have entered the conversation, pointing out that the historical

archive of the *American Holocaust* has been compiled, collated, and indeed constructed to a large degree by perpetrators, their descendants, and beneficiaries writing from a subject position inflected with a vested interest in maintaining the illusion of innocence concerning the “facts of the case.”

The exclusivists’ most compelling argument against the comparability of the two acts of genocide has been that the decimation of the American Indian population, unlike the extermination of the Jews, was unintentional—“caused by microbes, not militia . . . that is, this depopulation happened unwittingly rather than by design.”²⁰ Preeminent uniqueness proponent Steven Katz, in *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, while documenting the fact that the American Holocaust far exceeded the Nazi Holocaust in scope, at the same time reduces the American travesty to a mere case of “depopulation.”²¹ These conclusions are drawn from comparisons not of a simple corpse count but rather of the *rate* of extermination experienced by each group. Recent studies demonstrate that precontact population estimates generated by historians and demographers from the subject position of the perpetrators have been egregiously low. It is today commonly assumed that precontact populations were far and above the one-million figure that has acted as a standard of measure for centuries. More recent and more honest studies estimate the precontact civilization to have been between nine and eighteen million. This standard of measure puts the rate of attrition of indigenous populations at between 98 and 99 percent—that is, near total extermination. The rate of attrition of Jewish populations in Europe is commonly calculated at between 60 and 65 percent. Put in terms of survival rates, this means that two-thirds of the global Jewish population and about one third of the European Jewish population survived the Nazi Holocaust, whereas a mere remnant population of 1 to 2 percent survived the American Holocaust. This seriously calls into question any notion of “unparalleled” or “total extermination” of the Jews in the Nazi Holocaust.

Katz argues that the Nazi Holocaust is “phenomenologically” unique based on the “merciless, exceptionless, biocentric intentionality of Hitler’s ‘war against the Jews.’”²² Katz’s argument centers on *documented* intentionality and governmental policy in the Nazi period. What Katz does not take into account is that a twelve-year period in a twentieth-century industrialized society lends itself more readily to documentation than a five-hundred-year period, most of which is historically and geographically situated in the midst of a preindustrial “virgin wasteland,” nor does he significantly engage the discourse generated by Native American scholars in recent years. It does not, however, take a paragon of intellectual prowess to deduce an implied intent to “destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group,” from the events that transpired in the process of “depopulating” the New World—a slaughter that Katz patently refuses to define as “genocide” even though it conforms precisely to

the definition of the phenomenon as outlined by Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term in his 1944 *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*.²³ The murder of 96 percent of any given population does not occur “inadvertently,” especially when members of that group are viewed by their assassins as belonging to a separate (and inferior) national, ethnic, racial *and* religious order.

Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that the introduction of diseases to the Native populations of North America was anything but an incidental by-product of “westward expansion.” In what is likely the world’s first documented case of genocide accomplished by bacterial means, Lord Jeffrey Amherst suggested that smallpox-infected blankets be distributed to the Ottawa and Lenape peoples, stating in a 1763 letter to his subordinate, Colonel Henry Bouquet, “You will do well to [infect] the Indians by means of blankets as well as to try every other method that can serve to extirpate this [execrable] race.”²⁴ This statement indicates that the annihilation of the Indian population by way of disease was neither arbitrary nor incidental to the aims of the European settler population and its government. Even as early as 1763, the settler population and its sovereign representatives acted in full cognizance of the impact their introduction of disease would have on the Native populations. Stannard points out, with regard to the “enemy microbe” argument, that

by focusing almost entirely on disease, by displacing responsibility for the mass killing onto an army of invading microbes, contemporary authors increasingly have created the impression that the eradication of those tens of millions of people was inadvertent—a sad, but both inevitable and “unintended consequence” of human migration and progress. This is a modern version of what Alexander Saxton recently has described as the “soft side of anti-Indian racism” that emerged in America in the nineteenth century and that incorporated “expressions of regret over the fate of the Indians into narratives that traced the inevitability of their extinction. Ideologically,” Saxton adds, “the effect was to exonerate individuals, parties, nations, of any moral blame for what history had decreed.” In fact, however, the near-total destruction of the Western Hemisphere’s Native people was neither inadvertent nor inevitable.²⁵

Survivor testimony and statistical records from the Nazi death camps reveal that the uncontrolled spread of disease among inmates was *also* a major factor contributing to the death toll during the Nazi Holocaust, but that argument has never been forwarded in favor of exonerating the perpetrators—at least not in serious scholarship on the subject.

If, as Yehuda Bauer contends, “[t]here was no governmental intention to exterminate the victim population” in the Americas, how else are we to understand the now well-known statement attributed to General Philip Henry Sheridan at

Fort Cobb in January of 1889: “The only good Indian is a dead Indian?”²⁶ While Bauer concedes that “important figures in the U.S. administration expressed genocidal hopes and intentions,” he still insists that “there was no clear governmental policy of total murder.”²⁷ It would seem redundant, in this context, to point to the innumerable studies that have been conducted since 1945 in the attempt to ascertain whether or not Adolf Hitler himself had issued the order for the Final Solution.

The introduction of diseases to indigenous populations was accompanied by a systematic destruction of “the indigenous agricultural base [in order to] impose starvation conditions upon entire peoples, dramatically lowering their resistance to disease and increasing their susceptibility to epidemics.”²⁸ What is more, the ideology of Manifest Destiny is itself founded on an implied intent to kill—it is the “central constituent ideology translated into action” that Bauer posits as the defining characteristic that sets the Nazi Holocaust apart from all other genocidal campaigns in the history of humanity.

Fortunately, pseudoscholarly revisionists who would deny the Nazi atrocities have been properly (and legally) excluded from legitimate academic and public discourse in many countries—Germany, Austria, France and Canada among them. But, As Ward Churchill has argued in *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492—Present*: “the ugly enterprise of Holocaust denial has a flip side—indeed, a mirror image—which is equally objectionable but which has been anything but marginalized by the academy, popular media, or the public at large.”²⁹ According to Churchill, exclusivists insisting on the uniqueness of the Nazi Holocaust succeed in “outstripping the neonazis” in terms of denial:

Whereas the latter content themselves with denying the authenticity of a single genocidal process, exclusivists deny, categorically and out of hand, the validity of myriad genocides. Yet, unlike the neonazis, those holding to the postulates of Jewish exclusivism are not only treated as being academically credible, but are accorded a distinctly preferential treatment among the arbiters of scholarly integrity.³⁰

MANIFEST DESTINY: MY BROTHERS’ KILLER

Cogent arguments have been made to suggest that the same notion of creating space for the “master race” is as germane to the ideological framework of Hitler’s *Lebensraumpolitik* as it is to the U.S. government’s doctrine of Manifest Destiny: In each instance, the extermination of “inferior races” is justified in the interest of making way for a “superior race” of peoples.³¹ According to

Hitler biographer John Toland, the *Führer* is known to have “expressed admiration for the ‘efficiency’ of the American genocide campaign against the Indians, viewing it as a forerunner for his own plans and programs.”³² Even Steven Katz concedes that the “depopulation of the New World” was a “salient precursor” to the Nazi Holocaust.³³ Thus, the American Holocaust might be viewed as the *prototype* for the extermination of the Jews in Europe. At the very least, the event must be seen as a predecessor to the Nazi Holocaust.

While Hitler’s policy of *Lebensraumpolitik* has been vilified and condemned for the toll it took in terms of human lives—even in the Historians’ Debate, the essential criminality and moral reprehensibility of the Nazi regime was not challenged—*heroes* are made of men in America whose words were inspired by the same kind of thinking and whose actions resulted in the murder of millions of human beings considered to be members of “inferior” civilizations. Theodore Roosevelt, in *The Strenuous Life*, writes, in 1901:

Of course our whole national history has been one of expansion . . . That the barbarians recede or are conquered, with the attendant fact that peace follows their retrogression or conquest is due solely to the power of the mighty civilized races which have not lost the fighting instinct, and which by their expansion are gradually bringing peace to the red wastes where the barbarian peoples of this world hold sway.³⁴

Hannah Arendt, in the *Origins of Totalitarianism*, identifies metaphysical Jew-hatred as one element in the “subterranean stream of Western history” that subsequently translated into the *political* anti-Semitic consciousness in Europe and constituted the defining principle of Hitler’s Nazi regime.³⁵ Similarly, Richard Drinnon argues that the “national metaphysics of Indian-hating was central to the formation of national identity and political policy in the United States.”³⁶

The crucial issue at stake here is that, according to Drinnon’s analysis, this national metaphysics of Indian-hating rested on the “collective refusal to conceive of Native Americans as persons.”³⁷ Had the people of Europe—Jews and Gentiles alike—recognized these “barbarians” to be *human* entities and embraced them as siblings in the “family of man,” they might well have foreseen the fate that would befall civilized populations in Europe just a few short years later because, as Richard Drinnon points out in *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building*:

The sober truth was that the white man’s burden of Winning the West was crushing global folly. The West was quite literally nowhere—or everywhere, which was to say the same thing. For Homer’s Greeks and North American tribal peoples alike, the West was the land beyond, Spiritland, the land of

mystery, of death and of life eternal. It was not a Dark and bloody Ground to be “won.” But for Anglo-Americans it was exactly that, the latest conquest. Yet how could they conclusively “win” it? If the West was at bottom a form of society [as James Turner contended in “The Problem of the West”] then on our round earth, Winning the West amounted to no less than winning the world. It could be finally and decisively “won” only by rationalizing (Americanizing, Westernizing, modernizing) the world, and that meant conquering the land beyond, banishing mystery, and negating or extirpating other peoples, so the world would be subject to the regimented reason of one settlement culture with its professedly self-evident middle-class values.³⁸

Hitler’s *Lebensraumpolitik* was not without precedent or parallel. Four centuries after Columbus, the ideology of a master race had firmly established itself on American soil. A “color line” had been drawn, and it was clear that, in the national consciousness as in public policy, “Native Americans were natives and not Americans . . . the irreducible prerequisite of being an American, was to be of *European* stock.”³⁹ The color line drawn between the

Children of Light, the light of the Gospel, of Enlightenment institutions, law and order, progress, philanthropy, freedom, Americanization, modernization, forced urbanization . . . and the Children of Darkness, “savages” who stood in the way of the redemption and the rationalization of the world . . . unmistakably shaped national patterns of violence by establishing *whom* one could kill under propitious circumstances and thereby represented a prime source of the American way of inflicting death.⁴⁰

The hidden narratives of the master race and Manifest Destiny governing our understanding of American history distort perceptions of our own historiography. The ideology of Manifest Destiny—the fantasy and the fancy of the master race—is transferred from one generation to another so that there is no need for the kind of propaganda machinery required to make “willing executioners” of “ordinary men” and women in Germany. Americans, in their drive to forge “one Nation under God,” fought with “God on their side.”⁴¹ Stannard, in this regard, explains that

the Eurocentric racial contempt for the indigenous peoples . . . reflected in scholarly writings of this sort is now so complete and second nature to most Americans that it has passed into popular lore and common knowledge of the “every schoolboy knows” variety. No intent to distort the truth is any longer necessary. All that is required, once the model is established, is the recitation of rote learning as it passes from one uncritical generation to the next.⁴²

Giorgio Agamben has argued against the use of the term *Holocaust* as a descriptor for the Nazi extermination of the Jews because “Jews were exterminated not in a mad and giant holocaust but exactly as Hitler had announced, ‘as lice,’ which is to say as bare life.”⁴³ The notorious California Indian-killer H. L. Hall justified the murder of Native infants based on the argument that “a nit would make a louse.” John Chivington, commanding colonel in the infamous Sand Creek Massacre, reformulated the sentiment to justify similar actions with the statement “Nits make lice.”⁴⁴ Perplexing in this context is that Hitler’s perception of the Jews as “life unworthy of living,” that is, as “lice” or “bare life,” is received with moral outrage in the scholarly community and in public consciousness in the U.S. and elsewhere. But when Indians are placed on the same level of the “evolutionary scale” and assigned the same status in the biopolitical order, it becomes a justifiable sacrifice made in the name of “progress.”

Hitler’s willing executioners and the ordinary men and women of Germany had to be convinced that the Jewish population was not human; they had, after all, for centuries prior, lived and worked side by side with these people who were systematically exterminated as “like lice.” Before the Final Solution could be implemented, the Jewish population of Europe had to be reduced to the level of “bare life.” But for the American settlers, the notion that the life form to be clear-cut from the vast, “unpopulated” wilderness in order to make way for their American way of life was somehow *not* human ranked among those truths held to be self-evident; the “execrable race” of red men and women was viewed from the very onset as existing at the level of “bare life.” And yet, from a perspective that acknowledges the essential humanity of indigenous populations and the sophistication of the established forms of social organization, governance, and religious ritual prevailing among the indigenous populations at the time of contact, it becomes clear that, while the Nazi Holocaust was indeed unique in scope and in kind to the twentieth century, the American Holocaust was, as Stannard has stated, “far and away, the most massive act of genocide in the history of the world.”⁴⁵

Fortunately, Hitler was stopped before he could consummate the Final Solution. But some contend that Uncle Sam’s willing executioners are still today engaged in the effort to eradicate what remains of the indigenous population in North America. For others, the loss of Native lives and lifeways cannot be acknowledged as homicidal, genocidal, or suicidal because the “savage” is not—however ostentatiously liberal-minded individuals and institutions in this country may contend otherwise—considered fully human: “we” are not related. While a revisionist narrative of the West would attempt to suffuse its world-view with a politically correct moral underpinning by making super-

ficial linguistic concessions, no longer applying such terms as “savage” and “primitive” to indigenous peoples, contemporary scholarship still draws its insights and impulses from the same body of research and the same doctrine of universal superiority it now seeks to disavow and revile. The appearance of euphemisms such as “ethnocide” and “depopulation” applied to the genocide committed against Native populations is just one index of the continued resistance to the notion that this devastation involves a *human* tragedy.

Nominally, indigenous peoples have been grudgingly adopted into the “family of man” in the prevailing paradigms of Western thought. Phenomenologically, they are still today perceived not as human others, but in fact as a separate (and inferior) “species.” Depending on one’s interpretation of the Latin *siluaticus* (of the wood; belonging to a wood), from which the term “savage” is derived, one might suspect that, in the Western biopolitical order, the “savage life” acquires the status of one *less* than bare life or *Homo sacer*. If that is the case, then what occurred in *this* country must be viewed as a gigantic bonfire in which neither mice, lice, nor men, women or children were sacrificed and burned for the sake of clear-cutting a space for the master race—what was sacrificed here were merely logs. Driftwood. Dead weight. Useless waste. In the world of the uniqueness proponents, the “depopulation” of the New World is on a par with “deforestation.”

What is perhaps “unique” about the Nazi Holocaust is that it represents the first incidence in history of genocidal assault directed at an assimilated, “civilized” (and therefore human) population in central Europe.⁴⁶ Katz refers to the phenomenon as one of “Judeocide.” It might, however, more accurately be termed *fratricide*—brothers killing brothers—squabbling sons of the same God in a serial rerun of Cain and Abel. This is not to imply that fratricide is any less grievous a crime against humanity than genocide, merely to clarify the relationship of spiritual kinship existing between perpetrators and victims in the Nazi Holocaust and the way this works to influence our perception of the event’s primacy. It could in fact be argued that fratricide is indeed the more heinous crime since it involves the extermination of life that is clearly defined as “human” in the Judeo-Christian paradigm. Brothers killing brothers is classified as a mortal sin by the religious doctrines governing moral standards in both religions, but brothers killing *savages* is apparently sanctioned by the moral dictates of both these dominant world religions. If the ideology of Manifest Destiny is, on the other hand, subsumed under the mandate to “be fruitful and multiply,” then the extermination of indigenous populations is indeed ordained by the supreme deity common to the Christian and the Judaic faiths. From this perspective, mass murder is the implied mandate of Manifest Destiny.

Churchill speaks in terms of the need for a “denazification . . . a fundamental alteration in the consciousness of this country.”⁴⁷ I would suggest that “de-

manifestation” is a more apt designation for the paradigmatic shift requisite for decentering the hegemonistic reign of the “master narratives” of Manifest Destiny and the master race that govern our understanding of history as it relates to national identity in the United States. Thinking in terms of “de-manifestation” has the advantage of disaggregating the specific modalities of similar, but not identical, historical phenomena and of dislocating—geographically and intellectually—the source of the “problem” from the site of European history to that of American history. What follows is an attendant shift in temporal focus that allows us to properly place the postulates of Manifest Destiny and the master race in historically correct chronological order with relation to the *subsequent* emergence of theories of *Lebensraumpolitik* and the assumed superiority of the Aryan race on the European continent. Whereas “de-nazification” clearly connotes a “thing of the past,” “de-manifestation” implies a present, “manifest” reality. From this vantage point, the German *Sonderweg* is rerouted and an already trammelled trail of rampant plundering, pillage, and mass murder is revealed to have been blazed in the forward wake of the historical caesura that the Nazi Holocaust represents.

HOLOCAUST IN CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT: COLLECTIVE SUICIDE

Most importantly, perhaps, what distinguishes the American Holocaust from the Nazi Holocaust is what is at stake *today*. The Nazi Holocaust represents a historical event that threatened the entire Jewish population of Europe. Relating this event to the archive of oblivion would involve a fatal miscalculation resulting in wholesale moral bankruptcy for the entire Western world. But the worldwide Jewish population can hardly be said to be at risk of extermination *today*—certainly not in the United States. American Jews stepped up their efforts to direct attention to the Nazi Holocaust at a time when they

were by far the wealthiest, best-educated, most influential, in-every-way-most-successful group in American society—a group that, compared to most other identifiable minority groups, suffered no measurable discrimination and no disadvantages on account of that minority status.⁴⁸

Norman Finkelstein cites the Jewish income in the United States at double that of non-Jews and points out that sixteen of the forty wealthiest Americans are Jews, as are 40 percent of Nobel prizewinners in science and economics, 20 percent of professors at major universities and 40 percent of partners in law firms in New York and Washington.⁴⁹

Native Americans, by contrast, have long been subject to the most extreme poverty of any sector in the present North American population, and still have the highest rate of suicide of any other ethnic group on the continent.⁵⁰ High-

school dropout rates are as high as 70 percent in some communities. As Anishinabeg activist and Harvard-educated scholar Winona LaDuke notes with regard to the Lakota population in South Dakota: "Alcoholism, unemployment, suicide, accidental death and homicide rates are still well above the national average."⁵¹ Alcoholism, intergenerational posttraumatic stress, and a spate of social and economic ills continue to plague these communities in the aftermath of the American Holocaust.

As Peter Novik has made abundantly clear in his study of the way the Holocaust functions as a sort of "civil religion" and signifier of identity for American Jews, much of the commemoration rhetoric and practice propagated in this country centers on maintaining a consensual symbol of unity for American Jews who thus experience the Holocaust "vicariously." As Novik states, while most American Jews (and Gentiles) may be saddened, dismayed, or shocked by the Nazi Holocaust, there is little evidence to suggest that they have actually been *traumatized* by it.⁵² The Americanization of the Holocaust, according to Novik's analysis, serves a symbolic function for American Jews, ascribing victim status to a community that demonstrates little sign of actual victimization in a culture where the victim is victor. Norman Finkelstein, the vociferous Goldhagen critic who lost most of his family in the death camps and ghettos of Nazi-occupied Europe, has expressed similar views. His forthcoming publication asserts that the "Holocaust industry" was born with the Six-Day War in June of 1967. Before that, there was little mention of the Holocaust in American life. He argues that the development of the "Holocaust industry" in the United States is part of a strategic campaign to justify American political interests in Israel.⁵³

This is not to deny or diminish the clear and present danger in the ominous resurgence of anti-Semitic sentiments reflected in isolated incidences of racial violence against Jews and Jewish institutions both here and abroad. However, the *material realities* confronting the Native American population remain, in many instances, comparable to those prevailing in Third World countries. The Native American experience of persecution is not a vicarious one. For substantial portions of this population, it is a lived reality.

What is more, an unrelenting sentiment of Indian-hating persists in this country:

There is a peculiar kind of hatred in the northwoods, a hatred born of the guilt of privilege, a hatred born of living with three generations of complicity in the theft of lives and lands. What is worse is that each day, those who hold this position of privilege must come face to face with those whom they have dispossessed. To others who rightfully should share in the complicity and the guilt, Indians are far away and long ago. But in reservation border towns, In-

dians are ever present. . . . The poverty of dispossession is almost overwhelming. So is the poverty of complicity and guilt. In America, poverty is relative, but it still causes shame. That shame, combined with guilt and a feeling of powerlessness, creates an atmosphere in which hatred buds, blossoms, and flourishes. The hatred passes from father to son and from mother to daughter. Each generation feels the hatred and it penetrates deeper to justify a myth.⁵⁴

Attempts on the part of American Indians to transcend chronic, intergenerational maladies introduced by the settler population (for example, in the highly contested Casino industry, in the ongoing battles over tribal sovereignty, and so on) are challenged tooth and nail by the U.S. government *and* its “ordinary” people. Flexibility in transcending these conditions has been greatly curtailed by federal policies that have “legally” supplanted our traditional forms of governance, outlawed our languages and spirituality, manipulated our numbers and identity, usurped our cultural integrity, viciously repressed the leaders of our efforts to regain self-determination, and systematically miseducated the bulk of our youth to believe that this is, if not just, at least inevitable.”⁵⁵ Today’s state of affairs in America, both with regard to public memory and national identity, represents a flawless mirror image of the situation in Germany vis-à-vis Jews and other non-Aryan victims of the Nazi regime.⁵⁶

Collective indifference to these conditions on the part of both white and black America is a poor reflection on the nation’s character. This collective refusal to acknowledge the genocide further exacerbates the aftermath in Native communities and hinders the recovery process. This, too, sets the American situation apart from the German-Jewish situation: Holocaust denial is seen by most of the world as an affront to the victims of the Nazi regime. In America, the situation is the reverse: victims seeking recovery are seen as assaulting American ideals.

But what is at stake today, at the dawn of a new millennium, is not the culture, tradition, and survival of one population on one continent on *either* side of the Atlantic. What is at stake is the very future of the human *species*. LaDuke, in her most recent work, contextualizes the issues from a contemporary perspective:

Our experience of survival and resistance is shared with many others. But it is not only about Native people. . . . In the final analysis, the survival of Native America is fundamentally about the collective survival of all human beings. The question of who gets to determine the destiny of the land, and of the people who live on it—those with the money or those who pray on the land—is a question that is alive throughout society.⁵⁷

“There is,” as LaDuke reminds us, “a direct relationship between the loss of cultural diversity and the loss of biodiversity. Wherever Indigenous peoples still remain, there is also a corresponding enclave of biodiversity.”⁵⁸ But, she continues,

The last 150 years have seen a great holocaust. There have been more species lost in the past 150 years than since the Ice Age. (During the same time, Indigenous peoples have been disappearing from the face of the earth. Over 2,000 nations of Indigenous peoples have gone extinct in the western hemisphere and one nation disappears from the Amazon rainforest every year.)⁵⁹

It is not about “us” as indigenous *peoples*—it is about “us” as a human *species*. We are all related. At issue is no longer the “Jewish question” or the “Indian problem.” We must speak today in terms of the “human problem.” And it is this “problem” for which not a “final,” but a sustainable, viable solution must be found—because it is no longer a matter of “serial genocide,” it has become one of collective suicide. As Terrence Des Pres put it, in *The Survivor*: “At the heart of our problems is that nihilism which was all along the destiny of Western culture: a nihilism either unacknowledged even as the bombs fell or else, as with Hitler or Stalin, demonically proclaimed as the new salvation.”⁶⁰

All of us must now begin thinking and acting in the dimension and in the interest of the human species—an intellectual domain of *vita activa* that indigenous people have inhabited since time immemorial. It is this modality of thought as a process of *reflection* that the “civilized” nations must learn from the “savage” ones. Vine Deloria, in “Native American Spirituality,” has attempted to clarify this distinction:

American Indians look backwards in time to the creation of the world and view reality from the perspective of the one species that has the capability to reflect on the meaning of things. This attitude is generally misunderstood by non-Indians who act as if reflection and logical thought were synonymous. But reflection is a special art and requires maturity of personality, certainty of identity, and feelings of equality with the other life forms of the world. It consists, more precisely, of allowing wisdom to approach rather than seeking answers to self-generated questions. Such an attitude, then, stands in a polarized position to the manner in which society today conducts itself.⁶¹

It is not a matter of moral bookkeeping or of winners and losers in the battle of the most martyred minority. It is not a matter of comparative victimology, but one of collective survival. The insistence on incomparability and “uniqueness” of the Nazi Holocaust is precisely what prohibits our collective comprehension of genocide as a phenomenon of Western “civilization,” not as a reiterative series of historical events, each in its own way “unique.” It is what

inhibits our ability to name causes, anticipate outcomes, and, above all to engage in preemptive political and intellectual action in the face of contemporary exigencies.

In Tabori's 1990 production *Weisman and Rotgesicht*, the "calculus of calamity" is taken to hilarious heights to reveal the grave truth of the matter. In his 1994 discussion of "The Contemporary German Fascination for Things Jewish," Jack Zipes states of *Weisman und Rotgesicht*:

The resolution that Tabori offers, though hilarious, is meant to be taken seriously: a verbal duel so that both sides can expose themselves and realize how ridiculous it is to quarrel with one another. Hilarity becomes a nomadic means of questioning majority culture and of reversing identities so that understanding between different groups can be generated.⁶²

Ultimately, fostering a "solidarity of memory" that might fundamentally challenge majority culture must be the aim of any comparison of "minority" situations, but the conclusion Zipes draws from this particular conflation of identities in conflict is flawed by a misapprehension of the play's historically and culturally specific geographic setting in the Western wilderness and its relationship to indigenous peoples. As I have argued elsewhere, while Tabori does not specify the site of the duel in the desert, the play could be interpreted to be set in what is now the state of Colorado.⁶³ This is the site of the Sand Creek Massacre—a historical event with culturally specific meaning to the Native American people. It is at once a site of sanctity, of sacrifice, and of sacrilege. It represents the rampant desecration that has devastated an entire civilization and its way of life. But according to Jack Zipes's analysis: "There are many parallels that one can draw with the conflict in this play: Jews and blacks in the States, or blacks and Koreans; Jews and Turks in Germany; Jews and Arabs in the Middle East."⁶⁴ Clearly, other subaltern Others share similar relationships to other, more distant desert lands and wilderness landscapes, but Zipes's analogies are flawed on several counts.

In the case of the conflicts between the first two groups cited, the element of violent conquest and the dispossession of lands at the heart of the American Indian–European immigrant "dispute" is absent: Jews and blacks, like Jews and Koreans, are engaged in a struggle for cultural, racial, economic, and social equity in territories to which they have been introduced as Others—either as slaves, immigrants, or refugees. In the German-Turkish situation, the "minority" group is the "alien element" or, as the German euphemism would have it, "guest workers." None of these struggles involves legal agreements between sovereign nations—that is to say treaties between sovereign political entities—the terms of which have not been upheld by an outlaw state whose legitimacy as a "world power" is nevertheless recognized by the international community.

As Seth Wolitz has stated in this regard, “the text can also be read allegorically as a version of the Israeli-Palestinian encounter between two subalterns squabbling over land which the ‘Gewittergoi’, the imperialist powers, can always regain and control.”⁶⁵ The problem with this allegory, though, is that the North American territories that function as the setting and backdrop for the territories at issue in the Indian-immigrant conflict have yet to be manumitted from colonialist bondage. The lands remain in control of the “imperialist power.”

Precisely this is central to understanding the double-edged ironies and conflicts addressed in *Weisman und Rotgesicht*. The setting involves a geographical site that is readily associated with the actual site of a massacre and, as such, the site itself is ambiguous: it signifies both a site of (ongoing) sanctity and one of (ongoing) desecration. If the parallel is to be drawn between the Jewish and American Indian subaltern situations, the course of history as well as the present state of affairs must be taken into account: the fact is that Hitler lost the war and the State of Israel was formed as partial reparation for the losses sustained by the Jewish population as a result. However, the United States government, even as it sought to help absorb the losses sustained by the Jewish population in Europe not only through its support of Israel, but by offering refuge to Jewish immigrants in territories seized from the indigenous populations, *won* its war against the Indians.⁶⁶ The crucial difference between a regime whose demise was rooted in genocide and one for whom genocide was its foundational principle and the prerequisite to its existence is elided by this analogy.

Moreover, at the level of sheer abstraction, the solidarity between subaltern groups that the Jewish-American tradition of “spoofing” Jewish-Indian relations seeks to evoke is marred by its unilateral initiative—emanating from the Jewish perspective in the context of a Judeo-Christian framework that demonstrates little regard for or knowledge of the cultural and religious world-views of Native Americans, either as a collective entity or as heterogeneous individual nations—each with its own relationship to specific geographic sites within the boundaries of occupied territories now defined as the United States.

The land, “the Wilderness” or “the Desert” which has come to signify a “wasteland” in the symbolic and spiritual orders of other peoples, has never been associated with anything but abundance and eternal sustenance for indigenous peoples because revelation is rooted in the life of reflection on and with the land, not in catastrophic upheaval or divine intervention. Vine Deloria explains the “problem” of misconstrued understandings of this relationship in this way:

Almost every tribal religion was based on land. . . . Some of the old chiefs felt that, because generations of their ancestors had been buried on the lands and because the sacred events of their religion had taken place on the lands, they

were obligated to maintain the tribal lands against new kinds of exploitation. . . . Especially among the Pueblos, Hopi, and Navajo, the lands of the creation and emergence traditions are easily identified and are regarded as places of utmost significance. . . . Government officials have ruthlessly disregarded the Indians' pleas for the restoration of their most sacred lands, and the constant dispute between Indians and whites centers around this subject.⁶⁷

If anything sets the American Indian apart from other victims of genocide or oppression in *this* country, it is this: Native Americans are not, in the strictest sense of the word, a “diasporic” people.⁶⁸ While the policies of Indian Removal certainly served to disperse, displace, disparage, and dislocate Native cultures and identities from coast to coast, imposing upon Native North American peoples conditions of existence that might be described as “diasporic” in a Judeo-Christian or postcolonialist context, I would caution *against* the appropriation of the diasporic metaphor with regard to the state of Native North America. The traditional Deuteronomic narrative of the Diaspora implies divine punishment in response to a breach of covenant. In order for a “diasporic” situation to prevail, the peoples of the diaspora must have entered into a contract with the divinely intervening deity. But indigenous peoples of this country stood in no such relationship to the Judeo-Christian God and his sovereign representatives on Earth. The notion of a “Native Diaspora” in the United States presupposes an adherence to the doctrine of Manifest Destiny as divine intervention on the part of the Judeo-Christian God in His effort to create “living space” or *Lebensraum* for His children—“chosen” and “unchosen” alike. Even if we were to accept the contemporary permutations of the concept in the postcolonialist attempt to subvert and decenter traditional narratives of nationalism and imperialism as these relate to identity formation and the location of culture, the diasporic metaphor is inapplicable because the peoples and lands at issue here have yet to be manumitted from neo-colonialist bondage.

Uprootedness, homelessness, exile—these are maladies forced upon Native North American populations by the invading Europeans. What Simone Weil has written about this affliction in reference to Euro-African relations *in Africa* applies equally to the situation on Turtle Island.

[T]he white man carries [uprootedness] about with him wherever he goes. The disease has even penetrated the heart of the African continent, which had for thousands of years, nevertheless, been made up of villages. These black people at any rate, when nobody came to massacre them, torture them, or reduce them to slavery, knew how to live happily on their land. Contact with us is making them lose the art. That ought to make us wonder whether even the

black man, although the most primitive of all colonized peoples, hadn't after all more to teach us than to learn from us.⁶⁹

Native Americans have been “extirpated” as “savages” and as “barbarians” *on their own soil*. That soil has been contaminated by pestilence, poisons, toxins, oil spills, nuclear waste dumps and all the other deadly by-products Western “civilization” inevitably leaves as its legacy. Sacred sites have been effaced; graves have been robbed. Synagogues and churches can be rebuilt, but Mount Rushmore is not likely to be restored to its original glory by geological cosmetic surgery. Taken literally, James Young’s figurative language in “America’s Holocaust: Memory and the Politics of Identity,” is laced with mordant irony:

By themselves monuments are of little value, *mere stones in the landscape*. But as part of a nation’s rites or the objects of a people’s national pilgrimage, they are imbued with national soul and memory. For traditionally the state-sponsored memory of a national past aims to affirm *the righteousness of a nation’s birth, even its divine election*. The matrix of a nation’s monuments emplots the story of *ennobling* events, of *triumphs over barbarism*, and recalls the martyrdom of *those who gave their lives in the struggle for national existence*—who in the martyrological refrain, *died so that a nation might live*. In assuming the idealized forms and meanings assigned this era by the state, memorials tend to concretize particular historical interpretations. They suggest themselves in *indigenous*, even *geological outcroppings* in a national landscape; in time, such idealized memory grows as *natural* to the eye as the landscape in which it stands.”⁷⁰ [emphasis mine]

The irony of his statements is certainly not lost on Young, who concludes his discussion with a section titled “Against a Culture of Competing Catastrophes,” and states: “In the end we must recognize that memory cannot be divorced from the actions taken in its behalf, and *that memory without consequences may even contain the seeds of its own destruction*.”⁷¹ The “national monument” at Mount Rushmore represents the geographic and symbolic site in which the principles of Manifest Destiny and the master race are literally set in stone.⁷²

Only when the sanctity in the hearts and minds of the indigenous population of this “vast, untamed wilderness” itself has been duly acknowledged—when the dominant culture finally comes to grips with the fact that the ground they walk upon is not *like* a temple to the American Indian—it *is* the temple—then, and only then, will the nature of the devastation and desecration be driven home to them. Once that has been established, the essentially suicidal nature of Western intellectual endeavor will also become apparent. The savage—an entity reduced in the Western scheme of things to the level of “bare (and hence

disposable) life” on a par with the plant—reveals himself, in the Native American world-view, to be precisely that: nothing more and nothing less than the tree itself—equals in a covenant and an evolutionary chain that does not shackle or bind, but merely bonds. To the Native American sense and sensibility, the tree represents life itself, and there is no split between the life of the tree and the life of the human. They are holistically, historically, and happily related in the nexus of mutually sustainable symbiosis.

If, following Agamben, “*homo sacer* is life that may be killed but not sacrificed . . . life that may be killed by anyone without committing homicide,” then no crime has been committed in the American Holocaust, nor is the dearth of “academic moves,” “scholarly turns,” and “paradigmatic shifts” toward a fundamental rethinking and reshaping of American national identity of any consequence in global, local, or national terms.⁷³ There has been no “human” sacrifice in the conquest of the West. Nothing but the forest has been lost to the victor culture. But, if Native theorists, religious leaders, and activists who have survived the holocausts are correct in asserting, as they do, that the fate of the forest will be that of man, then the master race is, in fact, engaged in the specter of committing collective suicide—exercising the authority of the sovereign over life and death on all our behalf.

If we are to divert the disaster, Mount Rushmore must be placed on a par with burning synagogues, whose fires can never be extinguished, and with black churches in the South subjected to racially motivated acts of arson. If the “Jews are the Indians of Germany,” then Mount Rushmore is Bitburg, writ large and indelible, engraved not only in our collective memory, but spat on the very floor of the temple—a civic memorial to a people and a way of life sacrificed to someone else’s “God.”⁷⁴ But it is also here that the master race, *ex altera terra*, has signed and sealed its own fate on this continent as that of *homo sacer*:

A life that, excepting itself in double exclusion from the real context of both the profane and the religious forms of life, is defined solely by virtue of having entered into an intimate symbiosis with death without, nevertheless, belonging to the world of the deceased.⁷⁵

The stones speak volumes that continue to fall on the deaf ears of an American public more German than the Germans in its persistent refusal to come to terms with a “little matter of genocide,” choosing instead to adopt as its own the foundling stone of a historical marker—that coveted historical caesura everyone wants to have, but no one wants to own in the “Americanization of the Holocaust.”⁷⁶ But in the canyons of deep memory, the song of the stones still echoes and rings true for the three million survivors of the American Holocaust.

NOTES

1. The reader of this paper is instructed to note that the linguistic and literary intent of the writer includes a deliberate transgression of traditional boundaries in scholarship. This paper thus combines and at the same time challenges elements of various genres: from personal narrative, to scholarly discourse, to critical analysis and creative writing in a parodic idiom that, at times, borders on the “sacrilegious.” It is written from the subject position of a German-Jewish-Native-American-(Anishinabe)-Female and, as a “cross-genred” literary experiment, seeks to reflect the cultural hybridity of its author.

2. Seth Wolitz, “From Parody to Redemption: George Tabori’s *Weisman und Rotgesicht*,” in *Verkörperte Geschichtsentwürfe: George Taboris Theaterarbeit*, ed. Peter Höyng (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 1998) 151–76, 163.

3. Mark Slobin, “From Vilna to Vaudeville: Minikes and *Among the Indians*,” *The Drama Review* 24, no. 3 (September 1980): 18.

4. Raphael Seligmann, *Mit beschränkter Hoffnung: Juden, Deutsche und Israelis* (Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe, 1991), 97–8; cited in Sander L. Gilman, *Jews in Today’s German Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 19.

5. Lucy Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 17. In Dawidowicz’s earlier work *The War against the Jews 1933–1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), her discussion of the Madagascar Plan speaks in terms of the “Madagascar reservation . . . a reservation for Jews that would become truly their final destination” (150–66) [emphasis mine].

6. Cited in Peter Novik, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 200.

7. Novik, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 198.

8. See also Henry R. Huttenbach, “The Psychology and Politics of Genocide Denial: A Comparison of Four Case Studies,” in *Studies in Comparative Genocide*, eds. Levon Chorbajian and George Shirinian (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 216: “Denial has become an integral part of genocide; not to take this aspect into consideration is to fail to comprehend a major component of the dynamics of extermination.”

9. At the time of this writing, Finkelstein’s most recent work *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* was scheduled for publication by Verso in July 2000. Citations here are from an 11 June 2000 review by Bryan Appleyard published in the online version of *The Sunday Times* (<http://www.Sunday-times.co.uk/news/pages/sti/2000/06/11/stirevnwso2006.html>).

10. Novik, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 13.

11. Saul Friedländer, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 23.

12. Ernst Reinhard Piper, ed., *Historikerstreit: Die Dokumentation der Kontroversen um die Einzigartigkeit der national-sozialistischen Judenvernichtung* (Munich: Piper Verlag,

1987); in English, James Knowlton and Truett Cates, trans., *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust* (Atlantic Highlands NJ: Humanities Press, 1993).

13. Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narrative on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 4.

14. George Tabori, "Hamlet in Blue," *Theatre Quarterly* 20 (1975): 117–32.

15. Henryk Broder, "Die Germanisierung des Holocaust," in *Volk und Wahn* (Munich: Goldman Verlag, 1996), 214. English-language translations of "The Germanization of the Holocaust" and other essays by the same author are forthcoming in Lilian M. Friedberg and Sander L. Gilman, eds., *To Each His Own: Selected Essays by German-Jewish Essayist Henryk Broder*. Indeed, as Broder's essay implies, a veritable cottage industry has developed around the Holocaust. Titles like Edward Alexander's "Stealing the Holocaust," (*Midstream* [November 1980]) reflect the lunatic proportions that characterize the debates. See also Norman Finkelstein at note 9 above.

16. James Axtell, *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 262–63.

17. Finkelstein's article was subsequently reprinted—together with an equally scathing critique of Goldhagen's thesis and methodology by Ruth Bettina Birn, a recognized authority on the archives Goldhagen cites as sources for his research—in *A Nation on Trial: The Goldhagen Thesis and Historical Truth* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998).

18. William Greider, *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 368.

19. Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 57.

20. Steven Katz, "The Uniqueness of the Holocaust: The Historical Dimension," in *Is the Holocaust Unique?: Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, ed. Alan Rosenbaum (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1996), 21.

21. See Katz's chapter on "The Depopulation of the New World in the Sixteenth Century" in *The Holocaust in Historical Context: Volume I: The Holocaust and Mass Death before the Modern Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 87–91.

22. Katz, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, 59.

23. Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), cited in Katz, *Holocaust in Historical Context*, 125. Lemkin's definition has been reprinted in most standard works on genocide. For the reader who may be unfamiliar with the text of Article 2 of the UN Convention on Genocide adopted by the General Assembly in November 1948, which was based on Lemkin's original delineation of the term and the crime's parameters, I reprint it here: "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

1. Killing members of the group.
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (cited in Katz, *Holocaust in Historical Context*, 125)

Ward Churchill's *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492–Present* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997) firmly establishes, point by point, the manner and degree to which policies and actions on the part of the U.S. government and its people conform to the definition of genocide as outlined by Lemkin and by the UN convention.

24. Lord Jeffrey Amherst, cited in Churchill, *Matter of Genocide*, 154.
25. David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), xii.
26. While sources may disagree on the exact wording of Sheridan's now infamous statement, the sentiment, regardless of wording, is always the same. My source here is *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 499. The examples cited here reflect but the tip of the iceberg in a documented litany of official and unofficial statements issued by governmental authorities and representatives of the people of the United States, which express clear and unequivocal intent to exterminate the entire indigenous population of North America.
27. Yehuda Bauer, "Comparison of Genocides" in Chorbajian and Shirinian, *Studies in Comparative Genocide*, 38.
28. Lenore A. Stiffarm with Phil Lane, "The Demography of Native North America," in *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, ed. Annette Jaimes (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 33.
29. Churchill, *Matter of Genocide*, 63.
30. *Ibid.*, 64.
31. *Ibid.*, 147. See also Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); Frank Parella, "Lebensraum and Manifest Destiny: A Comparative Study in the Justification of Expansion" (master's thesis, Georgetown University, 1950); Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansion in American History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935); Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (New York: Knopf, 1963).
32. John Toland, paraphrased in Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 153.
33. Katz, *Holocaust in Historical Context*, 97.
34. Cited in Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 232.

35. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1973), ix. Arendt also identifies the doctrine of the master race as an element of the same “subterranean stream,” but her American exceptionalism renders her comments in this regard of little use to an analysis of the notion of “one nation under God” as a euphemistic veil for the concept of a master race. See Arendt, *Origins*, 152, 206.

36. Drinnon, *Facing West*, 463.

37. *Ibid.*, 463.

38. *Ibid.*, 465.

39. *Ibid.*, 462.

40. *Ibid.*, 463.

41. A discussion of the role Christian ideals played in the genocide of both the Jews and the indigenous populations of the Americas oversteps the scope of this study. Elie Wiesel, unaware perhaps of his own profundity in this matter, sums up the gist of the argument quite well when he states: “All the killers were Christian. . . . The Nazi system was the consequence of a movement of ideas and followed a strict logic; it did not arise in a void but had its roots deep in a tradition that prophesied it, prepared for it, and brought it to maturity. That tradition was inseparable from the past of Christian, civilized Europe” (in Irving Abrahamson, ed., *Against Silence: The Voice and Vision of Elie Wiesel* [New York: Holocaust Library, 1985], 33).

42. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 13.

43. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1998), 114.

44. Churchill, *Matter of Genocide*, 229.

45. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, x.

46. See also Terrence Des Pres’s (*The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976], 207) assertion that “[the survivor] is the first of *civilized* men to live beyond the compulsions of culture” [emphasis mine].

47. Ward Churchill, “A Summary of Arguments Against the Naming of a University Residence Hall After Clinton M. Tyler” (report prepared at the request of the assistant vice chancellor for academic services, University of Colorado at Boulder, July 1981, cited in Annette Jaimes, ed., *The State of Native America*, 5).

48. Novik, *Holocaust in American Life*, 9.

49. See note 9 above.

50. Eduardo and Bonnie Duran, *Native American Postcolonial Psychology* (New York: SUNY Press, 1995), 40.

51. Winona LaDuke, *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1999), 148.

52. Novik, *Holocaust in American Life*, 9.

53. See note 9 above.

54. Winona LaDuke, *Last Standing Woman* (Stillwater, MN: Voyageur Press, 1997), 127. LaDuke’s reference here is to the state of Minnesota. Her discussion centers on the

particularly virulent strain of metaphysical Indian-hating that permeates those areas in direct proximity to reservations.

55. Annette Jaimes, "Sand Creek—The Morning After," in Jaimes, *The State of Native America*, 8. A detailed discussion of the "legal" means employed by the U.S. government in outlawing and criminalizing various elements of native culture far exceeds the scope of this study. Churchill states, in this regard,

It may seem curious that American Indians, who had mandatorily become U.S. citizens by 1924, should "need a special statute passed in the late 1970's [The American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 1978] to be able to utilize the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution." A number of statutes and regulations promulgated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, effectively criminalized a range of indigenous spiritual practices extending from the Lakota sun dance to the potlatch ceremonies of the nations of the Pacific Northwest. Further, given that many native traditions embody a concept of sacred geography, loss of lands had by the late twentieth century seriously curtailed site-specific practices of Indian spirituality (Ward Churchill, cited in Jaimes, *The State of Native North America*, 17).

Native and non-Native scholars have conducted a substantial amount of research on these issues.

56. The "New Age" spiritual movement's fascination and appropriation of things Indian also presents a mirror image of the "contemporary fascination for things Jewish in Germany." See article of the same title by Jack Zipes, in Sander Gilman and Karen Remmler, eds., *Reemerging Jewish Culture in Germany: Life and Literature since 1989* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 15–45; cf. Wendy Rose, "The Great Pretenders: Further Reflections on Whiteshamanism," in Jaimes, *The State of Native North America*, 403–21.

57. LaDuke, *All Our Relations*, 5.

58. *Ibid.*, 1.

59. *Ibid.*, 1.

60. Des Pres, *The Survivor*, 207.

61. Vine Deloria, *For this Land: Writings on Religion in America* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 130.

62. Jack Zipes, "Contemporary Fascination," 36.

63. Lilian Friedberg, "Mule Minus Forty Million Acres: Topographies of Geographic Disorientation and Redface Minstrelsy in George Tabori's *Weisman und Rotgesicht*" (master's thesis, University of Chicago, May 2000).

64. Zipes, "Contemporary Fascination," 36.

65. Wolitz, "From Parody to Redemption," 166.

66. Ward Churchill, speaking at the University of Chicago on 21 January 2000 made

this point in his lecture on “A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492–Present.”

67. Deloria, *For this Land*, 127.

68. Any significant discussion of indigenous peoples and their relationship to the lands currently inhabited by other diasporic peoples is glaringly absent, for example, in Michael Galchinsky’s discussion of diasporism with regard to multicultural identity in the United States. See “Scattered Seeds: A Dialogue of Diasporas,” in *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, eds. David Biale, Michael Galchinsky, and Susan Heschel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 185–212.

69. Weil, *The Need for Roots*, 77.

70. James E. Young, “America’s Holocaust: Memory and the Politics of Identity,” in *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, ed. Helene Flanzbaum (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 69.

71. *Ibid.*, 82.

72. While opinions in Native communities are divided with regard to the “Rushmore alternative”—the “Crazy Horse Monument”—it is the view of many that this monumental undertaking, initiated by European immigrants, constitutes an equally atrocious assault on the land, which only adds insult to injury, especially since Crazy Horse, throughout his life, had insisted that no graphic representations of his person be made.

73. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 101–3.

74. This is a reference to the international scandal surrounding then President Ronald Reagan’s conduct at the cemetery in Bitburg, Germany, where former ss soldiers are buried and were commemorated in 1986. For a more detailed discussion of the event and its meaning, see also David Singer, ed, *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective* (Bloomington: University Press of Indiana, 1986) and Ilya Levkov, ed., *Bitburg and Beyond: Encounters in American, German, and Jewish History* (New York: Shapolsky, 1987).

75. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 100.

76. Russel Means, 12 October 1992, American Indian Movement: “All my life, I’ve had to listen to rhetoric about the United States being a model of freedom and democracy, the most uniquely enlightened and humanitarian country in history, a ‘nation of laws’ which, unlike others, has never pursued policies of conquest and aggression. I’m sure you’ve heard it before. It’s official ‘truth’ in the United States. It’s what is taught to schoolchildren and it’s the line peddled to the general public. Well, I’ve got a hot news flash for everybody here. It’s a lie. The whole thing’s a lie, and it always has been. Leaving aside the obvious points which could be raised to disprove it by blacks and Chicanos and Asian immigrants right here in North America—not to mention the Mexicans, the Nicaraguans, the Guatemalans, the Puerto Ricans, the Hawaiians, the Filipinos, the Samoans, the Tamarros of Guam, the Marshall Islanders, the Koreans, the Vietnamese, the Cubans, the Dominicans, the Granadans, the Libyans, the Pana-

manians, the Iraqis, and a few dozen other peoples out there who've suffered American invasions and occupations first hand—there's a little matter of genocide that's got to be taken into account right here at home. I'm talking about the genocide which has been perpetrated against American Indians, a genocide that began the instant the first of Europe's boat people washed up on the beach of Turtle Island, a genocide that's continuing right now, at this moment. Against Indians, there's not a law the United States hasn't broken, not a Crime Against Humanity it hasn't committed, and it's still going on" (cited in Churchill, *Matter of Genocide*, frontispiece).