

**After All, It Is Only an Animal...**

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A standard *bon ton* in the milieu of radicals is that the colony was the testing ground for Auschwitz. Initially, the statement was meant to elevate the suffering of the colony. It ended by downgrading Auschwitz. Nowadays, Auschwitz is a mere repetition of the horrors of colonialism. It is nothing more than the perfection of methods tried elsewhere. The argument only holds if one tries hard to forget history, and only if one dives fully dressed into the warm, murky waters of a Judeo-Christian Europe. What better way is there to clean one's sins than by making the victims the originators of the culture and land that has devoured them again and again and again. According to this logic, very soon, one will write of Judeo-African-Arab-Christian Europe. One should beware of naively adopting the discourse of those whose identity has always been mere imitation.

Freud may have been wrong on all points concerning Moses; however, there is one where he got it right. Antisemitism is one of the oldest, most ancient forms of the hatred of difference and, simultaneously, of identity. One hates those who tried to do things differently by reducing everything to the one. If there is an original Jewish sin, it is the sin of the universal, not that of whiteness or European culture. Nietzsche already stated as much in his genealogy of slave morality. He thought he saw a way out of it. Little did he know that what he understood as overcoming was just a tiny drunken hic before full acceleration. Indeed, slave morality and its nihilistic drive have never been better. The creation of values is dead. Long-live the return of the repressed, long-live the universal Victim (or the victim of the Universal?).

Adorno wrote that the real difference between the intellectual and the activist is that the latter is less aware of its "entanglement" in capitalism and colonialism (§ 6). He did not know the startling, synthetic form very well: the intellectual-activist who not only effaces self-reflexivity but renders its effacement opaque by linguistic prowess and wordy acrobatics (Adorno may have detected this figure in the wrestler-intellectual, § 87). In their work, the intellectual-activist states, in passing, what they would have wanted to say out loud – by becoming Israelis, Jews replaced the Nazis. To be honest, the Jews were never that different from their oppressor. The dominated are always implicated in their own domination (§ 117 & § 119). However, those Jews who replaced the torments of Europe by wanting to become like all other nations needed time to learn the art of domination, to master that of colonialism and oppression. They are yet to grasp that of genocide. They have not actualized a potentiality always implied in nationalism. Indeed, only the contamination of Jewish thinking by *raison d'état* could have led to Gaza.

However, let us not make the mistake, Gaza is not Auschwitz (not yet). And Auschwitz did not take 400 years to perfect. It took two millennia of ongoing persecution. What was done in Africa, the Americas or Asia was first tried at 'home' on the Jews. Forgetting this is to forget that the Jewish bourgeois and the European colonialist of pre-WWII Europe may look alike yet are different in rank and kind (§ 6). Let's say it clearly: Algiers, Auschwitz, or Gaza, should not be made into a competition of suffering; they are humanity's "progress into hell" (§ 149).

“Only a crippled mind needs self-hatred in order to demonstrate its intellectual essence – untruth – by the size of its biceps” (§ 87). Indeed, by its willingness to use violence in the name of victimhood it does not know, to employ misogynic-phallic metaphors in the name of women it always ignored, and to declare grand statements to obsessively veil the narrowness of mind it tries so compulsively to hide, the wrestler-intellectual ignores the fact that they too are walking knee-deep in blood. That the Jews are the apex of White European bourgeoisie and, hence, may be eradicated (theoretically at least) is not only “economic sophistry” but also the denial of “the infernal machine” that is Western history (§ 149). The wrestler-intellectual who “relinquishes awareness of the growth of horror” for the sake of choosing only one, most horrible Victim, where all others are effaced, “fails to perceive” “the true identity of the whole”, that is, “terror without end” (§ 149).

The only “emancipated society” that can exist is not one where pessimistic intellectuals will pit racial differences against each other in the name of the Victim’s moral purity. Nor is it a society where these differences are effaced for the sake of an abstract “equality for all”. A truly emancipated society is one where “the realization of universality” can happen in the “reconciliation of differences”, where one (and communities) can be “different without fear” (§ 66). The only way forward is by writing a history of the pogrom, of which Auschwitz, Gaza and Cape Town are chapters, where the perpetrator being Aryan, white, black, Jew, or Asian is a mere epiphenomenon of what is truly at stake: “what was not seen as human and yet is human, is made a thing” to be discarded since “after all, it’s only an animal” (§ 68).

## Biography

Guilel Treiber is an affiliated post doctoral researcher at the Centre for Research in Political Philosophy and Ethics Leuven (RIPPLE). He specializes in the study of resistance and political protest via a poststructuralist perspective. He is currently working on a synthesis between Foucauldian genealogy and Critical Theory in order to use the resulting methodology to analyse our present conditions in digitally connected mass societies.