

**“To Remember Too Much Is Indeed a Form of Madness:”  
Caryl Phillips’s *The Nature of Blood* and the Modalities of European Racism**

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Near the end of his scathing travelogue *The European Tribe*, Caryl Phillips writes:

“Europe is blinded by her past, and does not understand the high price of her churches, art galleries, and architecture. My presence in Europe is part of that price.”<sup>1</sup> Exploring the back streets and scintillating capitals of a continent in the midst of an uneven and halting process of unification, Phillips reminds his readers of the role of slavery, colonialism, and anti-Semitism in generating Europe’s cultural treasures and wealth. This reminder seems more necessary now than ever. At the recent United Nations World Conference Against Racism, it became clear that the European Union is unwilling to apologize explicitly for the suffering created by colonialism and slavery for fear of potential litigation.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, as Phillips states elsewhere in his travelogue, the Holocaust is one of the few openly acknowledged instances of systematic European racism. How should Europe’s colonial history figure, Phillips implicitly asks, as new, continent-wide definitions of identity and belonging are being forged? If the presence of formerly-colonized subjects in Europe is, as Phillips argues, part of the price paid for European splendor, to what extent is the Union willing to acknowledge the legitimacy of such subjects as members and citizens of that community?

The European Union needs its former colonies. With aging populations and dwindling birth rates, many nations in Europe will be forced in the coming decades to replenish their work forces with former colonial subjects or face economic crisis.<sup>3</sup> Yet political sentiment in most European nations remains stridently averse to all forms of immigration. Even as the European Union cements a continent of highly diverse and historically antagonistic peoples together, Europeans retain a unifying sense of their difference from those they once colonized. As Phillips suggests in *The European Tribe*, the multi-racial populations that have resulted from “colonization in reverse” since 1945 are a reminder of Europe’s long history of despoiling much

of the rest of the planet. Atrocities such as the Holocaust, colonialism, and racial slavery have typically been seen by the dominant theorists of modernity as resulting from the incapacity of modern social regulations to control human beings' innate rapacity and savagery. In what Zygmunt Bauman calls the etiological myth of Western society, such atrocities are regarded as a failure rather than a product of modernity.<sup>4</sup> This approach leaves European civilization untarnished by the violence that it perpetrated abroad and at home. The systematic forms of violence that arose following the advent of modernity are perceived as aberrations, temporary regressions that disturb the otherwise relentless march of material and cultural progress that is seen as having followed the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. As Aime Cèsaire acidly commented concerning colonialism, Europeans tolerated the nightmarish racial violence committed abroad in the name of civilization as long as it didn't affect them directly.<sup>5</sup>

Following in the footsteps of anti-colonial scholars such as C.L.R. James and Eric Williams, Paul Gilroy has challenged this refusal to acknowledge the blood-soaked side of European modernity by arguing that the atrocities as well as the profits of the triangular trade were an integral aspect of Euro-American history over the last 500 years.<sup>6</sup> Drawing on Bauman's work on the Holocaust, Gilroy argues that, like anti-Semitism, slavery was not an aberration but rather a fundamental element in the discourse of modern British cultural uniqueness that emerged with the consolidation of the nation-state. Binary oppositions between the British and the peoples they encountered during the centuries of their colonial expansion evolved as a result of slavery into an essentialized identity predicated on "whiteness." Black identity was consequently seen as external to British culture, despite the intertwining of Britain's history with Africa and the Caribbean since at least the sixteenth century. Gilroy points out that this myopic

cultural nationalist view of history contributes significantly to the spread of exclusionary definitions of identity and belonging in contemporary Britain.

Gilroy's suggestive comparison of the historical oppression of blacks and Jews raises significant questions for postcolonial studies. Most centrally, this comparison prompts discussion of the extent to which anti-Jewish sentiment in Europe became a template for other forms of racial hatred and colonial discourse. Furthermore, to what extent can racism, whether anti-semitic or colonial, be seen as an integral element of what Étienne Balibar calls the myth of Europe?<sup>7</sup> Such questions are particularly acute given current transformations in the mode of racial prejudice. Scholars and activists working on racism in Europe over the last two decades have noted the rise of what Balibar calls differential racism, a form of prejudice in which cultural differences rather than ascribed phenotypical distinctions ground modes of racism.<sup>8</sup> According to such critics, this form of racism is gradually displacing phenotypically-based models of racism derived from the social Darwinism of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the biological basis of eighteenth and nineteenth century modes of racialization is coming to seem increasingly archaic as contemporary molecular biology underlines the fundamental unity of all life at the genetic level.<sup>9</sup> Given these shifts, it may not be so outlandish to wonder whether previous modes of racialization that were not explicitly based on somatic characteristics are reasserting themselves with the emergence of differential racism. For instance, notions of irremediable cultural antagonism are arguably just as prevalent in contemporary hostilities towards Arab Europeans as are notions of racial superiority.

Caryl Phillips's *The Nature of Blood* is a particularly suggestive place to start exploring such issues. While the majority of Phillips's previous novels deal with the triangular geography of the Atlantic slave trade, in *The Nature of Blood* Phillips turns to an examination of European

identity and the place of Blacks and Jews in Europe. Phillips undermines the etiological myth of modern European history through a pastiche of three narratives: a revision of Shakespeare's tragedy *Othello*; an account of the persecution of a Jewish community living on the outskirts of the fifteenth-century Venetian republic; and the diaristic record of a young German-Jewish woman's experience of psychological trauma and breakdown as she lives through ghettoization, the exterminatory logic of the concentration camp, and the alienation that follows liberation. The harrowing subject matter and disjointed form of Phillips's novel force the reader to confront racial terror and its residues. Readers of the novel become witnesses to anti-Jewish prejudice at its historical inception in early modern Europe and at its horrendous terminus during the Nazi era. Through its intertwining, interrupted testimonies, the novel records the fragmentation of memory and identity that occurs under the weight of historical trauma. By following its protagonists through this trauma, *The Nature of Blood* reverses the social production of moral invisibility that accompanies genocide and other gross human rights violations.<sup>10</sup> Given the deep historical roots of racism in Europe, we need to be vigilant, the novel suggests, against the production of new forms of such moral invisibility as the continent strives to integrate itself not simply economically, but also politically and culturally.

In addition, by juxtaposing the history of anti-Semitism with the story of *Othello*, the first prominent modern Black European, Phillips alerts us to an important omission in postcolonial theory. Many proponents of this field have celebrated the hybrid cultures of diasporic subjects, finding in their cosmopolitan circuits an alternative to the forms of homogeneous and exclusionary identities often advanced in the name of the nation.<sup>11</sup> Far less attention has been paid, however, to the enduringly contradictory juridical nature of the nation-state and to the impact of this contradiction on diasporic subjects. In her work on the history of anti-Semitism,

Hannah Arendt described this issue as the fundamental problem of modernity. For Arendt, the theoretically inalienable Rights of Man evaporate whenever a people appear who were no longer citizens of any sovereign state.<sup>12</sup> Arendt's objection that the right to belong to humanity should be guaranteed by humanity itself rather than through reciprocal agreements between states still largely applies, despite the proliferation of universal rights declarations since the Holocaust. Still less, it might be added, can a regional political entity such as the European Union guarantee such inalienable human rights. The increasing displacement of populations as well as the globalization of culture over the last century mean that the issue of homeless peoples discussed by Arendt in her analysis of anti-Semitism urgently needs to be engaged by postcolonial analysis. As part of this effort, the exclusionary racial and cultural connotations of nascent definitions of European identity need to be challenged, as the acerbic history lesson from *The European Tribe* that I quoted above implicitly urges. In the longer term, meaningful forms of citizenship which overcome the geographical and cultural limitations that characterize those of the nation-state need to be created in order to avert further catastrophes like those depicted in Phillips's *The Nature of Blood*.

#### The Origins of Modern European Racism

To label the hostilities against Jews that developed in pre-modern Europe anti-Semitism is to engage in a form of anachronistic thinking. The term anti-Semitism is derived from the bio-racial theories of Jewish identity that developed in the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>13</sup> Such theories advanced secular explanations for the supposed Jewish threat to European civilization. Despite their significant differences from preceding anti-Jewish modes of thought, these racial explanations nonetheless absorbed and redeployed religiously-

based stereotypes concerning Jews that had been in circulation since the twelfth century. It was during the late medieval period, when Europe underwent a significant period of cultural metamorphosis and dislocation, that many of the persecutory stereotypes and practices to which Jews in Europe were subjected during the following centuries were first developed.<sup>14</sup> An examination of anti-Jewish sentiment during this early period, then, may help provide a more complete picture of the modes of differential racism that pre-date modern forms of bio-racial thought. In addition, such an examination can shed light on the enduringly controversial question of the responsibility borne by both church and state in Europe for the propagation and dissemination of anti-Jewish stereotypes.<sup>15</sup>

It is precisely to this early modern moment that Caryl Phillips turns in one strand of his narrative in *The Nature of Blood*.<sup>16</sup> The story of Servadio, a prominent Jewish moneylender who lives in the town of Portobuffole in the terrestrial hinterland of the Venetian republic, is told by a narrator who is not at first identified. Interwoven with other disorienting narratives, the story of the Jews of Portobuffole is announced simply by a description of the townspeople's anticipatory mood as they await the return of soldiers demobilized from a war against the Turks in 1480. The lack of a clearly delineated transition - a chapter break, for example - between Eva's fragmented narrative and that of Servadio is, at first, quite confusing. The interwoven strands of narrative that make up the novel must be disentangled and, in the process of doing so, the reader is encouraged to view these narratives as constituting a complex counter-point to one another. While Phillips has used such defamiliarizing aesthetic devices in previous novels, *The Nature of Blood* requires its reader to be a far more active consumer of textuality and history than his prior works. Far from simply debunking historiographic narrative per se, *The Nature of Blood* requires

its readers to assemble the pieces of a historical continuum that connects experiences of victimization and terror across the ages.

Despite drawing such connections, this section of the novel does not suggest that anti-Jewish uprisings are a primeval characteristic of European culture. Rather, this narrative strand of the novel situates such events in a particular historical moment.<sup>17</sup> The narrator describes a period of intense social upheaval, when, following years of plague and famine, townspeople remain extremely suspicious of strangers.<sup>18</sup> The Jews of Portobuffole, whose houses occupy prominent places in the central square of the town, have been residents of the Venetian republic for only sixty years. After being subjected to a series of pogroms and finally expelled from Germany earlier in the century, the Jews arrived in Portobuffole as refugees. Their position in the town remains extremely liminal after more than half a century of residence. On the one hand, as the narrator explains, dependency on Jewish usury was universal in the Venetian republic, and the members of the Jewish community had consequently obtained quite ostentatious amounts of personal wealth during their time in the republic. On the other hand, moneylending was viewed as a shameful, irreligious trade despite the fact that the Christian guilds that controlled other trades refused to admit Jews to their ranks. By this period, Jews had, in other words, come to occupy the equivocal status that was to characterize their social position during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: as bankers they were accorded special rights by the state, which nonetheless insisted on maintaining the social isolation of the Jewish community that helped to inflame popular resentment against their privileged position.<sup>19</sup> While it is clearly important to avoid ahistorical accounts of anti-Jewish racism in Europe, this similarity in the equivocal social position of Jews across a broad span of time suggests that there is more historical continuity than many analysts of modern anti-Semitism tend to acknowledge.<sup>20</sup>

The standpoint of the narrator throughout his account of the Jews' perilous position in Venetian society is itself remarkably ambivalent. He is capable of noting the many hypocrisies of the republic's Grand Council. This body tries to squelch harmful propaganda concerning the economically-essential Jewish population while also requiring that this population wear visible yellow insignia - forerunners of the Nazis' yellow stars of David - that proclaimed their identity as members of a marginalized minority. Yet the narrator also rearticulates anti-Jewish stereotypes that became the foundation of racial violence in Europe during the following centuries as if such stereotypes were manifold truth. The central of such stereotypes is the blood libel. Emerging in Northern Europe during the thirteenth century, the blood libel held that Jews used the blood of Christian children during their Passover celebrations not simply as a celebration of their escape from Egypt across the Red Sea, but also as a sign of their enduring malevolence towards Christianity.<sup>21</sup> According to the narrator, "not only had the Jews killed Jesus Christ, but during Holy Week it was common practice for them to reenact this crime and kill a Christian child..."<sup>22</sup> The objectivity of the narrator is obviously brought into question through this account of the blood libel. Just as the fragmented narrative form of the novel forces the reader to decode and connect historical moments, so the ambiguity of the narrator in this section encourages the reader to question the authority of historical narrative. As the story of Servadio and his fellow Jews unfolds, the narrator becomes closely identified and yet never coterminous with the figure of Andrea Dolphin, a Venetian aristocrat appointed by the oligarchy that rules the republic to lead Portobuffole. Dolphin's equivocation as both representative of the Doge and as leader of Portobuffole underlines the fundamental complicity of the state in incidents of racist bloodletting.

If the Venetian state grudgingly admitted the utility of the Jews, the Christian church did not. Indeed, the late medieval church viewed Jews as inimical to social concord. In the course of the ceremony that begins the second section of Servadio's story, intercessory prayers are made by the parish priest for officials of both church and state; the service concludes, however, with a special oration for the Jews, that God might "take away the venom of their spirits so that they may come to recognize Jesus Christ."<sup>23</sup> This passage underlines the fundamental problem that Jews represented for the church: their very existence, their enduring refusal to convert to Christianity, signalled the incompleteness and hence the failure of the church's mission on earth. It thus took relatively little for the New Testament's account of the Jews' murder of Christ to be transformed from a tale of historical violence and sin into an account of the active malevolence of Jews in the present.<sup>24</sup> Yet, as I indicate above, this shift occurred in a particular historical context. Phillips's *The Nature of Blood* relates the specific role of the Franciscan Order in canalizing popular sentiments against Jewish usury during the early modern period.<sup>25</sup> Itinerate Franciscan preachers such as Bernardino da Feltre were particularly successful at stirring up popular hostilities towards Jews with accusations of their ritual murder of Christian innocents. Anger towards the novel social conditions that the Jews were taken to emblemize was, however, intertwined with this theological hostility towards a population of supposed deicides.<sup>26</sup> Formed in part in reaction to the growth of mercantile capitalism in the Umbrian city-states of the late medieval period, the Franciscan order lashed out against some of the more anti-egalitarian aspects that characterized the advent of modernity in the West. As the primary economic support of the nascent economic order of capitalism and the secular state on which it rested, Jews became targets of popular unrest in Italy and other parts of Europe during this period. Outbursts of hatred and violence towards Jews, who were perceived as furthering the

interests of the elite, always involved an element of hostility towards the repressive states of the era.<sup>27</sup> As Hannah Arendt argues, anti-Semitism may consequently be seen as a form of mediated class tension, one in which some of the most socially marginalized subjects of modernity are ironically and tragically singled out for the ire felt by those reacting against aspects of modernity.<sup>28</sup>

Popular animosity towards the Jews as symbols of the state did not necessarily ensure the beneficence of the authorities towards the Jews upon whose capital they often depended. While the authorities did in many cases attempt to protect “their Jews,” attempts which tended to further inflame mob violence by providing visible evidence of the Jews’ privileged positions, such protection was by no means universal or guaranteed. The state could and often did choose to decapitate mob violence by itself prosecuting such violence in an organized fashion. The middle and final sections of this narrative strand in *The Nature of Blood* depict the decision made by Venice’s ruling elite to execute the Jews of Portobuffole in order to preserve their hold on power. A rumor concerning the disappearance of a blond beggar boy near Servadio’s house is quickly amplified as the blood libel circulates through Portobuffole. Andrea Dolfin feels he must arrest the Jews before the plebeians take matters into their own hands, and thereby subvert the Doge’s authority. What follows in Phillips’s novel is a detailed account of the inquisitional process through which the state investigators produce the truths of Jewish malevolence that they wish to hear. Neither Andrea Dolfin nor the other members of the court that tries Servadio and his two fellow Jews are erratic and arbitrary sadists. Indeed, the narrator describes the “flawless procedure” and high aspirations towards justice that characterize the Most Serene Republic’s legal system.<sup>29</sup> This system was in part inspired by the recent rediscovery of Roman civil law, which included the routinized use of physical violence as part of the trial. Obviously, such

inquisitorial techniques were predicated on the virtually complete dehumanization of those on trial. An integral part of the investigatory mechanism that the court at Portobuffole has at its disposal, for instance, is a vertical rack known as the *strappada*, upon which Servadio and his co-religionists are stretched. With the help of this mechanism, the court of Portobuffole extorts an amazingly detailed account from Servadio and his friends of their kidnapping and subsequent ritual slaughter of the Christian boy. No concrete evidence of their supposed crimes is presented to the court other than these confessions. The Jews are sentenced to death. After receiving Dolphin's account of the trial, Venetian authorities, not wishing to give in too hastily to popular sentiments in Portobuffole, order a retrial before the full Senate in the city itself. During this second trial, the state prosecutor capitalizes on the anti-Jewish stereotypes that were in circulation at the time, using popular rumors such as the blood libel to convince the Senators to vote by a commanding majority for the death of Servadio and two of his fellow Jews.

They are burnt at the stake before a jubilant crowd after being paraded down the Grand Canal. The narrator, who previously has retained a tone of complete objectivity in his redaction of events, jeers those who falter during their march to the stake as "Jew cowards" and describes the extent to which the crowd is "moved by the power of the Christian faith and its official Venetian guardians" as they witness the spectacle of three men being burned alive.<sup>30</sup> Like the social isolation in which Jews lived under normal circumstances, the suffering of these persecuted Jews is not taken as a crime against humanity, but rather as a symbol of their sinful nature.<sup>31</sup> Cast outside the pale of humanity as a result of the church's doctrine concerning their historical role as persecutors of Christ, their grisly execution is simply a confirmation of the spiritually reprobate condition of Judaism. In addition, as Andrea Dolphin's comment suggests, this execution also works as a form of purificatory or redemptive violence for the Christian

community in Venice.<sup>32</sup> It takes state involvement, however, to seal the rectitude of the Jews' exile from the community of moral sentiment. Without the orderly trials conducted in Portobuffole and Venice, the supposedly diabolical character of the Jews might seem nothing more than a product of mass hysteria. Furthermore, during the years of the inquisition, the church itself was not permitted to shed blood, and therefore depended on the cooperation of secular authorities for the dispensation of justice. Dehumanization cannot, in other words, achieve full effect without the authorization and routinization of the violent acts it encourages.<sup>33</sup> As critics such as Zygmunt Bauman and Paul Gilroy have reminded us, modernity and the civilizing process that attends it have not eradicated anti-social drives but have, rather, concentrated violence in the hands of the state. Should there be any doubts about the institutional character of anti-Jewish violence in early modern Europe, it should be underscored that the events depicted as an isolated instance in the Venetian republic in this section of *The Nature of Blood* contain the constituent elements for the social production of moral invisibility that was deployed against Jews throughout Western Europe during this period. Such policies were put to particularly devastating use in Spain, which, of course, would lead the other emerging European nation-states in a project of expanding such forms of systematic violence to a global scale after 1492.<sup>34</sup> And it was on such colonial terrain that, according to Arendt, the future cadres of the Nazi elite developed techniques that made possible the final solution to the Jewish "problem" in Europe.<sup>35</sup>

### Bearing Witness

Eva Stern's story begins on the day she is to die. Like the story of the Jews of Portobuffole, the imitation testimonial that makes up this strand of *The Nature of Blood*

disorients the reader in a number of ways. After Allied troops arrive and prevent Eva's scheduled extermination from taking place, she gradually begins to relive the events that brought her to the lager. This retelling ruptures chronological order, consisting as it does of four major sections: Eva's life in Eastern Europe after liberation; her time in a ghetto; her transit to and arrival at a concentration camp; and her trip to England after liberation. Within each of these sections, description of current events and memories of the past are jumbled together. This narrative has to be constantly taken apart and pieced back together in order to restore sense and progression to Eva's fragmented memories. Moreover, the narrative's initiation at the moment of Eva's liberation forces the reader to reconstruct the events that preceded from the fragments of the past that Eva offers up. Like Eva, the reader must grapple to make sense of a sequence of events so horrific that they rupture the bounds of reason. Eva's narration often additionally thwarts attempts to make sense of such events by mixing together hallucinations and highly realistic narrative. For instance, despite having described her mother's death early in the first section of this narrative, Eva later suffers a prolonged and recurring hallucination in which she decides that her mother has returned after the camp has been liberated.<sup>36</sup> Moments like these, as well as the achronicity in which they are narrated, emphasize the ultimately devastating impact of the cumulative acts of violence and psychological brutality experienced by Eva. Her personality has been shattered permanently. Memories of trauma such as those of the lager retain their power to disrupt memory and identity long after they have been experienced.<sup>37</sup>

Significantly, Eva's response to her mother's phantasized return is to lock herself away with her imagined mother, an act which isolates her not simply from the occupying Allied forces but also from the other women who have survived the lager. The psychoanalytic term melancholia might seem to be of use here: Eva is possessed by memories of her mother and by

those of her absent sister Margot, who was placed by her family in hiding with a Christian family in Germany before they were evacuated to a ghetto in Eastern Europe.<sup>38</sup> In the first section of her narrative, these memories divorce her almost totally from the rest of humanity. In the final section, in which Eva has been hospitalized following a suicide attempt, Phillips includes an italicized narrative by a doctor who describes his surprise at the depth of her trauma and notes his subsequent awareness of the common desire among survivors to have died with their families in the lagers. Phillips's novel thus demonstrates emerging awareness not simply of the events that took place in sites such as Auschwitz, but also of the forms of trauma that afflicted those who survived. However, employing a psychoanalytic category such as melancholia in relation to Holocaust experiences elides the fact that immuring oneself in the past was one of the only rational reactions to the systematic brutality of the lagers. As Primo Levi explains, memories of the past could play a vital role in briefly reconnecting one to a former self, to a sense of humanity in the midst of the depravity and suffering of concentration camp life.<sup>39</sup> Phillips's Eva, for instance, clearly states that she has remained alive simply because of her desire to be reunited with her sister Margot.

Moreover, the isolation that is a characteristic of melancholia was actively produced by the concentration camps: the individual was torn from all human solidarity by the brutal systems of hierarchy and competition that determined who survived in the camps. The lagers robbed people of their essential human ability to connect and sympathize with others, producing a universe of isolated monads that mirrored and advanced the Nazi's own denial of moral visibility to their victims. The inhuman conditions of the concentration camp seemed, in other words, to justify the Nazi's claim that Jews were, at bottom, sub-human. Phillips's novel underlines the extent to which the isolating experience of the lager has a psychological impact only after the

arduous routine of life there has ended. Freedom brings not relief, but rather knowledge of the diminishment of one's humanity. In the first section of Eva's narrative, her isolation is underlined primarily through her reaction to the amorous overtures made by a British soldier named Gerry. Although Gerry's subjectivity is not deeply limned in the novel, it is clear that this is simply an immature dalliance for him: he is afraid to show Eva to his friends, proposes to her and then looks horrified by what he's done, and, by the end of the novel, has abandoned her to marry an Englishwoman. For Eva, however, these relations with Gerry underline the extent to which her identity has been destroyed by Nazi persecution. Although she begins to open up to him slowly and haltingly, each movement in this direction is accompanied by near crippling fear and insecurity. Early in this section, for instance, she stands under an open air shower with the British troops looking on, feeling that she no longer has the body of a woman and knowing that the soldiers do not regard her as one.<sup>40</sup> Gerry's attempts at intimacy unnerve her, leaving her searching for a motive and terrified that even a modicum of happiness will destroy her.<sup>41</sup>

The full implications of Eva's inability to open herself to any form of intimacy are only apparent in later sections of her narrative, which relate chronologically prior events. Here we see Eva's adolescent awakening to sexuality during the period before Nazi persecution destroys normal life for the Jews in Germany, her interest in her older sister Margot's boyfriend, and her fascination with the illicit marriage of Rosa, a young woman who shares the Stern family's house in the ghetto, to a man who is not Jewish. Like Anne Frank's, this poignant blossoming takes place under increasingly adverse circumstances. The survival of these emotions in such conditions emphasizes the brutality through which Eva's delicately maturing sense of self is crushed. Eva's ability to trust others as well as her identity as a woman is pulverized by the systematic dehumanization administered in the lager. The full extent of her emotional destitution

becomes apparent the night before Eva is to leave the camp for a journey to England that she hopes will reunite her with Gerry, who has been demobilized. After a fellow survivor gives her some lipstick as a parting present, Eva looks at herself in the mirror and articulates her alienation from herself and the world: “How can this stranger be me? I look like them, ugly and ravaged. I begin to laugh at this mask. I smear the lipstick around my mouth. A jagged slash, red like blood.”<sup>42</sup> Eva’s inability to recognize her own face in the mirror suggests the gulf opened up by the concentration camp between her image of herself and the ravaged, nearly genderless body of the survivor that she sees. This disjunction in Eva’s subjectivity, this sense of herself as a stranger or an imposter, exists in tandem with alienation from others who have undergone similar experiences. She therefore sees other survivors as totally alien, a group of fear-inspiring beings with whom she feels no connection. Eva’s final declaration that she is not like “them” underlines her sense of the impossibility of returning to normal life: lipstick, one of the central signifiers of feminine identity, is useless to someone whose sense of gendered identity has been so radically undone. Instead of becoming an emblem of desirability, the jagged slash of lipstick applied by Eva acts as a sign of internal hemorrhage. It also foreshadows Eva’s attempted suicide in Britain, her final and absolute negation of the self.

Gerry’s abandonment is, however, the ultimate act in a long line of such betrayals. Before Eva and her fellow deportees arrive in the camps, they have already been deserted by family members, neighbors, colleagues, teachers, employers, religious leaders, government officials, and many others. By creating a testimonial that follows Eva through the entire itinerary that leads up to and out of the lager, Caryl Phillips depicts each stage in the dissolution of the social fabric that allowed genocide to take place in Europe.<sup>43</sup> Since this section of the novel is so tightly focused on Eva’s subjectivity, however, it spends relatively little time focusing on the

willing complicity of the majority of the population with Nazi vilification of the Jews. This complicity is, however, clearly delineated in the middle sections of Eva's narrative, during which Eva and her family go from social scapegoats in Germany to starving refugees in a ghetto in the East. While these sections may depict the cooperation of the civilian population with Nazi propaganda against the Jews in no uncertain terms, the bulk of Eva's narrative focuses on the tragic acquiescence of the Jews themselves to Nazi policy. In his work on the rationalized and routinized character of the Holocaust, Zygmunt Bauman has underlined the extent to which the genocidal policies of the Nazis were made possible not simply through a prophylactic politics that sealed off the Jews from the rest of the European population, but also through soliciting the cooperation of the Jews themselves in such designs.<sup>44</sup> While many Jewish leaders and individuals did commit suicide or rebel against Nazi commanders, many of them also collaborated. By giving Jews a degree of autonomy and self-management through the *Judenrate*, the Nazis ensured that Jewish community leaders would be complicit in their policies. Individual victories against the machinery of extermination, stays of execution and the winning of exemptions for instance, were won at the cost of broader acquiescence to the goal of genocide. Moreover, under the extreme circumstances of the Holocaust, differences within Jewish communities militated against solidarity. In the ghettos, the distance between social classes was the distance between life and death. By pitting Jews against one another, by making them face the impossible decision of who was fittest to survive, the Nazis ensured that no one could emerge from the Holocaust without having had to indulge in the very forms of horrendous moral callousness that animated the Final Solution itself. Victims of this system were not ennobled but degraded by their suffering. This is why Primo Levi argues that only the worst survived.<sup>45</sup>

*The Nature of Blood* contains no parallel to Levi's chilling portrait of Chaim Rodowski, the authoritarian leader of the Lodz ghetto who claimed that his emulation of Hitler would save his people. However, the novel does focus on the everyday acts of acquiescence that pave Eva's road to the lager. Eva's father, for instance, is too proud of his accomplishments in Germany and too angry at his wife's class condescension towards him to evacuate his family from the country while there is still time to do so. He vehemently attacks his brother Stephan, who has fled the country and joined guerilla forces fighting in Palestine for the establishment of a Zionist homeland, despite the escalating forms of humiliation and dispossession to which Jews are submitted. Eva's mother similarly retreats from the increasingly dangerous realities that surround the family, cloaking herself in snug bourgeois convention by lecturing Eva about courtship rituals after her daughter has been beaten on her way home from school. In the ghetto, Eva's parents use their wealth to get black market provisions that might have otherwise gone to those less fortunate. They order Eva not to look out the window, where she can see people begging and dying of starvation. The ultimate example of complicity, however, comes from Eva herself. In the midst of her highly fragmented account of the lager, Eva reveals that she has been a member of the *Sonder-kommando*, the group of prisoners assigned to exterminate other prisoners:

Today, they continue to burn bodies. (I burn bodies.) Burning Bodies. First, she lights the fire. Pour gasoline, make a torch, and then ignite the pyre. Wait for the explosion as the fire catches, and then wait for the smoke. Clothed bodies burn slowly. Decayed bodies burn slowly. In her mind she cries, fresh and naked, please. Women and children burn faster than men. Fresh naked children burn the fastest.<sup>46</sup>

As Primo Levi argues, the *Sonder-kommandos* were the limit case of collaboration.<sup>47</sup> Almost exclusively Jewish, they were picked from among the disoriented recent arrivals in the camps and systematically destroyed by the SS after several months of work so that they would not be able to bear witness to genocide. During the time that they were engaged in their work, they were fed special provisions and enjoyed relatively cordial relations with the camp functionaries. While the *Sonder-kommandos* cannot, according to Levi, be condemned for their forced collaboration, they do demonstrate the Nazi's diabolical use of power to corrupt. The lesson they embodied: the Nazis could destroy the souls as well as the bodies of those they victimized. Eva's narrative, and, by implication, her subjectivity, splits apart under the burden of describing the acts she was forced to commit during this period. First and third person collide, past and present come unhinged, and in the midst of it all comes the obscene demand for the corpses of fresh naked children to make the work of cremation easier. The extreme dehumanization to which Eva has not only been subjected by this point in the text but which she has herself come to enact on others is appalling. As anguishing as it may be to read this section of the novel, the testimonial format does force the reader to confront the ultimate implications of what Bauman calls the social production of moral invisibility. A society in which such moral invisibility is fostered is one with no neat, absolute distinctions between victims and perpetrators, good and evil. Instead, the fragmentation of memory and identity found in Eva's narrative are the product of a soul-eating schema of power that corrupts even its victims. No matter how unspeakably horrifying the degradation effected by this system may be, it is absolutely necessary that the processes and implications of the system be articulated if future atrocities are to be forestalled.

"Rude Am I In Speech:" Othello and the Fate of Black Europeans

In Elizabethan England, Africans were stock figures of devilish evil and sexual excess. To a certain extent, such associations were the product of Biblically-derived conceptions of blacks as descendants of Ham, the color of whose skin represented their believed proclivity for lust and wickedness.<sup>48</sup> Shakespeare's earlier play *Titus Andronicus* drew on such stereotypes for its representation of Aaron, a one-dimensional embodiment of malignancy in line with the typical black hero-villain of Elizabethan tragedy. Yet blacks were not simply a literary presence in Shakespeare's day. Hakluyt's writings attest to the beginnings of English participation in the slave trade during the sixteenth century. By Shakespeare's time, people of African descent had become an expected if minuscule presence in the metropolis. They were nevertheless perceived as a threat by the state. Queen Elizabeth, for instance, carried on a correspondence with her Privy Council in which she sought to deport 89 "blackamoors," whom, she claimed, threatened to overpopulate the land with their supposedly rampant sexuality and hence create unemployment among the natives of England.<sup>49</sup> Blacks were seen by the authorities, in other words, as an anti-social presence, a population that had to be carefully controlled or else eliminated. Their position, if not their population numbers, was structurally equivalent with that of the Jews. Just as religiously-derived stereotypes were adapted in order to blame Jews for the social turbulence that accompanied the birth pains of merchant capitalism in Venice, so the insignificant black population in England was scapegoated for the ills that attended a rapidly changing social order during the age of Shakespeare. Shakespeare's play records anti-black attitudes at a crucial formative moment near the beginning of England's global expansion and commodification of black lives in the slave trade.<sup>50</sup> Such racism echoes across the centuries to our own time: the sexually-charged stereotypes present in Elizabeth's letter to the Privy Council

are unnervingly similar to neo-racist European arguments attacking immigrants after the economic downturn of the late 1960s.<sup>51</sup>

Shakespeare's *Othello* is not, of course, simply facile racist propaganda. Rather, the play creates a protagonist worthy of a tragic fall, casting aside the stock figure of evil found in *Titus Andronicus* to portray Othello's struggle to achieve balance and identity as an outsider in a harshly xenophobic Venetian society.<sup>52</sup> However, by the play's conclusion, Othello embraces the mores of the Venetian patriarchy whose wrath he has provoked by marrying Desdemona. As in virtually all of Shakespeare's other plays, a challenge to the intertwined powers of family, custom, and civic order is suppressed and punished. Othello's acceptance of the patriarchal assessment of women as sinful deceivers is accompanied at every point by his internalization of negative stereotypes concerning his own identity. This should not be so surprising, for both he and Desdemona are represented as threats in their own particular ways. Representations of women at the time of Shakespeare's play focus on the putatively disruptive power of active female sexuality, which was perceived as a direct challenge to patriarchal control of bloodlines. It was thought that women's sexuality, which, like that of black men, was represented as at best fickle and at worst monstrous, had to be carefully governed.<sup>53</sup> Desdemona's self-assertion, her attraction to someone outside the bounds of social probity, her avowal of her sexual desire, and her repudiation of her father's authority, place her in defiance of Elizabethan notions of social order in the broadest possible sense. She actively chooses the exile which Othello's skin color imposes upon him. Yet his marriage to Desdemona was supposed to cap Othello's conquest of Venetian society. Instead, the lovers both become outsiders. The more Othello struggles to gain acceptance within the parameters of the dominant ideologies of race and gender at the time, the more he is led to see Desdemona, in the terms of such ideologies, as a deceiver rather than an

ally. Intertwining ideologies of racial and sexual subordination, Shakespeare's *Othello* thus sets up a tragic collision in which the protagonist's assimilation of Venetian values seals his own perdition and that of his love.

*The Nature of Blood* places the reader inside Othello's skin. As was true of Eva's narrative, this section of the novel adopts a first-person narrator, who, however, never actually names himself as Othello. Instead of figuring Othello as a threat to Venetian society, Phillips's novel anatomizes his painful attempts to understand and assimilate the peculiar social norms of the republic. We experience his awe as he arrives in the glittering, water-borne city of Venice. Othello feels that he has moved from the margins of the world to stand, as general of the army rather than slave, at "the very centre of the empire." This should be a moment of triumph. Yet immediately before this description of his arrival in Venice, Phillips gives us an account of Othello's vulnerability, and of his fears concerning the compromised position into which her marriage to him has placed Desdemona: "No longer to be gazed upon as desirable, yet unattainable. All will now imagine her as easy prey for their lascivious thoughts. Truly, what am I to make of her?"<sup>54</sup>

Rewriting the initial acts of Shakespeare's tragedy, Phillips underlines the isolation and vulnerability of migrants to the metropolis. No matter how crucial a figure like Othello becomes to the state, he is nonetheless constantly made aware of his own marginalization within European society. The insecurities expressed in the preceding passage are, then, not a result of an abased racial identity, but are rather a product of the forms of subordination to which Othello is consciously and unconsciously submitted.

Although he undergoes a host of small indignities during his early days in Venice, the liminality of his position is made clearest by events which lead to the alienation of his attendant.

In the midst of the first major section of his narrative, Othello recounts the common practice among Venetian aristocrats of employing courtesans in order to slake their sexual appetites while keeping bloodlines pure. His own attempts to follow this practice provoke an outraged animosity in his attendant, who, Othello learns, is appalled at the idea of miscegenation even in this attenuated form. Othello has unwittingly unleashed the gendered racism that lies at the bottom of phobic projections of black sexuality. His encounter with the courtesan, which of course anticipates his union with Desdemona, provokes an anger in his attendant that is based on the white male fear of losing control of white women's sexuality. Although he is honored for his military prowess, he is never allowed to forget that he is seen as capable of the most dangerous adulteration of bloodlines. Tolerated like Venice's Jews because of his essential service to the state, he is like them also constantly reminded of his marginal position as well as of the potential social and physical death that this position entails.

Phillips's Othello is aware of the tenuous nature of his place in Venetian society. His isolation while he awaits marching orders from the Senate leads him into long bouts of despondency, during which he meditates on his vulnerability. Goaded by these thoughts, Othello decides to mix his own native attire with that of a Venetian nobleman, speculating that such a blending of apparel might suggest the desirability of mixing the finest customs of his country with that of Venice. His hope that this display of sartorial hybridity will be received positively is dashed during a visit to a prominent senator's house. Here he realizes that he has been invited to be put on display, a "prize acquisition" and oriental spectacle which the senator wishes to exhibit for his family.<sup>55</sup> He comes to see that he is a glorified lap dog, a demonstration of the empire's ability to make servants out of those it has conquered. The senator cannot of course imagine that his young daughter, whom he treats like an object as well, might be so entranced by Othello's

exotic appeal as to break the iron bands of race, class, and generational difference to love him. Othello is, in turn, enthralled by her. Yet shortly after this first encounter between Desdemona and Othello, the latter has an experience which again underlines his predicament: he visits the Jewish ghetto. The Jews live at the heart of the empire but are housed in squalid conditions despite their wealth, constrained to pay Christian guards to lock them into an isolation that makes them particularly vulnerable to popular outbursts. Othello is depressed by this spectacle, but makes no connection to his own fate. Significantly, it is a member of the Jewish community who acts as an intermediary between Othello and Desdemona, reading the latter's letters and helping Othello pen responses. Othello, in other words, learns little from his own experiences of subordination in Venice as well as from those experienced by other socially-marginal groups such as the Jews. Despite his incredulity at the alacrity with which he has moved from total alienation to marrying "the heart of the society," Othello speeds the affair forward. As he is about to carry out his secret marriage to Desdemona, he contemplates "the stain of my smoky hand on her marble skin, a mark that might be washed clean in the milky basin of family love."<sup>56</sup> This hope for an assimilation so complete that it will annihilate the very mark of his racial subordination - his black skin - is a testament to Othello's folly. It is, however, also a damning indictment of the insular racism and misogyny that cast out both Othello and Desdemona for the sin of loving one another despite as well as because of their differences.

Othello is damned by Desdemona's father for his rash action. Despite Othello and Desdemona's flouting of patriarchal order, which is of course equated with civic order more broadly, the Doge supports them. Othello is deluded by his temporary utility to the state into thinking that his abrogation of custom has been given permanent sanction. However, Phillips cuts short his narrative before the implications of Othello's naïvete catch up with him, before

Iago begins to work on the insecurities born of his identity as an alien in Venetian society. The last glimpse we are given of Othello in the novel offers us a vision of amorous tranquility, in which the victorious general watches over his sleeping wife and looks forward to their return to Venice. The novel thus refuses the play's racialized closure. Running parallel and often interrupting this narrative, however, the stories of Servadio and Eva suggest the terrible weight of European racism against which Othello and Desdemona have to contend. History is against them in no uncertain terms. Othello's hopes of integration following the defeat of the Turks are, in other words, more than a little foolhardy. In addition to these bleakly intertwined narratives, however, Phillips also creates a canny narrator, who ruptures what remains of historical continuity with interjections that seek to awaken Othello from his ideological slumber. This narrator upbraids Othello for seeking to forget his past, which includes not simply his cultural identity but also a wife and child. The unidentified narrator also attacks Othello as complicit with European racism:

My friend, an African river bears no resemblance to a Venetian canal. Only the strongest spirit can hold both together. Only the most powerful heart can endure the pulse of two such disparate life-forces. After a protracted struggle, most men will relinquish one in favor of another. But you run like Jim Crow and leap into their creamy arms. Did you truly ever think of your wife's soft kiss? Or your son's eyes? Brother, you are weak. A figment of a Venetian imagination. While you still have time, jump from her bed and fly away home.<sup>57</sup>

This narrator's interventions constitute an important counter-point to Othello's lack of awareness of his history and of the forces arrayed against him and Desdemona. His reproach sets off the folly as well as the cowardice of Othello's position. Given our knowledge of subsequent events

from Shakespeare's play, we cannot help thinking that the narrator is correct to rail against Othello's naïvete. However, as I've underlined, Phillips's novel rewrites the dramatic original, thereby underlining the racist premises of the source text. The passage quoted above is the last reference to the narrative of Othello in the novel. By refusing closure to this narrative, *The Nature of Blood* does not resolve the clash between the narrator's disillusioned perspective and the still hopeful one of Othello. The union of Othello and Desdemona, whose violation of the central racial and sexual taboos of the society in which they live is an act of great heroism, is not destroyed. Consequently, despite the narrator's foreboding warnings, this strand of the novel does not finally terminate hope that the forces of historical racism can be overcome.

### Conclusion: Mobile Citizenship

*The European Tribe* begins with an autobiographical account that clarifies the stakes of the rest of the book. A schoolmaster, demonstrating his impressive knowledge to his underlings, explains the national origin of each child in his class based on their surnames. When he arrives at the young Caryl Phillips, he provokes gales of laughter from the boy's classmates by telling him that his last name suggests that he is from Wales. The national identity which his teacher seeks to confer on Phillips excruciatingly elides the colonial experiences through which the author's history was passed. As Paul Gilroy has argued, exclusionary definitions of national identity have made the condition of being both Black and British into a contradiction.<sup>58</sup> Growing up in Britain during the 1960s and early '70s, Phillips was exposed to few texts that dealt with the problems raised by such exclusionary definitions. It was in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Phillips writes, that he first found public acknowledgement of racial inequality and violence in Europe.<sup>59</sup> Identifying strongly with the ordeal undergone by Anne and her family, Phillips wrote

his first piece of fiction, based on a theme of Jewish persecution. In addition to providing a rare document of European racial violence, Anne Frank's diary also underlined to Phillips the precariousness of his own identity as a Black Briton. Indeed, writing years later in *The European Tribe*, Phillips describes the chilling anti-semitic rhetoric of the Nazis that is preserved in the Frank museum in Amsterdam. This rhetoric is all too reminiscent, according to Phillips, of the racist attacks that circulate in right wing culture in contemporary Britain. With the end of the long period of post-war economic growth in Britain during the 1970s, neo-fascist parties like the National Front gained a significant popular following by arguing that "immigrants" were responsible for the country's economic downturn. This re-evocation of Nazi rhetoric helped spawn right wing parties across Europe, from Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National to Jorge Haider's Freedom Party, which currently governs Austria. Phillips must have had these developments in his mind as he drafted the intertwined narratives of *The Nature of Blood*.

Today, after centuries of internal strife and after a particularly bloody conflict in the middle of the last century, Europe is finally being united on a secular basis. As the continent consolidates itself, there are signs that it once again is searching for scapegoats on whom to blame its internal problems and through whom to effect forms of intra-European identification and unity. In addition to the electoral successes of the right wing parties mentioned above, the European Union has shown particularly alarming tendencies towards exclusionary definitions of identity round its borders. As internal barriers to free movement have come down, various supra-national, non-democratic organizations have been constituted over the last ten years that are charged with administering community-wide law and order issues. In cases such as the Schengen Accords, for example, such regional coordination has involved attempts to control immigration into the European Union.<sup>60</sup> As the borders within the Union have dropped, an ever-

higher security cordon has been erected round the entire community. While this cordon may not be immediately directed at the ethnic minority populations of Europe, it does place them under suspicion as potential illegal immigrants. Europe is thus achieving unity through the creation of both formally and informally homogeneous constructions of belonging. The fatal contradictions of the nation-state, which promised a form of universal equality that was nevertheless tightly circumscribed by exclusionary geographic and ethnic boundaries, is simply being reproduced on a regional scale.<sup>61</sup> Such constructions of pan-European identity are animated not simply by homogenizing definitions of ethnicity, but also by material considerations. As long as Europe's "guest workers" are denied formal rights of citizenship, they can always be repatriated should a large surplus labor force no longer be necessary. While they remain in the country, they are often denied access to the relatively generous social safety net that is one of the signal achievements of social democracy. Both these material forms of disenfranchisement as well as the ideological definitions of belonging that help perpetuate them will have to be transformed if genuine social integration is to take place.<sup>62</sup> Europe's ethnic minorities will remain marginal, in other words, unless and until they secure the guarantees that political, social, and economic participation in a democratic community help consolidate.

*The Nature of Blood* remorselessly depicts the historical and psychic toll inflicted by such forms of marginalization. Through recording and bearing testimony to the forms of historical oppression meted out to those whom Europe has categorized as Other, Phillips's novel offers a powerful warning concerning the implications of exclusionary definitions of identity in Europe today. The consolidation of regional identity in the European Union raises important issues for postcolonial theory. While the burden of a significant segment of postcolonial theory has been to underline the transnational character of cultural forms today, relatively little attention has been

devoted to developing juridical guarantees to protect such transnational identities. Indeed, theorists today seem caught in an unproductive cul-de-sac. On the one hand, anti-colonial nationalists argue that, while a globe-hopping elite may be able to dispense with the nation-state as a locus of right and identity, the majority of the world's impoverished peoples can ill afford such feckless cosmopolitanism.<sup>63</sup> Critics of nationalism point out, by contrast, that the nation-state simply does not afford the protections it once used to, and that it has proven historically oppressive to significant segments of its population both in a First and a Third world context.<sup>64</sup> Admittedly, the majority of mass migrations continue to be produced by state terror of one kind or another. We are, however, living through a threshold moment, one in which new regional and local state forms are challenging the primacy of the nation-state as the arbiter of identity and rights.<sup>65</sup> If contemporary European racism is, as Balibar and others have argued, largely a product of the colonization in reverse that brought ethnic minorities to the metropolis over the last half century, adequate responses to such racism will have to deal with the question of statelessness. Unless new forms of citizenship are developed that are responsive to these shifts, the danger looms that more and more groups will fall through the cracks of shifting political formations and become stateless peoples. If truly open communities are to be created in our globalized world, belonging can no longer depend on incidental factors such as geography or ethnicity. Postcolonial theory needs, consequently, not simply to account for mobility but also to focus on and help develop definitions of citizenship which entitle mobile populations. This is, obviously, a tall order given the spiralling forms of economic and social polarization that have characterized the planet over the last thirty years. However, novels such as Caryl Phillips's *The Nature of Blood* warn us of the stark consequences should we fail to address adequately the issue of global statelessness.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Caryl Phillips, *The European Tribe*, Winchester, MA: Faber & Faber, 1987, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Rachel Swarns, "Race Talks Finally Reach Accord On Slavery and Palestinian Plight," *The New York Times*, 9 Sept 2001, A1, 16.

<sup>3</sup> R Cohen, "Papers, Please: Europe's Love-Hate Affair with Foreigners," *The New York Times*, 24 Dec 2000, D 1, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Referred to in R. S. Rajan, "Righting Wrongs, Rewriting History," *Interventions*, 2.2: 160.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Étienne Balibar, "'Es Gibt Keinen Staat in Europa:' Racism and Politics in Europe Today," *New Left Review*, 186 (1991), pp. 5-19.

<sup>8</sup> Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class*, New York: Verso, 1994, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2000, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> The phrase "social production of moral invisibility" is taken from a chapter heading in Zygmunt Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> For example, Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, New York: Routledge, 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York: Meridian Press, 1951, pp. 291-302.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997, p. 126.

<sup>14</sup> R Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes*, p. xi.

<sup>15</sup> The conflict over the Catholic church's role in modern anti-Semitism has, for example, grown more heated with the recent publication of David Kertzer's *The Popes Against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism*, New York: Knopf, 2001, a damning response to the 1998 Vatican commission which cleared the church of all responsibility for the spread of European anti-Semitism.

<sup>16</sup> Caryl Phillips, *The Nature of Blood*, New York: Knopf, 1997, pp. 48-59, 93-105, 149-155.

<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of the dangers inherent in notions of an indelible antagonism towards Jews in Europe, see Z Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 2-4.

<sup>18</sup> See R Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes*, pp. 4-7 for a discussion of the period of dislocation in western Europe during the dynamic twelfth century which contributed to anti-Jewish upheavals.

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the equivocal meaning of emancipation following the Enlightenment for Jews, see H Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>20</sup> Chazan's notion of the dialectical interplay between a prior legacy of negative stereotypes and the realities of a new social context in which anti-semitic perceptions circulate may be most useful in light of such continuities. See *Medieval Stereotypes*, p. 135.

<sup>21</sup> R Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>22</sup> C Phillips, *The Nature of Blood*, p. 51-52.

<sup>23</sup> C Phillips, *The Nature of Blood*, p. 94.

<sup>24</sup> The Catholic church only formally repudiated its charge that the Jews *as a people* are responsible for the death of Christ during the Second Vatican Council in 1965.

<sup>25</sup> For a more straightforwardly historical account of these events, see Benjamin Ravid, “Between the Myth of Venice and the Lachrymose Conception of Jewish History” in B Cooperman and B Garvin, eds. *The Jews of Italy: Memory and Identity*, Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2000, pp. 152-175.

<sup>26</sup> J Le Goff thus writes of medieval usury and the labor pains of capitalism. See reference in Chazan, p. 37.

<sup>27</sup>. See Chazan, p. 39, for a discussion of specific cases in twelfth century England.

<sup>28</sup>H Arendt, p. 39.

<sup>29</sup>. Ibid, p. 96.

<sup>30</sup>. Ibid, p. 155.

<sup>31</sup>L Glick, *Abraham's Heirs: Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999, p. xi.

<sup>32</sup>D LaCapra argues that these elements of ritual purification remain active in the secular anti-semitism that led to the Holocaust in his *History and Memory After Auschwitz*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998, p. 191.

<sup>33</sup>. This point is made by Z Bauman in his discussion of the social production of moral indifference. See his *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 21.

<sup>34</sup>. For an analysis of the role of religious difference in early colonialism, see W Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000, pp. 27-32.

<sup>35</sup>H Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 206.

<sup>36</sup>C Phillips, *The Nature of Blood*, p. 35.

<sup>37</sup>S Felman and D Laub, *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 57.

<sup>38</sup>D LaCapra uses this term while discussing efforts to heal trauma victims in *History and Memory After Auschwitz*, pp. 183-184.

<sup>39</sup>P Levi, *I sommersi e I salvati*, p. 112.

<sup>40</sup>C Phillips, *The Nature of Blood*, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup>. Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>42</sup>. Ibid, p. 47-48.

<sup>43</sup>N Mandel discusses the problems that result from an exclusive focus on Auschwitz and similar sites of extermination in "Rethinking 'After Auschwitz,'" *boundary 2* 28.2 (2001), p. 218.

<sup>44</sup>Z Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 122.

<sup>45</sup>P Levi, *I sommersi e i salvati*, p. 62.

<sup>46</sup>C Phillips, *The Nature of Blood*, p. 170.

<sup>47</sup>P Levi, *I sommersi e I salvati*, p. 36.

<sup>48</sup>A Loomba, "Sexuality and Racial Difference," in A G Barthelemy, ed., *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Othello*, New York: G.K. Hall and Co., 1994, p. 166.

<sup>49</sup>. Ibid, p. 167.

<sup>50</sup>It has recently been argued that Othello is defined more in terms of religious than racial difference. Although I think that this perspective elides the many references to his blackness, I do not see why racial and religious otherness could not be compounded in the play. See J R Lupton, "Othello Circumcised: Shakespeare and the Pauline Discourse of Nations," *Representations* 57 (Winter 1997), pp. 73-89.

<sup>51</sup>. This is no coincidence. See C Robinson, cited in Loomba, p. 167, on the reworking of past prejudices in later relations of dominance.

<sup>52</sup>. See K Newman, "And Wash the Ethiop White: Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello*," in A G Barthelemy, *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Othello*, pp. 125-139, for a discussion of the play's contestatory relation to hegemonic ideologies of race and gender in early modern England.

<sup>53</sup>A Loomba, "Sexuality and Racial Difference," in A G Barthelemy, ed., *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Othello*, p. 168.

<sup>54</sup>C Phillips, *The Nature of Blood*, p. 106.

<sup>55</sup>C Phillips, *The Nature of Blood*, p. 127.

<sup>56</sup>. Ibid, p. 146.

<sup>57</sup>C Phillips, *The Nature of Blood*, p. 182.

<sup>58</sup>. P Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup>. C Phillips, *The Nature of Blood*, p. 67.

<sup>60</sup>. T Bunyan discusses new authoritarian organs like the Schengen group in "Towards an Authoritarian European State," *Race and Class*, 32.3 (1991), pp. 19-26.

<sup>61</sup>. M Silverman makes this point forcefully when he argues that the contractual "open" nation of the Enlightenment was always also a "closed" ethnic nation; the universal framework of human rights was constructed within a particularistic framework. See his *Deconstructing the Nation: Immigration, Racism, and Citizenship in Modern France*, New York: Routledge, 1995.

<sup>62</sup>. For a more developed discussion of these issues, see T Modood and P Werbner, eds. *The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe: Racism, Identity, and Community*, New York: Zed Press, 1997.

<sup>63</sup>. For a representative example, see N Lazarus's *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

<sup>64</sup>. See, for example, P Chatterjee, *The Fragments of the Nation*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

<sup>65</sup>. M Hardt and A Negri describe the United Nations as the "hinge" between an international order and the new, global order we are seeing unfold today. See their *Empire*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000, pp. 4-8.