

## ETHNIC CLEANSING: THE ERINYES ARE STILL ANGRY

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**H**olding both hands high in the air, Dieterich L.'s first words to his analyst were, "These are my hands, they are the hands of my father. My father has blood on his hands."<sup>1</sup>

His father was a Nazi soldier who had fought at the front, been a judge for court martial cases, and served time as a prisoner of war. Dieterich, the son born only a few days before the outbreak of the war, was eight years old when he saw his father for the first time.

Now, at the age of forty, Dieterich has lost his sense of time. For him it is still 1945, and he believes himself to be a Führer of southern Germany, ordering the relocation of army divisions, devising escape plans, plotting victories. Unlike Orestes, who argued in Athene's court in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* that "the stain of blood dulls now and fades upon my hand" (l. 280),<sup>2</sup> this man has experienced no passage of time. The blood is still on his hands. For this man it is the Erinyes who hold sway, the Erinyes who "remember all past evils" and who "scatter wits, frenzy and fear, hurting the heart... binding brain and blighting blood..." (ll. 329-333). Apollo claims in the *Oresteia* that "Time in his aging, overtakes all things alike" (l.246), but for Dieterich L. this is not so. Time is standing still. It

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is in such experiences that the Erinyes (those ancient spirits who embody a people's blood) are speaking to us today.

The Erinyes are not expressing themselves, however, in the experience of Franz Grassler, Nazi minister to the Warsaw Ghetto, who said in 1983, "We tend to forget, thank God..."<sup>3</sup> The issue of "the memory of all past evil" was brought to a head in 1985 by Chancellor Kohl's invitation to President Reagan to visit the cemetery at Bitburg where Waffen SS soldiers are buried. This visit was an offense to many Jews: "That place, Mr. President, is not your place," writer Elie Wiesel said to Reagan, "your place is with the victims of the SS."<sup>4</sup> The President's reply that the SS soldiers buried at Bitburg were also "victims just as surely as the victims in the concentration camps"<sup>5</sup> outraged many Jews as an attempt to rewrite history for the sake of the political reconciliation between the U.S. and West Germany.

At the same time that the mayor of Bitburg was saying, "The population of Bitburg is becoming impatient, they want to see these macabre discussions finally come to an end...let the dead finally rest in peace,"<sup>6</sup> Elie Wiesel was urging President Reagan *not* to honor the dead of Bitburg since it could only be the expression of historical amnesia: "I speak for memory" and "Memory is the answer, perhaps the only answer."<sup>7</sup> To enthrone memory is to enthrone the Erinyes. The honor of "Jewish blood" is at stake, and its price is the frenzy of the German soul.

A German woman, Frieda T., whose biological father had desecrated synagogues before the war and whose stepfather had been an SS officer dreamed:

I was alone in a room with a dangerous, homicidal man, whom I kept unconscious by depressing an aneurysm on the side of his temples; but my hands were bloody like Lady Macbeth's. I ran away.<sup>8</sup>

She told her analyst that she felt she "had been an accessory, along with everyone in Germany, for the murder of Jews,"<sup>9</sup> and that the man in her dream was a German who had been committed to a mental hospital after attempting to kill his family with a gas oven. The blood on her hands is *German* blood.

The Erinyes are alive in the suffering of both these Germans, but they are not enthroned as Athene in Aeschylus' play decreed they must be since this enthroning means honoring "German Blood." There is no honoring, no sacrifices—only confusion. Until they are enthroned, the Erinyes warn us, they wreak havoc, "disinherited, suffering, heavy with anger..." (l. 890).

*I. A Curse On The House Of Siegfried:  
Hitler's Image Problem*

This fellow Hitler has played a trick on us. He will be with us as long as we live.  
—A Young German<sup>10</sup>

There is much to be learned from Hitler. Like the Erinyes, he is odious, and we would rather his image not darken our mantic chambers. He said, "If I try to gauge my work, I must consider, first of all, that I've contributed, in a world that had forgotten the notion, to the triumph of the idea of the primacy of race."<sup>11</sup> And he is right insofar as we would like to forget race. Race, we say, has only to do with the past; there are no more "races."

This thinking, Aeschylus tells us, is Apollonic: it is Apollo who orders the Erinyes from his temple while Orestes clings to the *omphalos* (the center stone). Nevertheless, it is Apollo who is ushered out of the proceedings of the trial in *The Eumenides*; he simply evaporates. There is no place for the Apollonic wish for racial amnesia in the imagining of the *polis*. Hitler is to stay with us, odious as he is. It is Apollo who must leave.

Hitler said, "There is nothing more important than one's people."<sup>12</sup> Yet even in this Vaterland of military fathers and Fausts and Siegfrieds, this thing we call "the German people" is a mother, for it is within this mother that each German has imagined his beginnings and begun his imagining. Like Clytemnestra in the *Oresteia*, this mother is both murderess and murdered. And her ghost is angry.

The Treaty of Versailles and the economic chaos it caused in Germany following World War I left the German people in a state of public disgrace. This "matricide" of the German soul was addressed by Hitler, acting as a betrayed Clytemnestra awakening the Erinyes within the German soul. The function of these ancient

female deities, after all, was to drive mad anyone who had harmed his own blood relations. "We have had wrong done us. When I have undergone so much and all in vain. Suffering, suffering, bitter, oh shame shame, unendurable wrong" (ll. 143-156), says Clytemnestra. Versailles.

"Today," said Hitler, "the object is to destroy nations by vitiating their racial integrity."<sup>13</sup> Once the Erinyes are awakened, the murdered mother through her agents becomes the murderess. "I see no solution but extermination. Why should I look at a Jew through other eyes?"<sup>14</sup>

Now a curse has been cast on the House of Siegfried. It is very difficult today to *be* German, and this difficulty is evidenced by the fact that we have to ask *what it is* to be German. Chancellor Kohl speaks of the "continuing liability" Germans bear for the crimes of the Nazis and of his desire not to allow the new Germany to be crippled by the sins of the old."<sup>15</sup> But what does one do with the sins of the old? "Remember," the Erinyes say. It was the Erinyes who erected the jagged stones of the memorial at Treblinka.

Hitler said, "A people that is rid of its Jews returns spontaneously to the natural order."<sup>16</sup> The Jews, according to the Nazi fantasy, are something beyond the natural order (the Voice of the transcendental God?): "It is Jewry that always destroys this order."<sup>17</sup> By reducing them to a racial body (Hitler believed Jews could be identified by the soles of their feet, and the SS officers in Treblinka referred to the corpses of the Jews as *figuren*, blocks of wood, shit),<sup>18</sup> Nazism keeps "the Jewish Question" within the realm of *physis* (or nature) where the Erinyes are most comfortable. In 1939, Hermann Rauschning asked Hitler if getting rid of the Jews in Germany would rid the world of the problem of the Jews, and Hitler answered:

We would have to invent them; one needs a visible enemy, one in plain sight. The Jew is always within us, but it is simpler to fight him in bodily form than as an invisible evil.<sup>19</sup>

The Jew who is the poison in the tumor on the body of racial health has infected history itself, so Hitler claimed, by foisting upon history twin notions of the equality of peoples and Bolshevism (Karl Marx):



The Jew who fraudulently introduced Christianity into the ancient world—in order to ruin it—reopened the same breach in modern times, this time taking as his pretext the social question. It's the same sleight of hand as before. Just as Saul was changed into St. Paul, Mordechai became Karl Marx.<sup>20</sup>

The confusion, Hitler warned, is the blurring of the lines of racial distinction.

A race who would confuse things in this manner must be exterminated. So Hitler takes what he himself called the "simpler" tack of fighting the Jew in bodily form rather than confronting "the Jew within." Images were used profusely in Hitler's speeches, but there was no understanding of image *qua* image on Hitler's part. Whereas the Jewish God had emerged out of an imaginal form into a transcendent idea, Nazism attacked the "Voice" of that God by reducing it to *figuren* and ash. The real fear in Nazism is not of the Jew or of his transcendent God, but of image. "The Jew is always within us," so we must make of him a parasite in a tumor, something inside on the outside, an invasive stranger like his God.

The spirits of racial identity cannot be put to sleep by the modern world, its melting pot, its blanched-out English, its designer suits, any more than Jewishness could be put to sleep by the Final Solution. More than the Holocaust reminds us of this fact: there are 42 different wars being fought in the world as I write this and each has for its cause the desire of a people (or peoples) "to enter the modern era without a loss of pride or identity."<sup>21</sup> And we may add to this list innumerable acts of terrorism, hijackings, kidnappings, bombings, and assassinations, all committed for the purpose of appeasing the offended honor of a people.

The Erinyes are not frightened off by our outrage (Reagan calling the suicide martyrs of Islam "barbaric" or U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz claiming the hijackers of the *Achille Lauro* are "beyond the pale of civilization"). The Erinyes demand our poetic reflection—so that we can see that they are the image that connects us to a people's "blood."

## II. *From Angry Ones To Venerable Ones:*

"O Justice, O Ye Thrones of the Erinyes..."

At the end of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Athene strikes a bargain with the Erinyes in which she promises that in exchange for their transformation into *Semnai Theai* ("Venerable Ones"), goddesses local to Athens, the Erinyes will be enthroned in a court of honor ("a place free of grief and pain," l. 893) where their cult will worship them for all time to come *in silence* ("In the primeval dark of earth-hollows/held in high veneration, with rites sacrificial/bless them, all people, with silence" [1036-1039]).

Aeschylus is being highly original here: he is imagining a new and radical approach to an age-old problem, one still being expressed at a later date even in Plato's *Laws* (IX, 865):

If a man killed a free man even unintentionally, let him undergo certain purifications, but let him not disregard a certain tale of bygone days as follows: "He who has died by a violent death, if he has lived the life of a free man, when he is newly dead is angry with the doer of the deed, and being himself full of fear and panic on account of the violence he has suffered and seeing his murderer going about in his accustomed haunts, he feels terror, and being himself disordered communicates the same feeling with all possible force, aided by recollection, to the guilty man—both to himself and to his deeds."

The *Ker*, or ghost, of the dead returns to drive the guilty murderer from the land.

Aeschylus recognizes the view that the shed blood of the unrighteously slain not only summons these ghosts, but also causes a physical infection:

Through too much glut of blood drunk by our fostering ground  
the vengeful gore is caked and hard, will not drain through.  
The deep-run ruin carries away  
the man of guilt. Swarming infection boils within.

(II. 66-70)

The shed blood has poisoned the Earth itself, and consequently poisons the murderer who takes his food from the Earth. Verrall connects it with the Biblical sentence of Cain: "and now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength."<sup>22</sup>

Pausanias<sup>23</sup> tells the story of the murder of Eriphyle by her son Alcmaeon who fled from city to city to rid himself of the sickness caused by the murder. Finally, the priestess of Apollo, the Pythia, told him that there was only one place where the Erinyes of his dead mother could not poison him; that place, she said, was a "new land" which had pushed up from under the sea *after* the murder had taken place. Only this land was unpolluted by the blood of Eriphyle and only on this land could he live. Likewise, Bellerophon, who had killed his own brother, failed to remove the blood-guilt and find purification until he arrived at the Aleian plain, an alluvial deposit uncovered by the sea:

The madness of Bellerophon—for in Homer he is obviously mad—is the madness of Orestes, of the man bloodstained, Erinyes-haunted; but the story of Bellerophon, like that of Alcmaeon, looks back to days even before the Erinyes was formulated as a personality, to days when Earth herself was polluted, poisoned by shed blood.<sup>24</sup>

What does *Ge-Erinyes* (the Angry Earth) do when poisoned? Listen to the words of contemporaries, both German and Jewish, who are wandering, some with the blood of another race on their hands, some "blood-haunted" by the Erinyes of their own people:<sup>25</sup>

A Jewish woman who successfully hid with friends from the Nazi's in 1943, cries, "What made us escape our fate that was the fulfilling of the destiny of our people?"

Another Jew who was forced by the Nazis to stir the ashes in the ovens at Auschwitz says (in 1983) with tears in his eyes, "It was like I was hypnotized. I did everything Fischel told me" [to stir and poke].

A former Nazi camp guard says, "We knew nothing—what or how—of the killing."

A Polish farmer who plowed his ground while Jews were being exterminated in a camp next to his field says, "The screaming was awful...you get used to it."

A Polish woman says, "They said we didn't know what happened. The Jews were here and then gone...how could they not see?"

A Polish official who visited the Warsaw Ghetto remembers, "It was not the world, it was not a part of humanity. They didn't look like human beings."

These wandering souls, Pausanias' image suggests, can find relief only by finding the "unpolluted" land. Where is this "land" unpolluted by the Genocide? *The Oresteia* teaches that this "land" is produced by a bargain that Athene strikes with the Erinyes. The "land" is thus a perspective on our racial bodies, a perspective grounded in the image of the Erinyes enthroned. This "land" is the *polis* (imagined for us by Aeschylus) since Orestes is freed of Erinyes once the enthroning takes place.

For Aeschylus, the Erinyes are preoccupied with the avenging of tribal blood and they call themselves "curses" (l. 417) whose function it is to drive murderers out of their homes (l. 421). For Homer (*Iliad* XIX, 258), however, they were more concerned with broken oaths. Jane Harrison agrees:

It is scarcely possible to doubt that in emphasizing the curse aspect of the Erinyes, Aeschylus had in his mind some floating reminiscence of a traditional connection between the Arae and the Areopagus. He is going to make the Erinyes turn into *Semnai*, the local Athenian goddesses invoked upon the Areopagus: the conception of the Erinyes as Arae makes as it were a convenient bridge.<sup>26</sup>

What Aeschylus does is to provide our own age with a prescription for the building of a bridge to a *genuine polis*. This *genuine polis* is built over the sanctuary of the Erinyes, the ancient spirits of



the races, and for this *genuine polis* to survive these Erinyes must be worshipped. The races must be honored, not forgotten, the *Orestea* decrees, or we will be destroyed by terrorism; the Erinyes will "let loose on the land the vindictive poison" (ll. 781-2).

Aeschylus' prescription for the Germans would be to give a German image to the Erinyes. In Homer, even though the Olympian Gods appear fully imagined, the Erinyes remain vague, invisible, shapeless. Homer knew what they did, but not how they looked. Since Aeschylus had to bring them to the stage he was forced to embody them. Germans are forced today to imagine the German Erinyes, to put them on stage. It is the first task of the enthronement.

When Apollo's priestess in *The Eumenides* has seen the Erinyes within the *adyton* (the sacred space) as they were circling about Orestes, she cries to the audience in her terror:

Fronting the man I saw a wondrous band of women, sleeping on the seats. But no! No women these, but Gorgons—yet moth-like. I may not liken them to Gorgon shapes. Once on a time I saw those pictured things that snatch at Phineus' feast, but these, but these are wingless—black, foul utterly. They snore, breathing out noisome breath. From out their eyes they ooze a loathly rheum. (ll. 46-54)

This is the first time ever that the Erinyes were given a definite shape. The priestess says, "This race of visitants never have I seen" (l. 57). It is an act of worship, even if unintentional, on Aeschylus' part; we are less likely to forget the Erinyes once we have seen them.

For Aeschylus, the Erinyes are like Gorgons and like Harpies, but not quite like either. At first they appear to be Gorgons, but then the priestess sees they lack the Gorgons' intolerable mask with tusks and protruding tongue. Then they look like Harpies, except that they have no wings. They are more human-like than either Gorgons or Harpies and their proximity to human shape renders them even more terrifying, like viewing one's own image in a warped mirror. In this regard, the humanness of the Nazi leaders makes them more terrifying than if they had been devils.

Robert Jay Lifton has argued in this vein for the humanity of Joseph Mengele, who, he says, was an ordinary man whose dark side became extreme when he was placed in the Nazi atmosphere.<sup>27</sup>

Before Aeschylus, it was customary to depict Gorgons and Harpies with four wings and in a striding posture with their knees bent. That Aeschylus removes the wings in his image of the Erinyes serves his purpose of giving them a place—no longer will they fly about driving people to madness from one place to another. They will have no need of wings; Athene places their sanctuary in the very center of the *polis* beneath the Acropolis. If the souls of Germans are wandering it is because the Erinyes have not been given a place and "the avenging ghosts have dogged their steps."

Immediately following Aeschylus' period, the majority of vase painters picture the Erinyes as wingless, but as the decades pass the wings begin to reappear. This suggests that the Erinyes have never been given a place, that they still fly about dogging our steps, driving us mad. Eventually, they become the terrors of a Christian Hell, both in the *Apocalypse of Peter* and in Dante's *Inferno*, where they guard the gates of Dis. They have found no sanctuary in "a place free of grief and pain" as Athene had promised. They are cultless as they had been prior to Aeschylus' period. History exposes a sad parade of ignorance regarding their nature as image. And with that ignorance we have lost our imaginal connection to our racial bodies.<sup>28</sup> The Erinyes, winged once again, fly about the world, without place, making history out of blood while our ignorance curses the visible. All we have done with Hitler is to express disgust or to forget.

Even in Classical Greece the Erinyes had no cult. They were mere "adjectives" of other Gods until they were imagined by the poets as personalities. The *Keres* (or ghosts) of the unrighteously slain were often sacrificed to in ancient Greece but not under the epithet "angry." The Erinyes were never worshipped as agents of vengeance.

But they appear to Aeschylus as they had appeared to no one else. These ancient, cultless, adjectival, vague forces associated with offended ghosts and blood revenge are imagined by Aeschylus in the conclusion of the *Oresteia* as identified with the *Semnai Theai*, the "Venerable Goddesses" who had had a cult of high honor in Athens for centuries. The *Semnai* already had a fixed place, a sanctuary on

the Areopagus, a cult limited to Athens,<sup>29</sup> and unlike the Erinyes, their personification was not due to the poets.

### *III. Finding A Sanctuary For Our Racial Blood:*

"No wind to wither trees shall blow..."

It is in the cult of the *Semnai Theai* that we learn what to do for our racial blood.<sup>30</sup> Their sanctuary was a true "sanctuary," a *refuge*. Aeschylus' image of the *Erinyes-as-Semnai* suggests that the images that connect one to one's people are a refuge. Thucydides recounts the story<sup>31</sup> of the conspirators of Kylon who found refuge in the sanctuary of the *Semnai* but who were killed at the door of the temple when they tried to leave. Plutarch<sup>32</sup> claims the conspirators tied themselves with a thread to the image of the *Semnai*, but when the thread broke, it was assumed that the Goddesses had rejected their plea for immunity, and they were executed.

Secondly, as with most underworld deities, the functions of the *Semnai* were oracular. "A mantic shrine, sacred, adored by mortals," is the way Euripides describes the sanctuary of the Erinyes in his *Electra* (l. 1270). This mantic shrine was an underground cave near the Areopagos, and it was to the *Semnai* that oaths were sworn by those giving testimony in the ancient court. For Athene to place the Erinyes in a mantic shrine must have been an affront to Apollo, who earlier in the play had ordered the Erinyes to "Get out...set the mantic chamber free" (ll. 179-80). But by the end of the play Apollo has simply evaporated, suggesting that there is no place for Apollonic reason in the bargain struck between Athene and the Erinyes.

Thirdly, the sanctuary and rituals of the *Semnai* were available to anyone, with two exceptions: those known as the "second-fated" or the "later-doomed" and those belonging to the *Eupatridai* (or elite families).

The "second-fated" were those who were thought to have died, perhaps in battle, and were given funeral rites, only to reappear at a later time. Such "re-born ones" were considered impure. Plutarch recounts the story of Aristenus, a "second-fated," who inquired of the oracle of Delphi how he could be made pure again. The oracle's answer was:



Whatsoever is accomplished by women that travails in childbed,  
that in thy turn having done, sacrifice to the Gods.<sup>33</sup>

Plutarch continues, "And Aristenus being a good and wise man gave himself up like a newborn child to the women to wash and swaddle and suckle, and all the others who were called 'later-doomed' did the like."<sup>34</sup> This was an old custom, Plutarch claims, and probably existed prior to Aeschylus' imagining the *Erinyes-as-Semnai*.

We can read this taboo against the "second-fated" as referring to people who were thought to have descended to the psychological core of the race but whose "descent" turned out to be false. Hitler is such a person. It is possible, in this reading, to suggest as a German friend of mine has suggested, that the "German-ness" that Hitler paraded before the world was a false German-ness, an ideological German-ness not grounded in actual archetypal German-ness. Hitler's descent (as in his book, *Mein Kampf*) was more like that of a wandering soldier than of one who had descended to the Truth. As one "reborn" from a false descent, he is not allowed to enter the sanctuary of the German Erinyes.

The Third Reich fantasy was, at least in part, a reaction to the modern world (the "civilized peace" of Versailles) and its Apollonian tendency to neglect such things as "German Blood." One could apply this argument as well to the terrorism of Palestinians, Armenians, Tamils, Zulus, and others. The Erinyes of these races (so the argument would go) are fighting extinction ("Here our destruction, or our high duties confirmed," the Erinyes claim in *The Eumenides*, 1. 747).

This does not imply that Hitler's ideology gave expression to the true archetypal German-ness. In fact, he did not. Hitler, in *Erinyes-as-Semnai* imagery, was "second-fated," his "descent" being falsely reported, and was therefore taboo to the sanctuary of true German-ness. Had he descended in the true sense he would have understood "German Blood" as the imaginal reality that it is. Instead of enthroning the Erinyes he *became* the Erinyes, enthroning himself. Having made no sacrifice to them, he is taboo.

Also considered taboo in the sanctuary of the *Semnai* were the *Eupatridai*, or *Genos*, political organizations calling themselves



"families." Such "families," from the perspective of the *Semnai* priests, were artificial, though they claimed a common descent through the male line from an ancestral hero. The "unnaturalness" of these "families" developed in some cases simply to promote the democratic civil structures and must have been abhorrent to the *Semnai*.

*Apollo Patroos* was the God of these "families." By enthroning the *Erinyes-as-Semnai* under the hearth of the *polis*, Aeschylus has imagined for us the necessity of keeping the matriarchal nature of race and its associated images at the center of what we do politically. There are to be no "families," cults of the great males, created for political convenience at the expense of the *Semnai*. The taboo suggests that those who have forgotten the maternal nature of race and its centrality are not capable of making sacrifices to the images that connect us to our racial bodies. And because these images are central to the life of the *polis*, the people who have forgotten are not true citizens.

The message is clear: stay close to the Mother that is your people, do not join the "artificial families" of hero worship (Adolf Hitler, Rev. Jim Jones, Yukio Mishima, Yasar Arafat, John F. Kennedy, Mohandis Gandhi, Nelson Mandela) even if they claim to speak for your mother-race. The *polis* is founded on keeping sacrifices to one's race "underground" (in the soul) and this soul-perspective is lost when it is turned into a hero cult.

Political action must take place in the context of sacrifice to this Mother, and we are warned against putting ourselves into a position where such sacrifices become taboo. The Third Reich and its false "family" of the Supreme Aryan, its cult of *mein Führer*, render the members of that "family" taboo to the sanctuary of true Germanness.

The *Hesychidae* ("the Silent Ones"), an aristocratic Athenian family, were the priests in the cult of the *Semnai*.<sup>35</sup> They were known as "uttering words inaudible." The Scholiast says, "...for they enact the sacred rites in silence, and on account of this the descendants of Hesychos (the Silent One) sacrifice to them, as Polemon says in his writings about Eratosthenes, thus : 'The family of the Eupatrids has no share in this sacrifice.'"<sup>36</sup> The artificial "families" and their heroes shouting in the Reichstag or wherever,

even if the shouting is about the glory of one's race, do not share in the sacrifice to the *genuine* nature of the race, to the *images* that connect us to our racial bodies. They are not "silent ones."

But what is this silence? A community of ethnic Russians who have been living in Paris since the Revolution of 1917 meet each Monday night to speak Russian, to share a Russian dinner, and to play and dance to Russian music.<sup>37</sup> The Russian atmosphere is not silent in the literal sense. It is usually very loud. But this atmosphere is "silent" in the sense that *it is an atmosphere*. These Russians are citizens of France, paying taxes to the French government, voting for the political leaders of France. But their Russian-ness is enthroned each Monday under the hearth of their French citizenship and worshipped ritually in the atmosphere that is the "silence" Poleon referred to. "Silence" is the metaphor for the psychological nature of the sacrifice. No one hears Russian-ness but Russians (one could argue); it is a ghetto in the soul.

It is my position, however, that this ritual of Russian-ness is too above ground, too literal, and not sufficiently "silent." This "they" (Russians) is caught in the fantasy of a biological Russian-ness and therefore is not "silent." But how far can we go here?

A friend of mine argues as follows:

What I learn from the factual phenomenon of genocide as its inherent psychological message from the unconscious to us is that the idea of *genos*, *ethnos*, race wants to be killed. So I think we have to entertain and enthrone the ideas of melting pot, of white massacre, even of actual genocide, and give them a home in our consciousness.<sup>38</sup>

He is right. But then he goes on to argue that:

...we do not have to turn to Greece again. Indeed we cannot. Greece, *polis*, race, many Gods, the individual personality, Erinyes, etc. are all dead, obsolete. We live in the age not only of the Bomb, but also of nuclear physics, cybernetics, communication satellites, TV, planetary civilization, multi-national concerns, etc. The Holocaust and today's terrorism seem to me to demonstrate the obsolescence of race, etc., not the need to heed it.

It is here that I feel we can go too far.

The unwillingness of a people to accept the death of Race has been demonstrated to me many times in my interviews with Armenians over the past five years. In the young, this unspoken fear often expresses itself in terrorism. The fear, the unwillingness, and the terrorism are as much a part of our reality as are nuclear physics, TV, Adidas, cybernetics, and the rest. I think we have an obligation to heed it. The question is: what is this heeding?

I agree with my friend that Race wants to be killed and that Holocaust and Genocide seek enthronement in the soul. This is Hitler's "trick", why he won't leave us alone. What is being killed is our dayworld notion of Race as blood type, pigmentation, bone structure, hair texture. And maybe here is where my friend and I see things differently: I feel this killing did not begin in our own age, but with the first *polis*, which was the first melting-pot.

I agree with Aristotle's distinctions (*Politics*, I, iii): (1) the first community is the *family*, "first house and wife and ox for the plough" (and "first" here is not necessarily historical); (2) the second is the *village*, which he calls "a colony from the family" composed of the children and grandchildren who are "suckled with the same milk" (here he offers Homer's dictum "Each one gives law to his children and wives"); and (3) the third community, the *polis*, *the end of all previous forms of community* and the best, a community that transcends bloodlines, a union of several villages, self-supporting, but not "unnatural" since it originates "in the bare needs of life" and since "man is by his nature a *polis*-animal." I do not feel that the Greeks, or anyone, accomplished the transformation from *ethnos* to *polis* as it was imagined (Aeschylus, Plato, Aristotle) since Blood, Race, Erinyes have *never* been buried (enthroned in soul).

My friend argues for enthroning the Erinyes

...as a mode of burying, a mode of declaring to be obsolete and a mode of leave-taking, so that we are more ready for the Bomb reality and its White Massacre; enthronement in the depth and silence of the soul, underground, but therefore also dead and buried—like art in museums.



It is not, for me at least, a question of returning to Greece as a way of avoiding the Bomb, White Massacre, etc., but it is a question of engaging the Bomb, White Massacre by completing Athene's 2500 year-old prescription. The *polis* as imagined then *is* White Massacre. Holocaust, Terrorism, the Bomb are the working out of something very old, a forcing of our hand so that we must do what we have been afraid to do. To engage White Massacre, a bargain must be struck with the past. I feel we are hedging on an ancient contract if we enthrone the Erinyes "as a mode of leave-taking."

The past, for me, is not only outmoded views of Race. It is also an imagined decree of the end of all previous forms of community (Aeschylus, Plato, Aristotle) and the challenge to establish a community (*polis*, Global Village) based on friendship, poetic enthronement, and a new *paideia* (or education). The move is not from *ethnos* to *polis* to White Massacre since *polis is* White Massacre. I feel that our age was not *creatio ex nihilo*, but that there remains an unfinished 2500 year-old contract.

What Aeschylus imagined still holds. The Erinyes can be transformed into *Semnai*—that is, the "Angry Ones"—racial anger, the "wind in the stomach that seeks release"—are transformed into the "Venerable Ones," Genocide honored in the soul silently. The Death of Race is the death of our failure to imagine Race and the birth of a new kind of citizen, the New Bloomusalem (as James Joyce calls it), where a Jew is father to a Celt.

This citizenship is not "unnatural" since imagining is not unnatural. Nor is the Bomb which necessitates this seeing unnatural: the Bomb unveils (is) nature's essence and the way to engage the Bomb is to become citizens in a *polis* built on a poetic understanding of Blood. It is the understanding and not the Blood which is our essence.

Finally, when the Erinyes accept this invitation and become *Erinyes-as-Semnai*, they announce to Athene that "No wind to wither trees shall blow, by our grace it shall be so" (ll. 938-9).<sup>39</sup> On the western side of the Areopagus an altar was built for sacrifices to the "Wind-stillers." Winds were identified with ghosts and worshipped with the same "wineless libations" used to honor all the underworld deities. In Corinth, according to Hesychius, there was a family known as the Wind-Calmers.<sup>40</sup> This "wind" that the *Erinyes-as-*



*Semnai* will calm is a "wind" that remains uncalmed when these goddesses have no cult. In 1938, Jung in an interview referred to:

...the widespread revival in the Third Reich of the cult of Wotan. Who was Wotan? God of wind. Take the name "Sturmabteilung"—Storm Troops. Storm, you see—the wind. Just as the swastika is a revolving vortex moving ever toward the left...<sup>41</sup>

And in 1936, "...a god has taken possession of the Germans and their house is filled with a 'mighty rushing wind.'"<sup>42</sup>

A middle-aged German man remembers his grandfather, during the War, marching around the dinner table with all the grandchildren following in a line, singing the old soldier's song, "In Austerlitz there was thunder and lightning, the Prussians have sweated their blood..."<sup>43</sup> If we read Aeschylus carefully, we see that the *Erinyes-as-Semnai* do not calm *this* "wind" that has to do with the archetypal and not merely the ideological German-ness. They calm the wind that "withers trees." They calm the wind that is a literal Holocaust. Enthroning these wind-stillers who are also "wind" saves the German soul for citizenship in the *polis*. And it saves the *polis*, which cannot exist without this enthronement.

### NOTES

1. *Generations of the Holocaust*, ed. Martin S. Bergmann and Milton E. Jucovy (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982), 200.
2. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from *The Oresteia* are from the "The Eumenides," the Richard Lattimore translation in *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, Vol. I, ed. David Grene and Richard Lattimore (New York: The Modern Library, 1942).
3. From an interview in Claude Lanzmann's film, *Shoah*, released in 1985.
4. *Newsweek*, April 29, 1985, 14.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, 16.
7. *Ibid.*, 24.
8. Bergmann and Jucovy, 191.
9. *Ibid.*
10. From an interview with Bill Moyers on "Hitler and Roosevelt," *A Walk Through the 20th Century with Bill Moyers*, Public Broadcasting System, broadcast December 10, 1985.

11. *Hitler's Secret Conversations 1941-1944*, ed. H.R. Trevor-Roper (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Young, Inc., 1953), 67.
12. From *A Walk Through the 20th Century with Bill Moyers*.
13. Trevor-Roper, 65.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Newsweek*, April 29, 1985, 19.
16. Trevor-Roper, 193.
17. *Ibid.*
18. From an interview in *Shoah*.
19. *Gesprache mit Hitler* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1973), 223.
20. Trevor-Roper, 255.
21. Flora Lewis, *New York Times*, November 8, 1983.
22. Quoted by Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 219.
23. *Description of Greece*, II, 18, 2.
24. *Ibid.*, 220.
25. All of these quotations are from the film, *Shoah*.
26. *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, 222.
27. *New York Times Magazine*, July 28, 1985.
28. See my paper, "From *Ethnos* to *Polis*: The Furies and Apollo" in *Spring 1985*.
29. Herodotus, IV, 149.
30. The *Semnai Theai* were not the *Eumenides* (the Kindly Ones) and should not be confused with them. The title, *The Eumenides*, for the third play of the trilogy was in all probability assigned to the play by a later writer, at a time when "the Erinyes, "the *Semnai*," and "the *Eumenides*" were terms used interchangeably. At the time of Aeschylus' writing (the *Oresteia* was first produced in 458 B.C.), these terms referred to three distinct sets of beings. The term "the *Eumenides*" never appears in Aeschylus' text and was probably assigned to the play by a later writer because the Orestes myth has its origin in Argos where there was a cult of the *Eumenides*.
31. Herodotus, I, 126.
32. Plutarch, *Lives*, XII.
33. *Fifth Roman Question*, quoted by Harrison, 244.
34. *Ibid.*, 245.
35. Demosthenes, c. *Dein.*, 47.
36. Polemon, quoted by Scholiast, in Harrison, 246.
37. *CBS Evening News*, December 5, 1985.
38. Private correspondence.
39. Tr. Harrison, 251.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *C.G. Jung Speaking*, 118.
42. *CW* 10, §389.
43. Bergmann and Jucovy, 202.