



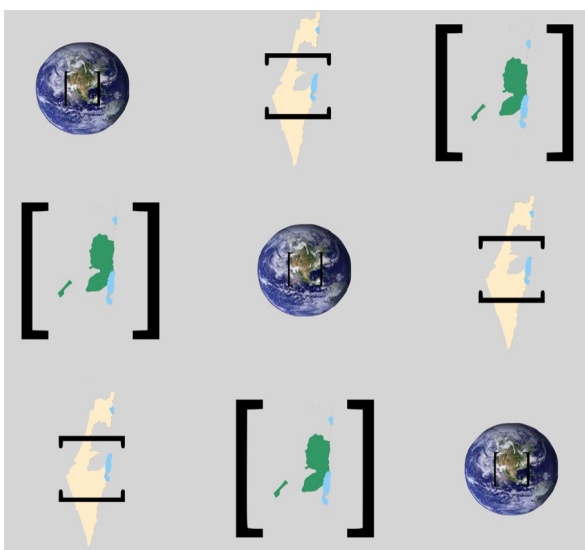
Above: in the left photomontage a connection is made between Nazis and Hamas at the Gaza border, next to it a caricature of Netanyahu and the Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro in a swastika shaped embrace (by Aroeira 2019), finally the photos of the Palestinian Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini visiting Nazi camps, Himmler and Hitler (Published by Haaretz 2017).

In the scope of the proximal *other*—as the point of entry unto the *ethics* understood as the collective good as the source of happiness—the current warfare between Palestinians and Israelis is a case in point of a global humanity in crisis. Within the scope of unsustainable but economically necessary greed, there is simply not enough for everybody. The history of economic dictates does not comply with geographic limitations and in its nature expansive. Of course, this is a heuristic explanation for the Middle East. Which it also is for the war between Russia and the Ukraine.

It applies to a situation where the colour of democratic polities around the globe is turning blue. So, we would look for the rhetorics and its more/less muffled critique. A major trend in ethics— with the avalanche of ‘guidelines’ we saw a few years back—is that they are *me*-centred: that is, how I present myself, argue my integrity in relation to others, and my track record of keeping these pledges: whether they have been imposed on me by others, or that I have developed a corporate responsible identity, from which I intend to earn respect from (and business) with others.

What this deontic concept of ethics appears to blind itself to—by its knack for declaring and applying *transparency*—is the fundamental problem of the *other*: the opacity of the other, is dismissed on account of the transparency of its own practices. Ethics, in this concept, can turn anyone into a beacon of truth and reason: whether the origin of such ethics is governmental, or corporate. It is another turn on the spiral of reason as violence. The part of ethics which is in the blind-spot of transparency, are 3 stages in how we relate to others: remotely, intimately and proximally.

The latter being the *other* in how it features in religious ethics: the other who is *near* (or, proximal). In the practical approached hatched from Nazi rhetorics the opposite trajectory was devised. From the other being integrated as citizens—defined as ‘with the right to partake of the life in the city’—to disseminate patterns by which the monstrous nature of these citizens was revealed, to the ultimate estrangement of these categories of citizens (Jews, Rom and LGBTQ+), who were then given to ritual destruction in KZ-camps.



In this gate-diagram the Israeli and Palestinian geographical areas are connected by the water-element. The struggle between Palestine and Israel is partly a [water-sharing conflict](#). On the other end of the scale we find the Netherlands, where the water management separates between the high (sea) and low (aquifer) waters. What they share: the geographical area and the water cartography are non-same.

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By *ritual*, I mean divesting the inmates from their moral integrity before their mass-execution. But also in the way that Jewish books—in the testimony of [Seymour Pormrenze](#)—were burned, destroyed and used for menial purposes, but also sample kept for posterity (with some Nazi scholars sent to Hebrew University in Israel to learn the language). The Nazis did not one-widely considered the Jews as vermin, they also contested their rank as the chosen people (which they wanted for themselves). Fire, being not only a medium of destruction but one of sacrifice: devised for takeover by consumption.

In the contemporary setting, we should ask how much of the Nazi's retro-ethics of belonging—vested in securing a cultural depth and wealth by looting—is practiced by diverse groups today. Nazi-retro-ethics readily applies for the purposes of remote othering/distancing, by both sides of a conflict. Which is indicated in the photomontage on the top of the last page [recto]. It makes little difference here whether the points made are

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researched and sophisticated, or they are crude and populist. As long as they foster collective stigmatisation and partake of propagandist rhetorics. With sophistication venom acts deeper.

When the symbolism from WWII and the Shoah/Holocaust now comes up it momentarily, in the news coverage from the Middle East, it features an emotional reaction. It is a reaction to bestiality. According to Zygmunt Bauman in [Modernity and the Holocaust](#), the distinctive feature of the Shoah, was *not* its bestiality: it did not proceed from emotional impulse, but was planned and calculated (from Wannsee to Auschwitz). Bauman's intent was to go from Auschwitz to a critique of modernity. However, at the flair of the moment we will look in depth for calculated plans.

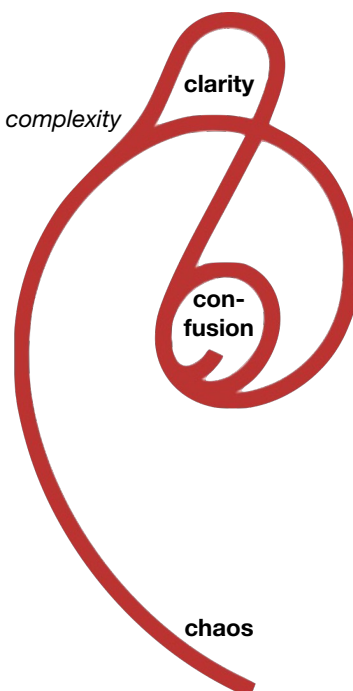
When Israel's retaliation on Hamas in Gaza is receive as a signal of a possible [genocide](#), this takes place **1)** from the vantage point of Doctors Without Borders (DwB) who have been operating in Gaza; **2)** directed to a country where a good share of the population are descendants from people who have experienced the Nazi genocide. But the DwB uses the word genocide not for this, but to the more recent historical events in Rwanda (the Hutu genocide of the Tutsi). Notwithstanding the veracity of this claim, historical denial is part of a context in which the *other* is dehumanised.

That is, Israelis and Palestinians become dehumanised depending on who the proponents of the retro-ethics *side* with. The pattern/recipe is the same. The methods are similar. Historical differences erase, and the other is removed from proximity. This is not very subtle. We are complicit and we are aware of it. However, it is here as in practices that unfortunately are widespread if not pervasive that the baggage that defines our core, suffers the more we spend our time guarding our borders. As Edward Tufte said in his critique of PPT: [pitching without corrupts within](#).

If *cultural variety* is the equivalent of *biodiversity*, the winners of wars regularly come out culturally depleted—it is busy expanding economically and otherwise—while the loosing side will go into itself, regroups its assets and build itself from that foundation. After all, Germany, Italy and Japan have not done that bad after WWII. If Hannah Arendt is right, the growing nationalisms that we see cropping up today, however, is on account a sense of weakened foundation: her point being that nationalisms are on the rise, whenever the sense of national belonging is in recess.

So, a constant border-patrol is not a winner. You must also have something to defend. Not only something you miss, you want and you take. For instance, when swastikas are being used to denigrate the opponent from both sides, it is emptied and transforms into an *floating signifier*.

With the danger that the reality behind the symbolism begins to define the space itself, in which the exchange of invectives, threats and death wishes take place. If this holds, it means that Nazi type ideologies are making conquests without invasion/warfare. The violence of the past has a sufficient load to make such conquests possible. Winning battles without even showing up!



The roadmap from *chaos* through *confusion* and *clarity*, is also a key to the knowledge complex dynamics. They feature the spaces between [⊕] the same, similar, different and other: same ⊕ similar ⊕ different ⊕ other.

And we become its [useful idiots](#). The perversity of using symbolic means to dismantle symbolism—which might very well be the paradox of the alt/extreme right—leads to a ‘heroism of boldness’: ranging from the opinions that we are branding, to the weapons we wield, to the instruments we use to deplete the earth. *Siegfried*. If we proceeded in the opposite way, moving from concrete challenges as water-sharing conflicts to symbolic concerns at the *core* of the cultural realm, one would maybe pave the way to support the journey from the *muddle*, through the shaping of *perception* to the hatching of the proximal *other*, as part of a civilising process in our culture, education and public debates. Why we may really need *art school*.

Sadly, we currently a long stretch from this now. But we need to think up the possibility, and to multiply them to a maximum of different areas. That is, if Nazi retro-ethics is everywhere the same, that people are doing similar things now as to what other have done in the past, and that we are as accurate as we can with regard to historical differences, there is a chance that we may discern the other underlying causes of animosity—that are substantial, real and material—where the challenge of being the other to one another, has to go through stages of chaos and confusion before reaching for clarity.