

Metaphor, Nation and the Holocaust

The Concept of the Body Politic

Andreas Musolff

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1 Introduction

Deadly Metaphors That Won't Die? *Bodies and Parasites as Concepts of Political Discourse*

1.1 THE BODY POLITIC AND THE HOLOCAUST

The phrase *body politic* belongs to a field of clichéd metaphors in English that refer to political entities and issues in terms of bodily organs and functions, such as *head of state*, *head of government*, *long arm of the law*, *organ (of a party)*, *sclerosis or tumour (of the body politic)*, *heart of Britain/Europe*.¹ It is used by British and American media and politicians, e.g. in formulations such as “Europe could cease to be the cyanide in the British body politic”; “voices in the body politic”; “disembowelling the body politic”; “campaign culture metastasize[d] throughout the entire body politic”.² The Conservative politician and mayor of London, Boris Johnson, even described himself tongue-in-cheek as “a mere toenail in the body politic”.³

In German public discourse, by comparison, the idea of society and/or the nation or state as a *body* is perceived as highly problematic. The term *Volkskörper* (“people’s body”, or “national body”), in particular, is stigmatized. In 1998, for instance, the conservative German politician J. Schönbohm was heavily criticised for having invoked the ideal of a homogeneous German “people’s body” as opposed to the notion of a “multi-cultural” society in the public debate about immigration. According to one of his critics, the notion of bodily homogeneity for the nation was likely to “kindle the fire” of inter-ethnic conflict.⁴ Eight years later, an article in the daily newspaper *Die Welt* discussed the low birth rate in Germany under the title “A hurt soul in the sick nation’s body [*Volkskörper*]”.⁵ Again, the notion of the *nation’s* or the *people’s body* was viewed as alluding to “the German traumata of the twentieth century”. Those who discussed demographic decline in terms of a threat to the *national body’s health* were suffering, the author asserted, from a *hysteria* similar to that which had motivated previous “bio-political” attempts to *cure the people’s body*.⁶ Evidently, the term *Volkskörper* still reminds parts of the German public of statements such as the following which were made by Adolf Hitler and his propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels in the 1920s and 1940s:

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[the Jew] has always been a *parasite in the body of other peoples*.⁷

1914 witnessed the last flicker of the national *instinct for self-preservation* in opposition to the *progressive paralysis of our people's body*.⁸

... *the Jew represents an infectious illness* ... Germany has no intention of giving in to this Jewish threat but intends to oppose it in time, if necessary by the means of its most complete and radical extermination, elimination.⁹

Statements such as these, which were taken from *Mein Kampf* and from Goebbels's infamous "total war" speech of 1943, were not just meant as insults of Jewish people. They implied a genocidal policy that ended in the Holocaust: the victims were treated as if they were *agents of disease* and *parasites* that threatened the *German national body's health* and therefore had to be annihilated. Goebbels's false start, *Ausrott[-ung]* ("extermination") in the third example, gives away his knowledge about the ongoing genocide but also illustrates the effort to avoid unequivocal references to killing and mass murder. The vague notion of "getting rid" of the victims, which is implied in the term *Ausschaltung* ("elimination", "removal"), was meant to leave room for a non-genocidal interpretation. However, the metaphor of an *infectious illness* leaves little doubt that a complete destruction of the *agent of the illness* was envisaged, or else the supposed *infection* would not be eradicated. The "logic" of the *illness-cure* imagery based on the *body-state* metaphor thus gives the lie to the dissimulating talk of "elimination".

How could the conceptualization of a socio-political entity as a human body acquire such sinister connotations? Is it a specific historical phenomenon of German political culture in the 20th century? Or is the metaphor inherently racist, suggesting as it does a physical/physiological concreteness of politics, which perhaps "lends itself" to physical "solutions" of any perceived problems? Should anyone who employs *body-related* metaphors in politics be viewed as a potential advocate of genocide? These are some of the questions that this book will engage with, with a view to determining the function of metaphor in political communication, i.e. the basic issue of how a metaphorical concept can impact on people's political perception and behaviour, even turn them into genocide perpetrators (or at least, passive bystanders).¹⁰

The imagery used by the Nazis to legitimize their genocidal policies provides us with an extreme "test-case", so to speak, of a metaphor that was turned into the horrendous reality of World War and Holocaust. We may ask, however, whether we are dealing with a "metaphor" at all. Standard definitions of "metaphor" describe it as the designation of a meaning unit by words taken from a different domain of meaning. This definition can seemingly be applied without great difficulty to our case: a social or

political entity is usually not considered to belong in the category of biological bodies, and a group of people in it is not an illness or parasite. Hence, the semantic transfer of bodily expressions to political and social issues would appear to qualify for "metaphor" status. However, in regard of the Nazi use of *body-illness-parasite* imagery, we have to take into account the fact that they applied it in a horrifically "literal" sense by trying to physically destroy and eliminate Jewish people. Neil Gregor has aptly put this problem in the form of a paradox: "it is not possible to see in *Mein Kampf* . . . a set of plans or a blueprint for mass murder in any specific way. . . . But, equally, we should not regard Hitler's metaphors merely as metaphors: for him, they described reality."¹¹ We thus seem to be dealing with a form of discourse that is non-literal and at the same time "literal" (in a poignant historical and political sense). How can this contradiction be resolved?

One way of dealing with this dilemma would be to assume that the metaphor of the supposed Jewish "race" as an *illness* or *parasite on the German nation's body* was known to be just part of propagandistic jargon both by its users (i.e. the Nazis) and its receivers (i.e. the German public and everyone within the reach of Nazi propaganda), and really meant something else, i.e. genocide. In this case, the metaphor could be assigned the same semantic status as euphemisms or camouflage words, such as *deportation* (*Deportation*, *Umsiedlung*), *special treatment* (*Sonderbehandlung*) or *final solution* (*Endlösung*), which the Nazis used in administrative or legal documents when referring to their murderous practices. Such camouflage vocabulary was not primarily intended to be persuasive; rather, it was meant to misinform those who were deemed outsiders or enemies, depending on the particular circumstances and the phase of policy implementation.¹² The "insiders" would know what was meant and needed no persuasion: the camouflage language was just a ruse to cover their tracks (and, perhaps, to suppress the perpetrators' own troubling emotions of empathy or guilt).¹³

If the *body/parasite* metaphor complex as used by the Nazis were on a par with such terminology it would not in fact be metaphorical. On closer inspection, however, this interpretation seems implausible. Camouflage terms such as *final solution* or *removal* referring to genocide are deliberately abstract, vague and general: they are designed to hide any concrete, vivid form of reference. But denouncing a group of people as a *parasite* and describing one's nation as *a body that is in danger of perishing* are not abstract or vague descriptions; on the contrary, they are striking and spectacular. The statements that included such metaphors were not confined to incidental, infrequent forms of "background" propaganda; as we shall see in detail later, they were carefully crafted and presented as "highlights" in the Nazi leaders' speeches. Anyone living under the Nazi regime or being aware of it could not help but notice them as key elements of their ideology and propaganda. The metaphor was recognised as a core belief held by all the leading Nazis. That still does not mean that people mistook it for a literal description of political issues, or else it would have been regarded

simply as a grotesque category mistake. So, if it was neither that nor a lie, how can we describe its meaning, both as a semantic category and as a pragmatic, political tool to advocate genocide?

Some of the confusion about the semantic status of the *body/parasite* “metaphor” can be avoided if we follow the insights of modern metaphor theories that have developed a notion of metaphor as a cognitive “framing” strategy to provide access to innovative perspectives for the conceptualisation and the discursive negotiation of all kinds of experience.¹⁴ In the metaphorical frame, new concepts are integrated into familiar sets of assumptions about classifications of entities, events and actions and their evaluations. With regard to Nazi metaphors, we have to investigate the frames that enabled their users to believe in assumptions that made the project of murdering all Jewish people in Europe seem possible, justifiable and necessary. It is this inferential cognitive link between assumptions embodied in the “source” concepts of bodies, illnesses and parasites and the political conclusions at the “target” level of genocidal ideology (and practice) that is at the centre of the first part of this study. In the following chapters I shall propose a cognitive analysis of the mappings of *body-illness-parasite* concepts onto politics as they appear in key texts produced by the Nazis and in documented contemporary reactions and comments, with a view to establishing the conceptual and argumentative framework in which the Holocaust would appear as a national *healing* exercise to the perpetrators and their audience.¹⁵ However, an analysis based on the corpus of texts from the Nazi period itself can only show its synchronic structure and function in its respective historical period. As we saw from our initial examples, the same metaphor complex is still being used in public discourse but it carries a kind of historical index of being related to the Nazi period. We therefore also need to look at its diachronic development.

1.2 A METAPHOR WITH A PAST

To depict societies, states and/or nations as a *body* is a metaphoric framing that has a long and famous pedigree in the history of ideas. Historical overviews¹⁶ locate its origins in pre-Socratic thinking and highlight a first flourishing of such metaphors in the writings of Plato and Aristotle (with *The Republic* and *Timaios*, *Politics* and *On the movement of animals* being the respective key texts). They were followed by a series of Hellenistic and Roman philosophers, the Stoics, Neoplatonists and mixed with Biblical traditions (especially St. Paul’s *Epistles to the Romans* and *Corinthians*), which were taken up by the “Church Fathers” and many political and social theorists from the early Middle Ages onwards, continuing up to the twentieth century.

Closely connected is the tradition of the so-called “fable of the belly”, which has its beginnings in Aesopian texts dating back to the fifth century

and that toes or toenails are less important body members than, say, the head, belongs to our everyday "encyclopaedic" and practical knowledge of the world. Shakespearean scholars and conceptual historians will of course recognise the image and reconstruct the links with ancient and modern uses to further its understanding, but this happens at a secondary level of interpretation. It may add to the intellectual and aesthetic appreciation of the text in question but it is not needed for the basic understanding of the metaphor.

Clearly, the Nazis and their audience did not have to rely on a two-thousand-year-old philosophical tradition to motivate their wish to murder all Jewish people in Europe. Like the interdependence and the relative importance of parts of the body, the dangers of illness and the benefits of a cure are common knowledge, and racists of all times have employed that knowledge to denounce their enemies as *agents of* (political/social) *disease*. This does not, however, exclude the possibility that a special, vulgarised version of some of the theoretical and textual traditions mentioned earlier was accessed around the turn of the last century by Hitler and other Nazi ideologues, in a way similar to the pseudo-scientific theories on human "races" that influenced Hitler during his formative years in Vienna and Munich.²² They could in fact hardly have existed without the input from an "authoritative" tradition that had already established the metaphorical concept of the body, its organs and functions and its state of health as a model for thinking and talking about politics. These beliefs would have provided the semantic-ideological space in which Hitler's political *body* and *parasite* metaphors could resonate.

In order to substantiate this hypothesis, we have to investigate those strands of the metaphor tradition that are most likely to have informed the sedimented political assumptions in the early twentieth century, in particular, conceptual and textual traditions of *body politic* theories and discussions in German-speaking political culture. German traditions of this metaphor complex have been less well researched than, for instance, the English- and French-speaking histories; it has even been claimed that German political literature lacked the equivalent of *body politic* imagery.²³ As we shall see later on, this assumption is unwarranted; in fact, the tradition of corporeal imagery in German political philosophy and discourse can be traced back to the early sixteenth century, i.e. to the same time when the phrase *body politic* itself became established in England and when similar terminological and conceptual developments took place in other European languages and political cultures.

These long-standing metaphor traditions not only informed the popular attitudes and opinions of the period until 1945; they still exert an influence on current discourse, albeit as an undercurrent that is overlaid, as it were, by the stigma-laden memory of the use of *illness/parasite* imagery in Nazi ideology. As we saw in the few examples from contemporary German discourse quoted earlier, journalists and politicians still expect the German public to

understand allusions to the Nazi uses, which seems to indicate that some kind of a "discourse memory" relating to Nazi-typical metaphors still exists. Right-wing and Neo-Nazi groups still make use of *body/parasite* imagery as if nothing had happened, so to speak,²⁴ but this lack of distance from Nazi jargon has probably helped to bar them from having a significant influence on post-war German political culture. The public judgement that a person or political group uses terminology and imagery comparable to that employed by the Nazis still serves as a powerful stigmatisation.²⁵ For German politicians, to invoke *body-parasite* imagery when dealing with socio-political and ethnic conflicts and to feign ignorance of the Nazi precedent is disingenuous and/or potentially self-defeating as long as they want to remain part of the mainstream public political discourse.²⁶ So, why do *body-illness-parasite* metaphors continue to be employed? By looking at the long-term history of body-based political thought and discourse we hope to find answers to this question; i.e. we not only try to understand the reasons for its historical "success" in persuading a majority the German public to participate in or at least tolerate the Holocaust but also the role that body-based metaphors generally play in current racist discourse and thought.

Given the vastness of the material, the selection of textual and conceptual traditions presented here can only claim to be a sample of the huge field of research (a cautious first estimate based on conceptual history research indicates the existence of at least 250 primary key texts ranging from antiquity to present-day texts in several European languages). The following chapters can thus not claim to be representative but only aim at providing insights into major continuities and discontinuities of the various strands of this metaphor leading up to (and beyond) its instrumentalisation by the Nazis. Some of these traditions were, as we shall see, explicitly connected to Nazi ideology, others seem to have only implicit and fragmentary links, and further strands even point to the ideological opposite of racism, i.e. an enlightened, tolerant vision of society and politics.

The chapters are roughly ordered as follows. In the chapter introducing Part I we establish the methodological implications of the cognitively oriented approach to metaphor analysis through its comparison with traditional analyses of Nazi imagery as a "mere" rhetorical trick that was incidental to Hitler's ideology and actual policy. By contrast, our analysis tries to demonstrate that his *body-illness-parasite* metaphors provided not just a propaganda ornament but were at the core of his racist ideology. Chapter 3 studies this conceptual core in detail by way of a close reading of Hitler's statements on race in *Mein Kampf*; Chapter 4 investigates how the Nazi ideologues and propagandists announced and presented the genocide as a *therapy for the German national body* while they were in power. Chapter 5 provides a methodological reflection of the results of our analyses and relates them to the second part, which investigates the *body-state* metaphor's roots in Western cultural history. Chapters 6–9 proceed in a loosely chronological order from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance to the

2 The Cognitive Import of Metaphor in Nazi Ideology¹

This chapter approaches the cognitive dimension of Nazi anti-Semitic imagery by reviewing historical and linguistic research on Nazi discourse. Much of post-war research treated the Nazis' metaphors and other facets of their political discourse either as "demagogic", "manipulative" abuses of language or as "literally" true expressions of racist ideology. Both these approaches highlight important aspects but, apart from contradicting each other, neither of them explains the extraordinary public appeal of the Nazi anti-Semitic imagery, its seeming plausibility and conclusiveness, which made the implementation of its genocidal implications in the Holocaust possible. This aspect has been brought to the fore in recent cognitive studies which have proposed various avenues of investigating the "mapping" and/or "blending" mechanisms involved in constructing the Nazi image of "the Jew" as a *parasite*; they provide a platform for the systematic analysis of Hitler's body-based imagery as a cognitive framework for genocide legitimization in the subsequent chapters.

2.1 HITLER'S METAPHORS AS OBJECTS OF HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL STUDY

Hitler and the Nazis' use of imagery has been an object of comment and analysis since the 1930s.² One highlight of the early critical analyses was Kenneth Burke's 1939 essay "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle'", which focused on Hitler's technique of "projecting" a religious category, i.e. the devil, onto a "visible, point-to-able form of people with a certain kind of 'blood'".³ According to Burke, this transfer of religious categories onto the socio-political level enabled Hitler to present his genocidal plans against "the Jew" as a promise of *purification*.⁴ In the following chapter we shall argue that the "religious" projection aspect is only a secondary part of the system of metaphors that Hitler operated and thus relativise Burke's conclusions to some extent. It is, however, important to recognize that, in highlighting the "projection" strategy, Burke provided an early model for an integrated analysis of content and style features of the "Rhetoric" of

technical devices of vermin extinction, such as poison gas. In his seminal study of "Hitler's world-view", Eberhard Jäckel concluded that Hitler, in his plans to eliminate the Jews, the "incurably ill" and all those he held responsible for Germany's defeat in WWI as laid out in *Mein Kampf*, "indubitably meant what he said quite literally".¹³ Similarly, Hermann Greive, in his overview of the history of modern anti-Semitism, speaks of "bloody seriousness" (*der blutige Ernst*), which "cannot be argued away".¹⁴

Such "literalness" can, however, be understood either as seriousness of hateful intent or, in a more tenuous sense, as a weird "category mistake" that literally confused the domains of humans and of (non-human) animals,¹⁵ due to the fanatical ideology held by the Nazis. Such an extreme stance is psychologically improbable and, as the following chapters will show, is far too simplistic to account for the conceptual range and textual/argumentative elaboration of Hitler's metaphor system. However, in principle it is conceivable, and it seems that Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, in his bestselling book *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, comes close to taking such a "category mistake" view when he labels the "organic metaphors of decomposition" by which the Nazis referred to Jews a "set of cognitions",¹⁶ albeit ones that were "absolutely fantastical, the sort of beliefs that ordinarily only madmen have of others".¹⁷ He also maintains that the product of this belief, i.e. "eliminationist" racial anti-Semitism, was shared by the vast majority of "ordinary Germans" of the day as an uncontested "cultural model", which only had to be "channelled in a genocidal direction and activated" by the Nazis to be implemented in Holocaust.¹⁸ Goldhagen's methodology and his conclusions have been criticized by historians;¹⁹ for our purposes its most significant aspect is its assumption of a cognitive framework of "eliminatorial anti-Semitism" that governed the thoughts and actions of tens of millions of people. This constitutes the maximum position, as it were, of a stance that takes Hitler's racist metaphor system literally and in addition assumes its cognitive domination over the whole of the German nation up until 1945. By taking Nazi pronouncements at face value, Goldhagen short-circuits the problem of determining the eliminationist "set of cognitions" that was expressed in Nazi imagery. He presupposes a "wild, 'magical thinking'" on the part of the Nazi leadership and the German people and an "incapacity for 'reality testing'" that "generally distinguishes them from the perpetrators of other mass slaughters".²⁰

This presupposition is, however, by no means self-evident. After all, at least up until 1933, the German public did have access to competing media, political statements and ideological frameworks. "Eliminationist anti-Semitism" was one among many stances on racial and social issues, doubtless prominent among the Nazi movement, but not among the general public. Even if we assume, for argument's sake, that the Nazi view of the necessity to eliminate the Jewish "parasite" became consensus during the Third Reich, this had to be achieved by a campaign of persuasion—which brings us back to the manipulation/propaganda hypothesis. That

such a sustained propaganda campaign did in fact take place is not in any way contentious;²¹ what is in question is the issue of its cognitive impact or “success”.

In order to investigate (rather than presume) a genocidal “set of cognitions” on the basis of Hitler’s imagery, we have to explain what we mean by characterising it as “cognition” in the first place. This problem has generated a substantial body of research over the past decades, which has specifically focused on metaphors as cognitive phenomena. From the cognitive viewpoint, metaphors and other so-called “rhetorical” figures of speech such as metonymy, simile, etc., are more than stylistic “ornaments” that add some extra associative or emotional value to the “core meaning” of a proposition. Instead, they are seen as fundamental cognitive processes, i.e. as “mappings”²² or “blendings”²³ of conceptual inputs from varying domains, which provide new perspectives for categorizing and reasoning about our experiences.

As regards the critical analysis of political language use, this claim by cognitivists to go beyond “rhetorical” analysis is of particular significance. If metaphors structure our worldviews, they are clearly of fundamental importance in political ideology and their critical analysis can provide “particular insight into why the rhetoric of political leaders is successful”.²⁴ Hitler’s imagery in *Mein Kampf* has therefore been made the object of a number of studies that claim to provide a specifically cognitive analysis, which goes beyond the earlier studies discussed earlier.

2.2 HITLER’S ANTI-SEMITIC ILLNESS/PARASITE IMAGERY AS A “COGNITIVE MODEL” OF DISCRIMINATORY IDEOLOGY

Recent cognitively oriented publications often focus on Hitler’s anti-Semitic imagery as a kind of negative yardstick of racist or discriminatory ideology. Hawkins (2001), for instance, envisages a “cognitive sociolinguistics” that “can help us understand how categorization is manipulated to establish social dynamics which privilege certain groupings of experience and dismiss other such groupings”.²⁵ He views “iconographic reference” as such a technique of manipulative categorization, i.e. the use of “simplistic images of our experiences” that are associated with “familiar values”, with the aim of establishing “a powerful conceptual link between the referent and a particular value judgment”.²⁶ Among the examples he discusses is a translated text passage from *Mein Kampf*, quoted after Bosmajian’s *The Language of Oppression* (1983):

This contamination of our people is carried on systematically by the Jew today. Systematically these black parasites of the nation defile our inexperienced young blonde girls and thereby destroy something that can no longer be replaced in this world.²⁷

3 *Body, Nature and Disease as Political Categories in Mein Kampf*

As the most substantial public enunciation of Hitler's "worldview" (Jäckel 1981), *Mein Kampf* provided the benchmark, so to speak, for uses of the *body-nation* metaphor in Nazi propaganda up until 1945.¹ Its thus provides us with a platform for investigating the cognitive import of his metaphor system by studying the overall conceptual range of his source images and their target applications, the argumentative patterns in which they appear, and the explicit and implicit conclusions drawn by Hitler. This study does not in itself present new material or insights into the core ideological content of *Mein Kampf*; its main aim is to reconstruct the "ontology" underlying his worldview in the form that Hitler was happy to admit to in public. To even assume the existence of an "ontological" structure (and thus, a certain rationality) may seem perverse and bordering on conveying some intellectual or even political legitimacy on Nazi anti-Semitism. However, to deny any rationality or ontological order to the Nazi worldview for the sake of outraged "attitudinizing" (K. Burke) would be tantamount to giving up analysing it at all. As Christopher Browning remarked in his seminal study of the "ordinary men" who actually carried out much of the Holocaust killing: "Explaining is not excusing, understanding is not forgiving. Not trying to understand the perpetrators in human terms would make impossible . . . any history of Holocaust perpetrators that sought to go beyond one-dimensional caricature."²

Hitler's imagery rested, as we shall see shortly, on a complex system of analogies that showed a high degree of ontological coherence once its basic premises were granted. Such an evaluation cannot in any degree detract from the fundamental immorality and factual inaccuracy of those premises, but to comprehend the analogies' attractiveness for so many followers it is essential to take their argumentative value seriously.³ Our aim is to understand the structural patterns that made it possible for Hitler's imagery to be believable to the point of quasi-literal acceptance by large parts of the German public. Whilst the textual manifestations and the historical implementation of Nazi racism are a thing of the past, the underlying cognitive patterns that underpinned them can be assumed to be typical for many more extremist world-views, including future ones, and thus of general relevance.

of the *human body which*, as part of the natural world, is *born, grows up, can fall ill and die*, as well as the sub-frames of an attack by a *parasite that feeds on the body* until it has destroyed it, and that of a *cure*, namely the radical, complete *removal of the parasite*. To summarise these conceptual relationships from our set of examples, we can draw up a schema of key mappings between source and target domains of *body* and *nation* concepts, respectively, as seen in Table 3.1

This table of metaphorical inter-domain mappings gives an overview of the basic conceptual correspondences, but it hardly conveys their argumentative and practical implications. The source cluster of *body-illness-cure* concepts in *Mein Kampf* is not an arbitrary constellation of notional elements but a complex, narrative/scenic schema or “scenario”⁴⁴ that tells a mini-story, complete with causal explanations and with conclusions about its outcome (here, the story of “a body suffering illness because of poisoning and therefore needing a radical cure”). This scenario is mapped as a whole onto the target domain, leading the reader towards the expectation that a *healer* will appear who will *cure* the national *illness*. It includes, as a tacit assumption on the basis of “commonsense” human self-interest, an evaluation, i.e. the conviction that securing and/or restoring the health of someone’s body is physically, emotionally, and ethically a good thing. The scenario serves as a *justification* for all the actions that are deemed to be necessary to achieve the overall therapeutic aim.

These commonsense assumptions imbue Hitler’s line of argument with a seemingly indisputable conclusiveness. If one accepts his tacit premises that there is such a thing as a *national body* in the first place and that that *body* has fallen *ill*, then the need to find a *cure* appears to be uncontroversial, and so does the necessity to destroy the *parasite* that has caused the *illness*. This analogical argument implied in the metaphor scenario links a highly

Table 3.1 *Body-Nation Mappings in Mein Kampf*

Source Domain	Target Domain
Body	(German) nation
Illness/disease	Diminution of the instinct of self-preservation
Symptom of illness	National downfall (especially, the military collapse of 1918) and its consequences
Cause of illnesses: poisoning	Jewish press
Agent of illness: bacillus, virus, sponger, parasite	“The Jew”
Cure of illness	Removal of all Jews from Germany

complex socio-political issue (Germany's socio-political and economic crisis since 1918) to everyday world knowledge (i.e. diagnosis of an acute, potentially fatal illness that requires immediate medical intervention). This scenario structure fuses the source and target concepts so that they lead the readers to a specific inference: *national cure* = elimination of "the Jew". The inference is not "automatic" in the sense of a tautological truth; rather, it is suggestive of a seemingly plausible, analogical conclusion.

To capture this scenario dimension of biological/medical metaphors in *Mein Kampf*, we need to amend the simple mapping schema of Table 3.1 by matching source and target concepts to their slots in the *illness-cure* narrative. For the "knowledge" that is presupposed in the source scenario and mapped onto the target is not restricted to a general ontology of disease/illness; it also includes an anticipatory plan or "script" of cause-effect relationships and a resulting course of action,⁴⁵ i.e. an "event-structure" that is used to predict (and to promise) consequences. Table 3.2 aims to visualize this narrative-predictive structure in Hitler's bio-political metaphors.

Table 3.2 demonstrates how much Hitler's political target-level argument depends on the commonsense logic of the source scenario. The arrows in bold signify cause-effect relations; the empty arrows represent inferences that are suggested by way of analogy. The only "hard" historical fact that Hitler is able to refer to is Germany's post-World War I crisis. The metaphorical interpretation of this crisis as an *illness*, which is indicated by the symbol $\uparrow 1$, sets off two argumentative moves, both of which are based on analogical conclusions (\Rightarrow). One move is the search for the *cause of the illness*. The author chooses from the illness source scenario the aspect that fits his purpose of depicting the target level match, "the Jew", as negatively as possible; hence the choice of the extremely dangerous, potentially deadly

Table 3.2 Event Structure of *Body-Nation* Mappings

Domains	Underlying Cause		Present Situation		Action Needed
Source	Poisoning by a parasitic 'alien body' (<i>bacillus, virus, sponger</i>)	\rightarrow	Body suffering from a severe, deadly illness (Blood poisoning)	\rightarrow	The cure of the illness consists in the removal of its cause by a competent healer
	\Downarrow		$\uparrow 1$		\Downarrow
Target	Destructive force of the Jewish press and the general influence of Jews on German society	\Rightarrow	National crisis of Germany (visible since 1918)	\Rightarrow	Germany must empower a politician who is able to effect the removal of Jews from German society

oversimplified account of heredity in the animal kingdom, rather than a political treatise. The opening paragraph starts with a childish-sounding introduction to the fact that sexual reproduction among the "higher" animals is usually confined to members of the same species:

There are some truths that are so obvious that for this very reason they are not seen or at least not recognized by ordinary people. . . . [people] wander about in the garden of Nature; they imagine that they know practically everything and yet, with few exceptions, they pass blindly by one of the most patent principles of Nature's rule: the inner segregation of the species of all living beings on this earth. . . . Blue tit seeks blue tit, finch goes to finch, stork to stork, field mouse to field mouse, dormouse to dormouse, he-wolf to she-wolf, etc.⁴⁷

Even a very naïve reader might wonder why Hitler would assume that this truth is not at all known to "ordinary people" who "wander about in the garden of Nature"—after all, his insights into the life of blue tits and finches are not *that* original. Within a couple of pages, however, after dealing perfunctorily with the most glaring exceptions to that "most patent principle", Hitler gets to his main point: just like animals, he alleges, humans of different races are not supposed to mate with each other:

Historical experience . . . shows with terrifying clarity that in every mingling of Aryan blood [*Blutsvermengung des Ariers*] with that of lower peoples the result was the end of the cultured people. . . . Briefly, the result of all racial crossing is therefore always the following:

- (a) Lowering of the level of the higher race;
- (b) Physical and intellectual regression and hence the beginning of a slowly but surely progressing sickness [*eines, wenn auch langsam, so doch sicher fortschreitenden Siechtums*].

To bring about such a development is therefore nothing else but to sin against the will of the eternal creator [*Sünde treiben wider den Willen des ewigen Schöpfers*].⁴⁸

Hitler's crude equivocation between animal "species" and human "races" has baffled even readers who tried to take his worldview as seriously as possible. Eberhard Jäckel considered this notion of race beneath contempt: "There is no need to comment on the nonsensicality of this kind of argument."⁴⁹ Others, such as Alan Bullock, Ian Kershaw and Richard J. Evans, have spoken of "enter[ing] the world of the insane", an "over-riding and all-embracing obsession" or a "paranoid conviction".⁵⁰ These psycho-pathological characterisations of Hitler's racist beliefs are certainly appropriate as regards the "target" content of these beliefs but help little to explain their appeal for Hitler's followers and the catastrophic consequences. By focusing on their function as metaphorical mappings, however,

favoured by extreme racists) only to underline that its proponents were engaged in an irrational enterprise: "Those who do not admit the principle of evolution, must look at species as separate creations . . . ; and they must decide what forms of man they will consider as species by the analogy of the method commonly pursued in ranking other organic beings as species. But it is a hopeless endeavour to decide this point, until some definition of the term 'species' is generally accepted; and the definition must not include an indeterminate element such as an act of creation. . . . Those naturalists, on the other hand, who admit the principle of evolution . . . will feel no doubt that all the races of man are descended from a single primitive stock."⁵⁸ The whole question of whether the different varieties of humans constituted *species* or *races* was therefore only of secondary importance to Darwin. For him, this was a question of more or less emphasis on differences between existing varieties; in his model, all species had been at a previous point in time "sub-varieties" (or "so-called races") of earlier species.

In terminology that would count today as highly "politically incorrect", Darwin even asserted that some human races, for instance, "the Negro and European, are so distinct that, if specimens had been brought to a naturalist without further information, they would undoubtedly have been considered by him as good and true species."⁵⁹ On the other hand, he stressed that "all the races agree in so many unimportant details of structure and in so many mental peculiarities, that these can be accounted for only by inheritance from a common progenitor."⁶⁰ In a similar dialectical argument, he claims that "American aborigines, Negroes and Europeans are as different from each other in mind as any three races that can be named",⁶¹ only to then highlight their *similarities*: "yet I was incessantly struck, whilst living with the Fuegians . . . , with the many little traits of character, shewing [*sic*] how similar their minds were to ours; and so it was with a full-blooded Negro with whom I once happened to be intimate".⁶²

For Hitler, to assert kinship (or friendship) with "Fuegians" or "full-blooded Negroes" would have been anathema. His interest in blurring the lines between *race* and *species* was not motivated by a wish to emphasise evolutionary continuity but, on the contrary, to make contrasts between human "races" appear as discontinuous as possible. Despite his pretension to "rational", scientific standards, Hitler's notion of "race" was based on the supposed "culture-building" abilities of the human races as "founders", "bearers" and "destroyers of culture" (*Kulturbegründer, -träger, -zerstörer*).⁶³ This tripartite distinction comes down to a simple opposition in one dimension: of all human races in the world, only one qualifies as the *founder* of culture, i.e. the Aryan race, and again only one bears the stigma of the *destroyer* of culture, "the Jew". All other races and peoples are just intermediates, i.e. mere *bearers* of the *founders'* culture to a higher or lesser degree.

The concept of the fundamental "racial" opposition "Aryan"—"Jew" (and of the Jew-exclusive hierarchy of "creator"—and "bearer"—races) has no basis

Table 3.4 Extended Scenario Structure of *Body-Nation* Mappings in *Mein Kampf*

	Event Structure		
<i>Domains</i>	Underlying Cause	Present Situation	Action Needed
<i>Source</i>	Poisoning by an 'alien body' (bacillus, virus, sponger)	→ Body suffering from a severe, deadly illness, i.e. blood poisoning	→ Cure by way of a complete removal of the cause of the illness
	↓	↑	↓
<i>Target Level 1a</i>	Race defilement of innocent girl by Jewish rapist	⇒ Destruction of hereditary foundations of the girl's race/people	⇒ The girl must be saved from the rapist
	↓	↑1	↓
<i>Target Level 1b</i>	Destructive influence of Jews on German society	⇒ Germany's downfall following the defeat in World War I	⇒ Elimination of Jews from German society/Europe
	↓	↓	↓
<i>Target Level 2</i>	Devilish forces foster unnatural mixing of human species/races	⇒ The natural course of improvement of species-races is put in jeopardy	⇒ A redeemer has to enforce the creator's cosmic design

✓ In terms of this last scenario version, "the Jew" was seen as an essentially *anti-human parasitic* species, which, unlike an unconsciously acting bio-parasite, *deliberately* tried to invade as many host populations as possible. As the infection was lethal for all its hosts, its own victory would also be its own nemesis: it would perish together with the last host it had conquered.¹¹⁷ "The Jew" thus became a kind of universal *super-parasite* that not only had the will to destroy other races but would do this, as it were, on principle, i.e. even risking its own destruction in the process. In this cosmic scenario framework, all conceptual boundaries between source and target domains were erased: for Hitler, any German-Jewish contact *was* blood mix, hence *blood defilement* and *blood poisoning*. The conceptual and epistemological difference of source and target levels was short-circuited and the result was a closed belief system of extreme apparent coherence, as the different scenario levels could be used to corroborate each other. Any claims that might seem problematic at target level were thus "proven" at source level—and vice versa. Outside facts that did not fit the scenario

could be dismissed as the product of cunning deception practised by "the Jew" as "the great master of lying".¹¹⁸

By following up the implications of the politico-medical metaphor scenario in *Mein Kampf*, we have reached the core, or in Hitler's words, the "granite foundations", of his specific, vicious anti-Semitism.¹¹⁹ They centred on the notion of an irreconcilable antagonism between Aryans/Germans and "the Jew", the responsibility for which lay wholly with "the Jew". It was he and he alone who had launched a deadly attack in the form of *blood poisoning* against the German nation's *body* at least at three levels: a) as a supposedly real act of *blood defilement*, i.e. rape or seduction, b) as cause of the German nation's *illness*, and c) as a devilish conspiracy against the creator's design. "The Jew" was portrayed as an eternal agent of destruction, which, unlike an unconsciously "acting" bio-parasite (a virus or bacillus), would deliberately invade as many host populations as possible.

The apparent conclusiveness of this conceptual framework suggestive of genocide derived not so much from the individual "content" of Hitler's metaphorization of Jews as *parasites* but from its integration in scenarios that had their own internal event-structure logic. The basic mapping (see Tables 3.1, 3.2) allowed inferences from the domain of popular biological, medical and hygienic knowledge ("necessity to remove a parasitic agent of disease") to be transferred to the target level of politics ("necessity to fight against the alleged Jewish influence"). This mapping and its implications did not as such transcend the conventional clichés of anti-Semitic discourse at the time (as we shall see later, the *parasite* image had become established in German *body politic* conceptualisations much earlier and had gained central importance by the end of the nineteenth century).¹²⁰ Hitler, however, did not stop at exploiting the standard implications of this analogy. By including a secondary target level of cosmic-metaphysical "redemption-through-annihilation" and an intermediate pseudo-realistic level between source and target scenarios (see Tables 3.3, 3.4), he managed to insinuate that the alleged crime of *blood poisoning* was "literally" true as well as being the overarching conceptual frame for the Jewish role in humanity at large.

The analysis of this multilayered conceptual structure of the chief causal event in the *illness-cure* scenario helps to explain the peculiar "metaphorical" status of Nazi anti-Semitism as far as it appears in *Mein Kampf*, whilst fully recognising its function as a real policy model for what the Nazis would later call the "Final Solution". The *blood-poisoning* scenario was considered to be truthful both at the level of experienced reality and in the metaphorical/allegorical applications of that concept. This alleged act of deliberate *parasitic* aggression justified in the eyes of Hitler and his followers any inhuman behaviour towards "the Jew" as an altruistic act of life-saving help for his supposed victims, i.e. any *innocent Aryan girl*, which at the same time symbolized *the German national body, the whole of humanity* and even *the cosmic order*.

German nation and “the Jew” was relayed endlessly by the controlled mass media and was therefore sure to find a wide national and international audience. Regarding the reception, we shall take the aforementioned secret reports into consideration, as well as the secret diaries of Victor Klemperer, a professor at Dresden University until 1935, who was considered to be racially Jewish by the Nazis but survived the Nazi period thanks to being married to a non-Jewish wife who stood by him. His secret diary, published posthumously,⁵ provided the material for his 1945 analysis of the *Language of the Third Reich*.⁶ The period covered is that between 1930, when the NSDAP won a significant share of votes in the general election of 17 September (18.3%, compared with 2.6% previously) and the end of World War II in May 1945.

4.1 PREPARING THE PUBLIC FOR THE GENOCIDE: THE BODY-PARASITE SCENARIO IN NAZI ANTI-SEMITIC PROPAGANDA, 1933–1939

The extreme socio-economic crisis in Germany that ensued as part of the worldwide recession following the bank crash of 1929 lent itself, so to speak, to the use of *illness* imagery. Even the plain-talking conservative chancellor of the Centre Party, Heinrich Brüning, spoke of the urgent need for a political and social *recovery* (*Gesundung*) of the nation as a precondition for regaining the ability to engage in reform policies.⁷ It was he, however, who was the main target of Hitler and Goebbels’s accusations that the government treated the “wounds on the German people’s body” by just “putting on sticking plaster”,⁸ instead of ridding the nation’s *body of parasites*.⁹ In a parliamentary speech in 1932, Goebbels attacked Brüning’s austerity measures as the equivalent of a “scientifically correct operation” that had “left the patient dead”.¹⁰ In the summer of that year, during the last general election campaign of the Weimar Republic, he depicted the Reichstag parliament as a “carcass” (*Parlamentskadaver*) whose “carrion stench” (*Aasgestank*) was polluting the people and had to (be made to) disappear.¹¹

When he was finally appointed chancellor in January 1933, Hitler, swiftly followed by Goebbels, proclaimed his government’s determination to restore the *nation’s body* through a “reform of head and limbs” (*Reform an Haupt und Gliedern*), echoing the famous formula from the time of the Church Reformation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹² Three months later, after a first nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses, Goebbels declared German Jewry to be an “alien, separate nation with parasitic characteristics” (*artfremdes, streng abgeschlossenes Volk mit parasitären Eigenschaften*), intent on sabotaging the national *reform/healing process*.¹³ The boycott appears to have met with widespread indifference in the general population and was called off after just one day¹⁴ but was terrifying to Jewish people.¹⁵ In combination with the legal and professional discrimination

✓ one's own body that is about to poison one's bloodstream is of a different order of intensity than that of a garden weed. The defensive reaction by the host organism is also different: it is instinctive, immediate, involves terror, revulsion and righteous aggression, and will not rest until the last vestiges of the parasite are eliminated.

Baumann is, however, right to stress that the genocidal "cleansing" ideology, whether botanical or zoological in its source input, was not reserved for Jewish targets alone but for *all* supposed forms of life "unworthy to live" in the Nazi state. In the second year of his rule, Hitler even made an example of his own comrades falling under the *cleansing-as-extermination* maxim. In the so-called "Night of Long Knives" (30 June 1934) almost all the leaders of the "storm troopers" (*Sturmabteilung*, SA), as well as a number of alleged co-conspirators (including Hitler's immediate predecessor as Reichs-Chancellor, General von Schleicher and his wife), were murdered on the pretence of an alleged plot to overthrow his government. In the Reichstag, Hitler presented the executions, which had taken place on his orders but without any formal legal authority, as the "burning out, down to the raw flesh" of "ulcers" (*Geschwüre*) that had been caused to grow by "poisoning", specifically, "well-poisoning" (*Brunnenvergiftung*), echoing the age-old anti-Jewish allegation.²³ The ambitious SA leadership under Ernst Röhm may have indeed formed a threat to his own rule, but according to Hitler it was the nation's *life* that was in danger:

✓ The nation must know that no one can threaten her existence . . . A nation only has itself to blame if she does not find the strength to defend herself against such parasites [*Schädlinge*]."²⁴

✓ If Hitler was ready to sacrifice his own comrades as well as incur the opprobrium attendant on ordering the killing of members of the top ranks of the traditional military and political establishment on account of their being *Schädlinge*, then it was plain to all that inclusion in the *parasite* category amounted to nothing less than a latent death warrant. The German public, presented with the tale of an attempted coup d'état (as well as with lurid hints of "unspeakable" scenes in which SA leaders had been found on arrest), showed for the most part relief as to the ensuing restriction of the SA's "rowdy" violence and admiration for the Führer's decisiveness in *cleansing* (*Säuberung*, *Reinigung*) his own movement of *Schädlinge*, according to underground reports.²⁵ Victor Klemperer noted that the lack of legal grounds for the executions was accepted as irrelevant on account of Hitler's authority as *Führer*. He also reported that Goebbels attempted to link the attempted coup d'état to Jews.²⁶ A more tenuous connection—between Jewish emigrants and the leadership of the SA, of all people—could hardly be imagined. Most importantly, however, Hitler came out of the affair as being resolute and "consistent": he was regarded as having proven himself firm enough to destroy any *illnesses* and *parasites* on the nation's *body*,

even if it meant sacrificing his own comrades. He had acted as a heroic *healer* who did not shy away from eliminating parts of his own party's *body* to save the nation's greater *body*. In this perspective, the Night of the Long Knives needed no legal justification: it was an act of self-defence.

If in 1934 the National Socialist government had demonstrated its ability to *cleanse* itself, the Nuremberg Party rally of the following year proceeded to lay the legal foundation for disposing of all *alien bodies* in the nation. The party and in its wake the Reichstag passed the race laws "for the Protection of German Blood and Honour" and a newly defined citizenship, which excluded Jews from German citizenship and from marriage or sexual relations with Germans; associated decrees stigmatized "less valuable" handicapped people as well as "Gypsies, Negroes, and their bastards".²⁷ According to Hitler's proclamation, "Jewish Marxism" was the core "enemy within" which was now to be fought relentlessly,²⁸ whereas other countries ("when we look around us") still contained the "ferments of decomposition" and the "elements of destruction", on account of the activities of Jewish emigrants.²⁹

In technical legal terms, the Nuremberg laws may have been over-complicated as the supposed racial Jewish heredity was solely defined in terms of ancestors' religion. The resulting calculations of degrees of blood admixture for anyone but a "full" Jew were the subject of endless debates among Nazi jurists and administrators (up to the "Wannsee conference" of 20 January 1942, which coordinated the already ongoing genocide).³⁰ Notwithstanding these technical problems, the laws sufficed to ensure that "proof that one was not of Jewish origin or did not belong to any 'less valuable' group became essential for a normal existence in the Third Reich".³¹ Any connection with Jews now carried the threat of criminalisation. For Jews were not just being segregated from German society; they were now systematically linked to crime and deviancy under the *parasite/pest* label in police reports, party speeches and the Nazi press.³² Particular emphasis was laid on the link to sex crimes. The "prototypical" *blood-poisoning* scenario of the rape and/or seduction of non-Jewish victims by Jews, which, as we saw, occupied a central place in Hitler's imagination was continuously reinforced by the "popular" outlets of anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda, such as Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer*.³³

With the Nuremberg laws, the Reich's highest legal experts went to great lengths to describe precisely all sexual activities that might be subsumed under the label of *Rassenschande*.³⁴ With such official backing, party members as well as "ordinary" citizens now engaged in the business of denunciations.³⁵ The pornographic racist "male fantasies" (Theweleit 1980) that had always been a central part of anti-Semites' obsessions were made legal and social reality. In order to fit "real" experiences to the stereotype of "the Jew" as a sexual parasite and predator, the Nazis did not shy away from provoking or enacting the supposedly "typical" behaviour. *Sopade* reports mention, for instance, the "coincidental" public kissing of a Jewish

or text based on the analogy, still demanded a minimum of inferential operation on the part of the audience in order to be fully "understood": The public were led to the intended conclusion but had to make the crucial inference (i.e. from the *body-parasite* scenario to the annihilation outcome) for themselves. This inference from analogy demanded more cognitive effort than the reception of a non-literal statement about the genocide (which was never officially made) would have demanded.⁹² The film thus left no doubt about what the Nazis were planning for the Jews but the responsibility for accepting this knowledge was left with the audience, thus making them accomplices of the genocide.

After the invasion of the USSR on 22 June 1941, which was to deliver an additional 2.5 million Jews into his hands,⁹³ Hitler repeated his trick from 1939 of blaming the whole conflict on "world Jewry";⁹⁴ but now he could set in motion a truly Europe-wide campaign of destruction against the *parasite race*. Accordingly, during the summer and autumn of 1941, SS *Einsatzgruppen*, police reserve battalions, and *Wehrmacht* troops started mass killings that quickly developed into the wholesale annihilation of local and regional communities.⁹⁵ During the campaign, Hitler's 1939 "prophecy" about the annihilation of Jewry, linked to references to Jews as *parasites*, appeared time and again in the letters of perpetrators and training journals for Order Police units.⁹⁶

After the defeat of the German offensive outside Moscow and the United States' entry into the war in December 1941, however, the context of the genocidal campaign and its propagandistic support changed. The supposedly Jewish-controlled USSR had shown its ability to fight back, which even Hitler had to acknowledge in public,⁹⁷ and the Western war coalition had strengthened immeasurably. The threat to eliminate the European Jews had no further use as a means of blackmailing or intimidating other states, nor could the mass murder be postponed so as to provide an "addendum" to a quickly completed military victory, for it was evident that the war would last for a considerably longer period.⁹⁸

Hitler implicitly admitted as much in his speech to a popular rally in Berlin on 30 January 1942 when he presented the alternative that the war could only end "either with the obliteration of the Aryan peoples or the disappearance of Jewry from Europe" (*daß entweder die arischen Völker ausgerottet werden oder daß das Judentum aus Europa verschwindet*).⁹⁹ His response to the rhetorical question—"which outcome would it be?"—was to recite his prophecy of "annihilation", this time embellishing it with the reference to the "truly ancient Jewish law 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'", which he promised to apply "for the first time" to the Jews themselves. All of this was topped up with a further prediction that the hour would come "when the most evil world enemy of all times will have ended his role for a thousand years".¹⁰⁰ According to *Sicherheitsdienst* reports, the broadcasted speech was praised and the accusations against the Jews with the specific emphasis on the 'Eye for an eye . . .' phrase were

interpreted as an indication that the *Führer's* "fight against the Jew was being conducted with utmost consequence to its end and that soon the last Jew would be deported (*vertrieben*) from the European continent".¹⁰¹ By this time, the public evidence of the "utmost consequences" was unavoidable: since autumn 1941, the remaining German Jews had to wear the open stigma of the yellow star and their numbers dwindled due to the ever-accelerating deportations to the East.¹⁰² From October 1941 onwards, any public show of friendly relations or pity towards Jews by non-Jewish Germans was deemed an offence worthy of arrest and, in "serious cases", of imprisonment in a concentration camp.¹⁰³

✓ Hitler's repeated public references to the "fulfilment" of the annihilation prophecy against European Jewry as a *therapy* of Germany and Europe's *illness* in 1941–42, which were recycled time and again by Goebbels,¹⁰⁴ left no doubt that he regarded the now ongoing genocide as the realization of his greatest ambition and as "doing the Lord's work". The *annihilation* of the Jewish *parasite race* was now made public to anybody who wished to listen to it. In his *Reichstag* speech of 26 April 1942, Hitler reconfirmed his redemptive-therapeutic scenario of what he saw as "world history in the making" in such an emphatic manner that it left little room for any non-genocidal interpretation:

✓ Politically, this war is no longer about the interests of individual nations but a conflict between those nations that want to assure their members' right to exist on this earth and those that have become the will-less instruments of an international world-parasite [*Weltparasit*]. The true character of this Jewish international war-mongering has now been revealed to the German soldiers and their allies in that country where Jewry exerts its exclusive dictatorship . . . We know the theoretical principles and the cruel truth underlying the aims of this world pestilence [*Weltpest*]. Its name is "dictatorship of the proletariat" but its reality is the dictatorship of the Jew!¹⁰⁵

✓ Even if Bolshevik Russia is at the moment the tangible product of this Jewish infection, we must not forget that it is democratic capitalism that provides the conditions for such an outcome. . . . In the first phase of this process [the Jews] debase the masses of millions of people to helpless slaves . . . Later, this is followed by the extermination of the people's national intelligentsia . . . What remains [of the people] is the beast in man plus a Jewish class that, once it has taken over, will eventually, as parasites [*als Parasit*], destroy the own host on which it has grown.¹⁰⁶

These words echo the passages of *Mein Kampf* that we analysed earlier. In contrast to its use in *Mein Kampf*, however, the *body-parasite* scenario is presented here no longer as a general law or a prediction but as a fact that

can now be acknowledged. For Hitler, the Jewish *parasite* was now reaping the just rewards for starting the new world war, and it would perish together with its host nation. Germany's war effort, led by its redeemer-*Führer*, was the *surgical* intervention that brought to fruition what was in any case inevitable. This was Hitler's own "truth" about the unfolding Holocaust at the height of its implementation: still couched in *parasite*-*"metaphoric"* language but ostentatiously murderous.

Victor Klemperer saw in Hitler's speech of April "intensification of hatred to the highest degree of madness", brought about by the method of "combining secrecy and open threat".¹⁰⁷ He read it as a sign that the "end" was imminent, not "five minutes before twelve" but "11.59 o'clock" and whether Jews "would still live to the end of the day" was dubious.¹⁰⁸ After he heard an older worker shouting at him "You Jewish swine" (*Du Judenluder*), he concluded that for Jews perhaps even "11.59 o'clock" was no longer the correct time.¹⁰⁹ Nazis were evidently reassured by the speech, as it "blamed the Jews for the military losses and the devastation inflicted by the Allied bombing campaign"¹¹⁰ and thus confirmed the overall cognitive frame in which the war against the Jewish world enemy was just and successful. Caught in the middle, "ordinary Germans" were on the one hand "no longer impressed by the propaganda" but unable to voice opposition, which would invariably elicit immediate prosecution; instead, tacit opposition was visible from large-scale apathy and growing fears that the genocide of the Jews would lead to Allied retaliation.¹¹¹

However, during the summer of 1942, with both the systematic mass murder of Jews and the new offensives in southern Russia advancing relentlessly,¹¹² Hitler was still sufficiently confident to continue boasting of his prophecy and to publicly emphasize its consequences with sadistic pleasure. At the end of September, with the 6th Army seemingly poised to conquer Stalingrad, he harked back to the alleged "mockery" of his prophecy by the Jews before he came to power, a topic that had figured also in his 1939 and 1941 speeches.¹¹³ He facetiously wondered about "whether by now there were any left who were still laughing at him" and promised that they would soon stop: not just in Germany but "everywhere".¹¹⁴ Friedländer calls the prophecy's function by this time that of a "mantra announcing to all and sundry that the fate of the Jews was sealed and soon none would remain".¹¹⁵ It served as a quasi-magical incantation to reassert Hitler's double strategy of war and genocide. In the anti-Semitic scenario as applied to the war situation, victory on the battlefield ensured annihilation of the Jews by making their deportation/mass murder physically possible; the genocide, on the other hand, was thought necessary to secure military success because it guaranteed, supposedly, that there would be no resistance or "stabbing-in-the-back".

However, with the catastrophic turnaround in Germany's military fortunes at the battles of El Alamein and Stalingrad in late 1942/early 1943, the strategic context changed irredeemably, whilst eyewitness reports and

rumours about the mass killings of Jews in occupied Poland and Russia spread ever more widely in Germany.¹¹⁶ From this time onwards, Hitler's references to his 1939 prophecy seem to have ceased. Its propagandistic usefulness had ended. With military victory over the Allies becoming less likely if not impossible, the nexus between the prophecy's two aspects—military victory and “annihilation” of the European Jews—was broken. As a consequence, the scenario started to be used on its own: no longer a fulfilled promise of victory, it was now being presented as an insurance against total defeat.

4.3 RACIAL THERAPY THROUGH GENOCIDE AS AN END IN ITSELF: BODY-PARASITE IMAGERY FOR THE “FINAL SOLUTION”, 1943–1945

On 30 January 1943, when the anniversary of the Nazi “power seizure” effectively coincided with the final capitulation of the 6th Army at Stalin-grad, Hitler's ritual anniversary speech, read over the radio by Goebbels, stated that only the National Socialist idea could put an end to “the Jew's” warmongering and its effects of “tearing apart” (*zerfleischen*) and “decomposing” (*zersetzen*) humanity.¹¹⁷ The same imagery was used by Goebbels in his infamous “total war” speech of 18 February 1943, in which he interpreted the loss of the 6th Army as a “sacrifice” that could only be honoured if the rest of the nation fought on with “total” commitment, lest a truly apocalyptic alternative to a German victory should become reality (which uncannily resembled the actual devastation wrought by Nazi Germany on Europe at the time):

Behind the advancing Soviet divisions we can already see the Jewish execution commandos and behind them we see the terror, the spectre of millions starving and complete anarchy in Europe. International Jewry thus proves itself to be the devilish ferment of decomposition [*das teuflische Ferment der Dekomposition*], feeling as it does an outright cynical pleasure in plunging the world into the deepest chaos and causing the demise of age-old civilizations, which it never had a part in.¹¹⁸

With breathtaking rhetorical and ideological audacity, Goebbels transformed the Soviet victory, which had just resulted in the loss of 300,000 men and a major retreat of the German forces, into a negative “proof” of the truth of the *body-parasite* scenario: it showed what a complete defeat of German forces would result in, i.e. the destruction of European/German civilization by the *ferment of decomposition*. This confirmation of the real possibility of a catastrophic outcome was, of course, still linked to the reassurance that Germany had a chance to avoid it: if only the whole nation followed the *Führer* and intensified her war effort, she would still win through. The radical measures

5 Methodological Reflection

Body and Illness Metaphors in the Evolution of Western Political Thought and Discourse

Having studied several crucial phases in the development and reception of the *body-parasite* metaphor scenario in Nazi Germany over the period 1930–1945, we can return to the question of how to explicate its cognitive import, i.e. the way in which it was understood by its users and hearers as a meaningful depiction of politics that could even motivate them to engage in specific actions. In view of the historical consequences, the answer to this question is far from trivial; however, at first glance, those text passages from Nazi discourse (whether from *Mein Kampf* or from later speeches) that contain relevant metaphor uses seem so absurd that it is difficult to take them seriously. The descriptions of social and national groups in terms of animal organisms and the practical conclusions that the Nazis drew from them are so obsessive and grotesque that their rational discussion seems impossible. Hence, historians have described their content as “entering the world of the insane” or sheer “nonsensicality”. Indeed, when analysed stringently for logical consistency at either the source level of biology and medicine or at the target level of politics, the metaphor scenario of the *German nation’s fight for its life against the Jewish parasite race* is riddled with contradictions and non sequiturs. However, when analysed as a metaphoric blend that “created” its own meaning system, the scenario did show a high degree of internal coherence and also an enormous scope that ranged from accounts of alleged crimes over socio-political analyses and overviews of German national history to eschatological and cosmic visions (see Chapter 3). Hitler used it as a conceptually closed, universal frame of reference to perform his political speech acts of warning, threatening and promising/prophesying. At the time of writing *Mein Kampf*, he could do no more than perform these speech acts in theory, as he was imprisoned. But the “action points” of his metaphorical scenario spelt out what would be carried out if and when he acquired the political power to fulfil his “vision”, as was demonstrated in all its genocidal consequences during 1933–45.

With the hindsight knowledge about these consequences, some historians have treated the *body-parasite* scenario and its eliminatory outcome as not being metaphoric at all, i.e. either as a “literal” blueprint or as camouflage phraseology that was meant to hide the intended target result of the

extermination against "the Jewish race in Europe" that was implied in the promise of national/racial *therapy* and *redemption* was understood.

If we therefore reject "literalness", "camouflage" or "misunderstanding" as categories to characterise the cognitive import for Nazi *parasite* imagery, we have to search for other explanations of its politico-discursive "success". Some researchers have pointed to the historical precursors of Nazi anti-Semitism, i.e. the development of "racially" motivated anti-Semitism since the second half of the nineteenth century, which is supposed to have provided the precondition of Nazi success. Goldhagen (2003) suggested that it generated a predisposition for the acceptance of an "eliminationist" anti-Semitism in the general public, so that by the outbreak of World War I, "a stable framework with widely accepted reference points, images, and explicit elaborations—had for over thirty years been in place with regard to the Jews."¹ In the context of the post-World War I crisis of Germany, this radical anti-Semitic "framework" is assumed to have become mass consensus.² Goldhagen's critics have pointed out that this hypothesis glosses over crucial developments of anti-Semitism in Germany between the 1860s and the 1930s in such a sweeping manner as to invalidate his generalizations.³ That a violent, racially motivated anti-Semitism was on the rise in Germany since the latter half of the nineteenth century is uncontroversial since Hannah Arendt's studies on the *Origins of Totalitarianism* from the 1950s, but it is also undisputed that this was not a special German phenomenon.⁴ The question of whether the Germans at some point became "eliminationist" anti-Semitic racists revisits some of the controversies about the search for "the man" (or several men) "who gave Hitler his ideas" (Daim 1958), which occupied early researchers of Nazi ideology. The answers provided then, i.e. interpretations of Hitler's references in *Mein Kampf* to nineteenth-century anti-Semitism in Austria, to Richard Wagner, Dietrich Eckart and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, as well as to social Darwinist theories and apocalyptic religious traditions, are pertinent and backed up by evidence but still not conclusive. They hardly explain the strength and ubiquity of the genocidal impulse among the contemporary German public. Any attempt at an explanation has to take into account the disturbing unresolved issue at the centre of Holocaust ideology: how could a worldview based on an analogical mapping of bio-medical onto socio-political concepts become so powerful and be taken so seriously that it actually turned into the reality of genocide and world war? Clearly, historical "conditioning" of the German public has to play a role in the explanation of the ideological-propagandistic success of Nazi anti-Semitism; but to restrict the search for "precursor concepts" to the pre-twentieth-century "race" theories or anti-Semitic tendencies in German history amounts to an artificial exclusion of the main conceptual complex that the Nazis themselves used and that, as we have argued earlier, was understood by the German populace, i.e. the complex of biologically and medically based metaphors referring to political issues in general and national identity in particular. We therefore have to consider the possibility

To draw any direct link between the historical metaphor tradition and its use by the Nazis would amount to attempting to convey an aura of respectability to the latter, which might seem desirable from a neo-Nazi propagandistic viewpoint but evidently has got nothing to do with any serious endeavour to reconstruct and understand the conceptual and discursive history of this metaphor complex. On the other hand, to deny *any* link between the tradition and its manifestations in Nazi ideology is akin to cherry-picking supposedly "respectable" parts of the *body-illness* metaphor complex and excluding its unsavoury aspects, thus truncating the analysis of its semantic and political range of implications. Acknowledging that the Nazis and their audiences are not likely to have consciously followed in the footsteps of philosophical discussions does not preclude the investigation of their dependence on aspects of these conceptual and cultural traditions. Our guiding principle for the following chapters is therefore to look for conceptual and discursive traditions in the use of the metaphor to which the Nazis could attach their notions of a racial *therapy* for the German nation's *body*.

5.2 AN EVOLUTIONARY ACCOUNT OF POLITICAL BODY METAPHORS

One central challenge for providing a cognitive account of the historical development of the conceptual metaphor complex surrounding the notion of the state or nation as a *body* lies in the problem of formulating a perspective for the conceptualization of long-term semantic change. Cognitive metaphor analysis in its early phase did not make historical investigations its foremost concern. Even if the historicity of conceptual metaphor systems such as the *Great Chain of Being* was acknowledged, as in Lakoff and Turner (1989),¹⁰ the main emphasis was on the synchronic investigation of the metaphor's "basic version" that is "largely unconscious and so fundamental to our thinking that we barely notice it" and that "occurs throughout a wide range of the world's cultures".¹¹ In the context of cognitive "embodiment" theory, the role of the body as the experiential and physiological basis of perception and conceptualization has been explored further, with special regard to neurophysiological structures and to primary experiential scenes in ontogenesis.¹² On this basis, we can de-construct the *body-nation* metaphor as the complexification of the general concept of *complex (social) systems as bodies* and the metonymy of *bodies-persons*. In an ahistorical approach, it might then be argued that all uses of a metaphor mapping, such as that between *nation* and *body*, are mere re-occurrences of a universal conceptual unit that as such has no history other than a chronological series of manifestations, which would be produced automatically, unconsciously and spontaneously.

Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) put forward the idea of “a physiology of the whole national body [*Physiologie des ganzen Nationalkörpers*]” instead of the outdated descriptions of the medieval Holy Roman Empire that dealt mostly with the “pathology of the head, i.e. the Emperor and some Estates”.³²

Herder developed and established an interest in *all* nations—and their languages and cultures—as *organic* wholes and, consequently, in their *physiological* explanation. As Isaiah Berlin (1976) has pointed out, there was “no *Favoritvolk*” for Herder; his “use of ‘organic’ and ‘organism’ [was] still wholly metaphorical and not, as in later, more metaphysical thinkers, only half metaphorical”.³³ However, it was also Herder who first described the Jews as a *parasitical plant* or *growth* on other nations:

God’s own people who were once given their fatherland as a divine present have been, almost since their inception, a parasitic plant on the stems of other nations [*eine parasitische Pflanze auf den Stämmen anderer Nationen*].³⁴

When comparing such a formulation with later anti-Semitic texts, it is important to bear in mind that Herder did not connect the *parasite plant* with the idea of a *human* or *animal body*: the *host* of the “Jewish parasite”, as he saw it, was another plant, e.g. a *tree*. The source domain for the *parasite* image was still botany (as in the case of Sieyès’s accusation against the privileged classes),³⁵ not human physiology. It would therefore be misleading, as well as anachronistic, to blame Herder for later versions of the *body-parasite* scenario.

Soon, however, the combination of the metaphor of the *nation’s body* and the scenario of a *parasite-induced illness* was to become a more potent and dangerous conceptual mixture in the context of “naturalized” concepts of society and history. The new term *Volkskörper* began to replace *Nationalkörper*, emphasizing the physical presence of the people.³⁶ Once the *parasite* concept was remapped into the source frame of human physiology, the focus shifted to the *parasite’s* allegedly destructive, poisonous effect on the *host*, as statements from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards show. In the run-up to the revolution of 1848, the nationalistic publicist Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769–1860) depicted “Jews and their fellows-in-arms” as working incessantly “towards the decomposition and destruction [*Zersetzung und Auflösung*] of . . . the love for the fatherland and the fear of God”.³⁷ The Prussian court preacher Adolf Stöcker (1835–1909) denounced “modern Jewry” as an “alien drop of blood in our national body [*ein fremder Blutstropfen in unserem Volkskörper*] . . . a destructive, wholly destructive force”.³⁸ In his 1881 book *On the Jewish Question*, Eugen Karl Dühring (1833–1921) declared that “the Jew comes into his own” when he can “act as a parasite in an existing or impending process of corruption”. He concluded that “wherever [the Jew] has made his home

king, the nobility and the protestant church from within".⁹⁶ The Prussian *state-Leviathan*, which was still "full of life", was "castrated" by "Stahl-Jolson".⁹⁷ Following on after this main "breach" of Hobbes's "authentic" idea of the state, a host of Jewish intellectuals (i.e. the Rothschilds, etc., see earlier) "[broke] into the European nations"; each one occupied a "zone of operation in the economy, in journalism, in the arts and in the sciences".⁹⁸ The institutions of individual freedom that these "liberals" created were the "knives with which anti-individualistic powers cut up the body of the Leviathan and divided his flesh between them. Thus, the mortal God died a second death".⁹⁹ In his denunciation of the supposed liberal-Jewish plot to *castrate*, *kill* and *devour* the *state-Leviathan*, Schmitt provided a high-brow version of Nazi-typical historiographies of "the Jew" as the *decomposing agent* in European culture. There were no explicit endorsements of Nazi policy in Schmitt's *Leviathan*, but his consistent use of scenarios of *decomposition* and *parasitic destruction* as the subtext for his conceptual history strongly resembled Hitler's scenario of an *illness of the body politic* caused by "the Jew" that necessitated a *radical therapy*. It also fitted into Schmitt's professed admiration of Hitler's *Führer*-competence on account of his proven ability "to distinguish who is friend and who is foe".¹⁰⁰

In his theory of the *homo sacer*, which is informed by a detailed critique of Schmitt, Giorgio Agamben has shown that the sovereign's power to stigmatize a subject as a *homo sacer*, i.e. as someone "who may be killed but not sacrificed", is even "more original", more basic "than the Schmittian opposition between friend and enemy, fellow citizen and foreigner".¹⁰¹ This stigmatizing and destructive use of power to deprive subjects of all rights, was, needless to say, characteristic of Nazi Germany: its victims were no mere "foes" in the sense of strangers or "honourable" adversaries (as Schmitt would pretend) but instead "bare", dispensable life that could be extinguished without guilt, life "that did not deserve to live" (*lebensunwertes Leben*).¹⁰²

Agamben criticizes Schmitt not so much for being too radical or cynical but for not being radical enough in conceptualising the structure and effects of unrestricted state power. Unlike the "heroic" Schmittian sovereign who defined friend and foe to assert his own identity in the ensuing *fight*, Agamben's sovereign (as well as that of Hobbes in Agamben's reading)¹⁰³ is defined by his self-decreed right to declare a total *ban* on the *homo sacer* that allows him "to kill without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice".¹⁰⁴ As a consequence, Agamben gives a further twist to the interpretation of the figure in the frontispiece of *Leviathan*: the "Common-wealth's" artificial *body politic* that is formed of the "bare life" of individual persons signifies nothing but "the absolute capacity of the subjects' bodies to be killed".¹⁰⁵ The utterly defenceless existence of the prisoner in a Nazi concentration or extermination camp is the manifestation of this "new political body", and this concept is complemented by that of the *Führer*, who, unlike princes, kings and emperors of old, is "neither

monstrous body politic that was beyond the control of even the most prudent political healers.¹¹⁴

In its "revival" after almost three centuries at the time of the Nazi dictatorship, this political *monster* scenario was open to contradictory readings. Leo Strauss, in some way pre-figuring Susan Sontag's stance, put the main emphasis on the cautionary lesson for rational politics. From this perspective, Hobbes's depiction of *incurable diseases* of the *body politic* was meant to warn rulers and their advisors never to let the state's *health* deteriorate that far: instead, at the first recognition of any *symptoms*, they had to combat the *illness* by all means available to the *Leviathan*-state. Strauss claimed this "humanistic" Hobbes for the project of a new political theory that would empower a rational state order to go beyond the mere mediation of different socio-economic interests, as envisaged by classical liberalism. Schmitt's interpretation, on the other hand, was informed by a markedly different, "anti-liberal" vision: he admired Hobbes's *Leviathan* for its *unity* and *strength*, which needed to be reasserted against the efforts to *divide*, *weaken* and *castrate* it that had allegedly been perpetrated by generations of "Jewish thinkers". Schmitt abandoned the traditional source domain of human physiology for the *body politic* imagery and concentrated on the *unity of the animal body* of the *Leviathan*. In doing so, he surrendered the last vestiges of a humanistic vision of the *body politic*. In the end, however, it was his own forced "re-construction" of the *Leviathan* against the supposed Jewish conspiracy, not Hobbes's original one, that "failed to restore the natural unity of the state".¹¹⁵ Lastly, Neumann, in order to achieve a similar effect from the opposite, Nazi-critical perspective, chose the symbol of *Behemoth* to denounce the destructive strength of National Socialism. For him, the *monstrous* aspect of the Nazi *body*, as personified in the *Führer*, lay in the utter lack of any constructive vision of politics: for the same reason, the Nazi-*Behemoth*, though formidable, was doomed to perish eventually.

These opposing re-applications of Hobbes's *body-state* metaphor to Nazi Germany are of course not representative of any popular conceptualisations among the German public at the time: Strauss's and Neumann's analyses were restricted to a reception in academically orientated emigrant circles and political scientists; Schmitt's laboured re-appropriation of Hobbes was not even attractive to the Nazi elites that it was meant to placate. The references to the arcane biblical monsters *Leviathan* and *Behemoth* were esoteric and speculative and their *body*-metaphorical characterisation remained highly abstract: all that was left of their "nature" was sheer strength or force, which was viewed by Schmitt with nostalgic fascination, by Neumann with horror, and in Strauss "humanistic" interpretation was being relativised as much as philologically possible. Nevertheless, in their focus on the dehumanised *Führer*-state the three opposing readings "shared" an interest in redefining the nature of the *body politic* that was uncannily topical in the context of a regime that specialised in defining its

associate it with Shakespeare's texts.⁸ In US American English, *body politic* has its own characteristic connotations that invoke an inclusive view of society (as in President Obama's appeal to overcome "racial and religious tensions within the body politic").⁹ In political science and philosophy, the metaphor has also been employed to denote notions of inclusiveness, e.g. in debates about globalisation and the phenomenological critique of the theory of sovereignty.¹⁰ In France, Rousseau's notions of the *social body* of the people are still being invoked to promote patriotic solidarity, e.g. in an article by Michel Guénaire welcoming the election of Nicolas Sarkozy as president in 2007 as an opportunity to put "le vieux corps social français" in order and to rediscover "son propre génie".¹¹

Not only do such allusions demonstrate a degree of popular memorising of famous and infamous historical formulations of the metaphor but, more importantly, they derive their very pragmatic and political import from this historical "resonance". To invoke the *body politic* today would probably be viewed as a laboured effort to use archaic language, were it not for the fact that speakers and writers know that they will be understood as referring to a conceptual-discursive tradition that is still relevant for their audience. The historicity of the *body-state* metaphor, however vaguely remembered by members of the public, is part of its attractiveness for continued uses, interpretations and reinterpretations in public discourse. For this reason, the historical indexicality of the metaphor cannot be excluded from its cognitive analysis. If the grounding of the *body-state* mapping in experientially based schemas is the necessary condition for its successful use in all kinds of expressions and scenarios, its historicity and discursive "situatedness" (Fränk 2008) provide the necessary complement to reach a sufficient explanation of its variation patterns. In the remainder of this chapter we will discuss the implications of this programmatic statement for the further study of the *body-state* metaphor and of political metaphor in general.

In the first place, our overview of the various manifestations and scenarios of the *body-state* metaphor has shown that cognitive analysis has to take into account the full range of its semantic variation as regards the source domain. It is evident that there are vast differences in the anatomical, functional and medical understanding of even the most basic source concepts of *body-related* metaphors (e.g. anatomical parts, main organs and their functions) in antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and modern science. As for specialised notions, such as *parasites*, *cancer*, *AIDS*, *viruses*, etc., they could serve as source input for metaphorical use only after these concepts had entered popular knowledge. The "paths" of their semantic development and entry into public consciousness can be very complicated and are by no means only unidirectional (in the sense of body knowledge being "first" and its socio-political application coming "afterwards"). In the case of English *parasite* and German *Parasit*, for instance, etymological studies have shown that their Greek source term *parasitos* denoted "a person allowed to share in the food provided

in the various layers of popular knowledge frameworks.¹⁵ Such simultaneous use of source inputs with diachronically diverse origins provides the basis of semantic metaphor variation that constitutes a vast field for further research.

A second main question we have raised concerns the “cognitive import” of the *body-state* metaphor when we consider its central role in Nazi anti-Semitic ideology. In Part I we explicated the various layers of source and target inputs in detail to show the internal systematicity and range of Hitler’s imagery as a basis for an elaborate argument-by-analogy, which pervaded both *Mein Kampf* and his later rhetoric up to the end of the “Third Reich”. It is obvious and has never been contentious that the *body-parasite* scenario is present in these texts; what *has* been contentious is its cognitive and pragmatic function: was it a “mere” propaganda slogan to accompany, and perhaps camouflage, the “real” Nazi policies of genocide and war, or was it an integral part of the ideology that was necessary to make the Holocaust happen? We considered (Chapter 2) diverse hypotheses that assumed the latter case with view to the following question: How were the recipients, i.e. in the first place, the German public, supposed to have understood the meaning of the metaphor? The initial answers—that the metaphor was understood as a “literal” blueprint for genocide, or as a “code” to hide its true nature—turned out to be disappointing. As a literally true description the *body-parasite* scenario makes no sense; as a camouflage “code” it would have had to be more terminologically fixed and abstract (like, e.g., “special treatment” or “deportation”) to be functional. Instead, the scenario appeared in the *Führer*’s speeches and speeches by other party “leaders” of all ranks as well as newspapers, books, pamphlets, radio and film propaganda as a vivid and emphatic announcement of genocidal intentions. This publicity was, however, counteracted by the policy of strict secrecy practised by the agencies of perpetrators (SS, SD, Gestapo etc.). There are statements by Goebbels and Himmler to the effect that the German people were not (yet) ready for the full knowledge of what “happened to the Jews”, and we have detailed data from diaries and secret reports about the popular rumours of mass killings, which fell short of providing detailed information especially about the extermination camps but which do show a general awareness of the enormous dimension of the genocide. On the basis of these data, we can conclude that the metaphor scenario supporting the genocide was integrated into a systematically distorted discourse that treated the murder of European Jewry (as well as of other groups) as an “open secret”.

In this discourse the metaphor of *parasite annihilation* played the central role of naming, explaining (and supposedly justifying) the core content of Nazi policy against Jews, which was “taboo” for identification in literal terminology (apart from some cases of internal communication among the perpetrators). Depending on situational context, social identity and personal interests, members of the general public could, as it were, choose from

✓ an array of interpretative "versions" that ranged from dismissive attitudes towards it as mere "wild" or "ugly" rhetoric over semi-informed suspicion of its "true" meaning to knowing complicity with (or, in incomparably fewer cases, resistance against) its "practical" genocidal implications. In the latter cases, the official insistence on continuing the "annihilation of the Jewish *parasite* race" as a means to "save the German nation's *body*" (and, for good measure, also the wider European *body politic*) must be assumed to have been easily comprehensible as a paraphrase for a statement that the genocide was ongoing (even after the chances of military victory, for which it was supposedly a precondition, were disappearing).

✓ Whilst the Nazi leaders and their audience did not need to have detailed knowledge of the long history of political *body* imagery in Western political philosophy and public discourse in order to "understand" the genocide they were perpetrating and/or witnessing, the famous traditions of conceptualising state, society or nation as a body certainly had a reinforcing and familiarising effect on their use. Our sketches of the discursive and conceptual changes of *body-state* imagery in the preceding chapters have shown that this history is not amenable to a one-dimensional interpretation in the sense of a linear development, but that does not mean it is un-interpretable. The main contrast between the *political therapy* scenarios employed by John of Salisbury and Christine de Pizan, Starkey and Machiavelli, and Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant and Herder and those used by Hitler and his acolytes does not lie in the source knowledge or in the supposedly more "optimistic" view of the severity of *political illness*, but in the degree of commitment that they impose on speakers and hearers.

✓ In what Sontag called the "classical" tradition, the scenario of a maximally invasive and aggressive *therapy* (e.g. *amputation*, *radical surgery*) was present, but it did not figure as the only possible "solution"; rather, it was the means of last resort. It was conceivable, but it was certainly not considered to be desirable or necessary except in desperate, "monstrous" circumstances that were themselves to be avoided at all cost. For this reason, classical scenarios of the *body-state* metaphor used to be couched in hedging formulations; e.g. similes, exemplary stories (e.g. the "fable of the belly"), referenced quotations from ancient and famous authors and explicitly argued analogies that stressed a relational rather than substantive similarity between the body and the state. Hitler and the Nazi's scenario of national and cosmic *therapy*, by contrast, knew only one outcome, one therapy and one course of action for the *healer*, in order to solve the alleged extreme crisis of the *body politic*, i.e. its *cure-through-elimination* of the *parasite*. This *therapy* was understood by Hitler and his followers in the sense of an elimination of all individuals of the supposed *parasite organism*. As the scenario analysis in Chapter 3 showed, the source and target levels in *Mein Kampf* were so intricately fused that the distinction of literal and figurative meanings of the *body/nation-v.-parasite/Jew* mapping was rendered meaningless.

Carl Schmitt's biased reconstruction of Hobbes's *Leviathan* showed that the attempt was made to connect the "respectable" philosophical *body politic* tradition with the notion of a "total" state that gained its identity only through combating an existential *foe*. The permanent crisis of such a state founded on conflict, which classical thinkers considered mainly as a limiting concept for a situation that had to be avoided, was for Schmitt the pre-condition of all political activity. So it was for Hitler and the Nazis, but they drew from it the ultimate conclusion which Schmitt himself did not (dare to?) consider: the absolute necessity for the national *body politic* to destroy the foe as a *parasite* life form that was "unworthy to live". The basis for such a conclusion was of course not Schmitt's attempted reconstruction of Hobbes's theory but the popularized "sedimented" tradition of *body-state* analogies.

Our historical analyses in Part II have revealed that whilst a relatively wide range of conceptual/lexical source elements can be found in the relevant texts, only a handful of thematic clusters appear repeatedly and prominently: the *hierarchically ordered anatomy of parts of the body*, their mutual *interdependence*, the *life cycle of the whole organism* and the *illness-diagnosis-cure* scenario. These key themes and scenarios carry evaluative and emotive associations with them, as well as assumptions about preferred and feared consequences and courses of action, which are understood as evaluations of solutions of political crises. Whilst they may appear to be nothing but commonsense concepts grounded in bodily experience and pre- or folk-theoretical assumptions, we can in fact trace them back to philosophically and even theologically oriented traditions reaching back to concepts of Christ's/God's body and its manifold worldly manifestations (e.g. as the "mystical body" of the church with the pope as its *head*, or as the emperor, or as the king in his "body politic", or as the "sovereign" as the principle of the state, the *people's body*, etc.). Long after the ancient cosmological and theological frameworks that sustained these notions have disappeared or have been relativised to the point where they can no longer be considered belief systems that members of a particular national or religious culture adhere to uncritically, the "holiness" of the collective (social and/or political) *body* remains. It was and still is this holiness of the *body politic* that has had to be defended at all costs, against devilish inspired heretics in the Middle Ages, humoral imbalances in the Renaissance, rabid dogs that can bite a state "to the quick" for Hobbes, or *racial vermin* and *agents of decomposition*, in the Nazi worldview.

Hitler's "diagnosis" of Germany's post-World War I crisis thus sounded plausible *not despite* but *because of* its metaphoric character and history. This apparent plausibility was grounded in its familiarity as an age-old, tried and tested commonsense analogy. It provided the German public with a conceptual and argumentative space to reason about the socio-economic and political hardships they were experiencing and

to trust Hitler with applying the *therapy* that would end those hardships and prevent them in future. As a means to achieve the common good for the nation, these measures could be interpreted as ethically acceptable, even if they included hardships and sacrifices (hence Himmler and other SS-leaders' self-stylisation as carrying out an unpleasant, almost sacrificial task in perpetrating the genocide). The function of the *body-parasite* scenario as employed by the Nazi elite was to make the genocide appear as the inevitable "solution" for Germany's crisis. They stuck with this scenario through the changing fortunes of war. As the secretly recorded statements of popular opinion show, its genocidal agenda was understood by the majority German populace sufficiently to at least "tolerate", if not participate, in that *final solution*. This astonishing persuasiveness of the *cure-by-elimination* scenario remains inexplicable if we dismiss it as a propagandistic extra to Hitler's "real" policies or view it as the re-manifestation of a "mind virus" (in an accidental, tragic historical context). Our findings show that Hitler's metaphorical presentation of *parasite annihilation* as a natural, self-evident and necessary *therapy* for the existential problems of the German *body politic* convinced the public of his genocidal agenda.

The comparison of Hitler's scenarios with those promoted by medieval theologians, humanists and enlightened thinkers would seem at first sight to be almost an "open and shut" case of contrasting a conceptually incoherent and ethically depraved use with a highly respectable philosophical tradition of political thought. However, we have seen that not only the range of source domain concepts and scenarios can be shown to be similar but also that even "respectable" authors often come dangerously close to suggesting radical and potentially genocidal *cures* for perceived political *illnesses*.

It is only through the explicit comparison and historical reconstruction that the differences between their uses of the metaphor and Hitler's version become visible:

- Where Hitler's metaphor system is a closed set of "self-fulfilling", mutually reinforcing scenarios and "prophecies", classical and also many modern uses are embedded in textual structures that highlight their figurative status (e.g. simile, quotation, "exemplum").
- Where the Nazis depicted the worst-possible scenario outcome (*destruction and decomposition of the body politic*) as an imminent and inevitable danger, most other uses portray it as a potential, but not inevitable, worst-case scenario that can and should be avoided.
- The therapy "offered" by the Nazi *body-parasite* scenario is a precise match of the supposed extreme danger to the *body*, i.e. complete *annihilation* of the supposed *illness-inducing agent* as a "final solution", whereas in classical and enlightened scenario applications, extreme *therapies* are mentioned mainly as deterrents to underline the necessity to avoid such a negative outcome.

However, as the examples of Rousseau's *corps de la nation* concept in its application during the French Revolution, Herder's idea of *parasite* nations in its later distortions and Hobbes's theory of the state-as-*Leviathan* in Schmitt's biased re-interpretation have shown, not even truly rationally oriented versions of the *body-state* metaphor are immune to being reconfigured as closed scenarios that legitimise murderous policies. The *body-state* metaphor complex is neither a superficial rhetorical ornament nor just an ahistoric, universal conceptual structure: in all its uses it provides an opportunity and a challenge for the respective *body politic* and its public "voices" to reflect on the ethical implications of their self-presentation and -interpretation. The metaphors by which nations define their destiny have the potential to shape that destiny. ✓

(*Entfernung*), 'resettlement' (*Umsiedlung*) or 'evacuation' (*Evakuierung*) changed their meanings several times: in the first phase, from the 1920s to the mid-1930s, the Nazis "used the terms with reference to the Jews but without necessarily implying a programme of mass murder"; after that until late 1941, their vocabulary "denoted the idea of a geographical relocation of a mass of people" and increasingly "incorporated the perspective of the physical end of the Jews in Europe"; in the last phase until 1945, these terms were "increasingly used as synonyms for mass murder" (Longerich 2003, pp. 24–25).

13. Longerich points out that even in Hitler's own circle, the Holocaust was referred to only in figurative or abstract terms, probably so as to avoid "tak[ing] in the reality of the murder of millions of people" and "[keeping] the horror of it at a distance" (Longerich 2003, p. 23).
14. This emphasis on the "perspectivisation" function of metaphor has been emphasized in cognitive approaches to metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Kövecses 2002; Fauconnier and Turner 2002), but is equally recognised in newer semantic and pragmatic/discursive accounts (Stern 2000; Tendahl and Gibbs 2008; Zinken and Musolff 2009).
15. Our study does not deal with the issue of how the National Socialists pictured their ideal of a healthy natural human body, which is, of course, linked to their source concepts for the nation's *body politic*. The Nazi body ideal and its counter-image of "the Jew", as depicted in literature and films as well as in all kinds of pictorial and sculptural manifestations, has been studied in detail (see, e.g., Theweleit 1980; Gilman 1991; Alkemeyer 1996; Wildmann 1998; Linke 1999). The relationship between the individual and the body ideal and the collective body (*Volkskörper*), however, is not one of identity but required its own argumentative buttressing. The study presented here thus needs to be complemented by an exploration of that relationship in Nazi ideology and propaganda, so as to give a complete picture of the literal and metaphorical applications of *body* concepts in National Socialism.
16. See Coker 1910; Archambault 1967; Hale 1971; Dhorn van Rossum and Böckenförde 1978; Sontag 1978, 1991; Sawday 1995; Kantorowicz 1997; De Baecque 1997; Peil 1983; Harris 1998; Guldin 2000; Maitland 2003; Nederman 2004; Koschorke et al. 2007; Mouton 2009.
17. See Nestle 1927; Hale 1971, pp. 26–29; Peil 1985; Patterson 1991; Guldin 2000, pp. 101–103; Koschorke et al. 2007, pp. 15–26.
18. Aesop 2002, p. 35 (fable no. 66).
19. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, Act I, Scene 1: 95–148 (quoted from Shakespeare 1976).
20. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, Act I, Scene 1: 154–157.
21. See Kokoschka 1971, quoted after Hamann 1996, p. 429.
22. See Hamann 1996, pp. 285–336; Kershaw 1999, pp. 71–106.
23. See Ganz 1957, p. 175.
24. See Levitas 1986; Linke 1999; Townsend 2005; Kienpointner 2005, pp. 226–227.
25. Occasionally, such criticism has the power to ruin a politician's career, as in the case of the West German Parliament's president, Philipp Jenninger, who had to resign after a commemoration speech that was deemed by many to contain Nazi vocabulary; see Ensink 1992; Krebs 1993; Siever 2001; for overall assessments see Steiner 1979, 1987; Stötzel 1989; Niven 2002, 2006; Eitz and Stötzel 2007.
26. The use of such imagery for the purpose of criticism (as in the above-mentioned censure of the term *Volkskörper*), is, of course, considered to be politically correct, as is, interestingly, its use to denounce right-wing extremists