Stain of God
Nicholas Strobbe

‡ That Christianity is the double, this *krisis* (*κρίσις*), riven between and as the Between — of Judaism and of post-Judaism. Christianity demonstrates the catastrophe of the coming event, the messianical. But this catastrophe is material (organic), mundane, and who can say for Jesus that the most catastrophic event was not initiated and executed (one chooses these words with both caution and certainty) by Christians? What is for the Christian revelation, the Day of Judgement, is for the Jew catastrophic (*krisis*).

‡ The catastrophe above all, however, is that Judaism, no less than the Christian religion, remains theological. What is not seen is that the advent of the Messiah is not theological but is marked in its most extreme limit in the excess of finitude, its *surplus* (what is theology but an economy of the surplus?). The onto-theological in this case transforms into the onto-genea-logical.

The Chrestic event in fact marks the catastrophic most particularly. The catastrophe was not that no Jewish Messiah arose, nor that the Messiah was yet to come or (this amounts to the same thing) that theology was dead. The catastrophe at least arose here — that the Christ became the historical and the human and finite and heterogeneous. The theological event does not give but destroys the human and divine. The Christ is human, mortal, multiform, sexuate, and sexual (one anoints the body by touching its surfaces and perfuming it, *christos* [*χριστός*]). The human — as *kata-logos* — as Christian, as finite and mortal and heterogeneous, these ones are the Messiah, they are the sign, they are the words that spell out ‘the death of God’. Every Christian and every mortal is this catastrophe — that there will be no Messiah, no guiding or asterio-logical event to speak of. The Christian stands against the Messiah. The catastrophe is the Christian.

‡ The Christ-cross and the chiasmus.

‡ Christophany as stain, colour, sign, and tattoo (*chriein* [*χριέιν*]).
Christ as the tattoo on the body of the theological.

‡ That Christianity (its whole peoples and history) is the Messiah. That is its catastrophe.

That is the catastrophe.

‡ The death in the disappearance of Reason in God (following Descartes) describes the realm of the immanent and eternal surplus. But this surplus remains ruinous. It is a moment into which our existence recedes and is reduced into utter nothingness. Even death here may be destroyed and annihilated. God’s Reason, then, exists not only at the point where human understanding ceases (since, for example, for a theological philosopher like Descartes human reason can have no object — the problem of reason is not that it (human understanding) cannot have an object but that it can only ever have objects, and this explains why God can not be an object for us), but God’s Reason arises at the moment of the most extreme decession. Human reason, accordingly, does not merely die but is annihilated in the move. God remains catastrophic for thought — but if we recognise and affirm the recognition that God is merely an idea, then this catastrophe (which may conform its rule of devastation in a practico-material world) remains exemplary for us. One sacrifices God over the death of surplus, though such an act can and ought never be fully dispensed.

‡ The Other is remembering. Memory is given in the obligation to the Other (not infinitely, but without measure and incommensurably) as my ownmost possibility. It is this sacrifice of the Other by my self that recalls me to myself, that is, to the commemoration which lies between the ruin of presence and the sacrifice of the ruin.

‡ Memory is an Other that bears to me an incommensurable obligation. I am not equal to the Other. All equality is a metaphysics. But its memory in this way remains, a fortiori, exemplary for thinking ruin and obligation. Memory, accordingly, is less like the theoretical in a facultative ordering than the practical (the mere memory of the mechanical — and of technē, even too poiesis — is itself already ethico-political).

‡ Man is dead. This is my memory. Man killed Woman for his sake, but then precisely this death of hers is not known — is not owned — by him. Man has not killed woman. She does not lack him. (Man lacks man.) Man has not met Woman, and will not meet women. Men have hardly met women.

‡ Memory as the sacrifice of thought gives itself over to this diremption in its being, which is not the sur of the real or the absolute (it is not a ‘plus’ in any sense of the term), but disappears abysally from presence into nothingness. This above all is not an event, though man will not always fail to figure this loss after his own event. Death, which is not merely human, remains inscribed in the remains of the act of oblivion.

And justice then? But the messianical just is doubly catastrophic. Not only is justice misunderstood in this sense, and then most unjust, but justice cannot await its messianical event. To leave justice to the very end would be to leave justice altogether. It would be to forget the immemorial character of justice as the crisis it is for us. Failing to attend to justice we forget memory (the virtue of common law in this respect is that it grafts the aporia of the present with the justices of the past).
Justice commemorates its own oblivion. Amnesty and memory meet here. That is to say, they supervene...what do they supervene?...the final loss from which no saving can preserve us, the loss from our being or presence which, too, is the most unfathomable loss and the greatest injustice. That is perhaps why justice ceases with death, because with the death sentence (where even the body may legally execute its own citizens — in modernity this takes the form of the state, but it is any case never a thing but always a condition) justice tries to enact its own origin in crisis, and to repeat its own decession.

Perhaps it’s not that we cannot remember the origin, but that origin has no memory. And who knows that there was only one origin? Perhaps there are myriads of origins, all about us, all in their own originality?

A freedom with no equal, and without equal, since every equality demands its own freedom — an equality in which freedom is not present is an equality of servitude. But freedom must love equality so much that it will sacrifice it — for an equality without equal. The equal haunts the free. It constitutes, after all, its incommensurable excess. Only the equal without measure, free equality, keeps the open of the free opening.

The equal is first an origin whose memory is ghostly. An equality in which freedom is immemorial. Freedom, then, as equality in excess.

Sometimes memory comes to us as a revelation. Perhaps we failed to recall something, or perhaps it was that we called it by the wrong name. Memory, like Echo, might either pine away and perish — lurking in repetition — or, like Echo again (she has two stories, and both are disastrous), she might be torn asunder and cast into distance. Not into the distance, since it has no place. Memory’s place...dis-stance. Recall a distance — is anything so intimate?

Thinking memory, one has never divorced its contents from the site where it was held, or even to the site as that which is with-held.

Memory’s only hope is the future.

Memory is a sign, a stigma on the body of thought. The memory of this time (as stigma, punctum) is never original enough. That is what is so precious about memory — that it is never original. The memory which remains original is catastrophic. Memory is an allegory which must think its presence originally.

Memory — lying between the passing away of the present and the nothing which it is not yet.

If the present names presence, then it precedes it. The present is neither before, nor after, but between. Not in the between — in it somehow —, but as it. Memory presents what? The present? No, and nothing, yet. Memory exhibits the nothing which it is in the middle of its not yet. And what is the Between but nothing?

Christ as the Interruption of God.
Memory is not a thing, a place, a positing. It is the de-posed. Here, the Between is beyond us.

The present is the ἐιδωλον of the Between, its image or reflection. The present is the most immediate of passing. Memory is the presentness of the passing, the most immediate of the passing away.

“This was the old ramp. Through the old ramp, the first one, three quarters of a million people died. This was the old ramp. I mean the majority. The new ramp was only built for the expected murder in a very short time of a million Jews from Hungary.”

In this place 400,000 alone were killed. Without graves, and abandoned. Simon Srebnik is one of only two to survive.

The Rabbi, Christ, Sorrows.

The essent has no memory — to think, then, this absolute singularity and its singular catastrophe.

“…es felhlen heilige Namen…” — “…there is a lack of holy names…”

Hence the gods, and want as this loss.

Christ as half god and half human, a monster.

“The gas chambers were the heart of the camp. They were built first, in a wood, or in a field, as at Treblinka. The gas chambers were the only stone buildings. All the others were wooden sheds. These camps weren’t built to last.”

Memory brings with its want its most unendurable need — presence that lasts. Memory’s want and its abyss is immeasurable and enduring, and it is this which must be revealed — that memory is unendurable.

Memory as the ἐποχή, the suspended, suspension. It is suspended, and indeed is the suspenseful. This, at least, is memory — something that stretches out…from an absence of presence and back into its presence. Memory as that which is suspended in the suspenseful itself.

From Heidegger’s “…Poetically Man Dwells…” we read Hölderlin’s question “Is there a measure on earth?” The answer: “There is none.”

Another diaspora: “Our Palestinian graves have fallen from planes all over the world, with no cemeteries to mark them. Our dead have fallen from one point in the Arab

3. Alfred Spiess, quoted in Lanzmann, Shoah 66.
nation to form an imaginary continent. And if Palestine never came down from the Empire of Heaven to dwell upon earth, would we be any less real?"  

‡ It is difficult to see memory’s apocalypse — its ruin is before us continually, but it is difficult to determine. Should one, or can one, waver before such an unendurable solicitation (of the ‘un-covering’, ἀπο-κάλυψις)?

‡ Memory takes place, it occurs. But, then, memory also takes place, memory takes something (the ‘now’, a present presence) and in this way takes it away, replacing it with…what? Nothing but the taking place. This is the aporia of place and memory, the dwelling of the immeasurable, such that in having taken place it is the taking place.

‡ The first memory. Equal to its origin?

‡ What is the idea of justice? An incomprehensible sense in just being.

There is no solution, and no Absolute, to the question of justice. In part because justice is, before all else, a question for us. (It is in the wake of being, according to both a certain wakefulness and the catastrophe of the death.) Here then, at least, is this responsibility — to think our thought before it passes over to the site without place…exhaustive death and meaningless oblivion, into exigence and without emergency. This marks the exposed vulnerability of emergency for those vulnerably exposed — the exiled. The character of the exposed, in all its vulnerability, above all in the place of the now, is the vulnerable, the most endangered and the most intimate. The now is a question by virtue of its vulnerability and exigency. Justice, accordingly, will also come in this case to mark out the amnesty in, and of, such an immeasurable oblivion, an amnesty that forgives its own abeyance. The grant of amnesty (which occurs here with the exiled) marks the impossible in the rule of the rule of justice. It is the memory of its own oblivion, and hence the most extreme gift and justice.

‡ Incommensurable justice, memory as obligation and the immeasurable responsibility of justice: ‘Love Thy Enemy’.

‡ To be alone, in exile, is to be exposed. Indeed, it is the exposed.

Socrates.

‡ Memory is the sign of an existence which finds itself out of death. But the finitude of this existence is without measure — that is, it marks the decisive feature in every justice. The decisive character here can no longer be thought outside the measure of the incommensurable, which is nonetheless a crisis that strikes at the origin according to the scission.

Justice, as Anaximander records it, brought forth in this originary event an event without parallel which calls us infinitely. This, in part, corresponds to the logic of a certain responsibility — as beings that arise as a response to the historical in its origin as krisis. Here, then, the decisive belongs to justice — not as its outcome or its logic, but,

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rather, according to a poiesis that attempts to reach back before its own state of closure. The impossible of the origin of the rule\(^5\) echoes our incomprehensible responsibility to memory.

‡ Here, then, a law of the nothing (which is a rule of the rule): the Between is the sign of the originary as krisis. Between being and nothing the crisis or scission is the region between being and the nothing which is not. The original moment here is not the nothing, nor the being (presence), but the absolute krisis of the Between itself. (Here, then, an origin of the ruin?)

‡ What is the Act of Oblivion? It is not simply the legislative act of 404 BC with which the democracy of Athens forgave its oppressors. No, the act signifies something more disturbing. How, for example, can an act occur in Oblivion, in the nothing which is not and which precedes every devastation? Oblivion has no thing, it is not given for, it is neither like a witness or a martyr. It is the impossible of every waste and value, and it is without any motility. The act of oblivion, accordingly, follows or succeeds upon itself. Nor is it simply the excess of the nil, because the nothing properly excludes excess.

Oblivion succeeds the Nothing, even though it is not yet, or not any longer, a place or a space. Oblivion cannot legislate over the Nothing, though it is itself still to be identified with forbearance and the gift of justice. Its realm is the Between, even as the paralogism of the act of oblivion is comprehended in the double genitive. Hence its meaning arises precisely according to the Between. Still, the Between is not closer to the origin or the Nothing.

‡ The sense of krisis (and of every death and impossible) is the site of a ruin. A crisis whose sense is lost to us, above all in the expression itself. Death exceeds its ruin. And memory — is it not too like ruin, the haunt of a future? But then this future which succeeded the Nothing remains to be thought in its remains.

‡ A child in the maelstrom of a Europe at war collecting autographs from the persecuted before having perished too. Yoli’s autograph of Danka Przybsiu reads:

“To remember / Laugh in public / Cry only in private / Be light in dancing / But never in life.”\(^6\)

‡ Memory lies in exile. For some, of course, will say only that memory exists for as long as it is present, and as a presence. This seems true, in part. But memory marks the loss of thought and thought’s return to this loss. Memory, then, in the exile to its non-place, strives as thought to consider and encompass with its thought a movement without return. But it is lost in this — the thought of the impossible — and can find no way through. It is in deepest exile, now, thought unto itself.

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To think about memory is already to begin to think within...no, not within, but between remembrance. To think and give heed to *(μνημειοθαί)* this thought full of remembrance, as the immemorial of membrane.

Memory, which is not the project but exile *(ex-salio)*, the salt and salve of a saving power which is no longer capable of holding a distance from its own dissolution.

This is what is saved after all in the return to the lost, and what is more lost than the exiled?

Every memory marks the salvation of exile, but it is saved only insofar as it retains its specificity in the with-out.

One burns in exile. *Plus de mots.*

But then one too came to write an Apology (though not from Todtnauberg; still, it is significant that the defence, such as it is, would be given according to a speaking-away-from — *ἀπο-λόγος*). Recall this singular event in the West: the first text of Plato’s documents a criminal trial. The *Apology*, for all its popularity, is both the record of a trial and a crime-story. But Socrates does not decide to escape, like so many others, into exile from his demos and Athens. Though, certainly, he has chosen (and yet the election is not his) to abide by his own exclusive extremity. Nothing refused this exile, no voice railed or whispered. A personal matter no doubt for the Diotiman.

Memory is forbidden. A translation out of communication, and in this sense the very esse-nce of memory.

If writing is not necessary, it is exceptional.
( Beloved, the word comes from your hand.)

In the *Der Spiegel* interview Heidegger famously and suggestively gives for consideration the thought that ‘perhaps only a God can save us’. Recall that this comes to us from French discussions of the publication subsequently translated into English. Recall, too, that Heidegger argues that there are only two genuinely philosophical languages — Greek and German. But how is it possible for us to understand these words? Understood and read in this language, they are not Greek at all (though this must remain, *a fortiori*, most Greek). Reading the English and understanding the French would above all determine our not reading — or reading impossibly — philosophically. If French and English are not philosophical languages proper, then Heidegger’s thoughts on God and the saving power are mirrored according to this general incomprehensibility.

Is there not thought in this turn, then, the return to Germany and the homeland? And yet, Hölderlin in ‘Homecoming’ (*Heimkunft*) concludes that with respect to the sacred name (*heilige Namen*) there remains a state of deficiency (*es fehlen*). Philosophy removes itself and is in a state of exile. Such is its state now. It withdraws itself from its site in a move that is not catastrophic but, in the very move itself, resounds the catastrophic. This is its nothing — the apo-calypse of philosophy. How, then, to remember the origin or site of the apocalypse? But it is absolutely catastrophic. It is
nothing. Such a want then that one is reading nothing philosophical. And if the saving power is dangerous, is it powerless before its power?

‡ Thought is in advance of memory. Indiscernible. But the advance of the indiscernible — isn’t this what is called forth by Husserl in the Crisis? That we remain attentive to a certain ratio for being?

‡ Memory, for the last time. In your own time…to the last as that which lasts. Memory comes at the last of thought. And thus, perhaps, it is in a way its saving power. Memory, then, understood as the saving power of thought and as that which is most dangerous — since what could be more dangerous for us than the loss of the thought-memory. It is memory that distinguishes us from the gods. A god, with that everlasting life, has no need of memory. The god does not ex-sist (ex-sisto, -sistere, -stare), and is nothing ek-static. The god is without any position. God, who does not exist and who lacks every memory, is not in the present. (Is this not what is recorded in the injunction of the Hebraic God to Abraham — ‘Behold me’ — ? No place is locatable, no time discernible, nothing of the divine is revealed which might otherwise compromise the rationality of rabbinical Judaism over Christianity, but simply and inexhaustibly the moral injunction to submit to sovereign law — unseen, unrevealed, only heard, but not spoken, and whose auditive structure according to Maimonides takes the tripartite order of listening, attentiveness, and obedience — in the election of a place without place. God does not take place, God is nothing sensible, contingent or accidental — at least with respect to the first and primary determination of accident in the Metaphysics.)

God is not present. Only the singularity of the mortal brings forth the death of god, yet as something strictly ungodly. The god, as Hölderlin knew, as the one present in all time could only exist — though this is no longer the right term, the right verb, to use after God, since the verbum word describes an action which is already an ex-pression that presents itself as a strike, a blow, and a violence; and yet we use the verb ‘to exist’ in respect of the divine by thinking this word in a passive and entirely graceful way: that is, we think this according to an unmerited forgiveness — in all time. One gives thanks to Nietzsche for the perturbation that we might not have succeeded in getting rid of God as a result of our continued employment of grammar — but such a limit will pre-cede its own formulation in the text which succumbs to the impassability of its own strike. There is, moreover, nothing verbal about god, and such a stricture obtains even greater clarity and precision when god and this movement are conjoined (according to the verbum whose origin is ἔχω, the spring). Every movement, every sense, and every memory speaks alone of the deviation from god. They are, at least, events for humans, though they are not strictly human events.

‡ Nothing precedes the human. The human is unprecedented. Nothing follows. The human is a memory for us alone. Here, at least, to think (penser) brings with it the rejoinder (je suis). It is well to recall here, too, Montaigne from the essay ‘On Repenting’ (1588): ‘je soys autre moy-mesmes’. This doubling fold of self and other, this irreducibly motile subject which, when presented as an object for discourse, is the moment when the I beguiles itself, and when the I portrays, by the necessity of this chance, not a thing in itself but, as he phrases or assays it, le passage. (Je suis pas/sage.)

‡ Memory has significance only for the being in finitude.

‡ Fate awaits man’s mystery.
Language, like memory, is promiscuous. One lets go of each one at every moment. One is relieved by it. And one is relieved of it. That is, one is relieved (relever) by language, which itself remains contaminated by this movement in its historiality. Memory here is the order of the historical, and it is in order that the historical as such will have been. Language, here, would announce itself here as the romance of a certain philogeny.

Il s'est donné la mort (Deleuze). Absence manifest itself by an other logic. Pure, and undifferentiated, difference. Memory — the singular event without repetition, since it is this singularity (even of repetition) which guarantees its presentation.

Man submits to the most unsustainable — hence the peculiarity, not of finitude, but of the description we give to it. Memory in this case marks the difference in this resistance to that nothing. One exists — one lives — according to a resistance. (The book is inhabited by signs of resistance; letters which in their stabilization and multiplicity are traces of a form of inhabitation — the city, and the book of the city.) One resists the abeyance of this finitude, though nothing can be known of this cleaving without it appearing as a crisis. Nothing finally is known of this, and here the nothing is cited according to the force of the verbum.

Oblivion is the world of the gods. And if it is to have a saving power its pure force must remain entirely dangerous to the living. That is why no sacrifice has ever been enough — because something always remains. The sacrifice gifts death as something, and that already exceeds the divine.

Oblivion is a krisis for thought. One doesn’t forget that oblivion is decisive for thought, and its interruption or trauma.

Oblivion is the not of thought. It is not thought. And even its act begs forgiveness. Still, this is not without relation to a certain violence. The violence of oblivion is also present with the violence of its end. This death preserves the fate of violence, which is its future. Accordingly, the not of oblivion marks the preservation of fate.

Remembering means thinking too of the violence oblivion undergoes in the not. Nothing of this remains at all.

Regarding the trace of this nihilation, all we have are muthoi and logoi. And these two indicate a more recent crisis. Their division signifies a certain violence (war) and a certain truth (wahr). That this is given according to the historical (es war) does not occlude a violence (the ‘it wa(h)rs’) of which the rise of the historiographical is one phenomenon.

Writing consumes everything. It says everything and even pronounces the unsayable. The invisible. Which consumes every noun, every one. Writing the Invisible — an irrepressible writing which seeks to pronounce its saying always coming to an end.
‡ Descartes’ responsibility is to the infinity of the deus, an infinity which the I/ceurtus stands before. But this is an I that flees before its responsibility. (Augustine, Montaigne, Descartes)

‡ Memory strives to reach its originality. The foreign or the metic of thought which, however, seems most homely. In this case thought seems most genuine insofar as it delineates its distance. This distance (di-stare, the standing apart; that is, the continuity of that which stands and perseveres, stare, which itself is in a state of withdrawal, a standing then which is in disaccord with itself, destance, the uncovering or apo-calypse of distance as krisis), in which memory appears, marks an original — and hence authentic — possibility for thought. But what if the distance was neither the authentic nor the inauthentic of thought? What if the authentic were itself distant?

‡ Memory survives its originality.

‡ Memory is the death, the passing, of thought distanced. Nothing further could guarantee thought than this incommensurable and incommunable distance. Memory wants thought, and thought’s violence (its action) on memory grants memory the expression it could never itself deliver. Memory, then, as an inexpressible deliverance of thought.

‡ Oblivion in exile. Memory is not the recapitulation of what has passed. For that another memory would be needed — a purely transcendent memory (Platonic). Strictly speaking, there is no idea of this memory where the Idea is without…empyreally beyond. The divine is the terror of all logic, of every transcendence, of any word. Nothing measures to the terror of the holy in which God appears as the monstrance of the Nothing, this monster of justice that for Jabès is God.

Memory is a warning (monere) and a marvel or wonder. It reminds and warns us of the po(r)tent (monstrum) of thought and it is the monster of memory (mens), the memory/thought that reveals itself in the demonstration of showing (monstrare).

‡ Perhaps, as Nietzsche writes, there never could be such a thing as forgetting. Perhaps nothing is forgotten. For what could this oblivion be? It is not the forgotten. No, that is already forgotten, it is nothing for us.

The forgotten as the trace of memory…its merest presence. What is the forgotten? The forgotten is not a thought — is it a memory in potentia? Memory says of this double that it is what is not remembered. It seeks to recall in the forgotten the ruin of its own finitude. In so doing its presence is recalled in the suspension of difference from oblivion. Nothing further can guarantee to memory its legitimation apart from the contradistinction from oblivion — indeed, it is by drawing this difference that memory prevails. In the circumscription of oblivion — in having demonstrated its thoughtful remembrance in the exile of the monstrous that is thought — memory thinks (but what does memory think?) to have demarcated oblivion and shown itself, the remembered, as the showing of the suspended. In which case the suspense of the double — memory-thought — appears as the singularity of the mon-strance, though nothing is known of this…nothing is known of the nothing which is memory’s most extreme exile, its most terrible possibility (Batailllean laughter). Memory prevails over itself to master its nothing, to refuse to forget what is only refused of it.
The death of God. That the God might die, or that it might no longer be required to be thought, or that death itself is the monstrous form of the god. But the god is not even a question, and least of all for apologists of the divine. Perhaps the god is a wondrous idiocy, a rule for nothing, or merely the mask for the nothing?

Still, do not kill the new god — stories abound, and anyway death is a mortal event and the crisis of the unjust.

The word has no memory. Nothing is read of the whole, not even the book. Unless it were simply one word, and even then we could not read the word all at once.

What is read? A sign given in absence, and represented by the work.

God as a trace of the oblivion of ruin. Such a ruin bears the theological and leaves it stripped. God would be the most proximal, the most intimate, the fully naked.

An exposure of the theological.

Nakedness, an oblique communication.

I remember now. You are my love. My wound. The word together with the tongue. Beloved loved. It is quite near now.

Socrates and the naked. Which mask is this? Xenophon’s? Plato’s? Nietzsche’s? Democrat or patrician? Realist or ironist? But what precisely is sought is that he be divested of this mask and finally revealed — as the denuded. 7

Where does the search for truth de-part from its seduction (and isn’t this seductive)? Es tu Diotima. 8

Nothing is written by him. Everything is remembered, everything is recalled, questioned, and requisitioned for thought. Socrates forgets more profoundly than us.

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7. On Socrates and the naked see Sarah Kofman, Socrate(s) (Paris: Galilée, 1989).
8. Following es tu Diotima Plato writes and Socrates speaks. We, however, do not learn any more about Diotima, or Xanthipe. And his daemon — isn’t this thought given according to an oblivion and a covering over? With respect to the indictment this was already to prove apocalyptic.
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